

Greenbank Connections



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Rowan Sophia Lane Ritchie was baptised by the Rev Professor David Fergusson on Sunday 23 May 2021

Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

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

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From the Manse



Homing

Recently I visited Whithorn in Galloway. South West Scotland is a part of the world which I haven’t visited much, despite living in Scotland my entire life so far. So, with the impending departure to the USA (still in the “slow lane” for the visa…) I wanted to go to some places that would be unlikely to feature on future returns to visit family and friends, largely focused on eastern and northern Scotland.

What a glorious part of the world! The cross country drive from Edinburgh via Biggar largely avoids busy high speed roads. Gorgeous pastoral countryside changes to the hill farming territory around Abington and through the Dalween Pass. Then you emerge out into the lowland farming country once again and on to the coastal plains. There was a delicious sense of discovery for me in that trip. Having no heritage in that area, there was no sense of “homing” for me, but a lovely feeling of adding to my experience of Scotland. But it’s home for many, and I was struck by this poem which I found cast on a plaque in the peaceful grounds of Whithorn Priory – deserted save an old woman walking her dog at around 6pm on a May Monday.

Whithorn Manse

I knew it as Eden
that lost walled garden,
past the green edge,
of priory and village:
and, beyond it, the house,
withdrawn, white,
one window alight.

Returning, I wonder,
idly, uneasily,
what eyes from inside
look out now, not in,
as mine once did,
and what might grant me
a right of entry.

Is it never dead then
that need of an Eden?

Even this evening,
estranged by age,
I ogle that light
with a child's greed,
wistfully claiming
lost prerogatives
of homecoming.

Alastair Reid, October 1999

Reid was the son of a Church of Scotland minister who lived for around 60 years outside Scotland, firstly in Spain and then in New York. Scottish writer, Muriel Spark, who also wrote for the *New Yorker* magazine, described him as “the second worst dressed man in New York”! You can read more about him in this obituary from *The Guardian* in 2014:

<https://tinyurl.com/ydackfps>

Reid was an expatriate who didn't romanticise Scotland, but still found a deep sense of homecoming in his return. The notion of our need for an “Eden”, a place where we find the deepest connections of source and roots, is one that resonates with the



Coastal wild flowers



Seascape with ministerial knees



St Ninian's Priory

work of another admired Scottish poet, Edwin Muir.

Both Reid and Muir are clear-eyed about people and places, and had a sense of forward-looking adventure and discovery as well as that wistful notion of “Eden” in our lives.

What is this sense of home for us? I suspect that our life experiences will shape it. Some who have come to this country to escape the tyranny of oppression in the country of their birth may have found a new sense of home in Scotland. Others may hold strongly to the place of their birth whilst still finding a sense of home here. Some, like myself, may have moved around during their upbringing and working lives and so find home to be a fluid concept with aspects of “home” spread around the country rather than one location, and connected to the significant relationships formed there.

As we prepare to move to the USA, Greenbank plays a strong part in my sense of “homing” that will always be associated with my 49 years in Scotland. That can never be taken away, and indeed the sense of Scotland as “home” will probably be stronger than ever. However, for me, “Eden” is not in the past, but in the present. It is the creation of relationships and experiences where we are now, and so is dynamic, and not fixed in either our own early lives nor in a mythical past. Let us all be part of creating “new Eden” wherever we find ourselves. I know that for lucky people who come into the Greenbank “garden” there will be Eden times ahead. With my love and gratitude.



Martin

Young Church on Sunday Mornings

Welcome back to Young Church! From 30th May, we will be holding Young Church from 10.30am-11.45am, in parallel with our regular Church service. Here, I'd like to give you a picture of how to register, and what it will look like on Sunday mornings.

Registration is easy: book in by email to bookgreenbank@gmail.com or call 0771 883 6683. **Please make sure to register by Friday afternoon.** The system is streamlined so that parents may book themselves in for Church and their children for Young Church at the same time – provided there are spaces. It's

possible that your children might get a space in Young Church, but you might not for Church. Young Church will be upstairs in the Hermitage Room and Braid Room as we can't use downstairs at the moment, so book early to give yourself the best chance of booking the whole family!

On Sunday morning, please drop off your children via the West Door from 10.15am. There is enough space outside the door that three families can be present at the same time. As long as we're indoors, everyone present will need to



Youth At Greenbank

As we have been approaching the end of term Martin, the volunteers from Babies and Toddlers, AM Sunday Club, PM Sunday Club, QII, and I have been having important conversations about how we welcome young people back into the building, and plan toward next year, which will present different challenges and opportunities. I would like to update you on the status of these conversations now.

Babies and Toddlers has been meeting on Thursday and Friday mornings, using Eventbrite to digitally register families with a WhatsApp group chat for on-the-day updates. We're unable to offer food or drink, but families are welcome to bring snacks themselves. It's been really lovely to hear the patter as wee children begin playing with the toys again and to know that parents are able to relax in the Main Hall.

AM Sunday Club and PM Sunday Club will be changing to better fit the circum-

stances. From 30th May to the end of term,



I and the volunteers will be returning to Young Church from 10.30am to 11.45am on Sundays, running in parallel with the Sunday morning service. It is our hope this will make it easier for families to attend the 10.30am service, knowing that there is provision for their children.

The QII Leadership and I have been hard at work organising a cracking schedule of events for the next QII

cohort. Soon, we'll be inviting new youth to QII, with a programme informed by the review orchestrated by Brian Barron and Lorna Periss. This means out-of-church events like trips to Gravity Trampoline Parks, monthly Youth Alpha nights (with pizza of course!), and an emphasis on finding a charitable cause we can collectively support.

Oh – and let's not forget: Holiday Club at Greenbank later this summer!

Steve Chaffee

Young Church... (cont'd)

wear a mask, so please ensure your children have one too. We'll be based in the Braid and Hermitage Rooms, and will likely spend at least part of the session outdoors in the Braidburn or Hermitage, weather permitting. By 11.40am we'll be ready for pickup. Please come down to the patio outside the West Door again to pick up your children.

For the duration, we'll be running a variable programme of crafts, games, and trips outside to the Braidburn or the Hermitage. Further, we'll see Steve's weekly kids' address and have a short think about the Bible story for the day. We're so happy to be able to offer this again to families, and look forward to seeing you face-to-face again!

Steve Chaffee

Baptism of Rowan Sophia Lane Ritchie

Martin and Sarah's daughter Rowan was baptised by the Rev Professor David Fergusson at the 10.30am service on Sunday 23rd May 2021. The sermon was preached by the Very Rev Professor Sir Iain Torrance.

The photographs below were taken by Fiona Perriss and Alison Murison; see also the cover.



*Martin, Sarah, Rowan, Professor Fergusson,
Professor Torrance*



Total immersion?



Martin & Rowan with Martin's parents



Faith Impact at the General Assembly

It is premature to be writing about the General Assembly of 2021 before it has taken place but this is the last chance for *Connections* to look at what it is saying about world church issues before the summer break. The Faith Impact report will be given on 26th May and I encourage you to look back at what was said then. The Church of Scotland website will be the place to find the report (in the section on the General Assembly) and also the debate on it.

This is the first full report of the Faith Impact Forum which is the successor to the World Mission and the Church and Society Councils. The Forum has a very wide remit and has organised its business into three main themes – congregational engagement, global justice and public witness. At Greenbank we have retained our World Mission Team in our Society and Creation Theme alongside Eco-congregation, Help the Homeless and Social Justice but there are many close links.

The Forum's report to the Assembly still has a strong world church focus, made all the more powerful by being integrated with the broader themes. The Deliverances – the matters that the Assembly will decide on and which will inform what is handed down to Presbyteries and congregations – include:

- ▷ That the UK Government should do all that it can to ensure COVID-19 vaccines are available throughout the world, particularly in resource-poor countries, on the basis of clinical need to preserve human life.
- ▷ That the Forum should call for the development of safe and legal routes for people desperately seeking sanctuary so that they can travel, live, work and con-

tribute to our society with respect and dignity; and

- ▷ That the UK Government and Parliament should continue to provide a minimum of 0.7% of Gross National Income as Overseas Development Assistance in line with the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015 and all main parties' 2019 manifesto commitments.

When the Faith Impact Forum's Convener, the Very Rev Dr Susan Brown of Dornoch Cathedral, introduces her report she will be able to draw attention to matters that are of current pressing concern. We will have to wait and see what she actually says but we can expect her to draw attention to the dire situations in Israel/Palestine and Myanmar. She is also likely to speak about the UK Government's new plans for immigration which, in the view of the Church of Scotland, are out of line with the Church's mission to those who have been displaced by war, famine and climate change.

I hope this has whetted your appetite for the Assembly coverage of world issues – watch this space!

Valerie Macniven
(Member, Faith Impact Forum)



Separation wall in Israel/Palestine

Annual Reports

As reported last month there will be no Annual Business Meeting again this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. To help the congregation keep in touch with what has been happening on finance, property, and general matters, here are three reports prepared by the Preses, the former Treasurer and the Property Convener.

The link to the summary of accounts is here: tinyurl.com/4zrtme8j

For anyone who wishes to see it and can't access the online version please contact the Church Office.

Alan Ramage

Report from the Preses

We reported the business of the church in 2019 to you electronically. Little did we think that a whole year later we would be doing the same for the business of 2020 all due to "in person" meeting regulations imposed due to COVID-19 lockdown. The Board met in January 2020 but our meeting scheduled for 24th March was cancelled with lockdown imposed from the 23rd. The Board did not meet again in 2020 with church business being taken care of by a Moderator's Committee approved by the church trustees and comprising a number of office bearers from Session and Board. This committee met remotely, on screen, on several occasions during 2020.

Session and Board matters often required to be discussed alongside each other and I would like to thank our Moderator, Martin Ritchie, and our Session Clerk, Valerie Macniven, both of whom have worked tirelessly under difficult circumstances, for their contributions.

The church remained closed for worship from 23rd March with the exception of a short period in late autumn when reduced numbers, due to social distancing, were allowed to meet. However, our very success-

ful live-stream system allowed members to watch and participate in services every Sunday thanks to our technical team and musical contributors.

Despite the church being closed for worship and to our Hall users, management of meetings, property and finances was still required. We thank Alan Ramage, David Allan with his property team and John Ritchie with his finance team respectively for looking after these matters.

Our office and maintenance staff as well as Beadle, organist and caretakers spent the best part of the year on varying forms of furlough where the Government assisted with payment of salaries whilst they could not work. We have successfully retained all staff under this scheme and we require to thank Robert Young and Rosemary McCulloch for managing this situation.

COVID-19 along with the continually changing rules and regulations regarding how and when people could meet has caused a huge amount of work from a Health and Safety point of view. Gillian Sweetman has handled this with great efficiency, keeping us on the straight and narrow through a minefield of information.

We have kept in close contact with our Hall users, informing them of the often changing rules of meeting in person. We appreciate the financial assistance given by many of our Hall users in continuing to make donations despite not being able to use the premises for a large part of the year. The Lent and Easter appeal was able to proceed with the nominated beneficiary being The Coastguard Association, Lothian. This charity was chosen following their life-saving actions concerning relatives of members of our congregation. The sum of £3,400 was raised.

As we continue to build our property and finance teams we find that elected Board members are seconded onto these teams

where their expertise lies. In this connection members due to retire being Moira Land, Donald Milne and David Bogie have agreed to serve a further 3 year term. Ian McWilliam has also agreed to serve a further term.

Nominations for the election of new members to the Board have been received for Jan Corbett, Karen Young, Jane Harkin, Margot Gillon and Barbara Middleton. All have agreed to stand but if there are objections please contact me at moreduk@yahoo.co.uk.

We also thank those appointed Elders who have served the Board.

Roddy Morrison

Preses to The Congregational Board

Report from the Treasurer

2020 was an extraordinary year and very challenging for all of us in so many ways. I am pleased to be able to report that the Church's summary accounts show that its finances have ended the year in good health. This reflects the hard work and dedication of the minister, session clerk and the Church staff, supported by the members of the Moderator's Committee, Kirk Session, Board and Property / Finance teams. All of you, as members of the Church, have been unstinting in your generous financial support of our work - thank you. We are also grateful to the Church of Scotland administrative staff and Presbytery of Edinburgh for their continued support, particularly in relation to the COVID-19 lockdown measures.

Further details of the summary accounts for 2020 and the budget for 2021 are available on the Church website, as noted above; copies are also available from the office. If you have any questions, please

contact me via email.

In closing, I would like to extend my grateful thanks to my predecessor as Congregational Treasurer, John Ritchie, for his careful stewardship of the finances over the past six years and for completing the 2020 accounts. Throughout the year, he was ably supported by Michael Struthers and Kathryn Sangster as Assistant Treasurers. In addition, Robert Young did sterling work on the Job Retention Scheme and Alan Ramage, David Bogie and Stephen Hadden offered support on treasury and accounting matters. In 2021, it is a clear tribute to all of the work carried out by John that Charlotte Tucker (accounts), Ian Thomson (banking) and I have been recruited to replace him!

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Tony Foster

Congregational Treasurer

treasurer@Greenbankchurch.org.uk

Report from the Property Convener

2020 was a strange year for all of us. In Greenbank most of our attention was on coping with the changing regulations for access to our buildings as the levels of lockdown varied throughout the year. Our property budget was again around £31,000, to be used to keep our buildings up to date and in a good state of repair. Although there is also a reserve (Fabric Fund) which we can use for major and unexpected expenditure, we decided to try to reduce expenditure because of the uncertainty about the impact of the moratorium on worship on our finances, so we did not undertake any major new projects. However, essential maintenance and repair work continued.

We undertook work on:

- ▷ the church roof, which is an annual and growing commitment, given the age of our roofs. This year the cost was £6,000.
 - ▷ the mutual wall with our neighbours which had become dangerous at the tennis court and was bowing heavily in the middle. The lower portion was completed in the Autumn but the work on the middle portion was delayed until the Spring of this year. The overall cost of the work was £5,500.
 - ▷ the manse heating system which stopped producing heat and hot water towards the end of 2019. The system is complex and took time to resolve (£1500).
 - ▷ repairing our two old boilers which heat the church, Main Hall and Lower Hall at a cost of around £1500. New problems leading to a failure of heating in both the church and the halls towards the end of the year led us to undertake a planned replacement of both boilers in 2021, in time for re-opening.
- ▷ our streaming equipment, buying a new computer and peripherals at a cost of nearly £1,000 to improve the quality of our streaming.

A major achievement has been the completion of the first draft of an extensive property manual for the church and hall buildings. For the first time we have in one place an explanation of how everything works. Huge credit for the manual lies with Ewan Walker, whose patient and meticulous approach has resulted in an exceptional piece of work.

This was my final year as Property Convener and, after six and a half years, I have moved on. Roddy Morrison has taken on the responsibility for co-ordinating the property team of Gillian Sweetman and Angus McLachlan (health, safety, security and fire safety), David Ferguson assisted by Ewan Walker (streaming and electrical work), Donald Milne (technical advice and practical work) and Moira Land who manages our halls. It has been a real pleasure for me to work with the entire team and the others on the property committee. I'd also like to thank John Ritchie who was treasurer for most of my period and put up with my endless requests for information and money with his customary good humour. In particular, I have to thank Ginny for her tireless work on many aspects of property and Mirek for his dedication, and willingness to tackle any task with commitment and enthusiasm. Finally, I'd like to thank the congregation for keeping me informed of what needed to be done and in being patient till we could find the time and resources for work to be done.

David Allan, Property Convener

Friendship Club

We progress! At last we can have a friend in for coffee and chat. Will we find it strange? What will we talk about? And when can we extend the number so that a group of us can meet back in the church complex for a bigger coffee morning? Maybe July or

August. What a red letter day that will be! Until then, keep safe and please make do with a couple of photos of a happy gathering from the past, and a promise of that celebration to come!

Val Smart



Gift Aid: a BIG Thank You and a Gentle Reminder

During 2020 Greenbank Church recovered more than £44,000 of Gift Aid as a result of donations from our members and supporters. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this magnificent achievement! This income represents a significant uplift to the Church's finances and helps us as a congregation better to fulfil our Mission, particularly during current troubled times. Gift Aid is good stewardship, and going forward it is important that we maximise the value of our donations.

Who is eligible to give through Gift Aid? Anyone who pays Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax (subject to limits per 2. below). With the present basic rate of income tax of 20%, the Church can recover tax on donations at the rate of 25% – at no additional cost to the donor!

So: £4 becomes £5; £20 becomes £25; £100 becomes £125 and so on....

Other Key Features of Gift Aid

- ▶ No minimum contribution is required
- ▶ No specific amount has to be promised
- ▶ There is no fixed term during which contributions must be made
- ▶ Tax can be recovered retrospectively (up to 4 years later): this is done by the Church.

Donations given by a means which identifies the donor are potentially of greater value to the Church than “open plate” donations. This can be by various methods, including primarily: standing order (the most popular); cash in offering envelopes; cheques; payroll giving. Other digital means are increasingly becoming available

and during 2020 we introduced an online donation facility which is accessible via the Church website. We have plans for further ways of giving designed to obviate use of cash and make it easier to donate in future. To help us in this endeavour (see 1 below), and to ensure compliance with the Gift Aid rules (2 below) there are several matters you are asked please to consider:

1. If you currently do not give through Gift Aid, check if you are eligible as a taxpayer, and if so, please consider signing a Gift Aid Declaration.
2. If you do currently Gift Aid your donations, it's important to check that you are still paying as much or more tax (income and/or Capital Gains) than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on your donations (to ALL charities) in the corresponding tax year (which ends 5th April). If the answer is “no”, please inform the Gift Aid Administrator:

michael.struthers@greenbankparish-church.onmicrosoft.com

For more information (including blank Declarations for completion) or assistance, please get in touch. Specifically, if you're not sure whether the Church holds a valid Declaration from you, or if you would like to cancel because your tax status has changed, please write to the Gift Aid Administrator, c/o the Church Office or else by confidential email, either to the above or to: Treasurer@greenbankchurch.org

Many thanks again.

Tony Foster, Treasurer

Guild

As restrictions ease we are looking forward to meeting one another, and being able to chat over tea or coffee in each other's houses and gardens. There will be a lot of news to catch up with! The Committee are beginning to work on plans for the summer and the next session. We may be able to arrange a limited form of coffee morning by July within the new guidelines. We are also beginning to plan meetings for our next session, with a range of speakers on inspiring projects, general interest and entertainment.

In the last three years across Scotland the Guild has raised (at the last count) £551,000 in support of all the wonderful work our project partners have carried out, touching the lives of people across the world and bringing hope and inspiration to so many. The effort and generosity of Guild members, especially during the past year when we have not been able to meet and share in person for worship, prayer, action and fellowship, is truly amazing. At the moment we are considering six new Guild Projects to be supported over the next three years. They are all interesting and cover a wide range of enterprises. In Greenbank we usually choose to support three of the six, taking one each year. Here are the projects.

Beat Scotland: This project will develop a network to raise awareness of eating disorders and encourage people to seek help.

Home for Good: Finding homes for vulnerable children in Scotland. This is a Christian charity passionate about



finding a home for every child who needs one. They hope to inspire people to think of fostering and adoption and to provide support for these families.

Pioneers: Chocolate heaven, South East Asia. This project intends to help build and develop a factory to support the production of sustainable chocolate products.

Starchild: Finding the light in every child, Uganda. This charity hopes to build a centre where children with a range of learning disabilities, particularly autism, can come to learn alongside their peers.

Hear our voice! Brazil: This is a project at Faculdade Unida de Vitória (UNIDA) designed to empower young women through theological education. UNIDA believes in an education that can transform lives in a violently unjust Brazilian society.

Kazunu: Village of Hope, Tanzania. Working with the Vine Trust and their partners on the ground, we will help them to take forward the development of a sustainable village with a school, health centre, and 40 individual homes as well as a community hub.

The lockdown restrictions have been difficult for us all. The lack of contact with friends and families and the loss of interesting and valuable activities was often boring and depressing. Our hope now, is that we will see slow progress back to a more normal level of sociable and useful living.

Edith Armit

Carbon Footprint: Getting Our Own House in Order

In recent months a great deal of column space in *Connections* has been filled by our Eco-group providing valuable information, guidance and advice to the congregation on matters such as recycling, efficiency of home energy, our shopping habits, methods of travel and food purchasing, to name but a few. The congregation at Greenbank has already been granted a bronze level award from the Eco-Congregation Scotland Scheme and our Eco-Group believe that we are well on our way to achieving a silver level award.

So, what are **WE** doing within our buildings at Braidburn Terrace to help preserve God's creation, The Planet Earth?

By far the largest part of our carbon footprint comes from heating our premises largely using a fossil fuel, natural gas. Church buildings, by their very nature, are difficult to deal with in terms of economical heating and retention of that heat. Our buildings date from 1900, 1927 and 2000; the older parts being of traditional solid stone and concrete construction, not easy to insulate.

We have a number of large spaces to heat including the Sanctuary, Main Hall and Centenary Hall. With high ceilings these areas add up to a considerable volume of space. Windows are largely single glazed including stained glass and roof spaces in most areas are not accessible to insulate.

One highly beneficial step forward in this battle has been the installation of an "intelligent heating system" which monitors the heat levels in several different zones against previously set desirable levels. This

system calculates when the heating should come on, taking account of weather conditions, in order to reach a comfortable temperature for use. Installation of this system has seen an average fall in our gas use and cost of around 33%.

We are currently looking at replacing our two main boilers which supply the Sanctuary, Main Hall and Lower Hall; both of which are around 30 years in age. The ideal, environmentally friendly solution would be to fit a ground or air source pump system but these are excessively expensive and are unlikely to be able to heat such large spaces. Looking to the future, hydrogen has been identified as the "green" fuel but the technology is in its infancy. Whilst yet to be finalised, our best solution may be to fit "hydrogen ready" boilers which would run on natural gas in the short term but have the capacity to convert. New boilers on their own would be more efficient, less expensive to run and cleaner than those presently located in our boiler room.

In terms of insulation, small steps have been taken, in order to keep costs down, to insulate spaces immediately accessible. Volunteer teams have insulated the floor beneath the office, always a cold spot, and fitted draught proofing to the windows. The large roof void over the main hall has also been insulated.

Other small, in-house projects include the replacement of hundreds of light bulbs with low energy LED units, fitting of a hand-dryer in the Gents toilet to save on paper towels, timers fitted on water immersions and electric heaters to prevent



overuse and fitting of door closers to minimise draughts and heat loss.

We have employed contractors to replace the failed roof-lights over the Braid and Hermitage Room corridor in double glazed units and to by-pass a water pump, reverting to using mains water pressure.

Recycling also forms part of our agenda and more user-friendly recycling bins have recently been purchased and installed.

We are currently putting together a more official Ethical Procurement Policy but have always checked that contractors used by us pay the minimum wage and do not use any form of forced labour.

Not only are we dealing with these practical issues in our buildings but we are also getting a strong message from the pulpit. Martin himself often raises the point of protecting our fragile planet and we have had a number of guest preachers with specific interests in the environment and climate change. A hard-hitting message was delivered by Sally Foster Fulton from Christian Aid regarding the problem across the globe. To paraphrase her sermon she said forget such niceties as “global warming” or “climate change”: what we are facing is chaos and climate disruption, rocketing to a point where the thermometer cannot be re-set because the planet is actually cooking itself.

Do we need a clearer message?

Roddy Morrison
Eco-Group

Greenbank Eco-Forum



Would you like to join a hive of information about eco-friendly ideas for people in and around the Greenbank area of Edinburgh? Greenbank Eco-Forum, a private Facebook group seeded by the Greenbank Parish Church Eco-Group, hopes to create a buzz as we support one another to reduce our individual and collective impact on the planet. Together we will strive for sustainability for the local and global community, and for future generations. Please join us by searching for ‘*Greenbank Eco-Forum*’ on Facebook.

Janet Edwards

Guild Work Party News

Although we have not been meeting lately, we have still been very busy knitting. Now, hopefully, we may be able to have a meeting, on **Thursday 24th June at 2.30pm**. It may have to be in the Main Hall, masked, sanitised, socially distanced, and no teas and coffees, but it will be a one-off chance to hand in work and collect wool for the summer, and of course CHAT!

New knitters will be very welcome. All being well, we will start normal meetings again in September. That’s the plan. Fingers crossed!

Best wishes and stay safe,

Anne Oxbrow

An Open Hand

This month sees the launch of a new project called *An Open Hand*! It is a partnership between *Greenbank Parish Church* and *Edinburgh City Mission*.

We are aiming to provide parents, who are in severe hardship and wouldn't otherwise be able to afford it, with a present to give to their child on their birthday. In addition, we also hope to provide a book and some small toys and craft items that the whole family can play with together at a later date.

Here is our web page:

www.greenbankchurch.org/youth/an-open-hand/an-open-hand.php



Let me tell you why we are setting this up

Currently, in Edinburgh, there are an estimated 77,600 people living in poverty, including one in five children. Levels of child poverty have risen by more than 25% in the past five years. Being in poverty can mean not being able to provide essentials for your family. Buying presents brings an added stress and financial strain for families or it is simply not possible and children go without a present.

Why do we consider birthdays so important?

When a child sees their family celebrating their birthday they feel special and significant within their family. It is a time when families can show how much they love and care for one another, and when families celebrate together it creates positive memories for everyone and helps strengthen family bonds.

If a family is unable to afford a gift, it can affect how the parent and child feel about the birthday. Some families in hardship avoid mentioning the birthday altogether to avoid the negative feelings associated with not being able to provide a gift. The lack of gift, therefore, denies the family the whole day of celebration and the chance to build those special and happy memories together.

An Open Hand is here to provide parents with presents for their children, so that the door can be opened to celebrating with their children. We feel this project is going to make a significant and positive difference to many families in Edinburgh, who face the strain of hardship every day. We hope it brings a time of joy and happiness that otherwise might not be possible.

We are asking for your help in a number of ways!

Firstly, we ask you to reflect quietly on how it might feel for the many children and families in these situations – to imagine your children, nieces, nephews and grandchildren waking up on their birthday to no celebration, no present, no feeling of being special, no joy, and consider how that might affect them as children and make them feel.

Secondly, please pray for this project.

Thirdly, would you consider donating to the project? We are setting up an initiative called ***My birthday – your present***. We are asking you to consider, on your birthday, making an annual donation to An Open Hand. Wouldn't it be wonderful to know when you are celebrating your birthday, you are also enabling a child somewhere across the city to celebrate their birthday with their whole family, enabling a day of fun and happy times.

Our bank details (Bank of Scotland) are:

Account Name: An Open Hand – Greenbank Church

Account Number: 21846864

Sort Code: 80-22-60

Your standing order can either be set up with your own Internet banking, or by collecting a standing order form in church, completing it and sending it to your bank.

The details of setting up a standing order are also on our web page.

It would be amazing if you might consider setting this up for yourself and for as many members of your family as you might like! It would be a great annual gift to give someone whom you might find hard to buy a present for, or who has reached a point where they don't want to receive any more 'stuff'!!

Any donation, including one-off donations, would allow An Open Hand to get off the ground and start receiving applications from referral agencies across the city. Our aim is to get 365 donors set up with an annual standing order on their birthday, to allow us as a congregation to give children in Edinburgh the chance to celebrate a birthday every day of the year. This is ambitious but I think we can do it!

Katie Bogie



A Safe Listening Place



We know that since lockdown domestic abuse is reported to be increasing at an alarming rate. No one deserves to live with abuse. If you or anyone you know is impacted by domestic abuse, confidential help can be found from the following agencies.

- ***Women's Aid:*** call the helpline 0131 315 8110 for free confidential support or visit the website at: 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

Work on the ***Safe Listening Place*** project in Greenbank is ongoing and we look forward to bringing you an update in the September edition of ***Connections***.

Susan Inch

Greenbank Church JogScotland

We have had a great term of running so far! The beginners group are progressing fabulously through the Couch to 5km programme and the Thursday group continue to run a 5km loop with some members pushing on to often nearly another 5km! All the running is done at a pace that ensures we can keep chatting as we jog! Several new members have been welcomed into the group as well, which is super. We have spent much of this term having to distance quite significantly during the sessions, which is no easy feat!! Everyone has done so well in respecting the rules



and this week we had the wonderful news from JogScotland that we could run without distancing again! It's fantastic to be moving forward like this!

This week our club t-shirts arrived, so if you see a dash of royal blue flashing through Greenbank you will know who it is!!



As always, new members are very welcome to either group. The beginners is on a Tuesday morning at 8:45am and the intermediate group on a Thursday evening at 7:30pm. Drop me a message if you would like to find out more, or join in!

Katie Bogie
cwrightman@doctors.org.uk

Book Review

The Moth Snowstorm

I could pop in a wee review of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), or Marion Shoard's *The Theft of the Countryside* (1981) about our loss of biodiversity published and read decades ago, but Michael McCarthy's more recent *The Moth Snowstorm* references them. McCarthy's writing shredded my heart the first time I read it – it is so vividly and wondrously written. Other critics have more eloquently described it as full of joy, grief, rage and love for nature.

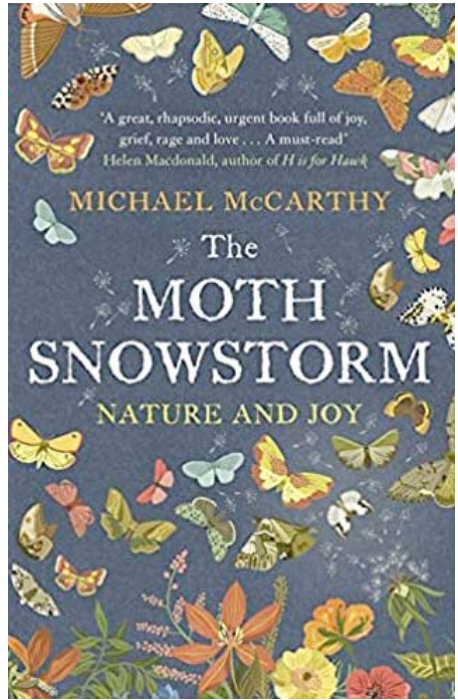
McCarthy discusses man's relationship with nature after Genesis 1:28, and says we are faced with "a sort of mass cognitive dissonance, a nationwide unawareness of what is obvious" – the terrible environmental price paid for industrialised intensified farming based on monocultures, poisons which have exterminated insects at the base of food chains in the natural world, and landscape scale engineering leading to the sixth mass extinction.

He writes so intensely about butterflies, birdsong, fish, moths, blossom, wildflowers ... and proposes Joy as a defence of the natural world rather than sustainable development or ecosystem services (which assigns monetary value to wilderness and biodiversity).

Another thought carried through the book is in George Monbiot's blurb: "in his beautiful book, Michael McCarthy suggests that a capacity to love the natural world, rather than merely to exist within it, might be a uniquely human trait."

Possibly available in the Oxfam Bookshop in Morningside ... it's where I found my copy!

Fiona Strathdee



Pre School Staff Vacancy

Braidburn Terrace, Edinburgh

Early Years Practitioner

We are looking to recruit an enthusiastic Early Years Practitioner for this thriving preschool provision based in Greenbank Church halls. You will be working with a qualified teacher and a team of Early Years Practitioners providing quality education for 3-5 year olds. You must be passionate about working with children, have knowledge of the *Curriculum for Excellence*, *GIRFEC* and *Building the Ambition* and be

aware of the importance of parental participation. You must be able to communicate effectively with children, colleagues, parents and other agencies. The position is part-time (24 hours per week worked on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays), commencing 18th August. The current salary is £11.25 per hour.

Applicants must hold either SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) SCQF Level 7 or HNC Childhood Practice or an equivalent qualification.

This post is considered Regulated Work with Vulnerable Children and/or Protected Adults, under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. The preferred candidate will be required to join the PVG Scheme or undergo a PVG scheme update check prior to a formal offer of employment being made.

For the job description, person specification and the application form please go to the “about” section of our website:

greenbankpreschool.org

Applications must be sent to

joanmritchie@btinternet.com

Closing date for applications:

Friday 4th June at 12 noon



Holiday Club at Greenbank 9th–13th August 2021 *The Megateam's Back!*

(See poster on back page.)

Summer holiday time will be here soon and once again we are planning to get together safely to have fun at Greenbank Holiday Club. Last year's online club was great but we would all rather be back at Greenbank if possible, meeting up with our friends, making new ones and sharing lots of laughter.

If you are at primary school now or are starting in August come along and join the fun: **Monday 9th to Friday 13th August 10.00 am till 12.15pm.**

Bring a friend, bring lots of friends or come by yourself and meet lots of new friends! Everyone is welcome but numbers may have to be limited so, to be sure of a place, book soon using the online booking at

www.greenbankchurch.org

For more information, contact the church office (phone 447 9969) or look on the church website.

Alison Reid

**Have you looked at
the Greenbank
website recently?**

www.greenbankchurch.org

Flower Rota

Provided by

Delivered by

June

6	Ina Weir	Katie Bogie
13	Flora Brodie	Dorothy Whitehead
20	-	Janet Walker
27	-	Alison Murison

July

4	-	Mary McMahon
11	Kathleen Patrick	Moira Davidson
18	-	Cathie Maclennan
25	-	Diana Teasdale

August

1	-	Kay Ellis
8	-	Ishbel Clark
15	Sweetman family	Pam Adair
22	-	Sheena Marshall
29	Hutchison family	Rosemary Collier



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/yxvpwpzy>

Meeting ID: 681 532 4082

Passcode: chitchat



If you would like to provide flowers on any Sunday (there are lots of gaps), please let me know, or contact the Office at

greenbankchurch@btconnect.com

or phone 0131 447 9969. We can also help with flower arranging.

Moira Land
landfamily@hotmail.com

Congregational Register

*Omitted from the online
version of Connections*

Welcome Teams

June

Sundays (10.30am)

- 6 Donald King**, Jill Powlett Brown,
Isobel Thom, Roddy Morrison
- 13 John Murison**, Alison Murison,
Hazel Macaulay, Gillian Sweetman
- 20 Isobel Thom**, Elaine McRae,
Stephen Hadden, Mary Hadden,
- 27 Caroline Kehoe**, Jane Harkin,
Keith Clark, Louise Coghill

July

Sundays (10.30am)

- 4 Donald King**, Isobel Thom, Gillian
Sweetman, Moira Small
- 11 Roddy Morrison**, Stephen Hadden,
Mary Hadden, Hazel Macaulay
- 18 Gillian Sweetman**, Jane Harkin,
John Murison, Alison Murison,
- 25 Caroline Kehoe**, Jill Powlett Brown,
Keith Clark, Louise Coghill

The welcome teams for Sunday mornings in August will be contacted by email during the summer.

At the time of going to press, it was not known whether the church would continue to be open at lunchtime on Wednesdays. If so, the welcome teams will be contacted by email.



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 September 2021 issue of Greenbank Connections should be delivered to the Church Office by
Sunday 15th August 2021, or
sent by e-mail by 11.59pm on
Thursday 19th August 2021 to
greenbankconnections@gmail.com

Greenbank Holiday Club

mega makers!

The Megateam's back!

9th to 13th August 2021