

Greenbank Connections



April 2026

Issue 742

Scottish Charity SC011325



Daffodils in Braidburn Valley Park (Roddy Morrison)

Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

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

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Letter from the Locum



Easter 2026

We wish you and yours a delightful Easter. May you appreciate the joy and peace of this special season. Hope you can join us for some of our special Easter activities and times of worship, alongside some with our neighbours from Morning-side Parish. All will be welcomed.

The world is changing very quickly at this period of uncertainty, and I offer this short reflection to help focus on the Easter story in the current global context.

The A.W.O.L. Messiah

*Has he gone off piste,
lost his bearings again?
He seems happier with white people,
especially in his White House.*

*A 'messiah' who has never
sought a lost sheep,
often found bragging,
borrowing and stealing.*



Certain 'messiahs need awards,
many missiles
and bombs to make their
confusing points.

Some 'messiahs' ignore all
needs bar their own.
The bully toddler type
shouts "MORE" constantly.

More land, even if it is Green,
or is holy and
belongs to a brown race
of children, women and men.

Should the presidential 'messiah'
one day pause,
and consider another Messiah.

His key words for neighbours
whether near or far were:
"Love", "Heal", "Forgive",
"Blessed are you".

A more graceful, gentle,
challenging route he took
through the Middle East, to a city,
a cross, finally an empty tomb.

Please ponder and think carefully.
Choose your Messiah with care, it
has lasting consequences.

Enjoy Easter.

Ian Gilmour
Locum Minister

Greenbank Walking Group

The first walk of the year by the Greenbank Walking Group, organised by Tom Inglis, took place on 4th March. We meet fortnightly on Wednesday mornings and always

finish in a café. If you would like to join us for a walk, please contact Tom.

Tom Inglis
tinglis63@gmail.com



Thought for the Month

Easter – and dynamic twilight

Many years ago, when I was a sailor, before the days of satellite navigation, the only way to fix your position was by taking sights of the sun and stars. For star sights you had to use the two daily twilights. You needed enough darkness to see the brightest stars and enough light to see a clear horizon.

Twilight is dynamic. Morning twilight takes you through the transition from the darkness of night to the full light of the day. Evening twilight is the reverse process. At no point is twilight static. This seems to me to be a good representation of the Easter process, both the story and our reaction to it.

Good Friday symbolism takes us into deepening darkness. Even though Jesus is described as dying at 3.00pm, the moment of his death precipitates a deep darkness after the gathering gloom of his false condemnation and agonised death. This reminds us of the darkness of all misdirected and self-orientated

ways of living that are encompassed by the word sin. We can be immensely thankful for what he was prepared to endure for us to enable our forgiveness and release.

Then on Easter Day, light triumphs in the Resurrection. But the light dawns slowly and understanding of the reality comes gradually through the indistinctness of the morning twilight, especially outside the tomb. Gradually, all the disciples, some more slowly than others, come to realise the truth of the Resurrection. This is what gives them a dynamic story to tell which becomes the core of the Christian Gospel.

Through Easter, and beyond, we are invited to navigate through both these twilights ourselves, always moving onward.

As St Clement once wrote: *“Christ has turned all our sunsets into dawn.”*

Tony Rose

Guild



On 17th February when we did not have the speaker we expected we had instead a brainstorming afternoon deciding whether the Time capsule from 1926 should be retrieved, (YES) whether a new one should be prepared for our centenary this year, (YES) and making a very long list of items which could be included. It was good fun, a welcome time to spend chatting with friends and gave us an interesting project to look forward to if Greenbank decides to go ahead with it.

On 3rd March Phil Barnes gave us an exceptional and lively description of his work as an Air Traffic Controller, from his training, experience, and loads of things we didn't know about how our flights are planned and made secure. What an enormous amount of expertise,



detailed planning and effort go into every flight. The next time any of us flies we will be thinking with gratitude of all those behind the scenes keeping us safe.

Our next meeting, the last of this session, is the Annual Business Meeting on 17th March at which we will be discussing how best the Guild can plan for the future. Later in March we will be deciding on our syllabus for the next year and planning our usual Summer Coffee Mornings on 5th May, 2nd June, 7th July, 11th August and 1st September.

On Friday 6th March several members of the Guild and others from Greenbank were at the World Day of Prayer at Morningside Parish Church. It was quite well attended and was a very interesting service prepared by Christian Women in Nigeria with some very striking testimonies; widows overcoming oppression, mothers finding courage to send their daughters to school in spite of the ever present danger of kidnap, and daily challenges testing people's faith – experiences that resonate across cultures and borders.

There is a proverb in Nigeria that says "The pain of one is the pain of all" – something to think of.

Edith Armit

World Church Group

With our news full of despair from the ongoing aftermath of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement action in Minnesota, the war in Ukraine having entered its fourth year, peace in Israel-Palestine still so volatile, and migrants continuing to cross the English Channel in their hundreds every week, it can be difficult to see beyond hopelessness and in to the good in our society.

However, across the globe, and in their own small ways, churches, faith groups and charities are taking on these issues, empowering congregations to act, and offering a place of support and refuge to the displaced, lonely and desperate.

Although Christianity is restricted in Iran, many churches meet and operate underground, supporting one another quietly through networks. Following the outbreak of Operation Epic Fury, and the current conflict, the underground house church movement is continuing, but with increased security risks. These house churches provide food and basic supplies to families in difficulty as well as providing pastoral care and safe places to meet when public gatherings are risky. Outside Iran, churches in neighbouring countries, such as Armenia, are preparing basic supplies and humanitarian aid for Iranians who choose to flee across

the border. Despite all the risks, there are reports that the Christian movement in Iran is one of the fastest growing globally.

Within Ukraine, local churches have become essential hubs providing lifesaving relief to those displaced by the war there. Again, this includes basic practical needs, but also medical assistance, transport to areas of safety, and counselling services. The churches receive funding to carry out this work from their local congregations, grant funding, and from international churches including the Church of Scotland.

The Rev Dr Stewart Gillan, our Mission Partner from St Andrew's Church Jerusalem, carried out a speaking tour of Scotland in 2025, to "amplify" the voices of people directly affected by the Israel-Gaza war and sharing how the Church of Scotland and its partners work together to support people caught up in the conflict. His talks also shared how the Church advocates for the cessation of hostilities, the release of hostages and prisoners and to maintain the essential flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza and other areas blighted by conflict.

In Kent, local Christian groups and charities, such as Samphire, are working together to integrate



Safe Listening Place

Are you caring for someone close to you or worrying about someone who is needing help to find support and advice?

Carers, who are frequently unpaid, have an essential but often invisible role and finding the right resources at the right time can be overwhelming.

On Sunday 26th April the Information Station will have a range of information including leaflets and contact numbers to assist anyone in a caring role to access sources of expert help as they navigate the



various stages and challenges of a carer's journey.

Help is out there! Do come and see us in the Main Hall at coffee time.

Susan Inch
Safe Listening Place Team

newcomers and foster community. Working with ex-detainees from migrant detention centres and the communities that they are released into, Samphire aims to alleviate destitution and provide emotional and practical support to people in crisis. From our position of safety here in Greenbank, we continue to think of the many churches and congregations across the globe in these difficult and challenging times. We share concerns with congregations across the world who are facing issues during these strange and difficult times. Although the Green-

bank World Church Group may not be able to influence directly what is happening at a political or humanitarian level, we will seek to do all that we can to support churches in their essential work.

The Greenbank World Church Group is always keen to hear from any member of the congregation who may have knowledge or expertise in areas of trouble and difficulty so that we might share their insights.

Clare Campbell
World Church Group

What's Ahead?

You may have read some recent articles in *Connections* and the weekly newsletter about the centenary of our sanctuary here at Greenbank and perhaps also wondering about our future and what's ahead of us? The answer to this question is that we don't yet know quite how the future will look, but as we are planning a new time capsule this year, we are very much visualising a thriving future for Greenbank Church much as our predecessors did when they took their leap of faith those years ago.

We were tasked, alongside Morningside and Fairmilehead churches, with working out how we might bring together these three churches with two ministers. This was most likely to be achieved by creating a union between two or all even all three. Greenbank would need to be one of the churches in any union as we sit in between the other two congregations and a union can only take place between neighbouring parishes. However, trying to bring together two congregations in big and very busy churches seems to be an impossible task and three in a union at the moment even more so. This task we have thus far been unable to succeed with, either in any proposal put to the Deployment Committee (the committee tasked by the Church of Scotland to work with congregations to move forward) or in the respective

Kirk Sessions, and so for almost a year we have been in a stalemate. Currently we are looking ahead to May 2026 and the General Assembly, where it is hoped there will be a proposal for discussion that might help find the way forward for Greenbank and permit us to call a minister if we can show that we can pay for this appointment. This legislation might or might not go before the Assembly and might or might not be approved. If it is approved, it will not take effect before January 2027 and Greenbank would not automatically be granted permission from Presbytery to go ahead, and would be required to follow the appropriate process – so, we wait for now.

In the meantime, we have been very much blessed with the three locum ministers we have been privileged to have join us in Greenbank – the Rev Dr Anne Logan, the Rev Julia Cato and our current locum the Rev Ian Gilmour. Each has brought something special to Greenbank, and we see with Ian the fruits of everyone's hard work on 'Growing Greenbank Young' inspired and motivated very much by Ian and continuing work started with Anne and Julia. It is such a joy right now to welcome the new families and children who have been



Fresh Start's mission is to help people make a home for themselves, and demand for the services is huge. Your support is greatly appreciated; many thanks to everyone who has donated items. If you have any small electrical items, kitchenware or household items in good condition which you think may be of use, please consider donating them to *Fresh Start*. Items can either be taken directly to *Fresh Start* on Ferry Road Drive (see website details below), or contact me to arrange a convenient time for collection or drop off items locally. Further information on *Fresh Start* and items suitable for donation can be found at:

www.freshstartweb.org.uk

coming along on Sunday mornings to worship in Greenbank and bring with them such a lively buzz.

Locum ministers by their very nature are short-term and later this year in the early autumn Ian will step down and we will look forward to the next stage in Greenbank's rich history, and honour the gifts we have been given by continuing to grow and develop and enjoy the life and special community that is Greenbank Church.

Rona Somerville
Session Clerk



Goods you donate help to make up starter packs provided to those in need who are setting up a new home. If you do not currently have items for donation, there are other ways you can help:

- You may consider making a purchase in the *Fresh Start* virtual shop* to provide all or part of the packs made available.
- Alternatively, you can donate new essential items, which *Fresh Start* regularly has to purchase for starter packs to meet demand. If you would like to donate by purchasing essential items via Amazon, please do so by using the *Fresh Start* wish list**.
- Lastly, financial donations can also be made on the *Fresh Start* website (under Donate).

Eileen MacKinnon

*www.freshstartweb.org.uk/shop

**tinyurl.com/Fresh-Start-wishes

Gleanings from The Scotsman Archives Part 2 – The Minister as a Prisoner of War

An article in the February issue of *Connections* featured reports from *The Scotsman* of the Induction of the Rev David H C Read as minister of Greenbank in October 1939 and of his immediate departure to continue his duties as a Chaplain to the Forces. After being captured by the German forces at St Valery-en-Caux in June 1940, he was reported missing but then turned up in a Prisoner of War camp, from where he was able to write to the congregation in October 1940.

A further letter, dated 22 April 1941, was received by the congregation in mid-June:

“Life goes on here with our usual mixture of routine and variety. Four of us (Church of Scotland, Episcopal Church in Scotland, Baptist, and myself) are together. We have a very good time together. Once a month we get out for a parole walk with the doctors and enjoy the magnificent scenery around here. Indoors, books have made a great difference and I’m very grateful to you all for the generous gifts. “Our Easter services were very happy ones, as I hope and believe yours were. It will be splendid if we can celebrate next Easter together once again.

“I shall try to tell you more about our life here in my next letter.

Meanwhile be assured that we are all in the very best of spirits.”

In May another minister wrote from Oflag 7 C, not identified in David Read’s letter but obviously the same camp, in Laufen Castle, Bavaria: he is named as one of the padres there at that time. The Rev F S Gordon Fraser, minister of Old Church, Nairn, shared the news that “we have a set of bagpipes now, to the delight of the 51st Division and the dismay of the Sassenach... They had their baptism at a grand Scottish concert in camp last night.”

Was it this set of pipes which inspired one of the prisoners, Lieutenant J E M “Jimmy” Atkinson, to write the Reel of the 51st Highland Division while a prisoner in that camp? His idea of a reel with a St Andrew’s Cross in its key formation was intended to symbolise Scotland, and the Highland Division, in adversity. Atkinson’s letter home with instructions for the dance was intercepted by the German security service, the Abwehr, who spent the rest of the war trying to break the code! However, another version of the dance reached Scotland where it was published while Atkinson was still a POW and became instantly popular.



Help the Homeless and Disadvantaged

We continue to seek your generous donations of non-perishable food. Please bring them along to the church. There is a box in the vestibule at the church door on Sunday mornings, or donations can be left with the church office during the week.

These donations are taken to several organisations, where they are used to help feed homeless people or distributed to food banks



Mr Fraser continues:

“Our camp is now fully organised by ourselves for recreation, entertainment, education, and etc. There is something for every taste.” He then tells his readers that there are seven padres in the camp, three of them Church of Scotland, David Read, Gilbert McCutcheon, and himself. “Services are conducted and well attended. I have still to find the embittered prisoner of war.”

Peter Graham

throughout the city. Every donation is very much appreciated and, unfortunately, the demand for them seems to be ever-increasing. You may wish to consider donating food items such as **tinned meat and fish, broth mix, sugar, teabags, coffee, rice and pasta, tinned vegetables, jars of sauces, beans**, etc.

We have also had a request on behalf of Edinburgh City Mission for donations of toiletries – shower gel, shampoo, soap, razors, essentials. Donations of these items would be very welcome, too.

Alternatively, you might want to consider making a financial donation to one of our charities. Please see details of their websites below:

StreetWork (support for the homeless)

simonscotland.org

Four Square (support for homeless, including women’s refuge)

foursquare.org.uk

Richmond Craigmillar Church, Fair Share Thursday

richmondcraigmillarchurch.org

Thank you for your ongoing support of this important work.

Julia Dunbar

Going Electric

In three weeks in September 2025, we – Peter, Sheila and Jason the dog – travelled from Edinburgh to Croatia and back in our electric powered Kia. Our journey took us through 10 countries (albeit one of them, Lichtenstein, for only 10 minutes). Our destination was Plitvici Lakes National Park in Croatia, a UNESCO World Heritage site with a series of interconnected terraced turquoise lakes. On the way we aimed to travel each day for no more than a few hours, and we visited many impressive European cities, parks, lakes and cathedrals. The dog demanded regular walks!

Charging the electric car was surprisingly easy. We got used to looking for the charging sign



on road signs – this is a small picture of a car, which looks like a mouse. We often charged overnight, with some top-ups during the day. We were pleased to note that many of the charging points provided green energy. Some charg-

ing points had amazing views, for example in Austria looking across to the Alps (see below). And the cafes at the charge points provided wonderful coffee and cakes, much better than UK service stations.

We have calculated that the carbon footprint for the 6,500km journey was approximately half that for two people to fly to and from Croatia, and a third of taking a non-electric car. The actual footprint of the electric travel was 0.8 tonne, which compares with an average UK household's carbon footprint of 11 tonnes per annum.

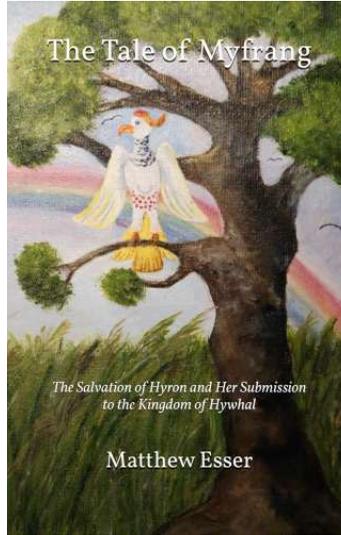
And – we are currently planning a trip to Southern Italy this year!

Sheila Cannell



Matthew's Books

During 2024, at the age of 13, Matthew Esser (S4) published a book on Amazon. Now, two years later, he published the second one, a novel! Matthew is an active member of Greenbank Parish Church and it is lovely to see his success in publishing two books! The first book provides a detailed discussion of a fictional nation. By relying on real world concepts, he created this nation with its own flag, anthem, language, measurement system, religion, detailed maps of the various regions and much more. This first book provides the reader with a journey into this new world with



detailed imagination. It is written in the form of an information book. The second one is a novel based on the life and intricate story of the main character, Myfrang.

He has been so disciplined in his writings, and we would love to see his books flying 'off the virtual shelves'!

Please have a look at

the links below.

Thanks in advance for your support.

Book 1: amzn.eu/d/o8eDPQp

Book 2: amzn.eu/d/7BDzoKM

Book also on Kindle:

amzn.eu/d/9PHbRqc

Irene-Marié Esser

Singing Group

The Singing Group meets on the changed times of **Wednesday 1st April** and **Wednesday 29th April**.

If you like to sing, even if you think you can't, then this is for you. Come along and try it. You're likely to find that it lifts your spirit and you'll get good chat as well.

Gillian Sweetman and David Allan



Greenbank Scout Jumble Sale

The fabulous Jumble Sale returns on **Saturday 18th April**. The Scout Group hope you'll come along (and buy our high-quality goods). If you're able to donate goods for sale, including home baking, so much the better—we'd be very grateful. Details are given in the flyer on the back page (which some of you will have had through your letterboxes).

See you then!

Duncan Macniven

Greenbank Weekly

Every week the digital news from Greenbank includes wonderful images that members share:



A heron, by David Somerville



Nessie Reid (pictured last summer) passed away peacefully last month aged 100 and a thanksgiving service was held at Greenbank for family and friends.

Thank you to all from the Greenbank community who attended the service and held Nessie and her family in prayer.

David Reid

Welcome Teams

April

- 5 **Easter Sunday**
Keith Clark, Elizabeth Htet-Khin, Isobel Thom, Charles Black, Pauline Walker, Catherine Denham
- 12 **Caroline Kehoe**, Ian McWilliam, Anne Kinnear, Kathryn Sangster, Rosemary McLeod, Lyndsay Kennedy
- 19 **Christina Morrow**, Edith Armit, Louise Coghill, Susan Black, Margot Gillon
- 26 **Ian Thomson**, Kathleen Patrick, Diana Teasdale, Jill Powlett Brown, Karen Young, Heather Kay

May

- 3 **Donald King**, Jan Corbett, Roderick Morrison, Jim Young, Jane Harkin

Coffee Rota

April

- 5 Easter
Sheila Cannell SLA
- 12 Caroline Kehoe D70
- 19 Helen & Phil Barnes D39, 42 & 89
- 26 Rosemary McCulloch D9

May

- 3 Richard Dunbar

Flower Rota

provided by

delivered by

April

- 5 Kelly Hunter Margaret Mack
- 12 Jill Powlett Brown Fiona Watt
- 19 Janet Walker Nora Kellock
- 26 Flower fund Katy Maguire

May

- 3 Hazel Macaulay Jennifer James

The Ministry Team can be contacted directly

Locum Minister: Rev Ian Gilmour
phone: 07794 149852
email: IGilmour@churchofscotland.org.uk

Administrator: Jackie Wilson-Tagoe
phone: 0131 447 9969
email: office@greenbankchurch.org

To make contact with any organisation featured in *Greenbank Connections*, please use the telephone number or email address given, if there is one. Otherwise contact the Church Office.

Website: www.greenbankchurch.org

Postal address:

Greenbank Parish Church
Braidburn Terrace,
Edinburgh EH10 6ES

Items for the *Weekly Newsletter* should be sent by **Thursdays** to:

greenbankweekly@gmail.com

Material for the **May** issue of *Greenbank Connections* should be delivered to the Editors' Pigeonhole by **Sunday 12th April** or sent by e-mail by 8pm on **Thursday 16th April** to:

greenbankconnections@gmail.com



*Easter Card 2026
Snowdrops (Ewan Hastings)*



**GREENBANK
SCOUTS
JUMBLE SALE**

**SATURDAY 18 APRIL 2026 9.30am – 12.30pm
GREENBANK CHURCH HALL, BRAIDBURN TERRACE**

PLEASE COME ALONG!

**£2 admission (children free)
HOME BAKING ON SALE**

Cash only –
no cards

PLEASE DONATE JUMBLE AND HOME BAKING!

If you're able, please deliver your jumble to the Church Monday 13 to Friday 17 April (evenings 6.30-8.30). We'll also be calling past to collect your jumble at the same times. If you're out, please leave it with a neighbour, or email greenbankjumble@gmail.com and we'll collect it (though we can't promise a specific day/precise time).

Please see overleaf for items we can and cannot accept. Any unsold items will be offered to charities.