

Greenbank Connections



October 2026

Issue 746

Scottish Charity SC011325



Lunchtime Picnic half-way to Cramond on the *Cramino*. See p8

Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

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

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District Visitors

I'd like to record our many thanks to **Miss Frances Scott** who is "retiring" from her role as District Visitor for Districts 51 & 52 after very many years. Thanks are due to all our Visitors who keep contact with our Church family.

Janet Ferguson

Letter from the Locum



Incredibly, it's already October! And, after another exceptional summer, Autumn has arrived, bringing with it a palpable shift in the air and a complexity of emotions.

I personally love this time of year, probably because my birthday is in October, but I know, for many, this season can be very poignant. Whether we have wee ones or not, the end of summer is often accompanied by a back-to-school feeling: a daunting mixture of anticipation and dread. Post-holiday blues and the idea of a 'September reset' can also contribute to a sense of pressure at this time of seasonal transition.

I recently heard this point in the year described as a 'second New Year'. Following summer's long, light days and their potential for spontaneity, autumn's shortening days invite us to tighten up our routines. And, for some, this brings the excitement of a new term and the possibility of personal growth. Yet in October,

the natural world invites us into a radically different pace. Creation is asking us to do something counter-cultural: to slow down, draw inward, cosy in, and let go.

We observe the trees' leaves staging their annual, breathtaking finale. Their brilliant displays of amber, gold and crimson create a dramatic and radiant show before the leaves inevitably fall. And yet, we don't view this shedding as a tragedy or a permanent end; instead, we can see it as part of the holy and generous rhythm of God's creation. Trees show us the sacred art of letting go: their leaves return to the earth, giving back their goodness, while beneath the quiet, dark soil the foundations of next spring are already being gathered — a deeply Christian rhythm. God isn't simply the creator of a world we inhabit, but the giver and sustainer of all life. All creation has rhythms, seasons, and inherent goodness, and we participate in its flourishing. As the gift of Sabbath reminds us, life isn't sustained by endless productivity. Rest is holy, as is letting go. Wisdom may be discerned by allowing ourselves to become quiet enough to notice what God is already doing.

Even amidst this seasonal fading, signs of hope and active stewardship are bursting forth in unexpected ways. Well south of the border, the town of Lewes in East Sussex recently made headlines with an initiative recognising the rights of trees. By symbolically shifting how local planning decisions are considered, the declaration affirms the value of trees as living

beings worthy of protection, restoration, and the opportunity to complete their natural life cycles.

This is a powerful reminder that the desire to protect, cherish and live in right relationship with our climate and ecosystems is growing. It also challenges us to think beyond our own immediate needs and timescale. As people of faith, we're called to love our neighbours, and that love extends across generations, species, and the whole community of creation.

This hope and vibrant love for creation are exactly what we're celebrating in our community rhythms this month. Rather than retreating or hibernating from our rapidly changing world, our autumn worship schedule calls us into deeper, joyful connection.

We'll express our deep gratitude for the earth's abundance at our Harvest Service of Thanksgiving 4th October. Later in the year we will enjoy Forest Church to worship God amidst the gloriously changing canopy. We'll delight in all God's precious creatures at our Pet Blessing on 11th October. We'll celebrate new lives at Baptism and Pre-School services, and longer-lived lives in our Care Home and Dementia Friendly services. These opportunities root us in wonder and awe of our Creator, reminding us that worship isn't something confined to a church building. We encounter God in the beauty and vulnerability of the world around us, in our relationships with each other



/contd from p3

and with the many creatures with whom we share this earth.

As the darker, colder nights draw in, autumn reminds us we're part of something much larger than ourselves. The falling leaves, lengthening shadows and quiet gathering beneath the soil all speak of change, dependence, and hope. They invite us to trust that, even when we can't see what's happening beneath the surface, God is still at work.

This seasonal transition is part of a grander, sacred journey, which, in due course, will lead us through a deepening quiet and darkness towards the expectant waiting of Advent. This October, may our Creator God grant us the energy to rest, the grace to let go of what we no longer need, the courage to care for the world entrusted to us, and the sustenance and companionship of the whole community of creation.

Emma McMillan
Locum Minister

Lifts

The number of our members who need a lift to organisations and to church is increasing. Many manage by using a friend, but others need more structured help. We have a small list of drivers who can help on a fairly regular basis, but we badly need more volunteers who would be prepared to help out on a one-off or periodic basis.

Could you help occasionally? If you can, it would be greatly appreciated by our members for it gives them a lifeline to get out of the house and come to church and various organisations. It keeps them included in the community of Greenbank.

Please contact David Allan giving your name and phone number (mobile if you use it) via Church Office.

David

Save the Date

7th November, 9.30am-12.30pm



CHURCH OF SCOTLAND CHARITY NUMBER SC05869

A SAFE LISTENING PLACE

Breaking the Silence on Domestic Abuse

At Greenbank Parish Church
Saturday 7th November 2026
9.30am–12.30pm

Come and join us to explore how domestic abuse can be addressed in our communities

For more information: www.greenbankchurch.org
To register, email: SafeListeningPlace@greenbankchurch.org

Thought for the Month

If you feel called, try something new and different

It's easy and reassuring, and let's face it, comfortable, to stick to what you know, rather than try something new. There are so many different opportunities for Christian service in Edinburgh and the choice of worthwhile activities, both paid and unpaid, is really wide. For some people, that's not the problem – they may have too many other demanding and variable commitments to take up a new challenge. For others, it may be a lack of confidence or a heightened awareness of our personal limitations or how others might see us that can put us off.

Stepping off the beaten track and launching yourself into something new and different can be a big deal. But if you feel the call, remember when Jesus called on his disciples to join him, the brothers Peter and

Andrew, and also James and John, put down their nets and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-22) They did so, not knowing what challenges and obstacles lay ahead. We can't predict the future and, whether you believe God has a plan for you or not, trust in Jesus to be there for you, to support you and guide you, to take up the task and answer the call.

Several times in my life I have looked outside my comfort zone into the relative unknown, feeling the call to try something new and different. We are all called to use our talents in the service of God's Kingdom so 'let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven' (Matthew 5:14-16). What we can offer may not be much but in Jesus' hands, it is more than enough.

Neil Ross

Our next session begins on 13th October with Duncan Macniven discussing our new Theme, *Beyond the Walls*, and continuing with a wide mixture of topics, including a Christmas Party.



We meet at 2pm in the Braid Room on the first and third Tuesday of the month.

Edith Armit

Crossreach Cards and Calendars On Sale 25th October

A Christmas card is a perfect way to stay in touch with friends and family whom you don't see or see only occasionally. It's a lovely way to let people know you are thinking of them, and to remind us of the baby born in a manger, who gives us hope.

Staff and volunteers at CrossReach* offer loving care to people of all ages who need a helping hand, supporting them to live life to the full whatever their circumstances. CrossReach is one of the largest care providers in Scotland, with experience across a broad range of services.

Greenbank Guild has supported one of their current projects, *Playful Beginnings*, providing creche support for families attending specialist perinatal services at Sun-



flower Garden in Edinburgh.

The Church of Scotland's Social Care Council is accountable for the work of CrossReach. Its remit is to provide social care services and spe-

cialist resources in Christ's name to further the caring work of the Church to people in challenging circumstances. It also helps to identify areas of need and guides the Church in new approaches to relevant problems in society as well as responding to issues arising in the Council's areas of concern.

Please come and support CrossReach by buying cards or calendars in the Main Hall after morning worship on Sunday 25th October.

Joan Ritchie

*tinyurl.com/C-of-S-Crossreach

Coffee Morning in aid of GRI-UK Saturday 17th October 10.30am

GRI-related disorders are a group of rare genetic conditions caused by changes in genes which disrupt how brain cells communicate. These conditions affect the nervous system and lead to a range of neurodevelopmental symptoms and sometimes severe disability.

GRI-UK supports and empowers individuals and families affected by GRI disorders so that those diagnosed can lead the best life possible.

Live Music! All Welcome!

Isobel Wright

gri-uk.org/

Farewell to the Rev Ian Gilmour



A large congregation turned out to wish goodbye to Ian Gilmour and his wife Donna.

Kirsten Pink excelled herself with a lovely cake, and the children couldn't wait to share it.

When everyone had had their cake, they set off on the **Cramino**, walking from Greenbank Church to Cramond Kirk, which is Ian and Donna's home parish. See next page.

Cramino Conversations

Greenbank's pilgrimage to 'walk Ian home' in late August was celebrated by a large group of friends and supporters who strode the seven miles or so to Cramond Kirk with him. It was a perfect day to tread the path in the manner of Christian pilgrims down the years. Benign weather combined positively with the lively exchange of views and opinions on the issues of our time between the participants. Also, and notably, the personal stories of church members not often aired in our regular after worship coffee chats were very much the currency of the afternoon. Our roving reporter Duncan 'Chaucer' Macniven was also on hand to record some of the pilgrims' voices, famously capturing, among others, tales from the Knight of Plewlands, and the Wife of Braidburn Terrace! The grain of these offerings was as follows –

- Everyone connected the celebration of Ian's time with us with the shared experience of walking together surrounded by God's Creation
- One of the most important aspects was identified as the theme of sharing an event as a Christian community in the particular circumstances at the end of Ian's ministry
- Many remarked on the beauty of nature and how the miles slipped by when in conversation with friends
- Other views identified the strength of Greenbank's approach to the life of faith ex-

pressed in different events, and significantly in the new initiative of the Cramino

- Pilgrims felt that the journey reminded us of the importance of speaking to people about more than superficial everyday matters, and of the learning it achieved for all of us.

Of course, we were all reminded at the end of the afternoon of the traditions of Christian hospitality with the wonderful reception provided for us by Cramond Kirk, and the enhancing of the ties of friendship which have linked us, through Julia Cato and others further back in time. For example, the originator of the pilgrimage idea and its raising of funds for childrens' literacy programmes in Africa was Moira Small. Her father-in-law, Leonard Small, a prominent theologian, was a former minister of Cramond.

David Jack





Lunch on the way, and the dogs enjoyed the walk too!



Having sent their instruments on ahead, the Greenbank Ceilidh Band walked all the way and then entertained in the Cramond Kirk Hall

Disputed Lands

Our prayers can go where we cannot

Open Doors International

www.opendoors.org/en-US/

has been ranking countries since 1993 based on reports of violence against Christians. According to its 2026 World Watch List, which was published in January, Syria, with a Christian population of approximately 300,000 making up 1.3% of the population, suffered the largest single-year increase in reports of Christian persecution, moving up 12 places in the rankings to sixth on the list of most dangerous nations for Christians.

According to **Open Doors'** CEO Ryan Brown things deteriorated for Christians in Syria, not necessarily at the hand of the government, but more so by the inability of the government to have adequate rule of law. One only must look at the situation in Iraq to see the impact of a country being destabilised: in 1990 Iraq had between 1million and 1.4million Christians making up 3-5% of the population while today only about 187,000 (or 0.4% of the population) remain.

Nigeria, which was reclassified by the U.S. State Department in October 2025 as a "Country of Particular Concern" maintained its ranking as the

seventh most dangerous place for Christians. "The country is beset by a severe combination of ethno-religious hostility, Islamist militancy, weak governance and organized crime," **Open Doors** said in its analysis of persecution in Nigeria. During their most recent analysis, more Christians were killed for their faith in Nigeria than all other nations combined: 3,490 deaths in Nigeria among a global tally of 4,849. The numbers are up from the 2025 report, which counted 3,100 deaths in Nigeria among a global count of 4,476.

Across the reporting of **Open Doors**, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), Release International, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), Barnabas Aid and International



Contested lands – the centuries old conflict between indigenous crop-farmers and Fulani pastoralists with religious overtones

Friendship Club

The Friendship Club opens its new session on 14th October at 2pm in the Braid Room. Our topic is *Jaguars and More* by Gillian Sweetman. We follow that up on Wednesday 28th October with a talk by the popular Roy Johnstone on *Heroines of the SOE*.

The meetings start at 2pm. The talk lasts for around 40 minutes and then we chat over coffee and biscuits.

The fee for the year is £25 or £3 per meeting. Why not come and give us a try?

David Allan
Gillian Sweetman

Singing Group



The Singing Group will meet on Wednesdays 7th and 21st October at 2 pm in the Braid Room. We sing a variety of songs and then meet for a cup of tea in the Hermitage Room afterwards

David Allan
Gillian Sweetman



/contd p.10 Disputed Lands

Christian Concern (ICC), a remarkably consistent picture emerges supporting the view that there is a major and sustained crisis of anti-Christian persecution in significant parts of Nigeria, embedded within a still larger Nigerian security crisis. Fulani ethnic militias, Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) are the main active militants targeting primarily Christians in Nigeria.

Andrew van der Bijl, the **Open Doors'** founder, used to say, "our prayers can go where we cannot". Those living in fear draw comfort and encouragement from knowing that brothers and sisters around the globe are lifting them up in prayer.

Alex Morrow
World Church Group

Caring for Wild Birds as Autumn Turns into Winter

As autumn gives way to winter in Scotland, our gardens, parks and green spaces become increasingly important to wild birds. Natural food is harder to find and cold weather means birds need extra energy to keep warm. There are several simple ways we can help.

Winter is a good time to provide food such as sunflower hearts, peanuts, nyjer seed and mixed bird seed. Apples and other fruit can also be useful, while mealworms provide valuable food for insect-eating birds. It is better to put out small quantities regularly than allow food to become old or mouldy. There is still a risk of spreading disease where birds gather, so good hygiene is important. Clean

feeders regularly, remove uneaten food and move feeders around the garden occasionally to prevent a build-up of droppings and discarded food. Hanging feeders can help reduce the concentration of birds compared with flat feeding tables. If several sick or dead birds appear, stop feeding for a couple of weeks and allow the birds to disperse.

Fresh, clean water is equally valuable. A shallow bird bath or sturdy dish provides drinking and bathing water. Change the water regularly and keep it free of ice during freezing weather.

Birds also need shelter. Hedges, shrubs, ivy and dense bushes offer protection from cold winds and predators. Leaving some fallen leaves and seed heads can provide both food and cover.

Caring for birds is a small act of kindness. By making our gardens and shared spaces more welcoming to wildlife, we can enjoy their beauty while doing our small part to care for God's creation.

Karen Young
Convenor
Eco-Group



Prisoners Week 15th to 22nd November 2026 Show Mercy

In line with our minister's sermon of 13th September on forgiveness, Greenbank Church, a signatory of the Prisoners Week Charter, is committed to exploring ways of understanding and giving practical support to all those affected by imprisonment in Scotland.

This year again we hope to help raise awareness of the impact of the justice system on individuals, families and communities.

The prison population in Scotland is currently facing unprecedented overcrowding. We hope that local churches can think about playing a vital role in supporting prison residents, staff, chaplains, and families. The Social Justice Awareness Group meet on 28th September to discuss this.

Details will follow.

Hazel Macaulay
Social Justice Action Group

Scout District Flag

A patrol from Greenbank Scouts, led by familiar faces Molly McRae (Patrol Leader) and Christo Esser (Assistant Patrol Leader) won the District Flag competition on 11th-13th September. The competition

is held annually and is open to all the Scout Troops in Braid District. It's held at Bonaly from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon, and includes camping, cooking, games, challenges, and activities –

all gaining competition points. The winning Greenbank patrol swept the board overall and also won the cooking part of the competition. Well done! The congregation will see the Flag which they won, at the Uniformed Organisations Service in February.

Duncan Macniven



Calendar

October

4 Sun	10.30am Eco-Group Surplus Produce Stall
7 Wed	2pm 3.15-5pm
11 Sun	10.30am 2pm
13 Tues	2pm
14 Wed	2pm 3.15-5pm
15 Thurs	2pm
17 Sat	10.30am
18 Sun	10.30am
20	2pm <i>Glimpses of the Canary Islands</i>
21 Wed	2pm Adult Singing Group 3.15-5pm After School
25 Sun	10.30am Crossreach Christmas Card Sale 2pm
28 Wed	2pm 3.15-5pm

November

1 Sun	10.30am
3 Tues	2pm

Harvest Thanksgiving

Adult Singing Group
After School
Music Group
Morning Service
Pet Blessing
Guild
Beyond the Walls
Friendship Club
Jaguars and More
After School
Music Group
Work Party
Charity Coffee morning
Morning Service (Baptism)
Peace Pole Dedication
Guild

Music Group
Morning Service

Afternoon Service
(Dementia Friendly)
Friendship Club
Heroines of the SOE
After School
Music Group

Welcome Teams

October

- 4 **Joan Ritchie**, Susan Inch, Gillian Sweetman, Clare Campbell, Stephen Hadden, Mary Hadden, Catherine Cameron
- 11 **Christina Morrow**, Edith Armit, Louise Coghill, Susan Black, Nora Kellock, Margot Gillon
- 18 **Caroline Kehoe**, Ian McWilliam, Anne Kinnear, Kathryn Sangster, Rosemary McLeod, Lyndsay Kennedy
- 25 **Keith Clark**, Elizabeth Htet-Khin, Isobel Thom, Charles Black, Pauline Walker, Catherine Denham

November

- 1 **Ian Thomson**, Kathleen Patrick, Diana Teasdale, Jill Powlett Brown, Karen Young, Heather Kay

Coffee Rota

October

- 4 Helen & Phil Barnes D39, 42 & 89
- 11 Rachel McWilliam D58
- 18 David
& Janet Ferguson D13, 26 & 28
- 25 Susan Inch
& Chris Horne D37, 48, 66, 67 & 89

November

- 1 Christina Morrow D40 & 41



The Ministry Team can be contacted directly

Locum Minister: Emma McMillan
email: emcmillan@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 **November** issue of *Greenbank Connections* should be delivered to the Editors' Pigeonhole by **Sunday 11th October** or sent by e-mail by 8pm on **Thursday 15th October** to:

greenbankconnections@gmail.com

Flower Rota

provided by

delivered by

October

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 4 Grace Maweu | Fiona Connal |
| 11 Heather Kay | Mary Hadden |
| 18 Valerie Macniven | Catherine Cameron |
| 25 Alison Reid | Rona Ferguson |

November

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1 Louise Coghill | Isabel Graham |
|------------------|---------------|

www.prisonersweek.org.uk



SHOW Mercy

What does the Lord require of you?
Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with your God.

Prisoners Week 2026

November 15th – 22nd



Patron: Barbara Dickson OBE • Prisoners Week Trust (SC043431)