

Greenbank Connections



March 2026

Issue 741

Scottish Charity SC011325



Bronte and Lochlan with their parents Adam and Amy Sinclair. See p 11

Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

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

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Letter from the Locum



At Best

You are the salt of the earth.

Matthew 5. 13

At best the church is only mentioned in the news these days when marking a cleric's fall from grace or caricaturing an extremist member's views. Christian values are not seen to be essential to the formation of young adults in popular culture. And our most ardent supporters would be cautious to describe the church as being as indispensable as salt.

At best even salt is taken for granted today. Though humble, salt still serves to preserve meat and provides abundant flavour without fanfare. An architect who worked with me in a previous congregation used to say, *"If the church wasn't there it would need to be invented"*.

He meant that, at its very best, the good church looks beyond its walls



to the needs of the wider community and then far beyond to the world and all its people. It prays for and supports all kinds of people and charities. Members visit the sick, sit with the dying and listen to the bereaved. Where would Greenbank be without our elders and our willing pastoral visitors putting care into action in regular, remarkable and thoughtful ways? I do think this is one reason so many of our members live such long and fruitful lives.

At its best our Church of Scotland has helped our nation to read, to

value further education, to thirst for democracy and engage with the most vulnerable in our society – isn't it our mission and delight to serve?

Like salt, the real impact of a humble ingredient only becomes obvious when you realise it is absent. Let us support our local church so that Greenbank Church and all in its parish may flourish.

At best please stay salty!

Ian

Ian Gilmour
Locum Minister

Guild

Our meeting on 3rd February was very interesting. We learned a lot about the deprived Christian Community in the south of Egypt which we are supporting this year with details down to the individual costs of the items being supplied – £500 for a strong roof to keep out weather and vermin, £255 for a toilet, £20 for a mattress and so on.

Our next meeting was to be an update on Richmond Hope, but the



speaker we expected was unable to come. Instead, we prepared a surprise activity for our members; interesting, thought provoking we hoped, and relevant to Greenbank Church. You will read more about it in the next issue of **Connections**.

We finish our programme for 2025/2026 with the **Annual Business Meeting** on 17th March for members only.

Edith Armit



Advent and Christmas Appeal

I am delighted to let you know that the recent appeal raised the amazing total of £12,425, including Gift Aid.

The appeal this year focused on families caught up in conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo,

but we were also reminded of the funding required to carry on vital work with disadvantaged communities across the world throughout the year.

Many thanks to all who donated so generously.

Fiona Watt
Christian Aid Coordinator

Lent / Easter Appeal 2026 Recipients

At its January meeting the Congregational Board selected the under-noted charities to share the monies raised in this year's Lent / Easter appeal. Envelopes will be in the pews from 15th March onwards. It will also be possible to donate on the Church website from this date.

The Open Door *

The Open Door (Morningside Road) offers connections, companionship and meaningful support for those who may be feeling isolated.

An Open Hand **

An Open Hand (Edinburgh) aims to provide parents experiencing extreme hardship with birthday presents which they have personally chosen for their child, opening the door to joyful birthday celebrations.

Alan Ramage
Joint Clerk to the Board

* www.theopendoor.org.uk/

** anopenhand.org.uk/

Friendship Club

On 11th March Amy Cawood will discuss the *History of the Astley Ainslie Hospital* – a chance to learn and to ask anything you'd like to know.

We'll complete our regular meetings on 25th March with *Desert Island Discs*, this time our castaway

being Alan Irvine, a well-kent and well-loved figure in Greenbank.

Guests are welcome at all our meetings. A £3 donation is requested

David Allan
Gillian Sweetman

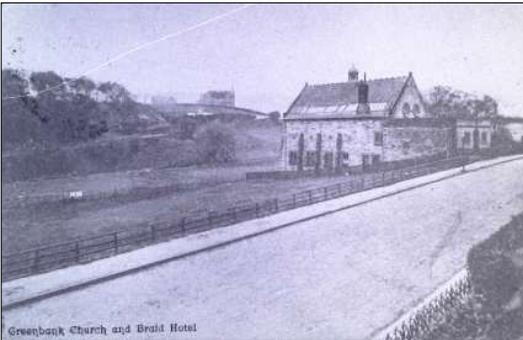
Greenbank Time Capsule

Did you know

That Greenbank Church has a Time Capsule built into its walls? It contains

- Coins of the Realm
- A short history of the congregation, 1900 to 1926
- A copy of the day's *Scotsman*
- The Congregational Register of the day

Almost 100 years ago, on Saturday, 24th March 1926 the view around the church looked rather different from the one we see today. The 'Greenbank Bungalows' had not yet taken over the green farmlands, and although the houses neighbouring the church in Braidburn Terrace had been built there was little else to the south of the church, but there was a vision, keenly held and founded in strong determination.



*How the original church looked with no neighbours – sometime between 1900 – 1915
[Greenbank Church Archive]*

That vision saw the first expansion to the buildings that would become the Greenbank Church that we know today. Back around 1900 a small building (now our office entrance, main hall and lower hall) was erected as an extension to Braid United Presbyterian Church (now Pizza Express). A few months after opening, the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church came together in union to form the United Free Church of Scotland. That small extension place soon became elevated to a full congregation which very quickly outgrew its premises and by 1914 plans were being drawn up to build a new and bigger church providing seats for 600 of a congregation. Those plans were put on hold by World War I and so it was not until several years later, in late 1923, that agreement

was reached on the building of a new sanctuary, which was finally approved in May 1925. The total cost of the building was agreed at £13,536 and building work began.

The Rev James Harvey DD, Moderator of the United Free Church, laid the foundation stone on 24th April and was presented with a silver trowel by the builder – Mr Gerard, and



The laying of the foundation stone with the silver presentation trowel [Greenbank Church Archive]

a wooden mallet by the architect – Mr Lorne Campbell.

Both the trowel and the mallet were subsequently given to Greenbank Church where they remain in our archives.

The new church was dedicated on Saturday 8th October 1927.

To commemorate the laying of the foundation

stone in April 1926 wouldn't it be a great idea to create a new Time Capsule that our members in years to come can discover? What kind of artefacts might we put into our new Time Capsule? Let me know what you think we could include – a copy of the *Scotsman*, some of our current currency, our Greenbank Church Directory, a copy of *Connections*? Perhaps we could take a congregational photograph and include all our smiling faces for our members of the future. Perhaps some of the children might like to draw a picture of themselves, or of the church or even write a little story about some of the things they do here at church; maybe even some of the adults could as well? Or maybe you have a different great idea – well, let me know!

Rona Sommerville

Sessionclerk@greenbankchurch.org



The newly built extended church now with next door neighbours [Greenbank Church Archive]

Our New Youth Co-ordinator

Hello everyone! My name is Frances Brookfield, and I'm delighted to introduce myself as the new Youth Co-ordinator at Greenbank Parish Church. It's a real privilege to be joining this church community, and I'm very much look-



ing forward to getting to know you, particularly the young people and families of our congregation.

I was born and raised in Saddleworth, Manchester, and studied Law and Psychology at the University of Chester before training as a primary school teacher. I spent several years teaching in the West Midlands and the North West, where I discovered a real passion for working with children in deprived areas. In February 2025, my sister, Elly, married a Scotsman after coming to study at the University of Edinburgh over 13 years ago. Wanting to be part of her life rather than apart from it, I decided to move to Scotland and left my teaching job at the end of the school year.

Church has always played a central role in my life. Growing up in a small congregation meant I was involved in many aspects of church life, from playing the piano and leading Sunday School to helping organise

events. I later served for three years as President of the North Cheshire Union of Sunday Schools, working alongside local churches to support and encourage young people in their faith. When the role at Greenbank became

available, I jumped at the opportunity to merge two important parts of my life: my faith and my love for working with young people.

As Youth Co-ordinator, my hope is to build on the excellent work already happening at Greenbank, helping to create a welcoming and engaging community where young people feel valued, supported, and able to explore their faith throughout the week, not just on Sundays. In my short time here, I have loved learning about the wonderful work done by so many different groups, and it has been lovely to see how well-used and loved the church is.

Outside of church, I enjoy reading, bird-watching, playing the piano and sharing a good conversation over a warm cup of tea. I'm very grateful for the warm welcome I've received so far and excited about what lies ahead. Please do say hello if you see me around – I'd love to meet you.

Frances Brookfield

Palestine

Three months on from the “cease-fire” in Gaza, Israeli soldiers have killed more than 490 Palestinians including at least 100 children. Israel has also levelled another 2,500 buildings, the last of the few that were still standing. The Board of Peace set up by US President Trump to determine Gaza’s future seems to be an attempt to strip the United Nations of any oversight of Gaza’s fate. Reinforcing this move, in East Jerusalem, Israeli bulldozers have demolished the buildings of UN-RWA, the UN refugee agency that has served as the main aid lifeline for the people of Gaza, a serious violation of international law. The UN’s trade and development arm warns

[news.un.org/en/
story/2025/11/1166444](https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/11/1166444)

that Israel has erased 70 years of human development in Gaza, and destroyed nearly 90% of cropland, leading to “the worst economic collapse ever recorded”. Israel continues to block the delivery of required aid while repressing the charities and NGOs trying to bring humanitarian assistance to the injured and the hungry.

While this seems a hopeless situation, we are called as a community following a God of justice, not to seek vengeance or retribution, but to proclaim true justice and to do it. As Jesus said, “You are the light of the world”. He knew light only shone if people acted justly. In the desperate situation prevailing in Palestine, silence is not an option, and nor is inaction.

Stephen Hadden
Social Justice Group



Safe Listening Place Update

We have had a confidential phone line available on the first Sunday of the month for the last few years. This has been possible thanks to the invaluable support of someone from outwith our congregation. As there has been little demand for this facility recently, we have decided to suspend it meantime.

The Information Station will still be available, after the 10:30am Service, on the last Sunday of the month. If you would like help to get further

information or have a request, we will be delighted to try to point you to avenues of expert help and support, especially in relation to the challenges we all face from time to time, such as bereavement, long term illness, relationship struggles, caring for loved ones and much more. Come and see us, we are always happy to have a chat.

Susan Inch
Safe Listening Place Team

Church Flowers

We are very fortunate to have our sanctuary and our memorial window in the vestibule adorned with beautiful flowers each Sunday. This is made possible by the generosity of donors, who provide the flowers for a variety of reasons, for example in memory of a loved one or in celebration of an anniversary or a birthday. I would like to thank everyone who makes this valuable part of our worship at Greenbank possible.

Most of the flower calendar dates are filled at the start of the year with the names of donors, many of whom agree to give on a regular, annual basis. We also have a Flower Fund, which is used to fund flowers on certain additional occasions, and to buy sundries for church decoration.

This coming year, there are three dates which have no named donor



against them – **26th April, 19th July and 29th November**. If you are willing to donate flowers on any of these dates for this year, please let me know. I will allocate any offers

of donations on a first-come, first-served basis.

The flowers are arranged as required by a small team, whose contribution is very much appreciated. Arranging the flowers does not require a high degree of floristry skill - a bunch of flowers in a vase is always very welcome! If you are interested in being part of the team responsible for arranging the flowers (which involves commitment only very occasionally), please get in touch. We would be very grateful for your support.

Thank you.

Julia Dunbar

Café Blush



Join us at Café Blush on **Monday afternoons** between **2pm – 3.15pm** where you will find a warm greeting, cosy chat, and tasty refreshments.

Our next meeting is on Monday, 9th March. We look forward to seeing you.

Vivien Hutchison
Pastoral Care Team

Bronte and Lochlan were Baptised by the Rev Ian Gilmour



Water

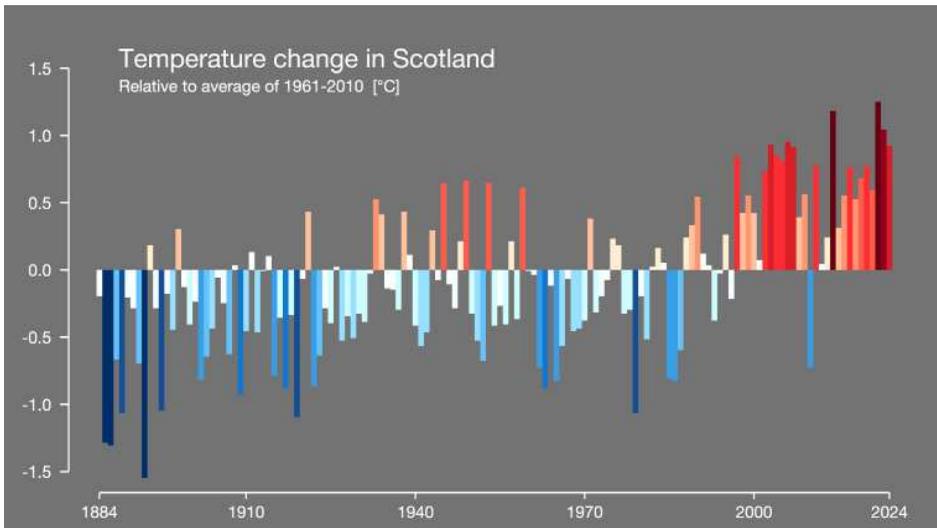
Since Christmas, it feels as though the rain has hardly stopped. Yet beyond our daily experience, important changes are taking place in Scotland's water because of Climate Change.

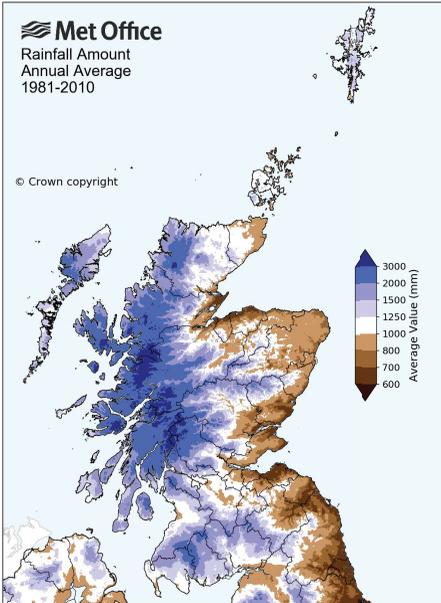
In 2024, for the first time on record, the Earth's average global temperature exceeded the Paris Climate Agreement threshold of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels for a calendar year. One consequence is Scotland's water cycle is changing. Winters are becoming warmer and wetter, particularly in the west. Meanwhile, the east is seeing drier summers, longer droughts and an increased risk of wildfires. Heavy downpours are becoming more frequent, leading to flash flooding damaging homes, disrupting communities and polluting rivers.

While reducing human-caused carbon emissions remains essential but globally challenging, adapting to these changes is increasingly urgent. Strengthening infrastructure - cutting leaks, improving reservoirs, adapting coasts to rising seas and reducing sewer overflows - will require massive investment. Nature also plays a vital role. Restoring peatlands and creating wetlands can store water, reduce flooding and improve water quality.

Each of us can help by using water wisely:

- **Turn off the tap** while brushing your teeth – save 5 litres of water a minute.
- **Use a bowl** to wash fruit and vegetables not running under a tap.
- **Avoid overfilling** the kettle.





Scotland's Average Rainfall 1981-2010

- **Shorten shower times** – two minutes off your shower can save c.5,000 litres of water a year per person and lower energy bills by about £100.
- **Fix dripping taps and leaking toilets promptly.** A leaking toilet can waste up to 400 litres of water per day, and a dripping tap can waste 5,500 litres a year.

Please don't take water for granted but, by caring for it thoughtfully, we play our part in protecting creation for future generations.

Karen Young
Convenor
Eco-Group

Sunday Streaming of Services Now on YouTube

For those who can't attend our services in person, Sunday Services are available online and can be watched through the Greenbank Church website

[www.greenbankchurch.org/
worship/live-vid](http://www.greenbankchurch.org/worship/live-vid)

Greenbank Church's Facebook page
[www.facebook.com/Greenbank-
ParishChurchEdinburgh](http://www.facebook.com/Greenbank-ParishChurchEdinburgh)

and now through YouTube
[www.youtube.com/@greenbank-
church/streams](http://www.youtube.com/@greenbank-church/streams).

Please search for **Greenbank Church, Edinburgh** otherwise you could easily be tuned in to our namesake in Glasgow!

The fact that we are now available on YouTube provides the added advantage that services can more easily be accessed through some TVs. The TVs which can access the stream this way are smart TVs or TVs connected to the internet using Amazon Fire, Roku or Apple Airplay. For help or advice please see a member of the Technical Team or put a request into the office.

David Ferguson

Supporting Greenbank Youth Work when shopping online

With the online 'easyfundraising' system funds can be raised automatically when you make online purchases, at no additional cost to yourself, for Greenbank's youth work. We started using easyfundraising during the Youth At CHurch Today ('YACHT') fundraising project a few years ago; since then over £2,000 has been raised by this means.

Getting Started

- Direct your web browser to easyfundraising.org.uk
- If you have not used *easyfundraising* before, click on 'Sign up' and follow the instructions. When you are asked to give the name of the charity you wish to support, type in 'Greenbank YACHT project' (we still use that name).
- If you have already signed up, click on 'Log in' instead.
- Within the website select the retailer you wish to use. Over 8,000 online retailers, including Amazon, eBay, M&S and John Lewis, are available.
- Order goods as normal.

Web Browser Extension

The buying process is easier if you install the easyfundraising extension in your web browser. Then when making a purchase you don't

first go to easyfundraising.org.uk but directly to the retailer's website. The extension will tell you just before you make a purchase that you can raise funds for your chosen charity.

To install the extension:

- Go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk/
- Click on the 'Browser Extension' button
- Follow the instructions
- easyfundraising App (Apple or Android)

To install the easyfundraising app on an Apple or Android device, go to the App Store (Apple) or to Google Play (Android) and look for 'easyfundraising'.

If you have problems in getting started with easyfundraising, there is a Help button on their website. This leads to a detailed description of the system, including a video.

David Jack



Welcome Teams

March

1 Communion

Stuart Sanders, Moira Davidson, Julia Dunbar, John Murison, Alison Murison

8 Donald King

Jan Corbett, Roderick Morrison, Jim Young, Jane Harkin

15 Keith Winton

Richard Dunbar, Chris Horne, Robin Nimmo, Hazel Macauley

22 Rosemary McCulloch

Moira Land, Fiona Grant, Martin Struthers, Barbara Middleton

29 Joan Ritchie

Susan Inch, Gillian Sweetman, Clare Campbell, Stephen Hadden, Mary Hadden, Catherine Cameron

April

5 Easter Sunday

Keith Clark, Elizabeth Htet-Khin, Isobel Thom, Charles Black, Pauline Walker, Catherine Denham

Coffee Rota

March

- | | | |
|----|------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | John Ferguson | D60 |
| 8 | Sheila Cannell | |
| | Valerie Macniven | World Church Group |
| 15 | Rachel McWilliam | D58 |
| 22 | Vivien Hutchison | Pastoral Care Group |
| 29 | Anne Kinnear | D49 & 50 |

April

- | | | |
|---|----------------|-----|
| 5 | Easter | |
| | Sheila Cannell | SLA |

Flower Rota

provided by *delivered by*

March

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 | Alan Ramage | Jill Mundy |
| 8 | Jan Corbett | Marcia Rankin |
| 15 | Ishbel Clark | Charlotte Tucker |
| 22 | Anne Oxbrow | Valerie Macniven |
| 29 | Alison Hamilton | Jane Harkin |

April

- | | | |
|---|--|---------------|
| 5 | | Margaret Mack |
|---|--|---------------|

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

greenbankconnections@gmail.com

in aid of



Registered Charity 5003064



CHARITY CINEMA NIGHT

Join us for fun, fizz and a film to
give children in India the opportunity to thrive

Sweet Home Alabama @ Dominion Cinema, Edinburgh

A NIGHT OF FUNDRAISING & CINEMA

Get ready to enjoy an evening of cinema for an amazing
cause. Elevate your movie-watching experience with a
touch of luxury.

Fizz/Non-Alcohol
& Snacks

Paid Raffle with
Amazing Prizes

Fun &
Entertainment

DUE TO LIMITED SEATS AVAILABLE, BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW:

£50 FOR TWO PEOPLE

<https://www.sla-india.org/product/cinema/>



Thursday 26 March 2026 · Doors open at 7:30 PM