

1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

## Coincidence

**“A ‘strange coincidence’, to use a phrase  
By which such things are settled nowadays.”**

Lord Byron, *Don Juan*

It's a funny thing ... Or maybe it's just a strange coincidence. We live in a fishing village in East Lothian, on the south side of the Firth of Forth. Our house was built in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so it's now around 120 years old. The church in which we worship, and which serves this community, is just across the road. And there are families in our congregation, and in the village, who've been around for generations.

We've recently had a union of two congregations, so the church building is full of "stuff": duplicates of things; items which have been kept for years, but no one knows why; artefacts about which choices have to be made – which is the better one to use, kind of thing; and, typically, boxes and bags of random "bits and pieces" – most of which is likely to be heading for the skip. So, there's some sorting out going on, and it looks like it'll go on for a while. But in the midst of it all, a funny thing happened.

In a box of "stuff" there were some old bibles. I always find it difficult to dispose of old bibles – even though they might be falling to pieces. And the people doing the sorting clearly felt the same. So, they had a look at each bible to see if there was anything significant inside. And in the flyleaf of a small, leather-bound "Holy Bible with Church Hymnary, revised", there were names – Isabella and Alex Dickson – followed by *my* address! This bible had been used, probably around a hundred years ago, by folk who were living in the house I live in now. Absolutely amazing!

Why am I sharing this with you? Because, as I said at the start, it's a funny thing ... It gave me tingles, and it made me think: about the continued importance of the Word of God; the continuity of worship in a village community; links to the past, to people I never knew; a hundred and twenty years of people sharing love in a family home.

It's a funny thing ... Or maybe it's just a strange coincidence. But when I remember George MacLeod saying, "If you think that's a coincidence, I wish you a very dull life", I reckon I'll just stick with my affirmation that ... it's a funny thing.

### **A prayer for today**

*Surprises that make you think. God, breaking through? It's a funny thing ...*

*An original reflection © Tom Gordon*

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