

# Greenbank Connections



February 2019

Issue 676

Scottish Charity SCO11325



*The Sanctuary was well filled for the Watsonian Community Choir Christmas Concert (8th December, 2018)*

## Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

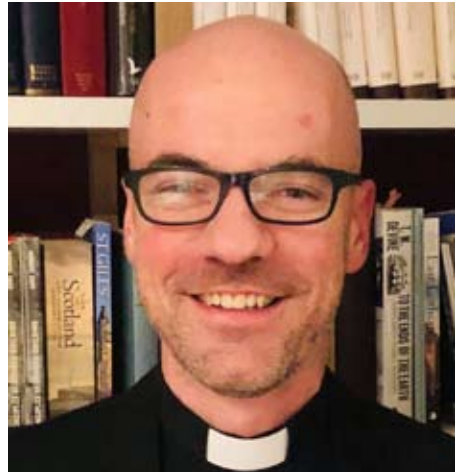
Online version: [www.greenbankchurch.org/about/the-newsletter/](http://www.greenbankchurch.org/about/the-newsletter/)

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## Minister's Letter

### Dear Friends



I'm writing this note on the eve of the much hyped and debated vote on the Prime Minister's Brexit deal. Times are interesting for everyone, that's for sure. I'm also pondering the Scripture theme for this Sunday, which is the parable of the vineyard from the Gospel of Matthew 21: 33-46. Our *Spill the Beans* resources which we use at the moment in Young Church (and as the basis for our Sunday worship) unpack the parable in the direction of how we steward the resources of the world – the vineyard that God has set us in. It strikes me that the current political turmoil, both in Scotland and England, comes down to how we are stewards of this vineyard in the roles and situations we inhabit. I'm with Desmond Tutu in his famous aphorism, "I'm confused about which Bible people are reading when they say that religion and politics do not mix." That was all the more potent in its context – the height of apartheid in South Africa. He reminded us that as Christians we can never be

cut off from the public realm in which we live and work. We might want to stick our heads under the duvet, or close the door and say “that’s for others”, but in the end to be true followers of Christ is to engage with all the ways of the world, combined with a healthy dose of retreat, to listen for the voice of God, and perhaps simply to recover!

Whatever happens in the next few months on the political stage, I hope that Christians will feel confident that their faith urges them to pray for, support and interrogate their political leaders in equal measure. Sometimes the church will do that as an institution, sometimes as individuals, but it is important that we have a voice. Something as huge as leaving the

EU has a range of potential unintended consequences, and we need to be alert to opportunism serving narrow interests.

The *Letter to the Hebrews* is full of memorable phrases, including the reassuring “Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” [13:8] I believe that is true, but I also believe that God acts in and through us by the Holy Spirit, working away at us in every new day and situation. At a time such as this, we should try to find time to listen to that voice.

With my love and best wishes for 2019.



Martin Ritchie

### **Pulpit Diary**

The Pulpit Diary is now incorporated into the monthly Calendar (see p.15). Worship events are rendered in the Calendar **in bold text**.

## **Christian Aid Week – 12th to 18th May 2019**



Over the next few weeks I will be getting in touch with collectors to ask if they can take part in the Christian Aid Week house-to-house collection again this year. However, if any of our collectors from last year wish to contact me to confirm they are available, that would be very helpful. We do need a few new volunteers. If you can help by delivering and collecting envelopes in a local street, please get in touch with me.

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

## Welcome Maestro Massimo!

It is great to be able to bring in the new year with a brand new Director of Music. Welcome to Maestro Alberto Massimo, whose first Sunday at the console was 6th January.

Alberto comes to us after over 20 years as Director of Music at Morningside United Church, but his musical roots were first in Capetown, South Africa, where he was a chorister in the Anglican cathedral. Alberto graduated BMus in organ, trumpet, double bass, piano, and composition in 1984. Specialising in conducting, he attended courses in Vienna, Salzburg, at the *Accademia Musicale Chigiana* in Siena, and a postgraduate course at the *Santa Cecilia Conservatory* in Rome, studying with Gianandrea Gavazzeni, Ferdinand Leitner, Carlo Maria Giulini, Franco Ferrara and Leonard Bernstein, and receiving a doctorate and diploma in conducting. In Rome he received appointments as “maestro di cappella” (organist and choirmaster and conductor), remaining at the *Basilica di Santa Cecilia* for four years and occasionally playing for a Papal Mass in the Vatican.



After postgraduate study at the *Accademia Barocca di Roma* in harpsichord and basso continuo with Rinaldo Alessandrini, on an Italian Government grant, he obtained a postgraduate Diploma in Music at the University of Edinburgh.

He has been Musical Director of the Edinburgh Chamber Orchestra from 1991 to the present, and we are very much looking forward to hosting the orchestra for

their weekly rehearsals and regular concerts, the first of which is coming up in the sanctuary at Greenbank at **7.30pm on 3rd April**.

Alberto is married to Victoria, and they have two children, Carlo and Olivia, both of whom are choristers at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, and attend St Mary's Music School. We were delighted to welcome Carlo to sing at Alberto's first service, and very much hope that we can hear from both him and Olivia in the near future.

Please join me in welcoming Alberto to Greenbank. We look forward to much wonderful music in worship!

**Martin Ritchie**

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## Used Stamps

I have emptied the little red post box in the Church Vestibule for many years. The used stamps were originally taken to *World Mission*, who sold them to a dealer. The proceeds were then used for the wider work of the Church. However, as *World Mission* no longer accepts carrier bags of stamps, the used stamps now go to the charity *Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre*.

The amount of stamps recently placed in the post box has greatly diminished, with the result that only a few bags are now collected yearly.

Now I feel is the time to hand this task over to a successor. If someone would be prepared to take over this work I should be grateful if they would contact me in the first instance.

**Jim Haggart**

## Learning and Unlearning

I was rewatching *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* over the holidays. It begins on the ice planet Hoth, and was all the justification I needed when I was younger to play it on every single day school was cancelled due to snow. In recent years, I have found myself drawn more and more into the second act, when Luke finds himself on Dagobah, the swamp planet, under the tutelage of Yoda, puppeteered and voiced by the inimitable Frank Oz.

On Dagobah, Luke undergoes intense physical and, I daresay, spiritual, training. Yoda teaches him to discipline his body, hone his mind, and use his spirit to be in tune with the universe around him. And from that training comes abilities which are, on their face, supernatural. While I do not think George Lucas was purposefully

drawing on Christian tradition, I think there is plenty there which aligns to Christian spirituality, for which holiness was not automatic. And it often requires unlearning as much as learning.

“You must unlearn what you have learned,” Yoda tells Luke when he is faced with telekinetically raising his ship out of the swamp. This, I think on buses and in the grocery store, is a skill worth cultivating. Christians and non-Christians alike benefit from unlearning all manner of everyday falsehoods, especially when it comes to Christianity, secularised or not. Though, this is difficult – it is harder to see the plank in your own eye. So, when next you settle down to watch *The Empire Strikes Back*, what will Yoda be telling you to unlearn?

Steve Chaffee

## Morning Coffee after the 10.30am Service

Thanks to the congregation's donations for their coffee and tea after the 10.30am service, it has been possible to buy new coffee cups, new plastic cups for juice, a second coffee machine (£240) and a stand (£315) for all the tables kept in the Main Hall.

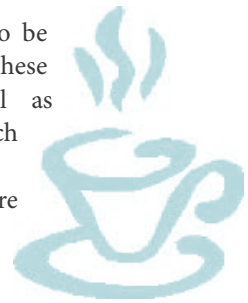
The remaining funds have allowed us to donate:

- £100 towards the transportation of 1,000 books to childrens' libraries in Kenya
- £500 to SLA for their work in India
- £500 to the Help the Homeless Group for their work with the homeless in Edinburgh.

It is marvellous to be able to support these charities as well as Greenbank Church itself.

Finally, thanks are due to Fiona Grant and Pauline Walker for all their organisational

support on Sundays, and to all the groups of volunteers who have made and served the coffee through the year.



Isobel Thom

## World Day of Prayer



**World Day of Prayer** is a prayer movement with an annual service held on or near the first Friday in March (1st March 2019). It is interdenominational and ecumenical and for all ages.

Throughout this service, written this year by women of Slovenia, we hear stories which reflect their history and situation today and are invited in this year's theme to *Come – Everything Is Ready*.

In a story Jesus told about a great dinner, the invitations are rejected, and then given to people on the streets. However there is still room and more invitations are given out until the celebration can begin. We should ask who is missing from the table in our communities? How can we include them?

You are all invited; the **World Day of Prayer** is for everyone. Will you accept our invitation?

A warm welcome awaits you at our local service on **Friday 1st March, at Morning-side Parish Church, Braid Hall, Coffee at 10.30 am, Service at 11 am.**



The next Fresh Start Collections will take place on **Sundays 10th February** and **10th March** (Main Hall after the 10.30am service). For further information on items required by Fresh Start, contact me or look at the Fresh Start website.

Alison Ambler  
(alison@ambler.me.uk)

## Bottletops

Over the last year we have produced 10 10lb bags of tops, each earning £1, not an enormous amount but every little helps, which last year, as decreed by the *Rotary in Galashiels*, went to *Marie Curie*.

I'd be very grateful if all tops are washed and have the necessary numbered triangle on the inside of the lid. (See April 2018 *Connections* for details.)

Many thanks and keep on collecting.

Val Smart

## Scripture Union Camps



**Calling all parents:** if you'd like your child (P5–S6) to learn more about the Christian faith whilst having great fun with other children from around Scotland, then why not seriously consider sending him/her to a Scripture Union Camp. To find out more:

Visit: [www.suholidays.org.uk](http://www.suholidays.org.uk)

Email: [info@suholidays.org.uk](mailto:info@suholidays.org.uk)

Tel: 0141 352 7620

Alison Ambler

## Friendship Club

In January we were in sunny climes with a fascinating and beautifully illustrated talk on her visit to *Sri Lanka* from Kathleen Patrick, whose following music afternoon's theme was *Wind Power*.

Eric Melvin then captivated us with his revelations about *Mary Queen of Scots*. And so we look forward to February when on the 6th we welcome Sarah Laing who is going to entertain us with a very special *Songs from the Shows*. This will be an open meeting and everyone is welcome (entry £2 for non-members), so join us for a fabulous nostalgic afternoon with many opportunities to sing along. Let's give her a full house .

On 13th February, Kathleen's music comes from *Across the Pond* then still over the water on the 20th, Maureen Kelly will be telling us about the *Amish and Shakers*.

Our first speaker in March is now Michael O'Kane, the local award winning optician from Specsavers.

Val Smart

## Monday Bible Study

Our new guide this term is *Christian Character (Lifebuilder)*, ISBN 9781859993750, using which we will study a number of passages in the Old and New Testaments. Topics include *The Cost of Commitment* (Luke 14:25-35) on 11th February, and *Resisting Temptation* (Genesis 39) on 25th February. Our study period lasts between 1 and 1½ hours and is followed by refreshments. All are welcome.

For further information please contact Joan Ritchie or Gillian Sweetman.

Joan Ritchie

## Jean Curwen née Boyle 1929–2018



We received word from Aberystwyth that Jean Curwen, the first secretary of Quest at its formation in 1945, died on 4th June, 2018. Her husband of 61 years, Tony, wrote in early January to let us know, and told of how her faith had such strong foundations as a result of her time at Greenbank.

They both visited in summer 2013, when they attended Sunday worship on 16th June, a special experience for her.

If anyone would like Tony's address to be in touch, or to have a copy of the tribute from Jean's funeral service, please let me know.

Martin Ritchie





## Thank Advent and

What a season that was! At our **Carol Service** on the eve of the service of Music and Remembrance **Year** on 30th December, we went to the depth, and fun through December for creating and leading the evening so wonderful, getting orders of erecting epic Christmas trees, and It was wonderful to have big attendance welcome friends, family, and neighbours. Special thanks to the Social and Music Committees for all that they did and to get people

Well done to

Martin







## Thanks for Christmas!

was! From the Advent  
beginning of 2nd December to  
readings for **The Gate of the**  
travelled a journey of beauty,  
ber. Thanks are due to so many  
events, making the church look  
service ready, singing, playing,  
and of course for coming along!  
attendances for everything, and to  
neighbours as well as the regulars.  
al and Mission and Service  
y did to organise hospitality  
e along to events.

**Greenbank!**

**Ritchie**



## Work Party Report

As always the Work Party display was much admired and we received e-mails and letters of thanks. Most of the goods were distributed before Christmas.

Fiona Stimpson, from *Edinburgh Clothing Store*, came to our Christmas Party and took two large sackfuls of jumpers, cardigans, baby blankets, hats and mitts. She told us about their clients, especially refugee families and the unemployed.

Our Homelessness Group took 60 adult hats to the night shelter run by *Bethany*. Baby hats and jackets went to *Simpsons Maternity Unit*. Twiddle Muffs went to the Saturday Club at *The Open Door* and to *The Elms*, together with knee rugs. The ladies

at *Morlich House* were delighted with their bedsocks. *Muirhouse* got a sackful of jumpers for children. *Children 1st* received baby blankets, childrens' jumpers and trauma teddies, which police will carry in their cars to comfort young children involved in upsetting circumstances.

We are now busy filling up our boxes again. Many thanks to those who have donated yarn, especially machine-washable Double Knitting.

As always, new members will be very welcome to join us. **Dates of the next meetings are: 7th and 21st February, and 7th and 21st March at 2.30 pm.**

Enquiries to [Anne Oxbrow](#).



*The Work Party were joined at their Christmas meeting by Fiona Stimpson, Director, Edinburgh Clothing Store*

## Edinburgh Street Pastors – Listening, Caring and Helping

### *Could you help?*

Edinburgh Street Pastors was set up in 2009. We are a group of Christian volunteers who are trained to respond to the issues that arise during the night time on the city centre streets.

Edinburgh City centre is a very different place at night. Thousands of people flood into the city from all over the world to enjoy the pubs, clubs, theatres, cinemas, restaurants and other entertainment. Edinburgh's night club scene attracts many stag and hen party groups from around the UK. There are also huge numbers of people begging and sleeping rough on our streets at night. So we patrol the city centre streets each Friday night, and two Saturdays per month with a minimum of 3 street pastors on patrol together between 11pm and 4am, and hope to exert a calming influence.

Each volunteer serves on one team that goes out once per month. We currently have 6 teams and we are looking to create more teams to enable us to patrol every Friday and Saturday night. The police are greatly appreciative of what we do, fully supportive and say our work saves police time. We are therefore keen to expand (as the police have been asking us for some years) to patrol every Saturday. Our aim is to listen, care and help. We do not seek to



judge, but want to extend the love of Christ to those who are in need. We serve people in various ways. We offer hot drinks and blankets to the rough sleepers. We help vulnerable young people to get home safely. We look out for anyone who is the worse for drink or drugs and care for them as required. We are often asked who we are and what we're doing which gives us the opportunity to share our faith. It is surprising how often spiritual conversations may ensue. The work is rewarding, as so often young and old on the streets offer us spontaneous thanks (and sometimes a hug!) and are grateful for what we are doing.

Interested in joining this work? Currently there are 50 Edinburgh Street Pastors from 34 churches, 17 being Church of Scotland churches. We would love to hear from you. Please contact Lawrie Hudson, Recruitment and Training Coordinator [edinburghsp.training@gmail.com](mailto:edinburghsp.training@gmail.com)



## Travels in Malawi for Church of Scotland

When I was last in Malawi in 1990 to visit friends, little did I think that I'd be back one day in my role as Convener of the Church of Scotland's Africa and Caribbean Committee.



The population of Malawi has grown from around 9 million then to 19 million now but the country remains one of the world's poorest – 171st out of 182 on a United Nations index. Yet the people are amazingly cheerful and welcoming to visitors and have a great fondness for Scotland.

My visit in December 2018 was very short, just 6 nights. The three of us who were visiting travelled over 600 miles, from the Airport at the capital Lilongwe in the centre to the northern town of Mzuzu and then all the way to Blantyre in the south. Fortunately this was all on tarred roads!

We visited two new Church of Scotland Mission Partners, Linus Malu and Gary Brough, who are working with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Livingstonia Synod in the north of Malawi. They are supporting an amazing project run by the Church to reduce gender based violence. Linus leads the legal team, which helps victims of GBV get access to local justice services, provides mediation and counselling, and tries to tackle the problem at its roots through engagement with communities. It is interesting to see that

the same issues are facing people there as here and that the churches in both countries are trying to help. Gary's job is to raise resources for this and other social outreach work.

It was very interesting to revisit the Mission station at Ekwendeni and see the hospital where our friends worked and the Girls School where Alison Swindells once taught. We admired the major developments of a multi-use building funded from Scotland by the Salvesen bequest and the fast expanding Synod University.

And, just to show that Greenbank connections are everywhere, I met Cogitator Mapala, who worshipped with us while studying in Edinburgh and is now Registrar of the Livingstonia Synod University!

Valerie Macniven

### Coffee Rota

#### February

- 3 SLA
- 10 John & Alison Murison (D60 & D62)
- 17 Country Dance Club
- 24 Choir

#### March

- 3 Communion – no coffee



## Congregational Register

*Omitted from the online  
version of Connections*

## Welcome Teams

### February

- 3 John George**, Rhian Ferguson, Alastair Hunter, Kathleen Patrick, Dorothy Whitehead, Tony Foster, Diana Teasdale, Jill Powlett-Brown
- 10 John Ritchie**, Susan Inch, Gill Sweetman, Ian Thomson, Susan Jackman, Clare Campbell, Catherine Cameron, Ishbel Emery
- 17 Alan Armit**, Edith Armit, Louise Coghil, Hugh Cowan, Susan Black, Malcolm Watters, Nora Kellock, Elizabeth Mackay
- 24 Ian Thom**, Keith Clark, Ray Dely, Catherine Hardie, Elizabeth Htet-Khin, Anne Oxbrow, Isobel Thom, Charles Black, Kay Ellis, David Gourlay

### March

- 3 Donald King**, Brian Barron, Walter Crosby, Donald MacLeod, Roderick Morrison, Mairi Stevenson, Jim Young, Kathryn Sangster

## Flower Rota

*Provided by*

*Delivered by*

### February

- |                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| <b>3</b> Moira Land      | Janet Edwards  |
| <b>10</b> Ishbel Emery   | Katy Maguire   |
| <b>17</b> Chrissie Munro | Caroline Kehoe |
| <b>24</b> Grace Maweu    | Helen Aitken   |

### March

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>3</b> Isobel Thom | Rosemarie Crawford |
|----------------------|--------------------|

*Crèche for children under  
3 is in the Hermitage Room  
at every 10.30am service  
(10am in the summer)*



## Feedback

The Communications Committee is reviewing all of our information giving and publicity activity, including *Connections* and website and social media material. One strand of this is to seek feedback on the content of *Connections*, and a short questionnaire is included with this issue to seek your views. Please post completed questionnaires into the box in the Vestibule. The questionnaire is also available on the Church website.

If you have any points you wish to make immediately, please drop a note to the editors, or to David Jack, Convenor of the Committee.

David Jack  
[davidinnesjack@gmail.com](mailto:davidinnesjack@gmail.com)

## Greenbank Scout Group Annual Jumble Sale

**Saturday 13th April: 9.30am–12 noon**

During the week **Monday 8th – Friday 12th 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; Clothing; Crockery; Working Electrical Goods; Small items of Furniture; Glassware; Hardware; Pictures and Mirrors; Records, DVDs and CDs; Soft furnishings; and any other saleable items.

All offers of help collecting or displaying items and on the day will be gratefully received. Unsold items will be offered to charities before disposal.

**Do come along on Saturday 13th April**  
**Tea/coffee and home baking on sale**  
**Admission £2**

## The Guild

We started the New Year in fine form with an excellent coffee morning; it was great to see friends over coffee and cake and catch up on everyone's activities over Christmas and New Year.

At our first meeting, on Tuesday 15th January, we had the Rev Liz Henderson from *Richmond Craigmillar* telling us about the continued regeneration of the Craigmillar area with all its changes to plans, delays, difficulties and changing needs. Many of us were familiar with the work done by the church when we were twinned with them. Although circumstances change and some things improve, there is still great need in the area and her description of the amazing efforts currently being made to alleviate hardship were inspiring. She gave us much to think about.

Our next meeting is on **Tuesday 5th February** when the theme is *A Gift of Music in Song*, then on the 19th we will be hearing about the work of *Braidburn School*.

All are welcome to our meetings at 7.30pm in the Braid Room, and of course there is always time for tea and a chat.

Edith Armit





## Book Café for Scottish Love in Action

**Saturday 2nd March 2019**

It will be held at **George Watson's College**  
Dining Hall, Colinton Road, Edinburgh  
**10.30am – 2.30pm**

Come and browse a great selection of books and enjoy a warm bowl of soup. Two books, soup and a roll are included in the **£7.50 ticket price (£5 for children aged 7–15, under 7s free)**. Additional books can be purchased. Coffee available.

Parking available.

**Tickets from:**

[www.sla-india.org/news/book-cafe-2019](http://www.sla-india.org/news/book-cafe-2019)  
or [tinyurl.com/y8d9svcs](http://tinyurl.com/y8d9svcs)  
or email [slabookcafe@gmail.com](mailto:slabookcafe@gmail.com)  
or at the door.



## Bridal and Bubbly Afternoon Tea

Tickets are now available for this afternoon tea with a difference. Come and join us on **Saturday 30th March 2019, 2.30pm–4.30pm**, for a scrumptious afternoon tea, a glass of bubbles and a display of wedding dresses through the decades. We are hoping to display wedding dresses from every decade as far back as we can go.

We need your help to do this! We are looking for ladies who are willing to lend their wedding dress for the afternoon. We have already had several dresses being offered but could do with a few more.

For tickets, more information about the event or to lend your wedding dress for the afternoon, please contact Carrie Reid ([carrie.r@talk21.com](mailto:carrie.r@talk21.com)) or Kirsten Pink ([kirstenpink@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kirstenpink@hotmail.co.uk)).

Tickets are **£20 a head** and all proceeds are going to the YACHT campaign. All are welcome – why not bring your mum, or indeed your daughter for a Mother's Day treat?

Carrie Reid

