

# Greenbank Connections



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*The Prodigal Son, by artist Willie Wilson, Parables Window, Greenbank Parish Church*

## Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

Online version: [www.greenbankchurch.org/about/the-newsletter/](http://www.greenbankchurch.org/about/the-newsletter/)

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## From the Minister

Dear friends and neighbours in the Greenbank congregation and parish,



It's some time since we distributed a print copy of *Connections*, even to members of the congregation. Lockdown and COVID-19 precautions have changed the lives of us all since March, and we have been forced to play the hand that we have been dealt. For some, that has been merely an inconvenience and has required us to deal with things in different ways. For some, the lockdown has brought welcome closeness to family as school closures, home working and furlough have given more precious time together. For others, the same circumstances have knocked carefully balanced lives out of kilter, and led to a lot of stress. Our young people and their teachers have been through the mill of attempts to give fair grades when exams became impossible. Economic turbulence is having its impact on jobs and livelihoods, and none of us are unaffected by what is ahead in terms of what happens when our current economic systems are unable to work in their normal ways. For some of the elderly and those living on their own, lockdown has brought a significant degree of

loneliness. Those who have lost loved ones during this period have sometimes been unable to say their farewells and to gather together everyone who would have wished to be part of funerals, and this has sharpened the grieving.

*For these situations in all their private and personal depth and complexity, it is quite right that we would sing a song of lament to recognise the pain, and to bring it all before God.*

Alongside all of this is the joy of experiencing the kindness of our community when responding to need. Life goes on with its changed patterns, and the best of us is still there. New relationships become possible and we welcome new life in babies born in recent months. There is the ongoing joy of community relationship in the ways that are possible, including taking advantage of new ways of connecting through technology. At Greenbank we have counted our blessings for the huge project to livestream our Sunday worship which after about three years of development and much generosity and hard work, reached fruition a month before lockdown and put us in a position to offer live Sunday worship beamed from the church each Sunday at 10.30am. That has enabled us to stay in contact with so many of our congregation and to welcome many more to worship from across Scotland and around the world.

*For all of this, it is right that we sing a song of thanksgiving.*

Whilst the livestreams and the many Zoom gatherings have been hugely important and appreciated, the experience has heightened our longing for the in person contact of our gatherings as church and community. We really miss it when it's not

possible, and online contact lacks much of the subtlety and vulnerability of being close to someone physically. Our eyes are firmly on the in-person dimension of Greenbank and nurturing our church as a community hub and a place where big ideas can be explored through and beyond COVID-19.

However, our embrace of technology will now remain as a permanent part of our range of ways of being church, and offers further possibilities to connect with the community here and further afield as we seek to live out the Good News of our faith as we emerge from the lockdown. There are practical and pastoral benefits for both the committed person of faith and the seeker. Meetings and small events can be held online without having to gather everyone together when family schedules and dark winter nights make getting to the church challenging for us all. Seekers and the curious can connect to worship and ease themselves into the experience before taking the often challenging first step across the threshold of the church door. Our most vulnerable can feel connected when there are huge physical barriers to getting to church in person. Our concept of "congregation" has expanded way beyond Greenbank parish – we can connect with anyone, anywhere, and are already experiencing the benefits of relationships renewed and developing through our livestream congregation.

As we move forward through the autumn, with a gradual return from our "exile" of lockdown, I feel a great sense of "threshold". 2020 has been an interruption to the momentum of our church and wider community. A moment like this is both



difficult and full of opportunity. We are forced to reassess our priorities, and are all then invited to the task of getting behind Greenbank and helping it to flourish. In this part of Edinburgh there are many springs and wells, now encircled by housing. I know that Greenbank Parish Church will continue to be a well of care, nurture, fun, and inspiration for so many people. All are welcome, all are invited. Our online

“doors” are open, and our physical doors are gradually beginning to open again. Whoever you are, whatever has been in your life, know that you have a place at Greenbank, that you are valued, and that we want to get to know you.



Martin Ritchie

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## Advent Carol Service



Crazy though it may seem to be thinking about Advent in August ... we are rising to the challenge of not being able to sing together by planning a **virtual choir to lead our Advent Carol Service**, which this year is on **Sunday 29th November at 6pm**.

In the October edition of *Connections* we'll be giving more details of how to take part, but this is an invitation to anyone in congregation and community who enjoys singing. Well in advance, guidance and practice materials will be created to enable you to record your part of the choral items whilst listening to a backing track. We've done this a few times with the church choir, with good results! The service itself will be livestreamed and under current guidelines will have a socially distanced congregation of up to 50 people, but government guidelines may well still prohibit live singing. Our plans allow us to enjoy the beauty of this service and harness the talents of our community, and we hope that you'll join in.

If you would like to know more and to be part of this project, please drop me a line on [mritchie@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:mritchie@churchofscotland.org.uk) or phone 07984 466 855.

Martin

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## Communion Sunday

**6th September 2020**

**Our quarterly communion Sunday** will have two opportunities to share in the celebration. First, **at 10.30am, we'll have our live-streamed communion**, and we invite you to have bread and wine/juice at the ready at home to take part in that way. **At 6pm, the reflective worship in church will be a communion service.** Please book



in the usual way (see opposite for details), and bring along your own bread and wine/juice in a form that is easy to bring for your own use. We will not be allowed to pass or share anything in the church, but at least we can be together in this way too.

Martin

## Returning to Worship in Person at the Church

We are very happy now to be able to welcome you to some worship and prayer time at the church in person. We now have a weekly service of reflective worship at **6pm every Sunday**. The church is also open for self-guided private reflection and prayer each **Wednesday from 1pm to 2pm**. Our main worship will continue to be the livestream on Sundays at 10.30am.

### Booking a place for Sunday evenings

The Government has set a cap of 50 for the total number of people allowed in the church at one time, including those conducting the service and the stewards. Here is what you need to do to reserve one of the limited number of seats in the church for the Sunday evening worship (There is no booking needed for Wednesday prayers but stewards will be on hand to help with seating).

- ▷ You can book by email or phone. The email address is [bookgreenbank@gmail.com](mailto:bookgreenbank@gmail.com); the phone number is 0771 883 6683.
- ▷ Booking will be open from 8pm every Sunday until 5pm on the Friday before the service or until we have reached full capacity – whichever is the earlier (the booking has to close in time for us to work on seating allocations). So, for the first service on 16th August, booking opened on 9th August and closed on 14th August.
- ▷ Please provide your name and phone number and, if you are coming with other people from your household, their details also. We need the names and telephone numbers for the NHS Test and Protect system and will keep the information securely and destroy it after two months.

- ▷ The church will be marked out to accommodate single attenders, and household groups of up to three sitting together. The 2- and 3-person seating areas are limited, and you may be offered single seats apart from each other if the 2s and 3s are already allocated. All seating areas will be two metres distant from other individuals or household groups.
- ▷ Entry to the service will not be possible unless you have reserved a place. Please do not turn up without having booked!

Here is some more information about what you will find when you arrive:

- ▷ The Church will be open from 5.30pm.
- ▷ You will be asked to apply hand sanitiser and wear a face covering, to maximise the protection of other people.
- ▷ You will be met at the door and shown to a specific seat.
- ▷ The church will be marked out in a way that allows family groups of up to three to sit together but be two metres distant from other individuals or groups.
- ▷ There will be no live singing.
- ▷ Toilets will be available.
- ▷ There will be no cash offerings taken. In time, we will have a contactless donation machine. In the meantime, please give by bank transfer or use the donate button on the website, or by cheque to the Treasurer if that is more convenient.
- ▷ At the end of the service, please wait to be directed about how to leave the Church.

We're looking forward to welcoming you!

**Martin**

## The Beauty and Power of the Local

### *Creationtide 2020*

This September we'll be exploring the theology, spirituality, and praxis around Christian perspectives on the environment. Four visiting preachers will explore different aspects of this on each of the September Sundays, leading up to our Harvest Thanksgiving service on Sunday 4th October. As part of this relatively new church season, we'll be thinking about "the beauty and power of the local" as an overarching theme, sparked by discussions in our Eco-Congregation group.

So, can you be thinking about the power of the local from your point of view? Have

you come to see things differently during lockdown? What is the power of our local? From a global point of view, how do we remain outward-looking and inter-connected without losing the value of what we may have rediscovered in our local? I'm sure that you will have much to say. I have come to value the local landscape walking the dogs at sunset each evening over Braid and Blackford Hills – a new perspective for me on Greenbank and Edinburgh. Drop me a line if you have thoughts, and I'll share them with our Eco-Congregation group as we work towards Creationtide.

### *Visiting Preachers on our Creationtide livestreams*

*Sunday 6th September* **Rev David Coleman**, Chaplain, Eco-Congregation Scotland

*Sunday 13th September* **Dr Bethany Sollereider**, Post-doctoral Fellow in Science and Religion at the University of Oxford

*Sunday 20th September* **Rev Dr Richard Frazer**, Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh and current Moderator of the Presbytery of Edinburgh

*Sunday 27th September* **Rev David D. Scott**, formerly of Traprain parishes, East Lothian

**Martin**

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## Huge Thanks

During lockdown our usual ways of running Greenbank Church have been impossible. I am hugely grateful to the group of office-bearers who formed the Moderator's Committee, which has been managing the business of the congregation on behalf of the Kirk Session and Congregational Board. This has involved a massive amount of work as we have tried to

do the best for our staff and congregation, and to fulfil the trustee responsibilities normally held by around 100 people! So many people have been involved in other ways, and it is hard to list everyone for fear of missing someone out. Please know that all the many commitments of time and expertise are deeply appreciated.

**Martin**

## Young Church and QII

What changes we have seen at Greenbank over the past months in the face of vastly changed circumstances! The youth and family programme at Greenbank has shifted to meet the needs of families through both short-term and longer-term projects. I have continued to produce the weekly Borrowing Box for children during or after the Livestream Sunday service, with material designed both for parents and children, and will do so for the foreseeable future. The Sunday Club, run on Zoom from 1pm–2pm, has collected together a core group of upper primary school children for a time to socialise and to dig a little deeper into the Bible story of the day. In August we ran our first (and hopefully last!) completely online Holiday Club, Bounceback Bunker, in which the children and leaders helped Dr Doktour reimagine how to live after emerging from his bunker beneath Greenbank. It was a tremendous effort from the whole team of volunteers, and was well received by the children who attended, and by parents who helped prepare crafts in the background. *(See also the article on page 19.)*

Throughout spring 2020 I replaced the Wednesday Coffee afternoons with an international Zoom call, giving QII the chance to meet with teens from Narberth Presbyterian Church outside Philadelphia, where my brother John is the Director of Youth Ministry. QII continued to

meet online on Sunday evenings, and maintained a series of informal calls over the course of the summer. QII also helped record the daily videos for Bounceback Bunker – an integral part of Holiday Club!

The coming months will be transitional, as guidance from the Church of Scotland and Scottish Government meets the needs of each moment. Similarly, the Youth and Family programming will keep some fixtures, like the weekly video for the Livestream and Borrowing Box, while pursuing further ways to promote faith formation in small groups and in the home. This will include select outings with QII (masks and distancing of course!) and garden visits by me to families, amongst other options. Let us go and be the Church, in whichever new way it is growing!

**Steve Chaffee**



*Steve Chaffee, our Youth Associate*

**Have you looked at the  
Greenbank website recently?  
[www.greenbankchurch.org](http://www.greenbankchurch.org)**

## The Guild

The Guild is a church-based organisation for men and women. The current three year strategy is *One Journey, Many Roads* and this session our theme is *Go the Extra Mile*.

In Greenbank we normally meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month from October to March. Most of our meetings are held in the Braid Room at 7.30pm. Of course, at the moment we can't forecast how social distancing and other measures will affect us in October, but we will adapt our meetings as needed.

We are planning a varied programme of talks for the coming session and we raise funds each year for one of the projects promoted by the national Church of Scotland Guild, of which we are a part. This session we are supporting *Join up the Dots*, a project run by *Crossreach*, the social care arm of the Church of Scotland. This project is concerned with social isolation and loneliness in Scotland and will be even more relevant in the aftermath of COVID-19. We shall learn more about it at our meeting on **17th November**.

Our first meeting will be on **6th October** when we will hear from *Scottish Love in Action* about the developments in the work of their Indian partners as they face the impact of COVID-19 among the vulnerable children they support.

Our topics will range from the work of various charities, through talks on travel, history and local interest to light-hearted ones such as *Eavesdropping on Queen Victoria at Balmoral* and *Haggis Breeding!*



Our meetings are open to anyone who is interested in any of our topics and we are always delighted if newcomers then decide to join our fellowship as Guild members. Details of our syllabus and other information will be posted regularly on our web page within the church website ([www.greenbankchurch.org](http://www.greenbankchurch.org)) and on the Guild part of the notice boards in the Main Hall corridor of the church premises. Further information may also be obtained from the joint co-ordinators, Ann Pirie and Edith Armit.

### Work Party

The members of the Work Party have continued and even increased their output over the lockdown period and have an amazing number of knitted articles, from childrens' jerseys to twiddle muffs for care homes, ready to be distributed. We are all looking forward to being able to meet again.

**Edith Armit**



(See *Running Club* – opposite page)  
One of our members ran to Portobello

## Running Club

Greenbank Church Running Club has continued 'virtually' throughout lockdown: until last week we were all doing separate runs alone because of the social distancing rules. But we are now meeting together again on a Tuesday morning and Thursday evening. We are delighted to be seeing each other again in person after all these months!

At the start of lockdown we merged the two groups into one larger group so that we could all encourage and motivate each other to keep exercising. We have had distance challenges and shared many wonderful photos of scenery and things we have seen during our exercise. Each week has had a photo theme to look for while running – hills/ trees / flowers / rainbow colours...!!

We also broadened our exercise options from running to include walking, cycling, yoga, pilates, skipping and Zumba!



*Steve doing Zumba at home*

We have even set up a Greenbank Church Running Club Strava\* group to share our activities.

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\**Strava* is a mobile app that runners and others can use to track their physical activities.

It is lovely to be back meeting up again now, and as I write this the restrictions have been lifted further to allow even more runners to meet together for exercise, with fewer distancing requirements.

If anyone would like to join in either group or just be a part of the encouragement to exercise, please feel free to email me on [cwrightman@doctors.org.uk](mailto:cwrightman@doctors.org.uk). We would love to hear from you! Greenbank Church Running group is open to everyone in our community who would like to start or keep their running going within a relaxed and friendly group. Our meeting times are 8.45am on a Tuesday morning and 7.30pm on a Thursday evening, meeting outside the church doors. We are running a mixture of distances so there should hopefully be something for all!

**Katie Bogie**

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## Autumn Speakers

Each autumn, Greenbank and Morningside parish churches collaborate to invite a series of speakers on Sunday evenings, and this year we're thrilled to welcome a great line-up. Each event is framed within a simple act of worship, and the speakers have been given the theme of *Beyond Lockdown*. Each event will be held in Morningside Parish Church at 7.30pm and will be livestreamed.

To attend in person, please book a place by contacting the office at Morningside Parish Church:

[office@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:office@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk)  
or call 0131 447 6745.

*See the advertisement on the back page of this issue for further details.*

**Martin**

## Summer Walks Finale

As I pen this, I am reflecting on David Ferguson's recent sermon on the need to take action to preserve God's creation, while also looking forward to the Creationtide focus in worship during September.

These themes have come to mind in recent years at midsummer, and I had often thought of taking a more ambitious walk through our own "hills of hame" on midsummer's night. So it was that I set out with my son Malcolm to walk the Pentland tops overnight – Pam had ruled that I was not allowed to do so on my own! I had also reasoned that with daily lockdown walks since March I was probably as fit as I would ever be.

We left Ninemileburn at just after midnight and made our way up to the Monk's Rigg, and the Cap Law, en route for the first tops – West and East Kip. Incredibly, in the semi-darkness we still found the Font Stone, the base of a giant mediæval cross which had once marked the way over a featureless part of the pilgrims' route from the Border abbeys to the shrine of Dunfermline. An owl hooted us on our way, along with the only man-made sound we heard all night, the throb of a lone truck towards Biggar.

Once over Cap Law, the full view of the Forth Valley opened out; the lights of all its urban settlements providing a sparkling base to the backdrop of the northern sky and its last remnants of natural light. The early starlight was provided by Venus and then the other familiar constellations appeared.

A heave up West Kip led to our first (but not our last) human contact of the night. A wee tent, right on the summit was occupied by someone simply savouring mid-

summer's night under the stars. Later we passed six or seven places where people in tents or bivvy bags were taking in the same special atmosphere.

As we church walkers know, travellers talk a lot, so Malcolm and I caught up with each other in ways we would not manage in normal times, stopping for food and more chat on the trail over the Kips, on to Scald Law and then towards the dawn, over Carnethy and Turnhouse Hills. Everywhere about us even in the semi darkness, were markers of Richard Rohr's "everlasting coming of Christ". As true dawn light appeared, this was accompanied by skylark songs as they rose from the heather around us. Rather grumpier grouse families complained in a mild way of our disturbing their breakfast.

On our last section, as energy flagged, after the biggest descent to Glencorse and then up again to Castlelaw, we were suddenly in a different world. A temperature inversion had kept the early morning cloud at low level, leaving the hilltops clear in the sun, and illuminating our last two hills, Allermuir and Caerketton. One was suddenly aware of the presence of God evident in the sharpness of focus, the ethereal quality of the morning light and the feeling of being distant from normal surroundings. Man's hand on the landscape had disappeared, and where Edinburgh would normally be in view, there stretched an endless snow field of shimmering cloud.

We completed the last two hills, surprising a deer as we came down to the Hillend car park. Malcolm's phone app showed 3,200 feet of ascent, and just short of 11 miles travelled in seven hours. It was interest-



ing to note that five and a half hours were spent walking – so we took more down time than we had thought!

As we approach Creationtide, this trip emphasised for me that there are always opportunities to pause and see the world in other ways. We have the chance to work in faith-based ways to stop climate change and preserve Creation for ourselves and

future generations.

So that's the last Summer walk story of 2020. I hope we'll see the walking groups back in action next year – but don't hold back from rediscovering the many facets of Creation in your continuing outdoor meanderings.

David Jack

## Friendship Club

Are you a senior citizen in the Greenbank area? Then our club is for you, whether you are a church member or not. Around 30 of us meet on alternate Wednesdays at 2.30pm in the Lower Hall (with lift access) where we are entertained by speakers offering a wide range of topics, often illustrated, amusing or serious but always interesting.

Each meeting closes with chat over tea and biscuits. A pre-ordered lunch (soup and pudding) is served before the first meet-



ing of each month at 1.15pm. We have a Christmas Party and annual outing, usually in May. The annual subscription is **£15** which includes tea but not lunch.

Our next session is planned to start on **14th October** when, after lunch, Paul Greenwood (a very appropriate name) will lead us into the amazing "*Magic and Mysteries of the Yew*".

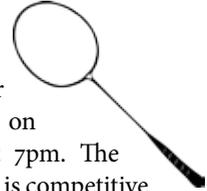
Our club is well named and a warm welcome awaits you, so why not join us then? For any further information please contact me.

Val Smart, Coordinator

## Monday Badminton

Greenbank Church Badminton Club has been running now for decades and meets on a Monday evening at 7pm. The standard of badminton is competitive lower league and the club is well suited to ex-competitive players who want a decent club night or to younger players (18+) looking to start in the Edinburgh club badminton scene via a small, friendly club. Unfortunately, we have no start date for the club and we will be operating under strict Badminton Scotland and government guidance due to COVID-19. But please contact Richard Edmonstone (redmonsto@hotmail.com) if you are interested in coming along to try the club out and we'll be in touch when we do get back. We can also direct juniors or serious players to clubs suitable for them within Edinburgh.

Richard Edmonstone



## Eco-Congregation

One theme that came out of our questionnaire in January was that people would like pointers on how to do their bit to save the planet. Here are a few ideas to give you food for thought. If you have ideas that are close to your heart, please contact any of the Eco Group and we will share it with the readers.

**Eat seasonally:** do you really need to eat strawberries all year round? Think about the (food) miles out-of-season or exotic fruit and vegetables have travelled, and the carbon footprint of out of season UK-produced food from heated greenhouses.

**Review what you buy** with an eye on the packaging. Supermarkets are very poor at minimising the amount of packaging. I accept that some food is plastic wrapped to cut food waste but this does not justify all packaging. Do the onions you select really need a bag?

**Do you really need to shop online?** I am constantly dismayed at the number of plastic bags that the major supermarket chains use in their online deliveries. Amazon parcels contain a large amount of plastic. There has been a sharp rise in plastic waste from online shopping since lockdown and many people are continuing to



shop online. Dispose of the plastic wrapping and facemasks responsibly.

**Carbon Offsetting:** While this may be of assistance in the short term it is akin, in

my view, to paying someone to do penance for your sins. We all need to change our travel habits to have a lasting effect.

**Avoid fast fashion:** if it is cheap it has almost certainly been made in poor conditions at the expense of other human beings (*without consideration for the welfare and health of others*) and is generally transported around the world by air. The inter-governmental panel on Climate Change has also raised serious concerns over the fashion industry generally. It has assessed that the industry produces 10% of global carbon dioxide and uses an estimated 1.5 trillion litres of water every year. There are also serious concerns about pollution from micro plastics, from synthetic fabrics and chemical waste. Think before you buy!

**Recycling at Supermarkets with poly bag recycling facilities:** 'Poly bags' can be returned for recycling at many supermarkets. This includes, for example, the internal packaging from breakfast cereal boxes.

**And finally:** I'm delighted to see so many people out on bikes – young families



through to the more elderly, and returning cyclists. It is therefore very important that car drivers give due consideration to these less experienced cyclists. This means giving them a minimum of 1.5m clearance whilst passing.

Donald Milne



Greenbank is home to a thriving Beaver colony, Cub pack, Scout troop and Explorer unit.

The highlight of 2020 was the February half-term when a group of 42 young people (mostly Explorers and Scouts) and leaders spent a week ski-ing in the French Alps. Long-planned and preceded by much fundraising, the trip went superbly in (mostly) excellent weather. Our annual weekends at Glenshee (two this year, just before lockdown) don't compare!

We have over 50 **Explorers** (young people of 14-18 years), over 40 **Scouts** (10½-14), now including girls, 32 **Cubs** (boys 8-10½) and 20 **Beavers** (boys 6-8). We love the outdoors – plenty camping, hiking and games in the parks we're lucky to have nearby – and cooking (and eating) good food! In the winter, we concentrate on badge work – for instance, last winter the Scouts did the Photographer and Astronomer activity badges with the help of visiting experts. During lockdown, the Explorers and Scouts have been meeting online,

including virtual camps with campfires and tents in individual gardens. As I write, it's not certain what we'll be doing in the autumn but I'm sure it will be fun...

#### *Want to Join?*

In normal times, Explorers and Scouts meet on Fridays (7.15pm to 9.15pm), Cubs meet on Thursdays (6.30 to 8.00) and Beavers meet on Tuesdays (6.30pm to 7.30pm). The best initial contact is

*4th.morningside.scouts@gmail.com.*

#### *Want to Help?*

Our main fundraising efforts are backpacking at Waitrose at Christmastime, and that Greenbank institution the Jumble Sale (on Saturday 17th April next year) – both of which depend on the support of the congregation and the neighbourhood. And we'd be delighted to hear from anyone who wants to join our team of enthusiastic leaders, especially for the Explorers and the Beavers. Do email us if you can help.

**Duncan Macniven**

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## Ladies Badminton Club

The Ladies Badminton Club in Greenbank was established over 30 years ago. It has normally met every Wednesday morning in the Main Hall from 9.30am to 11.30am from September to May for a morning of exercise and fun in equal measure. COVID-19 cut short our session this year. Until such time as Scottish Government, Church of Scotland and SportsScotland

guidelines allow play indoors, no start date has been set for this autumn. Current members will be contacted once that date is known.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact me for more information.

**Susan Black**  
(Email [sueblack29@hotmail.com](mailto:sueblack29@hotmail.com))

## Greenbank Church Choir

Our enthusiastic and friendly Choir of some twenty-two members usually meets on Thursday nights at 7:30 pm from the end of September until mid-June, mainly in the Braid Room.

The Choir, under its Director of Music, Alberto Massimo, sings a wide variety of interesting and inspiring choral works often in four parts. With additional music during Advent and Easter, the Choir performs an anthem at most Sunday services at 10:30am (except on Communion Sundays), sometimes rehearsing beforehand at 10am in the sanctuary.

We would encourage all keen singers, especially those who can read music, to come along and attend one of our rehears-



als and subsequent service. You will be made most welcome.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, arrangements for worship in the Autumn and for the rest of the year are uncertain at present. Singing in the Church looks to be unlikely in the foreseeable future and we therefore ask that you watch out for announcements which may herald the return of singing in worship – and arrangements for the Church Choir.

If you might be interested in joining us, please keep a look out for intimations indicating the return of the Choir. At that point, you may wish to approach Alberto directly after a service for some more information or alternatively, please feel free then to call Alberto (Phone 01368 866 844).

**Douglas Allan**

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## Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2022?

Getting to know more about the realities of life on the ground for Israelis and Palestinians alongside tracing the footsteps of Jesus and thinking ourselves into his world, were what motivated us at Greenbank to develop the idea of a pilgrimage in autumn 2021. We



*The Sea of Galilee*

think that the COVID-19 impact makes 2021 unlikely to work for all sorts of reasons. So we're looking at 14th–24th October 2022 as the revised potential date for a joint Greenbank-Morningside pilgrimage. Would you be interested in being part of this?

Initial indications of interest are invited – contact Martin or Valerie if you'd like to go on the “interested” list!

**Martin**

## Christian Aid

Christian Aid is a national organisation, set up 75 years ago by British churches, originally to help refugees following the Second World War. As



the charity has evolved its stated aims are now: to expose poverty throughout the world; to help in practical ways to end it. Christian Aid works with local partners and communities to fight injustice, respond to humanitarian emergencies and campaign for change.

Our small Christian Aid group at Greenbank works with other local churches to raise funds and awareness. This year our Film Night in February raised £800, and we were in the midst of planning a Spring Fair and making arrangements for Christian Aid Week in May when all activities were suspended due to the pandemic. We were able to promote Christian Aid Week through a special streamed Sunday service, and online links to Christian Aid's hastily developed e-envelope.

We were also delighted that John Mowat had been nurturing plants in preparation for the Spring Fair; by promoting these through the minister's weekly newsletter John raised over £600 and his son Grant delivered the plants around the parish and further afield.

At the moment Christian Aid is one of the charities coordinating the Disasters Emergency Committee Coronavirus appeal. This focuses on improving hygiene for families living in crowded refugee and displacement camps in Yemen, Syria, South Sudan and other countries. These people have little access to medical care, clean

water or enough food, making them extremely vulnerable to Coronavirus. To donate to the appeal and to the wider work of Christian Aid please visit

[www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)

Fiona Watt  
[fiona.watt@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:fiona.watt@blueyonder.co.uk)

## Rowan Sophia Lane Ritchie

Sarah and I were thrilled to welcome our daughter Rowan into the world on Sunday 19th July at 7.37pm! As you can imagine, we're totally in love with her, and are so grateful for all the many messages, cards, presents and other kindnesses shown by congregation and community. Although she made her Greenbank debut on the livestream on Sunday 26th July we look forward to introducing her to you in person whenever we see you around!

Sarah and Martin



## Nile Grove Playgroup at Greenbank

The perfect place for your child to take their first step towards independence and to play and socialise with other children.

**Childcare for 2 ¼ – 5 year olds**

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday  
and Friday**

**9.15am – 11.45am**

**Lunch Club available Mondays and  
Wednesdays until 12.30pm  
(Suspended until further notice)**

**£12 per session (£17 with lunch club)**

We are a local and friendly community playgroup running since 1984, a registered charity (Charity no. SC008817). The playgroup benefits from several fundraising events throughout the year to help raise much needed funds in order to enhance the learning environment for our little learners. Our successful Quiz Night in May 2019 raised a whopping £4,000 and this helped us to purchase new resources for our children. We thank the local families and community for their support during this event.

Each day the children will enjoy a host of toys and games alongside art and craft activities, messy play, dressing up, story time

and singing. They will also enjoy a healthy snack and have some time to play outdoors in



our private garden area. Our collection of balance bikes and scooters are favourites as well as the space hoppers – all of which help the children develop their gross motor skills.

The playgroup has strong links with the church's Baby and Toddler group as well as with Greenbank Pre-school – with our lunch club taking children directly into the afternoon session. This initiative has proven to be very successful in helping our local families with childcare needs, but also in continuing to build on the good working relationship between the playgroup and the Pre-school (although this arrangement may need to be on hold for the moment due to the new guidelines surrounding COVID-19).

Whether it is to help cover working commitments, or to give yourself a couple of hours of peace, we would love to hear from you and invite you to come and visit us.

*Playgroup Manager:* Elaine Ho

*Email:* [info@nilegroveplaygroup.co.uk](mailto:info@nilegroveplaygroup.co.uk)

*Phone:* 07505 366 580 (playgroup hours)

*Web:* [www.nilegroveplaygroup.co.uk](http://www.nilegroveplaygroup.co.uk)

*Facebook:*

[www.facebook.com/nilegroveplaygroup](https://www.facebook.com/nilegroveplaygroup)



## World Mission Team

The team follows news from the Church of Scotland's Faith Impact Forum and in particular, from our Mission Partner the Rev John McCulloch who, prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, was based in Jerusalem and we hope will be able to return. We aim to keep the congregation informed about world mission matters through articles in *Connections* and through practical action such as the '90kg Rice Challenge'. In recent years the surpluses made from our occasional fair trade stalls have supported the building of a school toilet block in Zambia through "Toilet Twinning" and Malawi rice farmers growing Kilombero Rice through "JTS" (Just Trading Scotland).

Whilst it is not possible to have a stall at church at present, we hope everyone will continue to look out for the distinctive FAIRTRADE logo and support fairly traded goods whether in their local corner shop or on a supermarket website.

Janet Edwards

On behalf of the World Mission Team



## Greenbank Pre School

- ▷ *Funded Partner with City of Edinburgh Council for 3-5's*
- ▷ *Centenary Hall, Greenbank Church, Braidburn Terrace, EH10 6ES*
- ▷ *Open between 8.25am and 3.40pm offering morning, afternoon or all day places.*

Children enjoy playing and learning with friends in bright modern airy accommodation with two garden areas with all-weather surfaces. We offer a nutritious organic snack and believe in promoting a healthy and positive outlook. From September 2020 hot lunches will be provided by *Little Lunches* for children attending all day.

*The well organised, well thought-out activities on offer every day enable our son to explore, discover and develop new skills as well as further his learning at a pace and challenge that is right for him. We cannot thank all the staff at Greenbank Pre School enough.*  
(Parent feedback)

Contact us for details or call us on 0131 447 8068 to arrange to visit.

Apply online at [greenbankpreschool.org](https://greenbankpreschool.org)  
FaceBook: [@GreenbankPreSchool](https://www.facebook.com/GreenbankPreSchool)





Fresh Start is a charity working with formerly homeless people. The aim is to provide household goods in starter packs to individuals taking on new tenancies. By providing them with these packs, which include a wide variety of items from cleaning products to toiletries, the new tenants are more likely to settle in well into their new environment.

Greenbank members have long donated items to Fresh Start. Over the past year members have been very generous in their giving to the charity. Because of COVID-19, donations were curtailed. After accepting donations again a few weeks ago, the charity has been overwhelmed with goods, and because of a bulging warehouse, is back to refusing donations at the moment.

When Fresh Start asks again for donations, I will announce it in *Connections*. Provided the church halls are open by that time, goods can be left in the ladies cloakroom. I will deliver items to Fresh Start at their premises on Ferry Road Drive on the last Friday of each month.

**Alison Ambler**  
(Email [alison@ambler.me.uk](mailto:alison@ambler.me.uk))

## Baby and Toddler Groups at Greenbank

The Baby and Toddler groups meet on Thursday and Friday mornings during term time in the main church hall. It's a chance for the children to play with lots of super toys while parents and carers can catch up over a coffee and some home baking. The groups run from 9.45am to 11.15am and entry is via the church office buzzer. A healthy snack is provided for the children too and the cost per family is £2 per session.

This last year has been great fun with parties and activities for the children, Santa even turned up at Christmas time! All children up to school age are welcome with their parents and carers. A warm welcome is extended to everyone so please come along and join us.

Please check our facebook page ([www.facebook.com/greenbankbabyandtoddler/](http://www.facebook.com/greenbankbabyandtoddler/)) for the latest information on reopening dates. For more information please contact either of us.

**Kirsten Pink**  
([kirstenpink@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kirstenpink@hotmail.co.uk))  
**Carrie Reid** ([carrie.r@talk21.com](mailto:carrie.r@talk21.com))



(See item opposite) Martin's 'food art'

## 'Breakout Bunker' Holiday Club

It became obvious that we weren't going to be able to have our usual Holiday Club this year, but we were determined that we were going to do something and so Greenbank Church's 'Zoom' Holiday Club was born. Our amazing team were keen to accept the challenge of something new and were happy to give up their mornings to meet with the children for a week online. Steve had been busy transforming himself into Doctor Doktour who had been living in a bunker underneath the church for many years, and was now having difficulty adjusting to being in the world again. QII were on hand to help him find his way in the "new normal" and there were bible stories to explain and lead the way. Many of the usual elements of Holiday Club, including crafts and games, were planned but, of course, we couldn't be

together physically so how could we make it fun for the children?

As it turned out the children who came brought their own sense of fun including a dog, a cat, and two delightful guinea pigs! The leaders were grateful to see parents' hands appear on the screen to assist children when the crafts got tricky! It was a bit frustrating to watch a glass of water balancing precariously on the edge of a table and not be able to move to prevent the inevitable spill, but the dog soon lapped that up!

Thank you to all the lovely children who took part, the parents who supported us and all of the amazing Holiday Club leaders who helped to plan and take part in a busy week. We had a great time.

Watch this space for our next venture!

**Alison Reid**



## Help the Homeless Group

This Group, as its name suggests, was set up to try to help with some of the problems of homelessness in Edinburgh which, for many reasons, remain significant. The virus has obviously changed what is possible at the moment. This note sets out what we hope to do and how we have adapted to the current environment.

The Group helps in three main ways:

1. **Fresh Start:** See article on page 18.
2. Greenbank also helps to staff Edinburgh's **Winter Night Shelters**, run by **Bethany** over the winter months. This provides a hot meal and a bed for anyone who needs it. Accommodation is supplied by central Edinburgh churches, and Greenbank helps supply the hot meal and company for users. Bethany provides the professional help to those who need it. This year was "normal" until March, when Bethany were able to start using The Waverley Hotel. With this safe accommodation, Bethany were able to extend the duration of their work this

year, which Greenbank were pleased to be able to support.

3. Finally, the **Foodbox**, situated at the main door of the church, is there to receive non-perishable food donations from anyone wishing to contribute. From March the Foodbox has been situated outside the houses of Julia Dunbar, Helen Barnes and Abi Hunter. The economic impact of the virus has resulted in even greater need for this food.

Since March the food collected has been split between **Edinburgh City Mission, Four Square** at Grove Street, and **Street Work** at the Cowgate. In addition to support for the homeless, **Edinburgh City Mission** also lends a great deal of assistance to many others in need. We would normally also support **St Catherine's Convent** – but at the moment they cannot provide their normal services to the homeless.

Nora Kellock, Alison Ambler,  
Richard Dunbar

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## Country Dance Club

The Country Dance Club is a social club open to anyone interested in Country Dancing. Our meetings are held on Wednesday evenings in the Centenary Hall from 7.30pm to 9.30pm from September to March. A qualified instructor teaches us a mixture of new dances and more familiar ones.

The Hall has been booked for next session starting on Wednesday 23rd September but we will be able to meet then only if the Government and Church regulations are further relaxed. When we have a definite date for resumption of our meetings we shall put it in the Church intimations and in **Connections**. If in the meantime you wish further information about the Club or are interested in joining it, please contact either of us.

Helen Millar (helenmillar1@yahoo.co.uk), Doris Laing (D.Laing@phonecoop.coop)



## 162 Brownies

It's been another busy – albeit very different – year for the 162 Brownies. We started out the year with a District-wide sleepover at a trampolining centre. It was really fun to bounce with our friends from other units and the leaders even managed to get some sleep! As a unit, we also did our own Great Brownie Bake Off sleepover – decorating our own aprons, learning icing techniques and even making our own ice cream!

As ever, we continued to play a part in our community and do things for



others by running a stall at Tea in the (Braidburn Valley) Park, organising a craft fair to raise money for Greenpeace and carol singing at a retirement home.

Another highlight was having Alison Johnstone, a Green MSP, to come to talk to us about the environment as well as what her job entails. We had many plans for the summer but as COVID-19 hit we had to adapt and change our meetings online. That didn't stop our usual fun though – we still managed to do crafts, quizzes, scavenger hunts and even some baking.

We head into the new year not quite sure when things will go back to 'normal' but rest assured we'll still be meeting regularly in some format to learn new skills, have fun and earn badges. However, we can only provide these experiences for young people if enough adults volunteer. If you'd like to give some time to a unit that meets at the church, please get in touch:

[162greenbankbrownies@gmail.com](mailto:162greenbankbrownies@gmail.com)

Heather Coyle

## Dementia-Friendly Community



We are delighted to have been able to offer a dementia-friendly service online this month which is available on the Greenbank Church website ([www.greenbankchurch.org](http://www.greenbankchurch.org)). We hope that many people will enjoy watching this from the comfort of their own home. We would like to thank all those on the musical, technical and worship team who made this possible. We plan to offer a monthly online service and would be happy to have any feedback or suggestions for the service.

We do appreciate that lockdown has been a very difficult time for people living with dementia and that whilst we are all trying to stay safe from infection many people have felt isolated and distressed. If you feel you would benefit from any advice or additional support please do get in touch with a member of the team.

You may also be interested to know that it is **World Alzheimer Day** on **21st September**. This year the focus is on breaking the stigma and stereotypes that surround a diagnosis of dementia.

Mary Hadden

(Email: [mjhadden34@gmail.com](mailto:mjhadden34@gmail.com))

Jan Corbett

(Email: [jancorbett@virginmedia.com](mailto:jancorbett@virginmedia.com))

## Fresh Flowers in the Church

Fresh flowers in the Church each Sunday add to the beauty of the service and are afterwards distributed to those in need. Now that services are resuming, the Flower Rota is re-starting and we are very grateful to all those who contribute. During lockdown, when flower donors were not permitted to enter the premises, ensuring we had fresh flowers in the sanctuary each Sunday somewhat depleted our Flower Fund. If you would like to contribute to the Fund, please send a cheque made out to *Greenbank Church Flower Fund* to the Church Office. Thank you.

Moira Land

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## Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse

### *Safe Listening Place Project – Work in progress*

The Church of Scotland recently responded to an initiative from the UN to increase awareness of domestic abuse. It appealed to congregations to develop strategies for offering support in their parishes, to increase awareness and access to specialist services and agencies for those affected by domestic abuse.

A small group from Greenbank, along with three other local parishes, has been looking at how we might respond, by raising awareness of domestic abuse amongst our congregations and the wider community. Our aim is to provide a safe listening place for anyone impacted by domestic abuse or anyone worried about a loved one where there is concern about relationship difficulties; a safe place to take those first difficult steps in accessing help and support where, hopefully, we can be of help and, if appropriate, connect people to the expert specialist assistance needed. The work of getting the project up and running is ongoing.

We know there is a need in our local communities, and since lockdown domestic abuse is reported to be increasing at an alarming rate. No one deserves to live with abuse. Practical and emotional support is on hand to guide people as they explore the options and choices available to them. Although the Safe Listening Place project is not up and running yet, if you or anyone you know is impacted by domestic abuse, confidential help can be found from the following agencies:

#### ***Edinburgh Women's Aid:***

call the helpline 0131 315 8110 for free confidential support or visit the website at: [www.edinwomensaid.co.uk](http://www.edinwomensaid.co.uk)

#### ***Scotland's Domestic Abuse Helpline:***

0800 027 1234 (24-hour service)

#### ***Respect Men's Advice Line:***

Free phone 0808 801 0327

Please keep an eye on the church website for further updates on the project.

Susan Inch

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## Flower Rota

*Provided by*

### September

- 6 Hutchison family
- 13 Offer/Hopkinson Wedding
- 20 Christina Black
- 27 Morna Morrison

### October

- 4 (Harvest) Katy Maguire

*Please see the article opposite.*

## Coffee Rota

*There will be no coffee after the Sunday Service until further notice.*

## Welcome Teams

*As explained on page 5, the church is presently open for worship on Sundays at 6pm and on Wednesdays at 1pm.*

*Ad hoc Welcome teams have been organised for these services, as follows:*

### September

- Wed 2** Ray Dely, Alison Kerr
- Sun 6** Rona Ferguson, Jane Harkin, Alison & John Murison
- Wed 9** Susan Black, Louise Coghill
- Sun 13** Caroline Kehoe, Jill Powlett Brown, Keith Clark, *tbc*
- Wed 16** Alison & John Murison
- Sun 20** Mary & Stephen Hadden, Alison & John Murison, Donald King
- Wed 23** Ray Dely, Alison Kerr
- Sun 27** Phil Barnes, Katie Bogie, Elaine McRae, Hazel Macaulay



### **The Ministry Team can be contacted directly**

*Rev Dr Martin Ritchie (Minister)*

*phone: 07984 466 855*

*email: MRitchie@churchofscotland.org.uk*

*Mr Steven Chaffee (Youth Associate)*

*phone: 07729 000 788*

*email: stevechaffee@greenbankchurch.org*

*Due to COVID-19 precautions the Office is closed to personal callers. Contact the Administrator by phone or email in the first instance until further notice.*

*Administrator: Mrs Virginia Johnston*

*phone and fax: 0131 447 9969*

*email: greenbankchurch@btconnect.com*

*To make contact with any organisation featured in Greenbank Connections, please use the telephone number or email address given, if there is one. Otherwise contact the Church Office.*

*Website: [www.greenbankchurch.org](http://www.greenbankchurch.org)*

*Postal address: Greenbank Parish Church  
Braidburn Terrace, Edinburgh EH10 6ES*

*Material for the October issue of Greenbank Connections should be delivered to the Church Office by*

*Sunday 13th September, or*

*sent by e-mail by 9am on*

*Friday 18th September to*

*[greenbankconnections@gmail.com](mailto:greenbankconnections@gmail.com)*



# Beyond Lockdown

SUNDAYS IN SEPTEMBER | 7.30PM  
AT MORNINGSIDE PARISH CHURCH (EH10 6BQ)



A series of evening services jointly created by Morningside and Greenbank parish churches, with reflections from leading figures in the worlds of green energy, religion and journalism. After COVID-19, where do we go from here?



6 SEPTEMBER

## Adam Bruce

*Global Head of Corporate Affairs,  
Mainstream Renewable Power*

**Building an electric society: energy  
in the 4th industrial revolution**



13 SEPTEMBER

## Richard Holloway

*former Bishop of Edinburgh*

**Religion as the art of crisis**



20 SEPTEMBER

## Sheena McDonald & Alan Little

**Being locked down**

The journalists and commentators share stories from their past and discuss how their experience helped prepare them for the pandemic.



27 SEPTEMBER

## James Naughtie

*Journalist and Writer*

Jim Naughtie rounds off the series with his thoughts on these exceptional times.

Livestream at [www.morningsideparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.morningsideparishchurch.org.uk)

To attend in person, you must reserve your place in advance  
email: [office@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:office@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk) or call: 0131 447 6745