

# Greenbank Connections



March 2021

Issue 696

Scottish Charity SCO11325



*Sunrise: Lockdown Life photographic competition winner, by Moira Davidson (see also p 7)*

## Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

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

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

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

## From the Manse



### **Dear Friends,**

On Tuesday 16th February we held a joint meeting of the Congregational Board and Kirk Session on Zoom, which will be reported later in this issue of *Connections*. In my opening reflection I noted that there was a very strong possibility that this would be the last time that I was able to address such a large group of Greenbank folk and to actually see them in “real time”. On our Sunday livestreams there are many of you watching live but also many who catch up at a later time, so Tuesday felt like a significant moment.

At the meeting of the Presbytery of Edinburgh on 9th February I had three minutes to say something in my leave-taking. However, I wasn’t allowed to say anything much about Greenbank – it was to be about thanking Presbytery for the support and fellowship I’ve experienced in the wider local church. So at our meeting last week I took the chance to shift the focus onto Greenbank and to express my heartfelt gratitude to you all for the way in which you welcomed Sarah and me, and then

Rowan into the Greenbank family. I have felt mightily encouraged and supported by all of you – elders, Board members, and the wider congregation and community – in the challenging but rewarding call of being Minister at Greenbank.

Three years isn't long in the life-span of a congregation, but as is the way of ministry, an awful lot can happen in that time! I'm grateful for all of the experiences that have been part of life at Greenbank. There has been a lot to reflect on that's formative in the best sense, as well as some things that have been very tough. Again, that's the way of ministry.

Recently the letters of Paul to the church at Corinth have featured in our Sunday lectionary cycle. Although they're very contextual, they contain a lot that resonates with the experience of Christian community through the ages and into the present day. In thinking about that, I pondered what it might be like to write to all of you in the manner of Paul, and what I might say.

**Firstly, I'd say how much I have appreciated the richness of a long-established community**, with folk who were baptised here when the church was brand new through to those who have found their way here only in recent years, and all those who have become part of Greenbank life in between. Churches like Greenbank have textures that new church plants don't – we should cherish and nurture that, even though it can make it challenging too!

**I'd say that I love your warm community spirit**, and the heart and desire for the love of God to be shown amongst and beyond the congregation. Never lose sight of that heart of the Gospel, especially when we

might get bogged down in things that are more about form than relationship.

**I'd say that you have risen to the challenge of taking the best of this congregation on** into a new chapter and given some things a good shake to see what is fit for purpose and what needs a rethink. I love the way that you have been open to new horizons whilst not “throwing out the baby with the bathwater”. That is a rare quality in a congregation.

**I'd say that I love that here there are mystics and managers**, the practical and the visionary, sometimes combining these qualities together. It's such a rich variety of skills that you have here, and that will see you through this next phase.

**Have confidence that you are the ones in and through whom God gives the growth.** One of my favourite lines from Paul is “Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth” (1 Corinthians 3: 6). Those of us who are called as ministers, or who come as employees, have the privilege of working with you for a season and to be part of that growth, but you as the people of God are the main event that continues. So finally, I would say thank you for this season of being part of the way in which God is working in this place and with this congregation, and bless you for the next chapter in the exciting story of Greenbank.

Sending my love to you all,



Martin Ritchie

## News from the Kirk Session and Two New Faces for Greenbank

The Kirk Session and Congregational Board met via Zoom on 16th February for the first time since the start of lockdown. During that time the business of the congregation has been overseen by the Moderator's Committee under mandates agreed with the Session and Board. However, after such a long gap and as we prepare to go into a vacancy, it seemed timely to bring everyone together. It was an amazing event – 75 screens, some shared by couples.

There was a lot to catch up on:

- we reviewed the main decisions of the Moderator's Committee covering property, finance, staffing, Board membership, reopening then closing of the Church for worship and some organisations, and implementing the Strategic Plan under new committees;
- caught up with the Congregational Register;
- heard from Steve Chaffee about Young Church and approved a group to look to the future of that;
- heard plans for Holy Week worship;
- heard the latest news on discussions with our church neighbours on the Presbytery Plan for 2022–2032.

We also heard about some arrangements that will start up once Martin leaves for the USA, though he does not yet have a date. The Presbytery of Edinburgh has appointed the **Rev Dr Alistair Donald**, Chaplain at Heriot-Watt University, to be our Interim Moderator. He has given us a brief profile (*see next page*). In this role he is the interface between the Congregation and the

Presbytery. He will chair the Kirk Session, and oversee the search for our new Minister with the Nominating Committee, which we will elect once we have the go-ahead from the Presbytery. That is likely to take longer than in our last vacancy because the Presbytery Plan has been suspended and each case needs separate examination.

In preparation for Martin's departure the Kirk Session has invited the **Rev Dr Anne Logan** to take on the role of locum. Anne, too has sent her profile (*see next page*). Steve Chaffee will complete the team as Youth Associate.

We do not know how long it will be until we have a new Minister. However, with the help of Alistair and Anne, the Kirk Session, Board and the District Visitor team will make sure the church is well led and that pastoral care continues to be strong. Martin's energetic ministry has put us in a good place to continue our mission and it is timely that we have the new groups leading on the delivery of the Strategic Plan. There will be plenty opportunities for all who worship with us to play their part.

In later editions of **Connections** I will provide more details about the many stages in the vacancy procedure. If you have any questions for now please email me at

[Sessionclerk@greenbankchurch.org](mailto:Sessionclerk@greenbankchurch.org).

I know you will all want to join me in wishing Martin, Sarah and Rowan every blessing as they move to Tenafly and to thank Martin for his superbly energetic and creative leadership at Greenbank.

**Valerie Macniven**  
Session Clerk

## Rev Dr Alistair Donald

*to be our Interim Moderator*



The Rev Dr Alistair Donald is full-time Chaplain to Heriot-Watt University here in Edinburgh. He is a graduate of St Andrews; he then studied in Wales for a PhD in environmental science. Working for what is now the Environment Agency, he published research on acid rain and water pollution, before moving back to Scotland as an environmental adviser to the former Scottish Office.

After training at New College for the Church of Scotland ministry, he served in a rural parish in Aberdeenshire for ten years before taking up his present post at Heriot-Watt in 2009.

He is married to Nicky and they have three grown-up sons.

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## Rev Dr Anne T. Logan

*to be our Locum Minister*



still quite a novelty! I was ordained in 1981 and retired (early) from my last charge in Stockbridge in 2012. Since then, I have been Interim Moderator and/or Locum in a variety of churches and also help out at St Giles. During my ministry, I spent time in churches around Edinburgh including St George's West and St Martin's. Throughout my ministry, I enjoyed and valued the interaction I had with those who were training for ministry – and frequently thought that I learned more from the students than they ever did from me!

I am married with two adult sons. My husband, Mike, was an anaesthetist – like me, he is now retired. Our sons have provided us with two delightful daughters-in-law and we have four grandchildren. In normal times, we are fortunate enough to be invited to go and play with our grandchildren two days a week whilst their parents are at work.



**Dear Friends,**

It is a privilege to be invited to spend time with you as Locum and I look forward to getting to know you over the coming months. One or two of you I know from times past, but for those who haven't met me before, here is a short biography.

A daughter and grand-daughter of the manse, I trained for ministry at New College at a time when women ministers were

## Rev Dr Anne T. Logan (cont'd from p5)

In our leisure time, Mike and I enjoy sailing and we keep our boat through in Largs. We tend to potter around the Clyde rather than attempt anything more adventurous and increasingly we are fair weather sailors! I also enjoy walking, gardening (most of the time!), and reading.

It is difficult to know how things will be over the next few months, but hopefully, the government will be able to begin lifting restrictions again. When the time is right, I will be glad to join with you and walk with you as you travel the next part of your journey of faith.

Blessings!

Anne

## Lent and Easter Appeal Aid for struggling congregations in Urban Priority Areas

*As explained in the February issue of Connections, 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'. 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

## The Guild



There may be no meetings, but the Guild are keeping busy. Although some of us have watched more TV than usual and seem to be leading a slower-paced life – ordering and waiting for deliveries takes

time – there is a lot going on!

One of the most popular occupations is knitting. Between them, Guild members have produced a fleecy mountain of articles. The Work Party donated 11 sacks of garments to their chosen charities in December, and by the end of this year far more will be delivered. Other activities are making preserves and trying out new recipes, mostly successful. Pancake Day was well celebrated! There have been lots of puzzles on the go, quizzes and wordsearches. When the weather allowed some of us have walked a lot, with many photos taken on our wanderings. Gardens have kept us busy. We have read loads of books and re-read many favourites. We have played Solitaire and computer Mahjong. Many have been home schooling or childminding. Some have been improving their keyboard playing. Some have sorted out hundreds of photos or more seriously sorted out their affairs and had a clear out. Some have got round to tracing the family tree. The most unusual activity was 'chasing Councillors about uncollected rubbish bins'!

We are keeping up our regular donations to SLA and supporting the CrossReach 'Joining up the Dots' project.

The Guild are still here, still working, phoning each other to keep in touch and having socially distanced chats on doorsteps, and of course looking forward to the time when we can meet normally.

Edith Armit

## Lockdown Life — Part 2

We restarted our weekly web-based photographic competition in mid-January.  
[www.greenbankchurch.org/about/lockdown-life/weekly-photo.php](http://www.greenbankchurch.org/about/lockdown-life/weekly-photo.php)



*Flowering Cactus (Kathleen Patrick)*

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



*Be-wych-ed Hazel (Margo Fraser)*



*Rosslyn Chapel (Ewan Hastings)*

## Thought for the Month – Spring

Many years ago, when I was a parish minister, one of my regular visits was to an elder, housebound by deteriorating health. Our conversations were always wide-ranging, but I recall that on more than one occasion we discussed the timing of the seasons. Why, we wondered, did summer not start until around Midsummer's Day? Did spring really last from the second half of March into summery June? And did winter only begin a few days before Christmas?

I realise now that neither of us was aware of the distinction between the astronomical and meteorological definitions of the seasons. The former is determined by the relative positions of the Sun and Earth and so the start of spring can vary a little from year to year. (This year it begins on 20th March.) The meteorological calendar splits the year into four seasons, each of three months, so that, whatever the weather, spring always starts on 1 March.

Although the date of Easter varies from year to year, it always falls within the spring, as does most of the holy season of Lent. The word 'Lent' is derived from an old English word 'lencten,' meaning lengthen. In the northern hemisphere Lent is the season of the lengthening of days: spring. Lent is the period of forty weekdays before Easter. The Sundays in Lent are not counted, because every Sunday is a little Easter, a day of celebration and joy rather than of introspection and sadness.

The forty days of Lent are rightly associated with the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness. However, we must not forget the forty years that God's people spent in the wilderness as they made their way to the Promised Land. We too may have our own wilderness experiences, as we struggle

to understand what it means to be God's people in this place at this particular point in time, as we try to work out more fully what God intends us to be and to do, as we seek the resources we need to keep going.

This year, more than ever, Lent can be for us a time of spiritual renewal. All around us are signs of new life as birds build their nests, spring flowers appear in gardens, and buds burst into leaf on trees. If we find this encouraging and uplifting, how much more should our spirits be uplifted and revived as we get in touch with the equally real spiritual environment in which we live and move and have our being?

With William Cowper we have to pray,

*Oh, for a closer walk with God,  
a calm and heavenly frame,  
a light to shine upon the road  
that leads me to the Lamb!*

And with Horatius Bonar we may be able to claim

*I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'I am this dark world's Light;  
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,  
and all thy days be bright'.  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my Star, my Sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk,  
till travelling days are done.*

As Mary Slessor, the 19th century Scottish missionary, wrote, "where Christ is, it is always the time of the singing of birds." With him as our unseen but real companion on our journey through the years, it can be perpetual spring, with the constant possibility of new spiritual growth, the flourishing of our life in Christ, and the transformation of our lives.

**Peter Graham**

## Friendship Club

So, it's a year since we last met together and it's good that we can see progress, however slow. Have we forgotten what it was like when we could socialise and what we all look like? Here are a few reminders of very happy days on the 'Maid of the Forth', at Purves Puppets and at the Kelpies. Can you put names to faces? Maybe I'll find some more for next month's *Connections*.

Val Smart



## What Can We Do About Plastic?



When all minds appear to be focused on the postponed COP26 conference, it appears to me that the other great environmental crisis has been forgotten about. I am referring to terrible damage that we are doing to the world through plastic pollution. We, as individuals, need to be constantly evaluating what we can do and perhaps reminding politicians that action to reduce our impact needs to remain at the top of the agenda. Here are a few things to consider:

- Don't change everything at once: take it slowly and form new good habits.
- Wash out your plastic containers before putting them in the recycling. Otherwise the item might not make it through the recycling process but end up in landfill
- Stop using single-use plastics. Start with the top ten single-use offenders: Crisp packets; Wet wipes; Sandwich packing; Sauce sachets; Ready meal trays; Pet food pouches; Cotton buds; Plant pots; Plastic drinking straws; "Foilised" wrapping paper.
- Switch to reusable shopping bags. And I don't mean supermarket 'bags for life' – use canvas bags.
- Stop buying bottled water.
- Buy loose produce. Farmers' markets and local shops are a great starting point.
- Consider buying milk in glass bottles.
- Consider how you store food. Plastic food wrap is generally made from non-recyclable PVC. Alternatives could be glass or pyrex containers. Consider re-using jars once the original product is finished. Even greaseproof paper is a greener alternative to "plastic" when wrapping small amounts of food.
- Carry your own cup for tea and coffee on the move. And if you're feeling brave also carry your cutlery. Bamboo based products fill this need very well.
- How many cleaning products do you use? Do you need separate face wash, shower gel and hand soap? Would one good quality product do the job?
- Consider buying in bulk or taking your own containers to local shops and refill.
- Are your dishwasher tablets plastic-free? Plastic-free tablets are available.

Donald Milne (Eco Group)

## World Mission

Our congregation at Greenbank has always supported Fairtrade products by purchasing the items on sale when the World Mission Team runs a stall in support of the One World Shop. Because of COVID-19's ongoing restrictions, we are unable to sell these items in person. But as we celebrate **2021 Fairtrade Fortnight**, which runs **from 22nd February to 7th March**, please visit the One World Shop's website ([www.oneworldshop.co.uk](http://www.oneworldshop.co.uk)) where you

can find a huge variety of Fairtrade items, thus helping producers from around the world to get a fair price for their products. When we go to the shops, or shop online, let's choose **Fairtrade** where possible: it makes a great difference to farmers and workers creating Fairtrade products, especially those who are struggling because of poor climate, floods or lack of rain, and the present Coronavirus restrictions.

Grace Maweu (World Mission Team)

## Holy Week

This year our Holy Week services will be held jointly at Morningside Parish Church. They will be livestreamed, but if the Covid situation improves then it may be possible to have a congregation gather in the church.

The services will be held each evening, Monday–Friday at 7.30pm, with a communion service on Maundy Thursday. The livestream can be accessed via the Morningside Parish Church website:

<http://morningsideparishchurch.org.uk/worship/recorded-service-intimations-and-orders-of-service/>

At Greenbank, we will hold our usual Palm Sunday service at 10.30am, and on Easter Day our 10.30am livestream will be a celebratory communion service.

Martin

## Greenbank Youth Programme

As we enter into the season of Lent, and approach the one year anniversary of first entering into lockdown, I am increasingly drawn to introspection. The Youth Programme at Greenbank has changed dramatically to meet the moment and to prepare itself for the moments when we can be face-to-face again. Among my hill walks and treks through the city looking for camera shots for the Sunday morning livestream video, I have had many opportunities to reflect on the needs of the church and community.

The AM and PM Sunday Clubs have continued most weeks, with a small but dedicated community forming to meet up, hear a Bible story, and have a craft or chat. These have served families well, even while the extremely dedicated teams consider fresh takes and new activities the format affords us. We're thinking through some details,



but believe there is a way forward for an intergenerational call – though sadly we won't be able to serve tea as in prior years!

QII has met most Sunday nights as well, but has turned more into a 'drop-in' call. I have recently begun reading *Wrestling with Rest: Inviting Youth To Discover the Gift of Sab-*

*bath* as part of a Church of Scotland Youth Worker's community. This has afforded rich material to consider how the QII Team and I can meet our current QIIers where they are and to prepare for the next cohort, which will have an opportunity to meet up as and when we begin to emerge from lockdown.

Finally, I have been chatting with Alison and the Holiday Club team concerning a small Holiday Club style event we might run around Easter – more on that to come!

Steve Chaffee

## Congregational Register

**Omitted from the online  
version of Connections**

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### Flower Rota

#### March

- 7 -
- 14 -
- 21 -
- 28 Alison Murison

*There are many empty slots on the Flower Rota throughout 2021. If you are interested in helping provide flowers, please contact Moira Land ([landfamily@hotmail.com](mailto:landfamily@hotmail.com)).*

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### 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](mailto:MRitchie@churchofscotland.org.uk)***

***Mr Steven Chaffee (Youth Associate)***

***phone: 07729 000 788***

***email: [stevechaffee@greenbankchurch.org](mailto: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](mailto: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 April 2021 issue of Greenbank Connections should be delivered to the Church Office by  
Sunday 14th March 2021, or  
sent by e-mail by 11.59pm on  
Thursday 18th March 2021 to  
[greenbankconnections@gmail.com](mailto:greenbankconnections@gmail.com)***

## Services at Greenbank

***Because of COVID restrictions, Greenbank Parish Church is not open for in-person worship at present.***

***Our main worship continues to be the livestream on Sundays at 10.30am.***