

Leaflet



Greenbank Parish Church
Braidburn Terrace, EH10 6ES

No 651 April 2016

Pulpit Diary

Apr 3

9.30am First Sunday Service
led by Monday House Group

10.30am Morning Worship
(special activity for children)

Apr 10

10.30am Morning Worship (Springboard
and Spectrum start of third
term)

Apr 17

10.30am Morning Worship

Apr 24 Stewardship Sunday

10.30am Morning Worship

7.00pm Night Light Service at
Morningside Parish Church
with Heart and Soul Swing
Band (focus on Christian Aid)

May 3

9.30am First Sunday Service
led by Help the Homeless

10.30am Morning Worship

For information about church organisations,
please contact the Church Office (Mon–Fri,
8.30am–12.00 noon, 1.30pm–3.00pm):

Mrs Virginia Johnston

tel and fax: 0131 447 9969

e-mail: greenbankchurch@btconnect.com

The pastoral team can be contacted through the
Church Office:

Rev Alison Swindells

tel and fax: 0131 447 4032

email: alisonswindells@blueyonder.co.uk

Rev W. Peter Graham

tel: 0131 445 5763

Youth Minister: Rev Bill Stone

tel: 07883 815 598

email: billstoneiii@gmail.com

To make contact with any of the organisations refer-
enced in this *Leaflet*, please use the telephone no
given, if there is one. Otherwise please contact the
Church Office. Website: www.greenbankchurch.org

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends

Perhaps you have read or heard something about the recent discussion over the timing of Easter. Some have argued that it would be more convenient for planning ahead if we celebrated Easter at the same time every year. But the date of Easter has a historic connection to Jesus and to the events of the last week of Jesus' life. In this it differs from



Christmas. The date of Easter was originally fixed with reference to the date of the Jewish Passover when Jesus, before he was betrayed, celebrated his last meal with his friends and offered them a way of remembering him through bread and wine – the origins of the Christian sacrament of communion.

Even when I complain, along with everyone else, that Easter is very early this year, still deep down I hope that the Church will resist the pressure to fix the date of this moveable feast. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, as I've already mentioned, it connects us historically to central events in our faith story – the Last Supper, the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Secondly, the traditional connection with the Jewish Passover is a reminder that Christianity emerged from within the Jewish faith, and of some of the things we hold in common with our Jewish brothers and sisters. Thirdly, the date of Easter is influenced by astronomical considerations which are beyond our direction or control – and surely this has something to commend it in the human-centred world in which we live. The Easter event itself takes us beyond our human experience and perhaps celebrating it as a moveable feast means that it retains a sense of unpredictability. And, lastly, because it is so hard to pin down, Easter has escaped, to some extent, the attentions of the marketplace, which dominate our celebration of Christmas. Although it has to be said that

the big stores try harder every year with eggs and chickens, bunnies and flowers and other symbols of new life.

Of course I have to admit that my heart rejoices at these signs of new life. The return of the lighter days always comes as a relief. As I write this letter Sean is in Jerusalem taking some study leave, and so

I have been walking the dogs twice daily in the Braidburn Valley Park. In the space of just a few days I have witnessed a profound transformation in the park, crocuses have come into flower – a splash of colour heralding the arrival of spring, and the daffodils are poking their heads through the cold earth. Meanwhile the buds are appearing on the stark bare branches of the trees – the promise of things to come.

Naturally these things speak to us of the new life that is at the heart of the Easter story and we approach the celebration very much in the spirit of affirmation of God's good creation. But I wonder what it is like to celebrate Easter in the southern hemisphere? There the seasons are reversed and people are moving towards the long dark days of winter. Could there be a deeper understanding of Jesus' journey into the darkness of Good Friday? Would we be inclined to approach the celebration with a greater awareness of the cost of God's refusal to allow sin and injustice and oppression to have the last word? Wherever we live, and whatever our circumstances, it is worth remembering that the joy of Easter began in the silent darkness of an empty tomb and it continues to take us by surprise today.

*Hallelujah Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!
Hallelujah!*

Happy Easter.

Alison I Swindells
Parish Minister

Annual Business Meeting : Sunday 13th March 2016

The meeting was constituted by prayer by the Minister, the Rev. Alison Swindells.

Approximately 140 members of the congregation were present. Apologies were received from Mr J Douglas Allan, Mrs Susan Inch, Mrs Rosemary McCulloch, Mr Ian McWilliam, Mr Donald Milne, Mrs Alison Murison, Mr John Murison, Miss Kathryn Sangster, Mr Michael Struthers, Mrs Gillian Sweetman and Mr Ian Thom.

In his introductory remarks the Preses of the Congregational Board, Roderick Morrison, stated that the Annual Business Meeting was required by the Church's constitution and allowed the Board to report its workings in the course of 2015 to a broad spectrum of the congregation. He thanked the Church's Treasurer, Robert Young, for his dedication and hard work over the past five years. Robert had intimated his wish to stand down at the September Board meeting and he had been working in tandem since then with John Ritchie, his successor as Treasurer. Also thanked were Gillian Sweetman (Health, Safety and Security Convener), Angus McLachlan (Fire Safety Adviser), Alan Armit (Halls Convener), Alan Ramage (Clerk to the Board), Joshua Man-yao (who had succeeded Hongsuk Um as Beadle), Jonathan Morrow (interim Beadle), Mirek Pociask (Church Caretaker/Handyman), Brian Webster (Church Cleaner), Ginny Johnston (Church Administrator) and Charles Black for his advice on insurance matters. The Preses also thanked all members of the Board for their positive and constructive contributions in the course of 2015. The Preses invited any members of the Congregation who were interested in serving on the Board to get in touch with him.

The Property Convener, David Allan, reported that it had been an eventful year from a property perspective. Both boilers in the Centenary Hall had been successfully replaced and for health and safety concerns asbestos in the crypt had been coated and sealed. Just over £3,000 had been spent on annual roof maintenance and around £2,000 on stonework. It had been identified that existing emergency lighting would require to be replaced which would be a significant cost. The efforts of the Work Squad (comprising volunteer members of the congregation) had enabled the improvement of the Ladies' and Mens' toilets and the re-painting of the external Church doors, the Hub vestibule and the Link corridor and the cleaning of the internal windows in the Centenary Hall. The Caretaker/Handyman had painted the Upper Hall and other volunteers had cleaned and repaired the curtains. Members had also installed new LED light fittings, motion sensors and more efficient immersion controls. A new energy group had been set up to look at energy savings, a significant part of which would be funded by the £3,000 raised as a result of the *Light a Light* appeal. Work on the lights in the Centenary Hall would have to wait until the emergency lighting issue had been resolved. The energy group was also working on a more weather-sensitive way of adjusting the heating in Church on Sundays. The Property Convener asked members to inform him or the Church Administrator if they noticed areas in the Church

which required attention. He concluded by thanking all the volunteers who had contributed to the property improvements in 2015 and the members of the Finance Committee which had supported him throughout the year. He invited other members with any domestic level practical skills (painting, plumbing, joinery, gardening, IT etc.) to help maintain the Church properties. The Preses added his thanks to all volunteers who had contributed so much in 2015.

With regard to Fire Safety, Angus McLachlan reported that the annual fire risk assessment had been carried out last August with no major problems having been found. A couple of action items had been noted and these had been addressed. Although not physically part of the Fire Alarm system, the emergency lights were a key part of the Fire Safety and Fire Emergency Plan. The work to renovate and extend the emergency lighting had been raised in the Property Convener's report.

Fire Safety Policies and Fire Emergency Plans were in place and Fire Safety Training material had been developed. The incorporation of Fire Safety duties (e.g. fire alarm tests and practice fire evacuations with the Pre-school Nursery and Playgroup) had also been agreed in principle with the Church Administrator and Pre-school Nursery leader.

The training of the Church staff would be rolled out at the end of March. It was planned to extend this training to other major user groups and the Duty Teams in due course.

On financial matters the Treasurer, Robert Young, reported that statutory accounts were prepared annually for the wider Greenbank Church. These included the financial statements for the Church itself as well as the numerous Church-associated organisations including the Pre-School, Spectrum, the Guild, QII, WAGs, BAGs and others. He further explained that the accounts for 2015 had been approved by the Church's Trustees and the independent examiner, Anne Dobson of Greenbank Accountants. Copies had been made available in the vestibule. The Treasurer explained that, given these accounts were in a statutory format and included the wider Church-associated organisations, they did not show a clear position of the finances of Greenbank Church itself. His report at this meeting would relate to the finances of the Church itself and would be based on the accounts for 2015 presented to the Congregational Board meeting on 19th January, copies of which had been issued with the *March Leaflet*. Total income for the Church (excluding YACHT and legacies) had been £288,000 which was £11,000 greater than in 2014. Total expenditure had been £276,000 (£18,000 greater than in 2014). Therefore there had been a surplus of £12,000. Total offerings including Gift Aid had amounted to £254,000 (£11,000 higher than in 2014) due to a concentrated effort to get Gift Aid up to date. Other ordinary general income (mainly from organisations, use of premises and investment income) had been £34,000 which had been in line with 2014 levels. The largest item of expenditure was the Church's £142,000 contribution to Ministries and Mission, only



£1,000 more than in 2014 as a result of an appeal based on the Youth Ministry project. The Church's contribution to the Presbytery of Edinburgh had been £4,000. In total the Church had contributed £146,000 to the wider work of the Church most of which went to Ministries costs (including the cost of the Minister). Salaries and staffing costs in 2015 had been £58,000 (in line with 2014 levels). Premises costs had been £56,000 which was £15,000 higher than 2014 costs mainly as a result of Board-approved but unplanned expenditure on new boilers and asbestos treatment. Other costs overall had been £2,000 greater than 2014 levels mainly due to timing differences in monies given to the Sunday School. During 2015 the YACHT appeal raised £64,000 and incurred costs of £31,000 (Youth Minister). In addition £2,000 of legacies had been received during the year. For 2016, a surplus of £2,000 had been budgeted before YACHT and one-off items, which was £10,000 less than the 2015 actual surplus as a result of budgeted income and costs being £14,000 and £4,000 respectively less than 2015 levels. 2016 income was budgeted to be lower due to a combination of Gift Aid being lower as 2015 Gift Aid levels were unusually high, other offerings being £3,000 lower than 2015 levels and income from the Church flat being £1,000 lower than 2015 levels. 2016 costs have been budgeted to be £4,000 lower than actual 2015 costs, mainly as a result of lower premises spend more than offsetting higher salary and other local costs. 2016 budgeted net income from YACHT was £37,000 which was £4,000 higher than the sum achieved in 2015. The Treasurer concluded by thanking the Assistant Treasurers, Michael Struthers and Kathryn Sangster, for all their dedication and hard work throughout the year and offered his best wishes to the new Treasurer, John Ritchie.

The Preses intimated that the Congregational Board had selected the *Autism Initiatives' Hermitage Centre* and the *Edinburgh Clothing Store* to be the recipients of the 2016 Lent and Easter Appeal.

Turning to the Board changes and the election of new Board members, the Preses intimated that John Ferguson, Henry Henderson, Colin Archibald and Liz Shiel had indicated their willingness to serve on the Board for a further 3 year term, subject to the approval of the congregation. After 3 years' service and 6 years' service respectively Fiona Grant and Anne Mackintosh were demitting office. Richard Denison, Angus McLachlan (but staying on the Board as Fire Safety representative), Edith Armit, John George and Roddy Morrison (but staying on the Board as Preses) were retiring as Board members nominated by the Kirk

GREENBANK PARISH CHURCH EDINBURGH



THE KIRK COLLECTION

By Henry W. Kerr, R.S.A. (1857-1931)

ACCOUNTS 1952 AND TREASURER'S REPORT



The Annual Business Meeting
will be held
on Tuesday, 10th February, 1953, at 7.30 p.m.

Once upon a time...

Session. The Preses thanked all of the above for their contributions to the Board. The Preses intimated a new Board nomination – Lyndsay Kennedy. In the absence of further nominations the congregation agreed the re-election of those willing to remain on the Board for a further three years and the new Board nominee.

The Minister expressed warm appreciation to the Preses, Roddy Morrison, for his role in leading the Board. The meeting concluded with a prayer of commitment.

NB: Following the meeting it was noted that Roddy Morrison, Angus McLachlan, David Reid, Alison Murison, Iain Davidson, Malcolm Watters and Louise Coghill had been appointed as Kirk Session representatives on the Board for a three year period.

Alan Ramage, Clerk to the Congregational Board

A Second Greenbank Alpha Course

On seven Monday evenings in February and March, a small group met in the Braid Room to follow the Alpha course – originally developed at Holy Trinity Church in London covering the essentials of the Christian faith. We started the meetings with an informal meal, helpful for people coming straight from work and an important icebreaker. The cakes were a special highlight! After a video on topics such as “*Is there more to life than this?*” and “*Who is the Holy Spirit?*”, we had a wide-ranging discussion,



based on our diverse upbringings and experiences. We were essentially a house group of 8–12 people and that made it easy for everyone to contribute – and to benefit from a deepening of understanding and faith as well as a sense of purpose and direction. We were particularly struck by the way that the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different people, by the importance of ecumenical action (“there is more that unites us than divides us”) and by the way that the church (including individual congregations like our own) is the family of God. The course was an excellent preparation for Easter.

Duncan Macniven

Messy Church

The latest Messy Church was held on Saturday 5th March. (See *photographs on opposite page.*) The children were making clay models of Christian symbols. Here are some examples:



Build a House

Just before noon on Saturday 25th April 2015 was when the first earthquake struck Nepal. Lasting just 45 seconds; causing devastation, changing people’s lives forever. 45 seconds that caused over 8,000 people to lose their lives and over 6 million families to lose their homes.

The World Mission Council is encouraging Presbyteries and congregations to raise £500 to build a house in Nepal, as part of a three year project in partnership with the United Mission to Nepal. Over the next three years the World Mission Council will be bringing us updates from Nepal so that we can see the difference that is being made.

Greenbank has recently contributed to this project – Spectrum held their annual fundraising lunch this month which raised over £500. It is gratifying for the children to know that their contribution will build one house. Another £100 has been donated from the profits from the coffee after the morning service.

Moira Davidson

Sharing the Light

(Further reasons for supporting the *Light a Light* initiative.)

A light will shine for each one:

For my three children who, with their spouses, have brought nothing but joy into our lives.

For the support given to us during times of illness from our Minister.

In memory of my wife and son who continue to shine their light on the lives of the families they have left.

In memory of family members.

In gratitude to God for his goodness to me and to the past and present members of Greenbank who have supported me by their prayers and friendship over the years.

With thanks for the life of my husband with whom I had the good fortune to be married for over sixty years.

Friendships made, support given, and a place where our family greatly benefited in their youth.

To say, “Thank you”, to God for my lovely family and my new life here.

In gratitude for so many things over many years.



Greenbank Scout Group

Annual Jumble Sale, Saturday 9th April: 9.30am–12 noon

During the week **Monday 4th – Friday 8th April** (evenings only, 6.30pm–8.30pm), our Scouts will be calling on houses in this area to collect items to sell, such as:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Books and toys | • Glassware; Hardware |
| • Clothing | • Pictures and Mirrors |
| • Crockery | • Records, DVDs and CDs |
| • Working Electrical Goods | • Soft furnishings |
| • Small items of Furniture | • any other saleable items |

Unsold items will be offered to charities such as Bethany, Shelter and Barnardo’s.

We would be very grateful if you could help this local institution by:

- collecting jumble by car, and setting up the stalls, on the evenings above – call Colin McCulloch (Tel 447 0915)



- baking even a small batch of traybakes (sliced), tablet, muffins, cupcakes, scone, loaves etc., and taking them to the Hall on the Friday evening or early Saturday morning
- coming along on Saturday 9th April (admission £2), with tea/coffee and home baking on sale, as well as (probably!) the best collection of jumble in town.

The next collection dates are Sundays **21st April** and **22nd May**, at the 10.30am Sunday Service (table set up in Main Hall).

Thanks to everyone who has responded to my request for donations to this worthwhile cause. The need for good quality donations to the starter pack scheme is as great as ever.

A full list of the items wanted for the starter packs was in last month’s *Leaflet*.

For more information about the work of Fresh Start, pick up a leaflet from me, see www.freshstartweb.org.uk or telephone 476 7741.

Alison Ambler



April Issue of *Life and Work*



The Edinburgh Clothing Store

This is one of two local charities which Greenbank has chosen to support financially this year via our Lent/Easter Appeal. (See March *Leaflet*.) On a practical note, we have previously gathered in clothes for The Edinburgh Clothing Store and we would like to do so again.

What's needed?



- baby clothes, clothes for children aged 2–10 and teenagers' clothes (very urgently needed)
- ladies' and men's clothes, including outdoor jackets and shoes
- towels, duvet covers and flat sheets

On **Sunday 10th April** or **Sunday 17th April** please bring any items, in good condition please, to the Braid Room before or straight after the 10.30am Service.

This is an easy and immediate way to help someone in need. Many thanks!



Janet Allan and Janet Ferguson

Faith and Finance

Should the Church of Scotland divest from fossil fuels?

Interview with Charles Munn, elder, economics professor and convener of the Church's Special Commission on the Purposes of Economic Activity

Two ministers reflect on past careers in the banking industry

The Privilege of Chaplaincy

The Rev Chris Kellock offers an insight into the life of a military chaplain

Changing Lives

The work of International Justice Mission

Bridging the Gap

Dr Murdo Macdonald shares stories of church-sponsored projects closing the digital divide

Creative Theology

Ron Ferguson argues that the Church of Scotland needs both conservatives and liberals

Unity of Church 'Of Fundamental Importance'

In his final column, the Rt Rev Dr Angus Morrison explains the importance of seeking unity

A Passion for Justice

Reflecting on a recent trip to Egypt, Hannah Mary Goodlad considers the plight of refugees and the need for tolerance

Image Over Word

The Rev Alastair Duncan considers the place and power of art in the Church today

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MORLICH HOUSE RESIDENTIAL HOME FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Coffee Morning

Garden, Gifts and Goodies Stall



at Morningside United Church Hall

Holy Corner

(enter off Chamberlain Road)

on Saturday 30th April 2016

10am–12 noon

£2.50 entry includes coffee/tea/juice

CrossReach is the Social Care arm of the Church of Scotland
a charity registered in Scotland No SC011353

Tickets are available from me. Donations for stalls will be very welcome.

Anne Oxbrow

Congregational Register

*Omitted from the On-line
version of the Leaflet*

Welcome Teams

April

- 3 **John George**, Rhian Ferguson, Alastair Hunter, Hazel Macaulay, Kathleen Patrick, Dorothy Whitehead, Tony Foster, Mark Fergusson
- 10 **John Rutherford**, David Allan, Richard Denison, Caroline Kehoe, Anne Kinnear, John Mowat, Jean Roynon-Jones, Ian McWilliam
- 17 **Ian Thom**, Keith Clark, Ray Dely, Catherine Hardie, Elizabeth Htet-Khin, Anne Oxbrow, Isobel Thom, Kay Ellis, Charles Black, Greig Scott
- 24 **Donald King**, Brian Barron, Walter Crosby, Donald MacLeod, Roderick Morrison, Mairi Stevenson, Jim Young, Kathryn Sangster

May

- 1 **Rosemary McCulloch**, Rona Ferguson, Fiona Grant, Christina Morrow, Alison Murison, Malcolm Reid, Joan Ritchie, Toby Tucker, Alastair Ross



Night Light

There will be a
Night Light
Service at 7pm
on Sunday
24th April
at Morningside
Parish Church,
with *Heart and
Soul Swing Band*.
(The Service will
focus on
Christian Aid.)

Flower Rota



Provided by

Delivered by

April

- 3 Anne Oxbrow
- 10 Jill Powlett-Brown
- 17 Jean Denison
- 24 Janet Walker

- Ruth Ray
- Janet McAinsh
- Margaret Mack
- Fiona Watt

May

- 1 Caroline Kehoe
- Catherine Ferguson

Crèche Rota



April

- 3 Lorna Htet-Khin
- 10 Ailsa Cameron
- 17 Lucy Teall
- 24 Carrie Reid

- Shona Murray
- Vivien Hutchison
- Hazel McLachlan
- Ailsa Cameron

May

- 1 Isobel Thom
- Jenny Wright

Coffee Rota



April

- 3 David Jack (D72)
- 10 Isobel and Ian Thom (D53, D54, D56)
- 17 WAGs
- 24 Rachel McWilliam (D58)

May

- 1 Janet and David Ferguson (D13, D26, D28)

The Guild

Our winter session of meetings closed with a fascinating talk from Dr Andrew Lyon on 1st March about his work as a neonatal physician, and our Annual Business meeting on 15th March followed by a short film about SLA, which we support with special collections every month.

Our summer outing will take place in May on a date still to be determined, and our monthly summer coffee mornings will take place in the Main Hall at 10.30am-11.45am on the **first Tuesday of each month from June to September**, to which all are welcome.

Kathleen Patrick

Have you looked at the Greenbank website yet?

www.greenbankchurch.org

Material for the May *Leaflet* should be delivered to the Church Office or to the Editors' pigeon-hole in the Main Hall by Sunday 10th April, or sent by e-mail by 9am on Tuesday 12th April to greenbankleaflet@googlemail.com

CONCERNING WORSHIP – SACRED SPACE

How do you know a church building when you see one? Is there such a thing as a typical church? Not all of them have spires, or pointed windows. Some are very plain: four walls and a roof and not much more. Some can be highly ornate, with all manner of intricate carvings on every available surface, inside and out. There are vast differences between the stark simplicity of a white-washed church on a Scottish island and the grandeur of York Minster or St Peter's in Rome or between the austerity of Durham Cathedral and the gilded splendour of a Russian Orthodox cathedral. Even within Edinburgh there is a great diversity, ranging from an unobtrusive ancient foundation like Duddingston Kirk to the dominant presence of St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral. But whatever their size or style, all of them have been built for the glory of God.

Whatever the differences in scale and magnificence, many church buildings have a fairly similar layout. This dates back to the fourth century, when in AD 313 the Roman Emperor Constantine decreed that there should be freedom of worship for all. Gone was the need for Christians to worship in secrecy, meeting in private homes, usually those of the more well-to-do members of the community. During times of persecution there was always a risk: Christians could have been put to death for the crime of assembling for worship or they could have been the victims of mobs who considered such gatherings unpatriotic or irreligious. Meeting in private homes gave a sense of hospitality and intimacy hard to imitate in public buildings, but surely qualities as essential today in large church buildings as at any time.

When Christianity became legal and respectable, the Emperor himself gave the church nine new buildings in Rome. Their design was adapted from a pattern used for many Roman public buildings, the *basilica*. The basilica was essentially a rectangular hall divided into three sections by two rows of columns parallel with the longer sides and a semi-circular niche opening off one of the shorter sides. This plan was followed because it provided what the church needed, not least space for the much larger congregations which now gathered for worship now that Christianity was respectable and officially recognised. Here is the direct ancestor of the familiar shape of many church buildings, not least Greenbank.

Within any church building there are various spaces. These correspond to the various reasons for having church buildings. There is the *gathering space*. The Christian community needs to assemble in order to worship. The sight of men, women and children making their way towards a church building is in itself a significant act of witness to a society where church-going has long ceased to be the norm. At Greenbank we are fortunate in having a reasonably sized vestibule which enables worshippers to be greeted as they arrive, to exchange news with each other and to make the necessary transition from the hectic world outside to the tranquillity of worship. And the congregation emerges from this same gathering space renewed and energised for its work of living out the gospel in every aspect of daily life.

This energising and renewal is the outcome of what takes place in the congregational space. This area is called the *nave*, a word derived from the Latin word for "ship", an ancient symbol of the church. The roof space of many churches is like that of an upturned boat. The association of the church with a ship, and the congregation as passengers in the ship, may suggest that together we are travelling towards God.

In most churches the nave is a rectangular space, filled with pews or chairs. Pews are a relatively modern invention. Those who have been in Greek or Russian Orthodox churches will have been aware of the people milling around, standing while the service is conducted by the priests. So it was in Scotland prior to the Reformation. There may have been stone seats around the base of columns or against the walls, for use by the infirm – hence our expression *the weak go to the wall*. Pews began to be installed in northern Europe when the importance of sermons developed. Sermons could be very long and the congregation needed to rest its weary legs.

Parish churches built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were very often plain rectangular structures. This style reflected the practices and emphases of the times. The pulpit would be on one of the long walls, with the pews facing the pulpit. On Communion Sundays, which were not as frequent as nowadays, some pews would be removed and a long trestle table would be set up lengthwise along the church, with benches for sitting on either side of it. After the sermon the bread and wine would be placed on the table, the minister would take his place at one end of it to preside at the Communion, and the congregation took their places on the benches. At the appropriate stage of the service the bread and wine would be passed along each side of the table. Because there would never be enough room for everybody, there would be several "sittings" until all had partaken. This practice was eventually replaced, partly by the influence of the Free Church, where the communicants never sat round a long table. From the middle of the 19th century onwards most churches have been built with the Communion Table on a raised platform. From there the bread and wine can be taken to the communicants sitting in pews covered with white linen cloths, an indication that they are an extension of the Communion Table.

In most church buildings the Communion Table is located in the sanctuary. In basilicas the apse housed the sanctuary. A rectangular sanctuary, as we have in Greenbank, is called a chancel. Both apses and chancels are raised by a step or two from the main floor and an arch or opening above the steps marks the division. This means that the holy Table is a focal point for the worshippers, a visible reminder, along with the font, of God's goodness and generosity and welcome. If it is at the Table that God's Word is made visible in bread and wine, it is from the lectern and the pulpit that God's Word is read, preached and becomes audible for those with hearts and minds to hear what God is saying to God's people gathered for worship.