

Leaflet



Greenbank Parish Church
Braidburn Terrace, EH10 6ES
No 641 March 2015

Pulpit Diary

Feb 27 (Friday)

7.30pm Pre-communion Service

Mar 1 Second Sunday in Lent

9.00am Communion

10.30am Communion (Creche, Spectrum and Springboard meet as usual)

3.00pm Communion (Braid Room)

Mar 6 (Friday)

10.30am at St Peter's Roman Catholic Church: Area World Day of Prayer Service

Mar 8 Third Sunday in Lent

10.30am Morning Worship

Mar 15 Fourth Sunday in Lent

10.30am Morning Worship with Annual Business Meeting

Mar 22 Fifth Sunday in Lent

10.30am Morning Worship (End of term for Springboard & Spectrum)

Mar 28 (Saturday)

4.00pm Families@4 – Greenbank's Messy Church

Mar 29 Palm Sunday

10.30am All Age Worship for Palm Sunday

Mar 30–Apr 3 (Monday – Friday) Holy Week Services

7.30pm at Morningside Parish Church

Apr 4 (Saturday) Readings and Music for Easter

7.30pm at Morningside Parish Church

Apr 5 Easter Sunday

9.30am Communion

10.30am All Age Easter Celebration followed by egg-rolling in Braidburn Valley Park

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends

Sean and I have just returned from a week's holiday in Turkey. Turkey is of course a huge country with a complex history. It would be impossible to gain a full picture of the country, or even visit all the sites, on one trip. The tour we went on left from Antalya on the Mediterranean coast (the biblical city of Attalia) and centred on the region of Cappadocia.



Cappadocia has the most amazing landscape. Apparently it is best viewed from the air by balloon. Unfortunately while we were there it was too windy for the hot air balloons to fly so we had to content ourselves with a ground level exploration of the unique rock formations. These rock formations are known as Fairy Chimneys – an apt description for the rocks that seem to grow out of the earth carrying with them, like rooftops, rocks which, before volcanic activity gave the area its present structure, lay on the ground.

Most of these Fairy Chimneys have been hollowed out at some time or another. And still today, the way in which they were made into dwellings or storehouses or even churches is obvious. In other parts of the region the very mountains have been carved out to form underground villages with shafts for air and wells for water – reminders of a turbulent history when long-term hiding places were a necessity.

We saw the remains of many churches carved into the hillsides. Some of these date back to the 11th and 12th century. Others are much older, dating back to the days of the early Church fathers who were so influential in shaping our creeds and teachings. Some possibly date even further back, to a time not long after St Paul on his missionary journeys visited the cities of Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. And in some of these ancient cave churches the original wall-paintings

showing scenes from the life of Jesus can still be seen today. Towards the end of the week we returned to Antalya via Iconium. And on the last day we enjoyed lunch in a restaurant, overlooking the harbour from which Paul and Barnabas sailed on their way back to Antioch. The Roman walls surrounding the harbour

are still there today.

To be able to visit these places which feature in the New Testament story of the Church is always a privilege. They remind us of our exciting heritage. We can look back on the challenges that faced Paul and his companions as they travelled the ancient world sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. We are reminded that they did not always receive a favourable reception – indeed sometimes they faced outright hostility. Yet we are also reminded of the amazing way in which the message of God's Kingdom of love took root in the hearts and lives of people, and how that kingdom grew and spread through the work and worship of small communities of faith.

Today the challenges which face the Church are different. But its purpose is still the same. We are called to be living communities of faith, loving and caring for one another, witnessing to God's love for the world and passing on the good news from one generation to the next. Elsewhere in this *Leaflet* you will read about how we are seeking to do this in Greenbank through a dedicated ministry to the young. I hope you will find it as exciting and challenging to read about the present and our hopes for the future, as it is to visit the past, knowing that we all have a part to play in the continuing story of God's Kingdom.

With warmest wishes,

Alison I Swindells
Parish Minister

A Week in the Life of a Youth Minister

Most of you know that on a Sunday morning I deliver the children's address and help with our Spectrum and Springboard classes, but I thought it might be nice to tell you about some of the other things I do during the week. Greenbank Parish is fortunate to be home to many families with children and young people, and I am fortunate to work with them in a variety of ways.

At both Pentland and South Morningside Primary Schools, I help lead a lunch group that meets weekly. We hear a Bible Story, and then do crafts or play games together. I also teach Religious and Moral Education classes to the Primary 1 and 3 classes at Pentland, and assist in leading assemblies both there and at South Morningside.

Recently, Alison and I have teamed up to offer a new programme called *Picnic and Praise*. On Fridays, just after the morning preschool and playgroup finish, we meet to share a snack and Bible Story before the children and their parents head off to collect older siblings or return to preschool. As a new father, I've enjoyed the chance to interact with other parents, and Ewan has enjoyed coming along once or twice to hear (or sleep through) a story.

On Sunday evenings, Greenbank's QII Youth Group (for young people in S4-6) meets; see the photograph below. We do a variety of activities, from games nights to discussion and debate sessions. We also head into town for fun things like ice skating at Winter Wonderland and ten pin bowling at Fountain Park. Beyond our social and spiritual meetings, QII also seeks to serve the community and has done work at Braidburn Valley Park, a rubbish clean-up at Portobello Beach, and a sponsored walk across the Forth Road Bridge in support of Christian Aid. Our members also regularly volunteer at St Catharine's Homeless Project in town. This coming

summer QII is heading to France to spend a week with the Taizé Community.

Our younger youth group, Springboard, is also travelling this summer, and will be spending time at the Macleod Centre on Iona along with young people from Fairmilehead Parish Church. We will tell you more about these trips in an upcoming issue of the *Leaflet!*

Beyond these weekly programmes, there are also quite a few special events that I help to plan and lead. The most well-known of these are likely *Holiday Club* and *Families at Four*. Greenbank's 2009 Holiday Club was actually the first thing I did when I arrived in Edinburgh. I played the part of "Pastor Mustard" alongside "Captain Ketchup", and I've been dressing up and dancing around every August since!



Families at Four (Greenbank's Messy Church) began last year as a way of reaching out to families in our community who enjoyed the holiday club, but for a variety of reasons were not connecting with us on a Sunday Morning. Messy Church is, as the name suggests, unlike a traditional Sunday morning service. I love seeing the crafts and activities that our team create around each session's Bible Story, and when we head into the church for worship,



there is always a tangible buzz in the air! Beyond working with young people, I enjoy helping with the Blokes at Greenbank, and am also in the early stages of a new Blokes Bible Study with them.

Two years ago, my wife Hayley and I began a programme called 'Theology on Tap' that invites university students and young adults to the pub once a week in the summer months to discuss the intersection of faith and modern life. Our discussions are always spirited, and we have also been known to stay after the discussion to win the evening quiz!

There are lots of other odds and ends that make up a week in the life of a Youth Minister – from webpage development to visits with the Uniformed Organisations or planning the 9.30am summer services. And this is one of the many things that I really like about my work. Each day is different, and offers its own surprises and challenges. The common thread through all of these activities is that they involve a lot of interaction with other people. Over the last four years I have been delighted to get to know the children and young people of Greenbank. Their curiosity and boundless energy are inspiring (and occasionally exhausting) and I am grateful to have a part in nurturing their faith.

Bill Stone



Book Review

How to Explain Your Faith

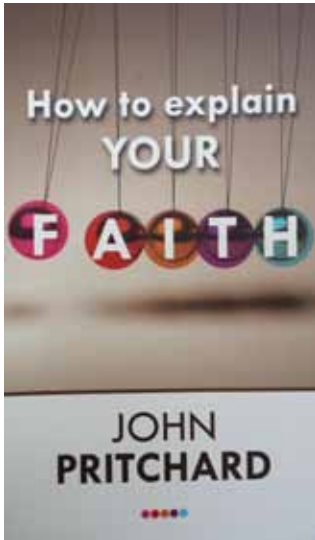
by John Pritchard

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). ISBN: 978-0-281-07254-5

If, like me, you do not always find it easy

to explain your faith, especially when faced with questions that leave you tongue-tied, such as: "Is Christianity for those who can't get a life?", "What use is a dying God?", "Why is the Church so embarrassing?", you will find this book very useful and practical and it will help you talk more confidently with your friends. It may also help you come to a deeper understanding of what you really believe.

The book is nicely set out in 17 short chapters divided into three sections, which is suitable if you wish to read a chapter a day. Each chapter individually focuses on questions/points



often put to Christians from the external secular society in which we live today. The author identifies key issues and then suggests how we as Christians might respond. All through the book you will find stories as well as inspiring poignant and witty quotes which you can work into your conversations.

In a world that increasingly doubts the need for organised religion, it is important for Christians to have straightforward and respectful answers to questions, so John Pritchard helps us explore these challenging questions in a practical way. He takes readers to the heart of the matter of Christian faith and covers key issues such as "Why does God allow suffering?".

This book is well written and easy to follow and I would recommend it, especially if you are considering attending the forthcoming Alpha Course at Greenbank.

Christina Morrow

One World Stall

The next One World Stall selling fairly traded goods will be after the 10.30am Service on **29th March**.

Change of Date

The date of our next Families at Four (Messy Church) event has changed to **28th March**.

Bookstall

After the 10.30am Service on **22nd March** the Bookstall will be open with a selection of books from *The Cornerstone*, with a special focus on books that might help you on your faith journey or expand your knowledge of Christian history, doctrine or the Bible. If you would like to order a copy of "Look well to this day", reviewed in the February *Leaflet*, or "How to explain your Faith", reviewed in this *Leaflet*, please contact us before 8th March.

John and Joan Ritchie

GET GOING!

Are you a young adult?
Struggling to get going with a career?
Need some real experience for your CV?
Some help applying for jobs?
Or some help with basic IT skills?

If YES - Greenbank Church's GET GOING programme may be for you

We're looking to recruit up to 3 volunteers to work for 3-6 months in one of the following roles:

- Pre-school assistant
- Church office admin assistant
- Youth work assistant

We'd expect you to work for 3 days a week, allowing time for you to continue the search for paid employment

As part of the placement, members of the congregation have committed to provide the volunteer with:

- Support updating CVs and completing job application forms
- Coaching in interview technique
- Help with basic IT skills
- General advice, mentoring

If you'd like to see detailed role descriptions, discuss further, or obtain an application form, please email mike@teall.co.uk

Be prepared!

The Greenbank Scout Jumble Sale will be held on **Saturday 18th April from 9.30am to 12 noon**.

fischy music

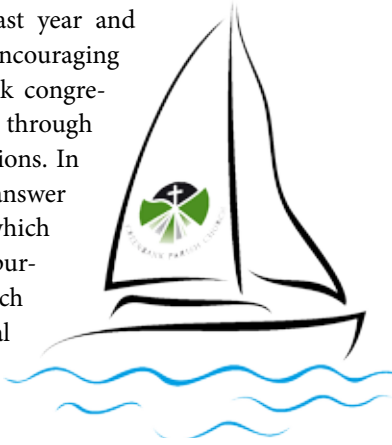
14 March
2:00pm - 3:00pm
at the Cluny Centre
£5/child (adults are free)

Join us for a fun-filled sing-along concert. We'll hear some of your favourite songs, and some new ones too! Children must bring an adult with them.

This event is hosted by Morningside and Greenbank Parish Churches. For more information, or to register, call 447 9969 or visit greenbankchurch.org

YACHT Fundraising Appeal

We launched our very ambitious YACHT campaign in September last year and since then have been encouraging members of the Greenbank congregation to make a donation through one of a wide range of options. In this article we hope to answer some of the questions which have arisen, reaffirm the purpose of this campaign, which we believe to be fundamental to our future, and continue to encourage you to pledge support.



Why does Greenbank need a Yacht?

Greenbank doesn't need a yacht! The yacht is merely a symbol that we are using for the appeal, based on the phrase "Youth At Church Today". As a yacht needs to be "steered" and be on a "steady course", and so on, it gives us an image and a metaphor that can be applied to our youth ministry in Greenbank.

Is Greenbank short of money? Aren't we quite a wealthy congregation?

Relatively speaking, the Greenbank congregation does contribute more than many congregations are able to. But our commitments are also very high: for example, more than 50% of our givings go to 'Ministry and Mission' – to 121 George Street to support the wider work of the Church of Scotland, principally funding ministers for poorer congregations. (Our M&M contribution was over £142,000 last year.) The Treasurer's Report, presented at the Congregational Business Meeting in March each year, goes into detail about our income and outgoings.

For a number of years we were able to pursue projects and initiatives largely based on a small number of generous bequests; the refurbishment of the sanctuary and the initial employment of the Rev Bill Stone are two examples. However, we cannot rely on such bequests: if we are to plan for the future, as we must, it has to be based on givings from the congregation.

Our current annual commitments exceed our annual income. We must either reduce our commitments or ask the congregation to contribute more to support the work of the church. The Kirk Session has decided on the latter course.

Why do we need a Youth Minister?

We see all around us declining attendances at churches, of many different denominations. Many families and youngsters are just not connecting with the traditional model of the Church. We need to find new and creative ways to reach out and nurture faith; give youngsters a foundation for life; and support them in their spiritual development. That will provide a sense of community, allow others to be engaged and so introduced into the Church. Good examples which have been developed in Greenbank are Messy Church and the Holiday Clubs which reach out to families and youngsters in the Parish. These events are well attended and form small congregations of their own. Messy Church has averaged fifty

attendees over the last two events. With inbuilt service and teaching these are meaningful Christian events in their own right.

But that needs staffing. It needs a Youth Minister to get out into the Parish and create and develop these links and events. And that needs a sustained commitment over a number of years. Bill Stone outlines in a separate article the work he is involved in week on week in the Parish, but this is not a short term project – we need to be in it for the long haul.

And what is the alternative? A typical pattern is of families with young children not attending, and not attracted or encouraged to do so, with the inevitable result that the average age of the congregation goes up. Soon there are no young adults available to take on leadership roles of church organisations. As the numbers attending dwindle, congregational activity dwindles, and before long the church is being joined to another congregation or closed down altogether.

Greenbank may seem a long way from this dismal scenario. But our membership is declining year on year and indeed in this sense we are already facing a fight for survival in the future which the Session is determined to address now.

So we simply must focus on our youth ministry. We must attract young families willing to play an active part in the congregation, and the best way to do this is to have a member of our ministry team with the particular skills and responsibilities to do that.

How are other congregations faring?

Declining church membership is a widespread problem. Some churches are doing better than others, but much depends on local circumstances. However, there is no real merit in comparing ourselves with other congregations, whether in other parts of Edinburgh or in another city. WE should focus on serving our local community, and on ensuring that our Christian witness is faithful in inviting people, including young people, to join and play an active part in the life of our Church.

Does this focus on youth mean that the older members will be ignored?

No, we are not planning to reduce other congregational activities 'for the sake of the young people'. We want to *expand* the congregation and the church's life – this applies to all ages. Our focus on youth ministry will not be at the expense of other members of the congregation.

I am currently giving money to the church by Standing Order. Shall I just increase the amount to contribute to the YACHT appeal?

Thank you for your willingness to increase your givings to Greenbank. But we would like you to complete the reply slip that came with the YACHT brochure, copies of which can be found on the shelves in the Vestibule, and take out a *new* Standing Order (if that is your preference). This is because the Church has a separate bank account specifically for the YACHT fundraising campaign; the YACHT reply slip references the new account. (Please don't forget to complete the Gift Aid declaration on the back of the slip.)

Why do you want to raise £500,000? That seems a lot for one minister.

The total of £500,000 is our target for a fundraising project of five years in duration. If we succeed in reaching this target, we

should be able to fund the Greenbank youth ministry *for almost twenty years, i.e. until end 2033*. That is what we mean by the long haul. We would then be able to make long-term plans for our youth work secure in the knowledge of what we could afford. And, of course, we would not have to ask the congregation for further support for this work within that timescale.

We do not wish to budget further ahead than that, as it is impossible to know what will then be the congregation's priorities.

How much of the total do you expect to raise in the 'week in September' each year?

The fundraising events during the designated week in September will enable members of the congregation and parish to come together with a shared purpose. Such events in the past – for example, those associated with our Centenary Project 15 years ago – served to bring the congregation closer together, and were much enjoyed. We hope the same will apply during our YACHT fundraising weeks over the next five years. That was certainly our experience in September 2014. We aim to have further events in 2015.

If the fundraising events during the annual week are well supported, as they were in 2014 and as we hope they will continue to be, we can hope to raise a few thousand pounds. (The events in September 2014 raised £3,500) So the amounts raised will still only be a small proportion of the total target sum.

It is clear that the main means by which we will approach our target will be by Standing Orders (or other regular giving), augmented by Gift Aid, *from individual members of the congregation*.

How much do you hope to raise in each of the years 2015–2019 of the campaign?

We look for £80,000 per annum for 4 years and an extra push of £115,000 in 2019, the final year of the campaign. Of course, in that period it will be necessary to pay our Youth Minister and so some of the funds raised each year will be needed to meet that commitment.

How are we doing?

(Please see the 'Lighthouse' diagram, above.) We were fortunate to be able to transfer the residue (£50,000) of Miss May Brown's generous legacy to the YACHT budget at the outset.

35 one-off donations and 27 pledges of yearly giving for the 5 years of the campaign have been received, contributing £39,000 to the fund. If the current pledges are honoured then of our target amount of £500,000 the estimated amount reached in the 5-year period would be £160,000 – so we have a long way to go. *We clearly need further pledges of yearly giving.*

Are you applying for any Grant money?

Yes – we are presently in the throes of making application to the Church of Scotland "Go for it" Fund to see if we can get assistance for this campaign.

Will the money raised just 'sit in the bank'?

No, the contents of the fund (less what is required in the short term) will be invested, to yield more income.



How will we spend the money? What happens when it has all gone?

The main item of expenditure is the Youth Minister's salary. If our projections are accurate and the campaign reaches its ambitious target, then the fund will not be exhausted until 2034. So the aim is to be able to pay for a Youth Minister until then. It is hard for us to know what the challenges facing the congregation will be so far ahead. It is up to the Board and the Session of that time to decide how to proceed.

What happens if we don't manage to raise £500,000?

We would operate as best we could with what had been raised. But we would have to keep coming back to the congregation in the short term to ask for further financial support for our youth ministry. We would not be able to make long term plans.

Are we planning to raise money for any other causes during the five years of the YACHT appeal?

We will continue to give our full support to Christian Aid, in our regular Advent appeal and during Christian Aid Week. The handsome sums realised for Christian Aid in the Advent appeal demonstrates that this campaign has not diminished that appeal. Furthermore, as has been our practice, the congregation may be asked to support emergency appeals as they arise. The Board has decided that the proceeds of the Lenten Appeal this year will be shared with this campaign and the John McIntyre Scholarship Fund (used to provide support for students of the School of Divinity).

Do you have any dates for our diary?

Yes – We intend to hold a Ceilidh on *Saturday 26th September 2015* which is open to all ages and to which a special invitation will be extended to former members of Quest and QII (it is the 70th Anniversary of the founding of Quest in September 2015). Also the February *Leaflet* contained details of the Photographic Competition which will go to make up a 2016 Church Calendar. It is intended to make a presentation of these photographs for selection and also to conduct a "Sale of Talents" on *Saturday 3rd October 2015*.

YACHT Appeal Committee

The Guild

At our meeting on 20th January we learned about the work of the charity which we have selected from the projects within the National Guild's theme "A World to serve" – Mary's Meals – which provides a feeding programme for impoverished children in various parts of the world, whereby they are given a simple nourishing meal every day at their schools, thus enabling them to have an education and be fed. The area on which the Guild project is focussed is Liberia, which has been severely affected by Ebola and where, in spite of the closure of the schools for several months, the charity has been able to maintain a sustenance programme. By the time this issue reaches its readership we shall have raised funds for the project through our Fund-raising evening on 17th February when Mr Eric Melvin delivers an illustrated talk on "Aspects of the Royal Mile" and we are grateful to all who have been supporting this event. On 3rd February we learned about a different aspect of Edinburgh's history when Rose Pipes showed slides of the various housing developments known as "the Colonies", of which the most familiar are perhaps those in Stockbridge, Dalry, Slateford and Abbeyhill.

Our winter season draws to a close with our meetings in March – our meeting on 3rd March has the intriguing title of "Gas Masks and Lipsticks" and on 17th March we have our Annual Business Meeting followed by "Sacred and Profane" when I shall be exploring the origins of some of the hymns and hymn tunes in CH4. Both meetings, starting at 7.30pm in the Braid Room, are open to anyone interested in attending.

Kathleen Patrick

Friendship Club

Last month we enjoyed hearing about Eric Liddell's connections with Holy Corner from Ewan Hastings, and also Kathleen's "Voices". Our talk on "Newhaven" became a visit to Jamaica and we stay on the same side of the world for Fred's trip from "Chile to Argentina" on 4th March. Fred's photos are always superb so we look forward to his return visit. On 11th March Kathleen's "Seasonal Music" may be Spring based, and our final meeting of the session on 18th March will be a short ABM followed by Muriel Armstrong, a previous and prize winning editor of *Life and Work*, talking about her "Life in the Church".

Plans for our outing on 6th May are underway. We hope to go on the 'Maid of the Forth' round Inchcolm and back to South Queensferry for lunch and a stroll round the town. Anyone who is interested in joining us should contact me.

Val Smart

Love Music Community Choir supporting *Scottish Love in Action!*

Tuesday 24th March 2015 | 7.30pm | Usher Hall

Join us for a night to remember in the Usher Hall where you will be entertained with folk tunes, love songs and classical favourites with beautiful harmonies that will make your heart sing!

£5 / FREE to under 16 and unwaged. Tickets from Usher Hall Box Office.

Ticket sale proceeds to support the work of *Love Music Productions Ltd*, Charity No.SCO37370 (www.lovemusic.org.uk). Retiring collection for *Scottish Love in Action*, Charity No SCO30516 (www.sla-india.org).



Dates for your Diary: Please note that the next dates for Fresh Start collections are **8th March** and **19th April** at the Sunday Service (table in Main Hall).

There is a continuing need for good quality items for the starter pack scheme, and cleaning things such as jay cloths, dish cloths and yellow dusters are in short supply. See below for a full list of household goods wanted. Thank you to everyone who donated items in good condition or indeed new items, last month.

Dishes and Crockery

Dinner plates, side plates, bowls, cutlery, mugs, glass tumblers, tea-towels.

Pots and Pans, etc.

Pots with lids, milk pans, frying pans, plastic boxes, cooking utensils, can openers, potato peelers, wooden spoons.

Cleaning Things

Washing up basins, washing-up liquid, toilet cleaner, toilet rolls, hand soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, dust pans and brushes, pedal bin liners, rubbish bags, all purpose cleaner, laundry tablets.

Bed Linen and Towels

Single flat sheets, double flat sheets, single duvet covers, double duvet covers, pillow cases, blankets, duvets, bed covers, towels, face cloths, bath mats, curtains, rugs.

Small Household Electrical Items (Not TVs)

The Fresh Start 'Portable Appliance Testing' (PAT) service to businesses and charities continues to operate, and the Fresh Start electrical re-use service, which provides people who have been homeless with small electrical appliances, like kettles, toasters, lamps, radios and irons, is also operating very successfully. The appliances are tested by trainees, so as well as helping people who have been homeless in Edinburgh, the re-use service creates opportunities for the training initiative. There is an environmental benefit too. Every year, goods are being diverted from landfill.

Pick up a leaflet on a Fresh Start Sunday, refer to the website www.freshstartweb.org.uk or telephone 0131 476 7741 to find out more about Fresh Start.

Alison Ambler

For information about church organisations, please contact the Church Office (Mon–Fri, 9.00am–12.00 noon, 1.30pm–3.30pm):
Mrs Virginia Johnston
tel and fax: 0131 447 9969
e-mail: greenbankchurch@btconnect.com

The pastoral team can be contacted through the Church Office:
Rev Alison Swindells
tel and fax: 0131 447 4032
email: alisonswindells@blueyonder.co.uk
Rev W. Peter Graham
tel: 0131 445 5763
Youth Minister: Rev Bill Stone
tel: 07883 815 598
email: billstoneiii@gmail.com

Welcome Teams

March

- 1** Rosemary McCulloch, Rona Ferguson, Fiona Grant, Christina Morrow, Alison Murison, Malcolm Reid, Joan Ritchie, Toby Tucker, Alastair Ross
- 8** John Ritchie, Eric Brown, Stewart Coghill, Ralph Davidson, Susan Inch, Gill Sweetman, Ian Thomson, David Easton, Susan Jackman
- 15** Alan Armit, Edith Armit, Louise Coghill, Iain Davidson, Hugh Cowan, Susan Black, Malcolm Watters, Nora Kellock, Elizabeth Mackay
- 22** Stuart Sanders, Moira Davidson, John Murison, Rachel Cadell, Jenny Wright, Sandy Cameron, Carrie Reid, Moira Land, Julia Dunbar
- 29** Keith Winton, Eileen Campbell, Richard Dunbar, Clifford Hastings, Chris Horne, Doris Laing, Enid Mowat, Robin Nimmo

April

- 5** John George, Rhian Ferguson, Alastair Hunter, Hazel Macaulay, Kathleen Patrick, Dorothy Whitehead, Tony Foster

Mission and Service

Young and Old

News from the Church and Society Council includes intimation of the annual residential event for young adults aged between 17 and 25 who have some connection with the Church of Scotland. This event attracts folk from all over Scotland with different backgrounds and is a chance to get together, worship together, learn together, discuss together and party together.

Known as the National Youth Assembly it is designed to enable young adults to have a voice within the Church of Scotland. It consists of a series of discussions on topical issues, ranging from fashion to politics, from tax avoidance to climate change, and from social media to marriage. This takes the form of a mix of small groups, workshops, late night sessions and social events for delegates to enjoy. Many attend on their own but leave with lasting friendships. It takes place from 14th to 17th August 2015 at Gartmore House, Stirlingshire. For more information, please see www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/events/events/the_national_youth_assembly

Music and art are known to enrich the lives of those affected by dementia and Alzheimer's. Roadblocks to verbal communication laid by dementia are bypassed through the artistic process, and individuals can express themselves through the art. Concentration and attention improves, and patients are often easier to

To make contact with any of the organisations referenced in this Leaflet, please use the telephone number given, if there is one. Otherwise please contact the Church Office. Website: www.greenbankchurch.org

Coffee Rota

March

- 1** Communion
- 8** Clifford Hastings (D61A)
- 15** Susan Inch & Chris Horne (D48/D37)
- 22** Spectrum 3
- 29** Jill Powlett Brown (D12B)

April

- 5** David Jack (D72)



Crèche Rota

March

- | | | |
|-----------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Carrie Reid | Jenny Wright |
| 8 | Vivien Hutchison | Janet Ferguson |
| 15 | Alison Ambler | Eileen McKinnon |
| 22 | Lorna Htet-Khin | Lucy Teall |
| 29 | Hazel McLachlan | Lorna Perris |

April

- | | | |
|----------|--------------|--------------|
| 5 | Shona Murray | Jenny Wright |
|----------|--------------|--------------|



Flower Rota

	<i>Provided by</i>	<i>Delivered by</i>
March		
1	Isobel Aitchison	Fiona Connal
8	Rhian Ferguson	Ruth Ray
15	Doreen Milliken	Jean Roynon-Jones
22	Moira Land	Pauline Walker
29	Christine Willis	Isobel Brown
April		
5	Rona Sommerville	Joan Cameron



care for even when the therapy is over. When there are no words, and very often with dementia there is no word association when a person wants to express themselves, the process of creating art enables the visible communication of thoughts and feelings. CrossReach have found that their Heart for Art classes have allowed these expressions to be translated into astounding pieces of art. This ignited the initiative to showcase some of the inspirational pieces produced, and a stunning exhibition of art was held in *House of an Art Lover* in Glasgow, created by those attending Heart for Art classes. If you think someone might benefit from this therapy contact CrossReach at www.crossreach.org.uk.

Material for the April *Leaflet* should be delivered to the Church Office or to the Editors' pigeon-hole in the Main Hall by **Sunday 15th March** or sent by e-mail by **9am on Tuesday 17th March** to greenbankleaflet@googlemail.com

FASTING OR FEASTING

Many people claim to have benefited from intermittent fasting. Introduced in August 2013 by a television documentary called “Eat, Fast, Live Longer”, the concept of intermittent fasting very quickly attracted the attention and endorsement of various celebrities and politicians. The subsequent Fast Diet phenomenon has been quite startling. Also known as the 5:2 Diet Plan, it is simple to adopt: for two non-consecutive days a week you must limit yourself to 500 calories a day (600 for men) and the rest of the time you can eat normally. The downside is that ‘normally’ doesn’t mean you can feast on takeaways and family-sized deep-fried Mars bars; rather, you need to stick to the recommended daily calorie intake.

Fasting, voluntarily doing without food and fluid for a time or severely restricting one’s intake, is not new. Over the centuries fasting has been adopted both for religious and political purposes. Fasting has been used as a political tool in the form of hunger strikes: by the Suffragettes over a hundred years ago, by Mahatma Gandhi in his struggle for Indian independence, by the IRA in 1981 and in January of this year by refugees seeking asylum in Australia, to select just a few examples from many. Those who engage in a hunger strike see it as a non-violent way of drawing attention to their cause, of showing how much they care about a particular issue, of provoking feelings of guilt on the part of their opponents, and of achieving change.

Fasting has been practised throughout the Church since its earliest days. Following the custom of the Jews, the first Christians fasted as a means of strengthening their spiritual life. Even today millions of Christians in many different denominations abstain from food and drink on a regular basis as part of their religious discipline. At one time in Scotland, when Communion tended to be celebrated just twice a year, the Thursday before Communion Sunday was observed as the Fast Day. This was used as a time for spiritual self-examination and reflection in preparation for the Sacrament, when worshippers would receive a greater nourishment. Nowadays, there are some who choose to fast as a sign of their solidarity with the millions of men, women and children who have no choice about their diet while others still find it of spiritual value in sharpening their awareness of God. And of course fasting has long been associated with the season of Lent, in commemoration of the forty days our Lord spent fasting in the wilderness.

But what did Jesus have to say about fasting? The subject of fasting was not a central issue in the teachings of Jesus. Although he himself fasted, he does not seem to have commanded his followers to fast on a regular basis nor did he give any detailed advice about the practice. Beyond question, however, Jesus radically changed the way fasting was to be carried on as well as playing down the relative importance of the practice. He was critical of the wrong kind of fasting. In the collection of his sayings known as the Sermon on the Mount, there is teaching about the three traditional pillars of Jewish piety: prayer, giving to the poor and fasting. In this Jesus ridiculed those whose religion was all outward show, whose engagement in these practices was

primarily to receive public recognition and respect for their piety. **The first followers of Jesus did not fast.** Some of his critics asked Jesus why they did not fast, as if to say, If you’re so holy, why aren’t you fasting all the time? Jesus did not lash out at his opponents, but answered with a vivid picture put in the form of a question: *The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.*

Of course not! In ancient Palestine wedding celebrations could last a whole week. The groom and bride did not disappear for a honeymoon but presided over the festivities as king and queen. By common consent all the guests were exempt from the usual obligations like fasting, so that everyone could enjoy the party. Fasting was totally inappropriate at a feast. Jesus claimed for his disciples a similar exemption, on the grounds that they were guests at the greater banquet of the messianic age, an occasion for even greater joy and celebration than any wedding.

Jesus pictured himself as the bridegroom. In the New Testament there are many word pictures of the Church. One of the most intimate is that of the Church as the Bride of Christ. This suggests that the relationship between God and humanity is supremely not that of an absolute ruler and subject, nor that of master and servant, nor that of owner and slave, nor that of judge and defendant - although all these are common Biblical images of the divine-human relationship: it is above all a relationship of lover and loved one, like that of the ideal relationship between husband and wife. Such a relationship is marked by fidelity, intimacy, trust and permanence.

Fasting may have been appropriate before the bridegroom appeared, but not now. It was a time for feasting, not for fasting or mourning. The Jews fasted as a sign of waiting, of bewailing the fact that God’s Kingdom had not yet arrived. It was a way of looking back to the disasters which had befallen Israel and humbling oneself in repentance to pray for God’s mercy. But what if God’s mercy was now alive and active, healing, celebrating, creating a new world and inviting you to enjoy it? The coming of God’s kingly rule in the person of Jesus is like a wedding-feast and the last thing you do at a wedding-feast is abstain from food or drink. It’s a celebration of life itself.

We celebrate life and all that God gives us when we gather for the Lord’s Supper. We are reminded “This is the Lord’s Table. The Lord invites us to share this joyful feast.” We may recall Horatius Bonar’s hymn:

This is the hour of banquet and of song;
this is the heavenly table spread for me;
here let me feast, and, feasting, still prolong
the hallowed hour of fellowship with thee.

May each Lord’s Supper be for us not a solemn fast but a joyful feast when through faith we receive what God has to offer and so taste and see that the Lord is good.

For further reading:

*The passage on fasting in the Sermon on the Mount is St Matthew 6, 1-18
The discussion about fasting is in St Mark 2, 18-20.*