

Greenbank Connections



April 2021

Issue 697

Scottish Charity SCO11325



Springtime in Braidburn Valley Park (photograph by the Rev Dr Martin Ritchie)

Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

Online version: www.greenbankchurch.org/about/the-newsletter/

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This month's cover: Greenbank Parish Church did not produce an Easter card this year, since COVID-19 restrictions meant that it could not be delivered.

Our cover shows the image which would have appeared on the Easter 2021 card.

From the Manse



*I was glad when they said to me,
we will go into the house of the Lord*

(Psalm 122)

Finally, we are able to start to come back to church on a Sunday morning! (See the piece on page 4.) This last year has been a challenging one for our community as we navigated our way through the wilderness of physical separation from our friends and neighbours in the congregation. Many of us will have bumped into Greenbankers around town during the lockdown, but now we have a chance to sit not so far away from a number of our friends in the Sanctuary on a Sunday morning. A year's "exile" from our own temple is a long time. For me and a few others who have been in the church every week, we have had a privileged position. We could enjoy the beauty of the place, but for me there was an ache in my heart every time I looked out on the empty pews and had to use my imagination to remember the rough location of all your beautiful faces! Beautiful as our "temple" is, it is not as beautiful as

you – each a temple of the Holy Spirit, as Paul puts it (1 Corinthians 6: 19).

Returning from exile is a time of opportunity to refocus on what the important things are in the restored “homeland” of our church community. I’d love to hear what you have valued and missed about Greenbank. Drop me a line sometime if you’d be willing to share your thoughts.

Sending my love and best wishes
to all of you,



Martin Ritchie

Youth at Greenbank April 2021

This Easter I was drawn to remember all the prior Easter mornings we have had at Greenbank – many in the Sanctuary, one very early one in Braidburn, and last year from my home office. Parallel to this, all the varied ways the youth programme operates at Greenbank: Nile Grove, Pre School, Babies and Toddlers, AM and PM Sunday Club, Springboard, QII, and the Uniformed Organisations, to name a few! Spring is bursting, and the return by children to school has lifted many spirits. With that, we are making moves towards meeting with young people and their families in whatever way is appropriate. We are considering ways to fit AM and PM Sunday Clubs to the moment, and eagerly look forward to blended or (perhaps!) in-

person forms of Young Church. These all require quite careful thinking, though I am optimistic with the change in weather and vaccination rate.

With so many of our QIIers getting ready to graduate from High School (already?!), I and the QII leadership team are having quite intense conversations. These range from how to minister to them in the time we have with them and how to bring together the next cohort of QII. To that end we are working on events which might bring them together closer to the summer, and a robust and exciting programme for next year. Thankfully there are many families in Greenbank’s orbit with youth approaching QII age. There is rarely, if ever, a single way to bring together groups like this, so we are reaching out to families with children in the age range to ensure that the programme is fit for purpose.

All in all: I am cautious and also very optimistic about the coming months, and look forward to many more walks with families as we approach reopening together.

Steve Chaffee



Back to Church

I have good news about the reopening of the church for worship. In line with Scottish Government and Church of Scotland guidance, the Moderator's Committee, which has been standing in for the Kirk Session since lockdown, has decided to restart "in-person" morning services on Sundays at 10.30am from **Easter Day, 4th April**. The services will also be livestreamed, as before.

The Government limit of 50 people on our premises at any one time remains in place, just the same as when we were open for evening worship last year. This means we will again have a booking system in place. You will be able to book by email or phone from 2pm on the Sunday a week ahead. So, for the Easter Day 10.30am service, the booking will open at **2pm on Sunday 28th March**. It will close at 5pm on the Friday evening, or earlier if all the places are taken. If you don't get a place on a particular Sunday, you'll be offered one for the following Sunday. The email address is bookgreenbank@gmail.com and the telephone number is 0771 883 6683.

When you arrive, you will be met by a steward at the door and shown to a specific seat. You will be asked to apply hand sanitiser and wear a face covering, to maximise the protection of other people. The church will be marked out so that family groups of up to three people can sit together but be two metres distant from other individuals or groups. We will record your name and telephone number so that, if asked, we can

give this information to the NHS as part of the Test and Protect system.

It will be up to you to make your own decision about coming to these services of worship – but we will do all we can to protect you once you arrive. We will have in place an extensive system of disinfection and cleaning. Toilets will be available.



Sadly, there can be no live singing, although the music videos running on the livestream will be simultaneously played in the church. There will be no cash offering taken during the service but, if you wish to donate on the day, there will be a plate for cash, cheques or envelopes as you leave. Unfortunately it is not possible to restart coffee after the service. Indeed, it is important

that the congregation leaves the area around the church as soon as possible and does not linger to chat. Zoom coffee will continue after the livestream for as long as there is demand for it.

For now we won't be restarting evening services but these might return in the autumn when we can enjoy the cosy and peaceful candlelit church.

We have waited a long time for this moment and, as was the case in the autumn, the reopening of the church will be welcomed by many of you. We'll understand, though, if you'd rather not return to in-person worship meantime and prefer to join us on the livestream instead. Thank you for your patience, and welcome back!

Martin Ritchie

Christian Aid Update

The generosity of the Greenbank congregation meant that **£13,897** was donated to Christian Aid from the Advent appeal. In common with other charities, Christian Aid has had a difficult year, and income overall has fallen. However the need to help people living in poverty has not gone away.

We are now starting to think about Christian Aid Week in May. Last year many activities were cancelled including the house-to-house collections, the local book sale and Spring Fair. Overall just under £4 million was raised in the UK for Christian Aid Week 2020 but that compares with over £7 million in previous years. At Greenbank we asked people to donate directly to the charity so we are unable to tell you how much was raised locally.

Christian Aid Scotland recently organised an online event to reflect on current issues and ways in which congregations raised funds last year. There are recordings of the presentations here –

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/events/gathering-2021>

This was also a good opportunity to start thinking about the current year.

Christian Aid Week 10th to 16th May 2021 will focus on the climate crisis and in particular the effects of extreme weather on communities in Kenya. The official dates this year are Monday to Sunday (the same dates as last year) so that some of last year's resources can be re-used to save funds.



Our Christian Aid service will be on **Sunday 9th May** and we have arranged to have a speaker from the Scottish Christian Aid team.

We are going to try something different for the house-to-house collections. **Following a recommendation from Christian Aid we hope to distribute delivery-only envelopes in the parish**, and there will be further information about this nearer the time. At the moment I am contacting volunteers from previous years to ask if they would be willing to deliver envelopes and I would be very happy to hear from any new volunteers. **This would involve delivering to between 30 and 50 houses; there would be no need to return to collect the envelopes.** Obviously we will monitor restrictions but hope that this will be a safe way to promote Christian Aid week in May.

Please contact me if you would be willing to deliver envelopes for Christian Aid in May.

Fiona Watt

Fiona.watt@blueyonder.co.uk
(Phone 447 3489)

P.S. The Holy Corner Book Sale has been cancelled again but a few of the organisers, including Hazel McLachlan from Greenbank, are taking part in the **Kiltwalk in April to support Christian Aid**. All donations will be matched by the Hunter Foundation –

<https://virtual.thekiltwalk.co.uk/teams/holy-corner-christian-aid-booksale>

Holy Week and Easter

This year our joint services with Morningside will be held at Morningside Parish Church. They are to be livestreamed only, and no attendance in person is possible. You can join the services from **Monday 29th to Friday 2nd April at 7.30pm** via the Morningside Parish Church website:

[http://morningsideparishchurch.org.uk/worship/
recorded-service-intimations-and-orders-of-service/](http://morningsideparishchurch.org.uk/worship/recorded-service-intimations-and-orders-of-service/)

Our Greenbank service on Easter Day will be an in-person/livestreamed communion service at 10.30am. If you're planning to come in person then bring your own bread and wine/juice along with something to drink from. I'll invite you to break, pour, eat and drink along with me as we celebrate the Easter message again.

Also in that service we will welcome **Stephen Hadden** as a member of the Kirk Session. He was already an elder, latterly at Queen's Cross Church in Aberdeen, and our own Session decided to invite him to join us. We're very happy to say that he accepted and look forward to showing our welcome in a round of applause during the service.

Martin

Lent and Easter Appeal

Aid for struggling congregations in Urban Priority Areas

Our 2021 Lent Appeal is dedicated to creating a short term fund in support of congregations in deprived areas who are struggling with 'lockdown bills'. This is a small gesture of support and encouragement as we all emerge from the dark tunnel of Covid-19. The fund will be disbursed to struggling churches on the basis of need, with the advice of our colleagues in the national offices of the Church of Scotland. Donations to the Lent and Easter appeal can be sent to Greenbank via a cheque or via a bank transfer, in both cases identified as Lent Appeal.

Bank details

Bank of Scotland,
Morningside Road, Edinburgh
Account: Greenbank Church
Sort Code: 80-02-77
Account No: 00371917



Martin

Stephen Hadden, our new elder

What's Fairtrade got to do with fighting the Climate Crisis?



Endangered Foodstuffs

This year's Fairtrade Fortnight focused on the climate emergency as the biggest threat to the livelihoods of millions of small-scale farmers in low-income countries across the world. Critical situations, caused by more frequent and intense droughts, floods and storms, frequent erratic weather patterns, the loss of fertile land, the emergence of new pests and the spread of crop diseases mean that their security, their homes, their access to food, their health and wellbeing and their ability to earn an income are all at risk. Although the Fairtrade premium is helpful it's not enough to make the longer-term investments needed to adapt to climate change or address carbon emissions relating to the supply chain.

Not only does extreme weather damage and undermine farmers' livelihoods, it also affects us as consumers here in the UK, due to the likely impact on the availability of popular products on which we depend. If the current level of global heating continues, vast areas of the land used

to grow crops such as coffee, cocoa and bananas could be unsustainable within the next three decades. Whether we are lovers of coffee, chocolate, bananas or all three, we all have a stake in ensuring that current and future generations of farmers who grow these foods can do so in environmentally friendly ways, while earning a decent income that enables them to stay in business and live the sort of life their hard work deserves. It's well worth reading the Fairtrade Foundation's report *A Climate of Crisis: Farmers, Our Food and the Fight for Justice*, which can be found at

tinyurl.com/uu3747bs

Praying for Myanmar

Following February's military coup in Myanmar, initially peaceful protests have escalated to violence between security forces and civilians, leading to loss of life. The Presbyterian Church in Myanmar has asked for prayers for the coup to be reversed, the result of the November election to be honoured and the people detained to be released. As partner churches, the leaders of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Church of Scotland have jointly written to the UK Foreign Secretary to endorse PCM's stance and to urge the UK government to do all it can to build an international diplomatic response and ensure the restoration of democracy. At the time of writing the loss of life was at least 149 people and this is a developing situation – please keep the people of Myanmar in your prayers.

Janet Edwards

Lenten Studies – A Time For Change

The Lenten Studies this year have centred on Ian Bradley's book *God is Green*. Those of us involved have been especially struck by the challenges to our faith preconceptions posed by its content.

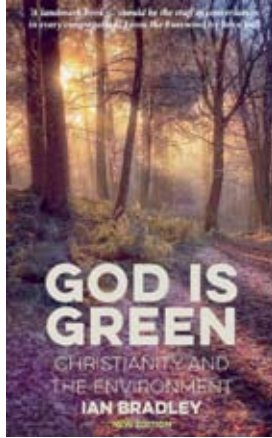
At the time of writing we are four sessions into the series, and have discussed the different versions of the Genesis story, pivoting on whether or not mankind is to have dominion over all of nature, or to be part of Creation and its continuous process of change in the world. This alone would be enough to chew on, but the book carries us through the notion of the fall of nature (as opposed to the fall of man and original sin), and asks questions about the Christian interpretation of Creation.

Traditional western Christian thinking lay more in an historical view of Creation, seen as an event in the past, but the Eastern Orthodox tradition has maintained the concept of a dynamic and continuous process in Creation, where we should see God in all things, and all things in God. This is more in line with modern green Christianity.

In discussion we have covered the 'dance of Creation' and its linkage to quantum physics. Although it makes our brains hurt, the latest theories uncover a dynamic world of continuous movement and change below the structure of the solid world. With this very different view of what constitutes physical matter, a more ecological and holistic concept of the relationship between the creator of the world and all its creatures is possible. Unknowable in essence, God is revealed through the uncreated divine

energies which permeate Creation.

Our need in modern green Christianity is to recapture the lost sense of the cosmic Christ; Jesus is the one in whom all things hold together. Christ is the universal and cosmic saviour. We were also reminded in Bradley's text of the symbol of the crucifix as



a living tree, emphasising the sacrificial aspects of the functioning of the natural world as well as that of human love.

Along the way, we have visited some of the 'givens' in our faith education which have all been shaken around in our study periods – incarnation, suffering, sacrificial love and more. But we have also discussed much of the current debate around the need for Christian action in the context

of a damaged Creation. A good example is land ownership and the control of other resources, such as water and energy. Are these not communal goods, here for the benefit of man and of all Creation, rather than for exploitation and consumption until they are depleted? Living well in a positive relationship with all wild creatures and living things is another aspect.

The key takeaway for me is that we all have to change profoundly if we are to be part of the worldwide movement necessary to preserve the planet, which is here to benefit the whole of nature, not just mankind. If we are part of a continuous process of Creation, it won't do to be passive or static about the issues before us which must be addressed to sustain it. As Gandhi put it, "you must be the change you wish to see in the world".

David Jack

Kirk Session: Retiral of Margot Fergusson



Margot Fergusson has indicated that she will have to stand down from active eldership at Greenbank when she moves with David to Cambridge. We are very sorry to see Margot leave us and wish her well. Margot was ordained as an elder and admitted to the eldership in Greenbank in 2009. She has been the much valued elder for District 11. We have all benefited from her cheerful and skilful contributions to our social events over the years and her earlier work with Young Church. Margot will be much missed in the Session and Board. We look forward to seeing her back in Greenbank whenever possible.

Valerie Macniven

Social Justice Group

We are setting up an exciting new group at Greenbank Church which aims to look at areas of social justice in Scotland. We have a few projects in mind but are very keen to hear more from the wider congregation and community!

The term 'social justice' means different things to different people. As Christians, Jesus sets examples to follow of caring for people in our community – feeding the hungry, defending the oppressed and loving the outcast, rejected, despised, and the sinner. He asks us to give to the poor and help the helpless. There are sadly many within our own communities who need help, and this group will aim to offer some support and assistance.

Do you know of any issues or projects you feel we could support? Do you have experience in this area, or does anything written



above strike a chord with you, drawing you to be a part of this new group? If so we would love to hear from you! Just drop an email to Katie Bogie at

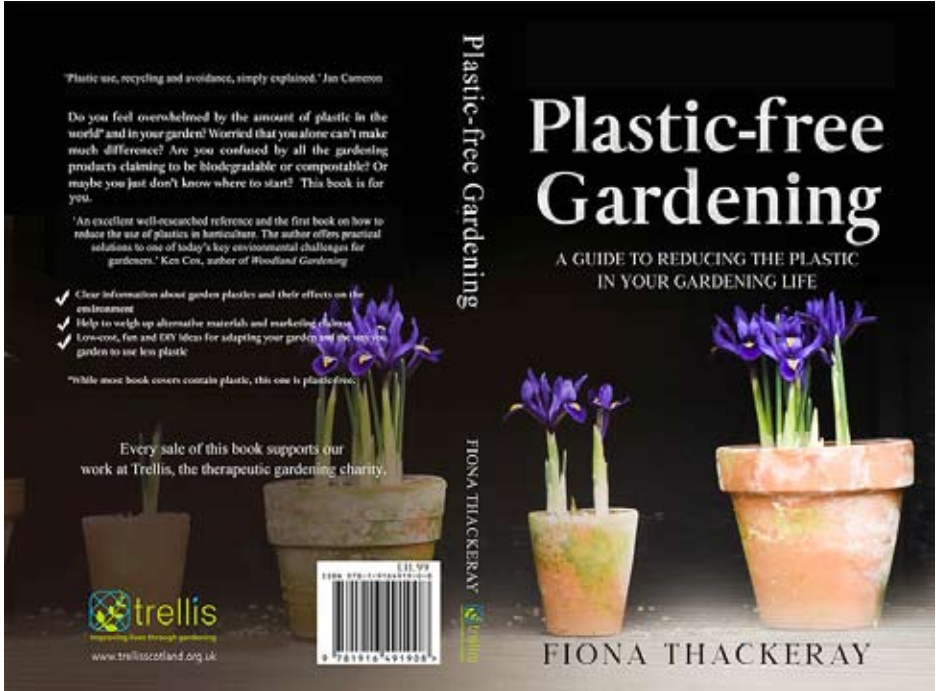
cwrightman@doctors.org.uk

Isaiah 1:17

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”

Katie Bogie

Plastic Free Gardening



This book guides readers through the complexities of plastics and why and when they can become a problem, suggests alternatives, recycling methods and ideas for changing the way to garden using less plastic. It is written by Fiona Thackeray who works for **Trellis**, the therapeutic gardening charity: www.trellisscotland.org.uk This well-illustrated book covers many aspects of gardening. There are plenty of practical tips with checklists and suggestions for reducing your plastic use.

'An excellent well-researched reference and the first book on how to reduce the use of plastics in horticulture. The author offers practical solutions to one of today's key environmental challenges for gardeners.' Ken Cox, author of

Woodland Gardening, Garden Plants for Scotland, and Fruit and Vegetables for Scotland.

It is available from Amazon but if you have any problems in ordering please contact Trellis directly: telephone 01738 624 348 or email info@trellisscotland.org.uk

(Fiona willingly gives excellent talks on Gardening for Wellbeing. She is also a published author of stories set in Brazil.)

Alison Murison



Edinburgh – Swift City

Perhaps a good number of *Connections* readers will know that Edinburgh is aiming to be a ‘Swift City’. A drastic reduction in swift numbers has occurred in recent years, and the RSPB has established the *Swift City Project* to boost public awareness of the bird’s plight, and to encourage practical actions, especially the establishment of more nesting sites.

<https://tinyurl.com/bhxphe8>

There is lots of additional information online, especially some local data on swift nesting sites in our area, and records of ‘swift screaming parties’, which are indicative of the birds’ arrival back from migration and their search for nest sites.

Loss of old buildings with appropriate nooks and crannies in the eaves for nests is a major reason for falling numbers, and using information on how to do this via the internet, I have made one using some skip wood. The photo (below) shows the entry on the



underside of the box, and the overall size. I have enough wood for two, so if anyone would like one for their house please let me know. You need a site about five metres off the ground, probably below the house eaves, and not in too hot a location, so avoid a full southern aspect. There also needs to be a clear flight path to the box. Swifts only ever come to rest for nesting – otherwise they spend the whole of their lives airborne, feeding and sleeping on the wing.

It may be a year or two before the birds take up residence, and some of the advice on nest boxes includes playing recordings of swift calls from the box to encourage their interest! They are also very social birds, and would prefer to nest in groups, so a couple of nest boxes side by side is encouraged. As I make my first attempt to attract swifts, it would be good to know that others in the congregation were willing to join the project.

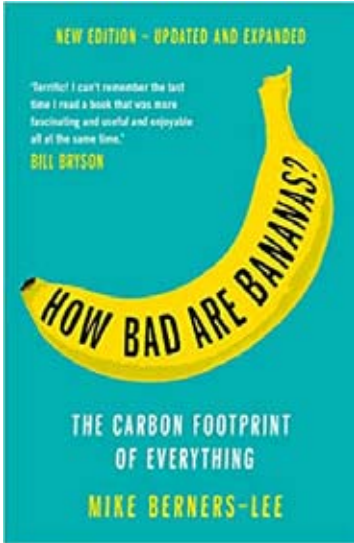


Protecting and preserving God’s creation is central to our green faith commitments, and so taking a small step to assist one species being sustained within the evolving story of the creation is important.

Incidentally, there is a bible reference to swifts, in Jeremiah, but I’ll let readers enquire further if they wish!

David Jack

Are Bananas Bad?



Many people are looking to minimise their impact on the environment and *How Bad Are Bananas: The Carbon Footprint of Everything* by Mike Berners-Lee is a great and entertaining place to start. Rather than telling us how to behave or aiming to make us feel guilty about our lifestyle, the book supports us making informed choices regarding almost everything we consume.

Why not support our local bookshop, The Edinburgh Bookshop, in Morningside? They can order most items. They are doing “click and collect” only at the moment. You can order on their website www.edinburghbookshop.com or email them: mail@edinburghbookshop.com or make the order by phone: 0131 447 1917.

Fi Strathdee

Friendship Club

Progress is slow but a little “unlocking” gives us hope. Sadly, when we do meet again it will be with a space at the “boys’ table” as Eric Brown, one of our longest



serving members and a favourite speaker too, died last month. Here he and Isabel are on our Outing in 2014, having afternoon tea on the Steam Train (opposite page), and at the Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society for another lovely tea (left). Happy memories for us all.

Val Smart

The Guild

Last month I told you of all the things the Guild members have been doing in Lockdown; one of the most popular was knitting. This month we have found a new knitting pattern and several of us are knitting Easter Chickens! There are going to be lots of these winging their way to families, friends and local children. They are very quick and easy if you are a good knitter (but a frustrating tangle of unravelling wool and dropped stitches if you are like me). They are small cheerful little creatures with a secret... they have a Creme Egg tucked inside. So far there are more than twenty on the go and that's only the two people I have talked to and there are several other knitters.

One Guild member (not in Greenbank) has produced an amazing Lockdown song to the tune of the Wild Rover which she has shared through the Guild eNews. It's



very clever, funny and she's a good singer!

More seriously we are still supporting SLA, whose next Fundraiser is **Bake and Share the Love**. A £10 donation brings you a Kit which includes sweet spices from Spice Pots, a cookie cutter, baking decorations, recipes and more to make some tempting goodies to share with family and friends. Full details are on the SLA website enquiries@sla-india.org

We are planning how we can begin to meet in small numbers and very carefully as restrictions ease. Coffee for two in a garden probably... that could be a chance to use the SLA Baking kit.

Most of all though we are looking forward to being able to have proper (though limited) services in Church and being able to meet friends more freely.

Edith Armit



Services at Greenbank

As explained on page 4, “in-person” morning services are restarting on Sundays at 10.30am *from Easter Day, 4th April.*

The procedure to follow in order to book a place at morning worship is also explained on page 4. *Morning worship will also be livestreamed, as before.*

No other in-person services are being held at Greenbank meantime.

Welcome Teams

April

- 4 **Donald King**, Susan Inch, Isobel Thom, John Adair
- 11 **Stephen Hadden**, Mary Hadden, Hazel Macaulay, *tbc*
- 18 **Rona Ferguson**, Jane Harkin, John Murison, Alison Murison
- 25 **Caroline Kehoe**, Jill Powlett Brown, Keith Clark, Louise Coghill

May

- 2 **Donald King**, Jane Harkin, Elaine McRae, John Adair

Lockdown Life — Part 2

We restarted our weekly web-based photographic competition in mid-January:

www.greenbankchurch.org/about/lockdown-life/weekly-photo.php

Here are two photographs taken from the past few weeks of the competition which have not appeared in Martin’s weekly newsletter.



Catkins (Pamela Jack)



Freddie (Christina Morrow)

Congregational Register

**Omitted from the online
version of Connections**

Coffee Rota

There is no requirement for a coffee rota meantime. However, see below...

Zoom Coffee

Join us for a Zoom 'coffee hour,' for chat on Sunday mornings following our livestreamed 10.30am service. It will be an informal gathering in small break-out rooms for about 20 minutes. It will begin around five minutes after the end of the livestream, giving the chance to go and make yourself a cuppa before joining the call. Please note that the Zoom is separate from the livestream.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://tinyurl.com/yxvpwpyz>

Meeting ID: 681 532 4082

Passcode: chitchat

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

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

*Material for the May 2021 issue of Greenbank Connections should be delivered to the Church Office by **Sunday 11th April 2021, or sent by e-mail by 11.59pm on Thursday 15th April 2021 to greenbankconnections@gmail.com***

Flower Rota

April

- 4** Alison and John Murison
- 11** Jill Powlett Brown
- 18** Janet Walker
- 25** Janet Ferguson

Greenbank Church JogScotland Group

We are back on!!! Having had to pause our group runs at the end of December in line with lockdown restrictions, we were given the go-ahead by **JogScotland** to restart this week! It's been great to see everyone in person again and get back to running together! We have a beginners' group on a Monday at 8:35am following the Couch to 5km programme and an intermediate group on a Thursday evening running a 5km loop followed by a few more km for anyone who wishes to do more. We are a very relaxed and friendly group and would love to welcome any new runners of any ability! If you would like to join us, or find out more, just drop me an email at cwrightman@doctors.org.uk



Katie Bogie

