

- *On Sunday we looked at gathering congregational input into the "Angel of the Church" Presbytery Planning process*

## Chat with the Children

- The story of your life
  - what might you include?
  - boring bits?
  - interesting bits?
  - bits that tell how great you are at stuff?
  - bits that don't cast such a good light on you?
- Its all part of the story...
  - and God knows it all, is interested in it all
- *And has something to say to add to every story...*
  - wants to be a part of our story, with us, alongside us - **a friend indeed**

## Introduction

- The seven letters, purpose - encouragement, challenge, a word from God
  - God has something to say, and is concerned for the developing story...

## Affirmation

- General point about affirmation:
  - God sees our good service, and smiles!
  - do we affirm one another? Do we see what God sees and commend as he commends?
- Specific stuff about:
  - hard work
  - perseverance, not least in prayer for the reaching of Fintry...
  - do we tolerate sin in our midst?
  - affirmation of our desire to cling to truth
- *Other things in other of the 7 letters...*

## Challenge

- General stuff about challenge:
  - about its healthfulness... that if missing, leads to ill-health
  - necessary for growth, for health...
  - when challenge comes, not so much a sign of failure and judgement as of love and a desire for change
  - helpfulness of challenge for me, of things I've said that have hurt or could be misinterpreted - that I would otherwise have perhaps be entirely oblivious to!
  - come in the context of affirmation, comes with a clear and obvious desire for the best of the one being challenged, not out of hurt and pain
- Specifically here it is about the folk in Ephesus' relationship with God:
  - a challenge we all need to hear at some time or other...
  - **where are we our relationship with God?**
  - would people who come amongst us know God's presence here, would they perceive our first love being Jesus?
- Sobering warning of judgement to bring repentance...

## Application

- When God speaks to us here on earth, it is always with the prospect of change

- and growth
    - its never "well, that's it, I'm giving up..."
    - he may say to us clearly the consequences of persisting in a course of action...
    - but repentance and change is always possible
    - when God speaks, it is so we can hear and respond, so that we can know life and life more abundant...
  - Are we ready to hear God speak today?
    - have we heard a specific challenge or encouragement from this passage?
    - or maybe we'll go and have a read of the other letters to the churches in Revelation 2 & 3...?
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## The Angel of the Church

- Explain the return we need to make
  - explain the use that will be made of this return
  - explore how we are seeking not simply to get congregations to justify their own existence, but tell their story of what God is doing in their midst...

### The story of Fintry

- Reflect realistically about our context, and about our current life as God's people here
  - and tell the story of the opportunities we have to share the new life of Jesus with those around us...
- What do you think we should include in the story:
  - it might be something you value about this church
  - it might be something you think we could develop
  - it might be just one word that captures something about who we are, the feel...
  - it might be something about the Fintry community or area you think is important for folk who don't know this part of Dundee well to understand
- *Put Fintry Prayer video on while folk are filling out returns, volume down fairly low, maybe run a couple of times over...*
  - *elders moving about, able to answer questions, and take returns*

### The Purposes of the Church

- There are five areas of church life that are specifically mentioned in the Angel of the Church documents we are responding to.
  - it may be that as you tried to mention things for the story of Fintry Church you wondered whether there was something important you'd missed out
  - over the page there are the five areas of church life...
  - maybe looking at them you are reminded of something you'd like to mention, specifically for that area...
  - write it down underneath that particular heading... so under [Worship](#) if its about worship, etc
  - we'll not take so long to do this, but it will help us fill in any gaps that might otherwise get left...

### Conclusion

- Summarise what will happen to this:
  - raw information to inform members of the Kirk Session writing up a story of the church and answers to a few specific questions
  - the Kirk Session will have a good work through of the document - critically meeting on the 15th of September
  - and it will be returned to Presbytery during October