

Greenbank Connections



February 2023

Issue 713

Scottish Charity SC011325



The Gatepost to Braidburn Valley Park

Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

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

Contents

Minister's Letter	2
Gift Service – Thank You	3
Interim Moderator	4
Eco-Group	4
Book Review	5
Soup n' Song n' Sweet Treats	5
Thought for the Month	6
Caring for China	7
Greenbank's Stained Glass	8
World Day of Prayer	10
Poppy Scotland	10
Guild	11
Friendship Club	11
Prisoners Week	12
Thanks – the Coffee Team	13
Congregational Register	14
Church Flowers	14
Open Door Coffee and Cake	14
Welcome Teams	15
Flower Rota	15
Coffee Rota	15
Contact details	15
Christian Aid Book Sale	16



Minister's Letter



Welcoming the Stranger

The mystery of the Christmas story still intrigues me well into the winter months of January and February. And because we are still in Epiphany, I find myself reflecting on the Magi, strangers who appeared from a foreign land to pay homage to Jesus.

The Magi came from beyond the Jewish tribe to bless a Jewish child, and then returned to where they came from. We never hear of them again or what became of them. What remains in our Christian scriptures is only the story of the bright star that guided their journey to bring gifts to the infant Jesus. From the beginning, the stranger was drawn to Christ and Christ to the stranger.

The Magi remind us that strangers are important figures in the Bible. The Old Testament holds many commands to love the stranger.

For example, “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:33-34).

Perhaps this is why, as faithful Jews, Mary and Joseph did not seem surprised when the Magi showed up. Instead of turning them away,

they accepted their gifts. Mary and Joseph welcomed them, knowing strangers often brought blessings.

The Magi recognised the Divine in a child who was a stranger to them. As we move through our days, may we also embrace the mystery of the stranger. May we recognise God in those we encounter, even in the most unlikely of places. Who knows what blessings we might welcome into our lives.

Julia A Cato

Gift Service – Thank You

Thanks to everyone’s generous support we were able to take a carload of presents, along with several bags of knitted clothing from the Work Party, to Muirhouse. An equal amount was set aside for Barnado’s. We were able to split £890 in vouchers between the two charities.

Some extracts from the thank you letters:

From Muirhouse: “Many thanks to you, the congregation and the knitters group for all the gifts, knitting and vouchers. All much appreciated by parents as well as children “

From Barnado’s: “Dearest Friends, I cannot recall a time when your contribution to the gift collection was needed more than it was last year. When I asked for your help, I had no idea what your response would be. It was amazing.

I cannot thank you enough for what you do. It is impossible to measure

the difference that your kindness and generosity make.

This year 259 children had presents to open. Every child, where possible, received a toy, an activity, a book and something nice.

The gifts were distributed through Christmas parties in the Prison visits room. Gifts were also given out directly and delivered to those unable to collect them.

Thank you once more for what you all do in supporting the Edinburgh Prison Christmas Gift Collection “

On a personal note, the Prison Officer involved has been invited to receive a Butler Trust Commendation for the work he has done over the last 22 years for the Edinburgh Prison Christmas Gift Collection.

Hazel McLachlan

Interim Moderator

Although I have met some of you – in person or virtually – since becoming Greenbank’s Interim Moderator in November, and been involved in other ways in the life of the congregation over the past few weeks, this is the first chance I have had to introduce myself to a wider audience. So here is a little bit about me.



Family: I grew up in Fife, the middle child of three. I am married to Bruce, also a Fifer.

Education: I attended George Watson’s College before studying Law and, many years later, Divinity, both at Edinburgh University.

Work: My first degree led to a career as a solicitor. Based in an office in the New Town, I dealt mainly with conveyancing and executry work. I have had three full-time ministry posts:

- Outreach Minister at St Andrew’s & St George’s Church in George Street, serving as chaplain to shops and businesses in the heart of the city;
- Parish Minister in Monifieth, joining what was, at the time, a recently-formed triple union with a plethora of ecclesiastical buildings and the need to forge a

new identity; and

- Associate Minister at Dunblane Cathedral.

I retired from full-time ministry in 2021 and we moved back to Edinburgh. I now work on a part-time basis as locum at Inverleith St Serf’s Parish Church. I am also

Chair of the Kirk’s Housing & Loan Fund. Now having become Greenbank’s Interim Moderator too, I am kept pretty busy.

It will take me some time to get to know you and your story, but I look forward to being involved with the congregation’s life, work and plans as it looks to the future.

Dorothy U Anderson
Interim Moderator

Eco-Group

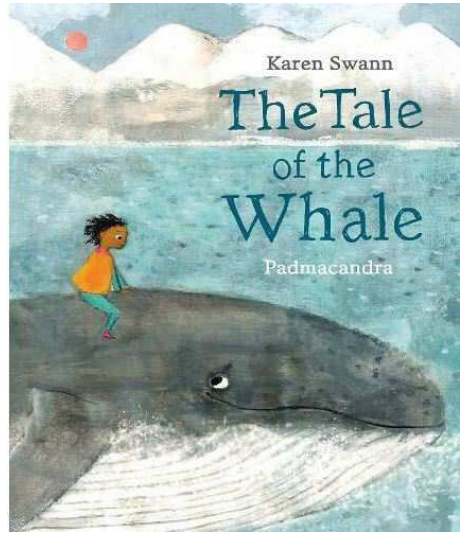
Karen Young is now recovered enough from her bike accident and able to take over as Eco-Group Convener. I would like to thank all the members of the group present and past who have made a difference to the eco credentials of Greenbank. I thank the members of the congregation for their help and hope they continue to encourage the group and its new leader.

Alison Murison

Book Review

The Tale of the Whale by Karen Swann, illustrated by Padmacandra. In this book the child narrator of the story describes meeting a whale who has a lot it wants to show. The two special friends go on a journey of discovery together, across and under the ocean. They encounter the joyous colour and beauty of the ocean's many inhabitants - turtles, rays, seagulls, dolphins, seals and polar bears. But they also witness evidence of human carelessness, an abandoned shipwreck and the "soup of the ocean", their name for discarded waste harmful to sea creatures. As they return home the two travellers are saddened by all they have seen and once back on dry land, the child promises the whale that they will tell everyone all about it. Finally, the child appeals to the reader "You've heard the whale's story . . . please change it with me".

The rhyming text of the book flows along gently, and together with the beautiful illustrations, explores our



joyful connection with the natural world and our responsibilities towards it. It's an excellent story for different generations to experience together and feel empowered to play a part in the change needed.

If anyone would like to borrow my copy of the book please get in touch.

Janet Edwards
Eco Group

ISBN: 978-1912650491 £11.48 (hardback)

ISBN: 978-1912650910 £6.99 (paperback)

Soup n' Song n' Sweet Treats

Come and join us! Newmarket Community Choir is giving a concert at 12.15pm on Sunday 5th February, after the service and coffee.

The limited tickets for the concert and the light lunch afterwards are selling fast but it's possible to come only to the concert. Entry costs £3 and you can pay at the door.

David Allan

Thought for the Month

Do you have a favourite Bible passage? Though I can't claim I do, I am often drawn to Genesis 12:1-9. Sometimes that has been within the context of a settled and established ministry, but more often it has been when I have been an Interim Moderator.

The passage tells part of Abram/ Abraham's story, of his journeying away from Haran, from the familiar, established, routine of daily life, with family, flocks and possessions, to the land of Canaan.

There are plenty of analogies that can be drawn:

- for the Church in this time of flux and fluidity;
- for individual congregations facing uncertainties and a time of change;
- and even as we move through the church year – leaving behind the familiar patterns of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and Candlemas, to the more downbeat, less certain, days of Lent now upon us.
- In the midst of all that is unknown perhaps there are lessons for us in Abram's journey.

Especially, I think, it is worth reflecting on five words in the last sentence of the passage:

'Abram journeyed on by stages.'

When progress is slow, let us remember that, at times, Abram stopped to worship God.

If we're not sure we are following the right path, let us remember that neither did Abram know his destination, but travelled in faith.

And when we take almost as many steps backwards as forwards, let us remember that we travel in God's time, and, like Abram, journey on in stages.

Dorothy U Anderson
Interim Moderator)



<- The notice on the lamp

Caring for China

By the Rev Patricia Johnston

Scottish
Churches
China Group

苏格兰教会中国会



Scotland has a long connection with China, including Christian links such as the pioneering medical and educational work of Eric Liddell.

Today, the Church of Scotland is a member of the Scottish Churches China Group (SCCG (Scottish Charity Number SCO33740)), a small ecumenical charity working with Chinese partners in public health and education.

Modern China is a huge – and rich – country but there is still immense poverty so we try to respond where there is most need, particularly in the fields of medicine and education.

Our Chinese partners include The Amity Foundation in Nanjing, a large NGO charity set up in 1985 by Chinese Protestant leaders for Chinese Christians to witness through good works; the Rende Foundation in Shanghai; the Caritas Social Service Centre in Liaoning Catholic Diocese mainly focusing on care for the elderly and those with HIV/Aids; and Spiritual and Palliative Care professionals at Shengjing Hospital. Projects range from training staff looking after children with additional support needs, including

autism, to projects training medical staff involved in palliative and end of life care, neither of which are yet fully recognised specialisms in China.

The SCCG draws on expertise within Scotland and the UK, having collaborated with organisations such as Scottish Autism, Macmillan Cancer Care and Alzheimer Scotland to train Chinese partners. We fund travel for Chinese partners to come to Scotland for training as well as for Scottish experts training partners in China.

The turmoil caused by the pandemic, plus the current political situation in China, means we have to work very hard – and sensitively – to support our Chinese partners. We look forward to seeing them again in person quite soon.

The SCCG AGM will be held in Edinburgh at the Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL on Thursday 9th March at 11am (includes lunch at 12.30pm).

If you would like more details about our work or to be added to our mailing list, please email me:

patricia.johnston@sccg.org.uk

or look at our website:

www.sccg.org.uk

If you would like to invite us to speak to your church or group, please let us know.

World Church Group

Greenbank's Stained Glass The Revelation Window

The window we all see immediately in every entry we make to the Sanctuary, and often reflect on during worship, is the massive Revelation Window in the Chancel.

While it is probably most often looked at during worship, it has another important role: passers-by often see it illuminated from within on evenings when the Sanctuary is in use, with the internal lighting throwing the image of the Redeemer out into the wider community of Greenbank.

However and whenever you look at the window, you are struck by the strength of the imagery and the sheer scale of the five window panels. The Redeemer at the top is shown with the slain Lamb of God, surrounded by angels holding spheres, representing God's power over the world. In the centre is the Tree of Life, whose leaves symbolise the need for the healing of the nations, and below is an angel gathering in the prayers of the faithful before God. Elsewhere elders worship the throne, the peoples of the world offer their worship, and in the bottom corners more angels are in action suppressing the four winds which threaten destruction of the world.

The designer, Alexander Strachan, was a prominent stained glass artist, who along with his brother taught at the Edinburgh School of Art and then also set up his own workshop in Balcarres Street, from where our window was produced in 1928. His

design was commissioned by the parents of Captain Charles Inglis Clark, who died of wounds in Mesopotamia in 1918.

A few of us in the congregation are hobby stained glass 'artists' and can testify to the effort involved in first designing a window, and then executing it – tracing the design, cutting glass, doing the lead work and fitting the finished item. Oddly, my own first evening classes in stained glass were held in the current Edinburgh Stained Glass House in Balcarres Street. We know that a design is often a long time in the conception phase, with every variant drafted raising questions about the image being projected as well as technical issues around its practical execution. The process can be exhausting even for a small piece.

While Strachan had the content of the Book of Revelation to draw upon, he had to select the key images he wanted to portray, and design a coherent tableau covering the essence of the book, on a grand scale. This must have required great imagination and care in the finalising of the design. The richness of the colours used is notable (deciding on glass colours is another burden in the process!) as is the impact of particular images, such as the Tree of Life and others.

Now a fair bit of the window's imagery would be seen to be dated if produced today – white male elders with beards being one example, but



in other aspects the window has astonishingly modern references. Is not a current reference for faith in worship and action the acknowledgement of God's power in creating our world and sustaining it? In many ways we are the stewards of the Tree of Life and need to redouble our efforts in this current era to assist the healing of the nations. So also are our own actions in preventing the destruction of the world by climate change - reflecting the efforts of the angels to suppress the four winds in the window!

Inspiration in the making of stained glass is everything. Those of us who do it for a hobby link the work of our hands with the celebration of beauty and the wider span of God's Creation. Have a think yourselves about your own concepts of art and the environment next time you pause and take in the images of the Revelation Window.

David Jack

The second edition of the Rev Donald Mackay's Guide to Greenbank's stained glass windows is available online:

<https://tinyurl.com/3nhszwv4>

Copies are available for £5 from the Church Office

World Day of Prayer – Friday 3rd March 2023

This year our local service will be held at Morningside Parish Church at 10.30 am. Refreshments will be served afterwards in the Braid Hall.

The WDP theme for 2023 is: "I have heard about your faith". This year's service has been written by the women of Taiwan. All are welcome at this service, men, women and young people.

From Tuesday 21st February the Scottish WDP Committee has planned "10 days of prayer", with short reflections which will be posted on the wdpscotland.org.uk website and their Facebook Page.

For Edinburgh, an online Bible Study will be held via Zoom on Friday 3rd February 2023, from 10.30 – 12.00 led by the Rev Fiona Kennedy.

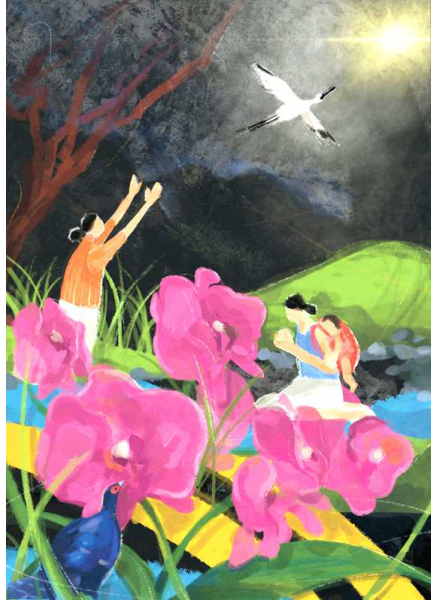


Illustration from Taiwan

Poppy Scotland

Once more Greenbank Church has continued to show its generosity for the Poppy Scotland appeal. You raised £492.37 this year which is most impressive for only two 30 minute collecting sessions standing outside Church. I am always humbled by how kind people are towards this charity and how determined you are to contribute no matter what the weather!

Thank you on behalf of all the veterans and serving personnel who you will be helping this coming year.

John Adair



Guild

Happy New Year to everyone!

We finished last year with a splendid Christmas Party, with a lavish Afternoon Tea and an excellent singer. His choice of music was spot on – lots of songs we knew. We were encouraged to sing along.

Our first meeting in January was a well attended Coffee morning (lots of cake!). We were pleased to have friends from Fairmilehead Guild joining us. Children from Greenbank Pre School entertained us



with their repertoire of songs. They are amazing wee singers.

We are looking forward to hearing the Very Reverend Dr Derek Browning tell us about his year as Moderator on 7th February, and on the 21st there will be a talk about the making of Stained Glass. On 7th March Dr Katie Bogie will be speaking about the work of the Edinburgh City Mission.

We are always pleased to welcome anyone interested in the talks to join us. The meetings are at 2.30pm in the Braid Room.

Edith Armit

Friendship Club

The scheming of Burke and Hare, the rise of the railways, the lottery, the millennium and the largest equine statues in the world – each of these topics came into the fabulous talk given by Colin Chase on the history of the Union Canal, a very fitting start to the new year. Then to celebrate the birthday of Robert Burns we enjoyed listening to and singing along with Alan and Paul, the 'Forget Me Notes', another great afternoon.

We are all very aware at the moment of the plight of refugees

from Ukraine. On 8th February Sabine Chalmers will be telling us about the situation of refugees from Afghanistan who have settled here in Scotland. Later, on the 22nd, Alasdair Smart will be taking us on his Tyrolean adventure and on 8th March, back in Scotland, we'll hear about Cramond Island from John Dods.

So join us for enlightening and relaxing friendly afternoons in the warm.

Val Smart

Prisoners Week

“Remember those who are in prison as though you were in prison with them” Hebrews 13:3

Last year Greenbank Church signed the Prisoners’ Charter in which we promised to Support the Activities of Prisoners Week Scotland by :

- Praying for all those affected by the Criminal Justice System
- Annually engaging with Prisoners Week
- Informing our congregation of events
- Exploring the effects of the Criminal Justice System in our local community (Victims, Offenders, Families)
- Displaying this Charter and reviewing it annually.

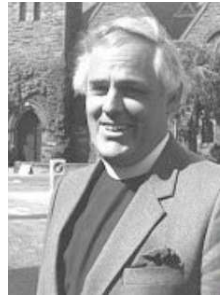
2022’s Prisoners Week theme of celebrating the stories of transformation, forgiveness, hope, new beginnings and encouragement invited us to listen to grace-filled stories of those affected by imprisonment in Scotland. Here at Greenbank we have our own story of grace which some of you may have heard of.

Historically Greenbank Church has been involved in volunteer work in the Prison Sector and some individual members are still involved. The Greenbank group was started by Jack George in the 1950s.

As part of exploring Greenbank’s role in Prisoners Week we spoke with Isobel Clark who told us of her late husband’s experience of befriending a prisoner from Saughton

and remaining friends over almost a lifetime. Bob Clark and a number of Greenbank members at that time including current members John George, Charles Black and Roger Bland were approached by the prison chaplain and encouraged to be involved in a project to link up and befriend a long serving prisoner. Bob was allocated Jim Nelson who was in prison for the murder of his mother. As his sentence progressed Jim was allowed to visit Bob and family at home in Morningside.

Jim was keen to study and Bob encouraged him by taking him to Thins to buy books. Jim regularly enjoyed meals with the family and there were many lively discussions round the kitchen table.



At that time Saughton had a Prison Choir which visited churches in Edinburgh.

Isobel remembers Jim as a wonderful singer whose beautiful voice, singing the Lord’s Prayer, created a wonderful atmosphere in Corstorphine Church, lit only by the twinkling Christmas tree lights.

Bob accompanied Jim on visits to his father where Jim sang as his father played the piano.

With Bob’s encouragement Jim went on to St Mary’s College, St Andrews where he trained as a Church

of Scotland minister. His induction service was packed out. If Bob and Jim were here to tell us more I am certain that Jim would acknowledge the huge influence Bob and Isobel made in his life by sharing and caring.

How Can You Help?

Edinburgh Prison Visitors' Centre At HMP Edinburgh Prison, Saughton, is Scotland's only purpose-built centre to meet the needs of anyone visiting a family member or friend in prison. It is owned by the Onward Trust and managed by the Salvation Army, whose mission is to meet people at their point of need. They seek to provide a safe, supportive, friendly and non-judgmental environment where visitors can find out more about visiting someone in prison. The centre needs your help in lots of ways to :

- Provide a listening ear
- Help in the café area
- Organise children's activities in the play area
- Assist families to access information about prison visiting

Are you compassionate, a good listener with the practical skills needed to reach out to prisoners' visitors?

Telephone 0131 444 3098 for a 'Volunteers' Pack or contact: Anne Munro, Centre Manager, Edinburgh Prison Visitors' Centre, 33 Stenhouse Road, Edinburgh EH11 3LN

<https://tinyurl.com/54v9war4>

Hazel Macaulay
Social Justice Group

Thanks – the Coffee Team

The reintroduction of Sunday morning tea and coffee last year was very welcome and continues to be a popular place to meet and chat after worship each week.

With huge thanks for your generous weekly donations, we were able to support four charities in December with payments going to Scottish Love in Action, Help the Homeless, and An Open Hand. A pledge of support has also been made to the Youth Empowerment and Support Initiative-Malawi. In addition, we've also been able to replace some of the old and broken coffee jugs, to ensure that the coffee is kept nice and hot.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy the time of fellowship each week and thank you for your continued financial support.

Clare Campbell

The Sunday Morning Coffee Team



Church Flowers

It has been a great privilege to co-ordinate the Flower Rota over the past three years and I thank all those who have so generously donated and arranged flowers for worship over these past years. I would also like to acknowledge the valuable advice and guidance of my predecessor, Katy Maguire, who has been so helpful. I am now handing the baton to Julia Dunbar who has kindly agreed to take on this duty to allow me more time to concentrate on my other volunteer role as Halls Manager. Julia has arranged flowers for many of you over the years and she created the magnificent arrangement for Julia Cato's Ordination, so I am sure that the Flower Rota is in very capable and creative hands.

Moira Land



Peggy's Café at The Open Door 420 Morningside Road

We want to give people the chance to be warm while getting together with friends over COFFEE AND CAKE on Monday afternoons through January and February from 1.30 to 3.30pm. There will be no set charge, just give what you can.

These will be volunteer led events. Can you VOLUNTEER a couple of hours of your time on one or more Mondays?

Can you help by donating some luscious HOME BAKING?

Simon Warr

0131 447 9757

simon@thependoor.org.uk

Coffee and Cake at Peggy's!



Holy Corner Booksale 2023

Book Donations

- We will be accepting book donations in January & February, from Wednesday, 18 January, 2023
- No home pick-ups, drop-off only, to:
Morningside United Church, Chamberlain Road entrance,
at the following times:
Wednesdays 10 am - 12 noon
Saturdays 10 am - 12 noon

We Want

- Non-fiction books; Scottish books particularly welcome
- Paperback fiction
- Children's books



We Cannot Accept

- Encyclopaedias
- Academic journals
- Reader's Digest
- Books in poor condition, due to mould, water-damage
- CDs, DVDs

(These won't sell, and would incur disposal costs.)

Morningside United Church, Holy Corner, EH10 4DJ

In aid of Christian Aid: Charity No. SC039150

Booksale website: <https://holycornerbooksale.wordpress.com>