

# NORTH LEITH PARISH CHURCH MAGAZINE

July 2021

Dear Members and Friends,

When I last wrote to you in March, we were looking forward to the church building opening again. That seems a long time ago. The building has been open every Sunday morning since Palm Sunday and it has been lovely to see so many people again in person.

Worship has changed a little. We have experimented with the reading of the words of the hymns while Iain plays the music on the organ. Members have returned to leading prayers as well as reading Scripture. The service is now being filmed in church when possible and the recording is being put up on the church web site later in the day.

There is space for over 100 people in the church building so if you haven't been back yet or haven't been for some time, please know that there is room for you and it would be good to see you.  
The church, and now the garden too, are open on Tuesday and Friday mornings between 10am and 12noon.

The One Church for Leith Bible study group has continued meeting weekly, with folk from the four churches. Over the summer the group is discussing the response of the church to the challenge of climate change from a Biblical viewpoint using material from the Christian charity Tearfund.

The message is very much that we are created to live on a planet that feeds our body and our soul and that we are trusted to care for and protect the land because "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it" as Psalm 24 verse 1 puts it.

Tearfund suggests that we can all pray about climate change with its idea of **Prayer in the Park** as we go out and about our local area.

This July, the Church of Scotland is also doing a new thing. It is part of a project called **Our Trees**. During this month, each congregation is invited to survey the trees growing on its land, in its sacred spaces. North Leith has several trees in the church garden and by the time this reaches you, I hope that this will have been done.

Trees have a special place in the Bible from the Garden of Eden in Genesis to the book of Revelation. We may all only be able to make small steps towards changing the way we live in response to climate change but Jesus tells us in the parable of the mustard seed that a tiny seed grows in to a large tree which provides rest and shelter for all the birds that come to it.

Summer is a time for rest and recovery and for finding new ways of seeing life and living. However you are today, I hope that this summer you know God's deep peace and restoration.

With love and blessings,

*Katherine*

0131 258 6523, 07748445998 and [KTaylor@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:KTaylor@churchofscotland.org.uk)



*Mother and Father God,  
Creator of the deep quiet,  
may we never be a stranger  
to that place within our heart  
where we are at one  
with life's source  
and tiniest bloom*

*Peter Millar*

## One Church for Leith

### Update from the Steering Group, Summer 2021



#### Chairing the group

Following the decision of the independent chair of the group that it was time for him to stand down, there was a proposal to have co-chairs, two lay people from within the four congregations.

Unfortunately it proved difficult to get nominations for this as a number of people approached did not feel, for various good reasons, they were in a position to take this on. The ministers have stepped up and agreed that they will chair on a rolling basis at least for the immediate future.

#### 2021 General Assembly decisions

The most recent meeting of the group was in early June following the General Assembly at the end of May.

We were delighted to have Marjory McPherson, the Presbytery Clerk, join us to review the major changes for the whole Church of Scotland agreed at the Assembly and how they will impact on Edinburgh Presbytery and, in particular, the church in Leith.

Marjory reminded us that in 2018 there was talk of a reduction of 20% in numbers of ministers, but now the agreed national figures represent a reduction of 38% of the combined number of ministers and Ministry Development Staff. The total number believed to be financially sustainable, and to form a sound basis for the priority for Mission, is to be 600 (plus up to 60 vacancies) by the end of 2025.

Presbytery Plans to achieve this have to be agreed and approved by the end of 2022.

The current Edinburgh Presbytery Plan has 78 ordained minister posts and this is to reduce to 48 total ministry appointments.

People are still wrestling with what it all means and how implementation of the plans will be managed.

The new Mission Plan Act which spells out the decisions has a number of new ways to aid in the adjustment. The main method remains by unions of congregations. New regulations allow formally for Parish Grouping and Team Ministry arrangements.

The good news for us is that the new Presbytery Plan does not have to be finalised before changes can start. It was agreed at the meeting that we in Leith, having been working together for many years and enjoying good relationships, are in a good position to make early progress.

Be in no doubt, there is still a lot to sort out and there will be many challenges along the way, but now the path is becoming clearer to let us become the One Church for Leith to which we are committed.

## **Mission Initiatives**

A special meeting took place in May to take forward consideration of the three priority mission initiatives identified at the recent joint Sessions' meeting: Community Hub, Mobile Phone App, Café Style Church. One person from each church formed 3 subgroups which met by Zoom before coming together to report on their initial thoughts. All the subgroups agreed to meet separately again during June/July before the next Steering Group meeting. Already some exciting ideas are coming forward and the groups are considering ambitious plans as well as possible small steps forward.

## **Clergy team proposals**

The ministers presented a paper at the June meeting with proposals for them to cooperate and work together in two specific areas of ministry: Pastoral Care and Worship. This paper was much welcomed by the group. The ministers are now looking at fleshing out the details.

The Group sends best wishes to all for a good summer.

*Rob Mackenzie, One Church for Leith Steering Group Interim Chair*

## Vaccination Thanksgiving

Dear All,

At the closing of the General Assembly, I had the opportunity to launch a joint initiative between the Church of Scotland and Christian Aid, encouraging members to give a financial gift in thanksgiving once they had received full vaccination for Covid-19. It has been much on my mind as to how fortunate I have been to receive my two vaccinations; but had I been living elsewhere in the world, the story would have been quite different. In my year as Moderator, the plan is to visit Lebanon and Malawi. Just taking these two places as examples, the percentage of population vaccinated with only one vaccination is 4% and 0.8% respectively. That is against more than 60% of our population in UK.

The World Health Organisation have said no-one is protected until all are protected, therefore we are urging the UK Government to do all that it can to ensure COVID-19 vaccines are available throughout the world. Alongside this we must also seek to limit the impact of the virus on health, livelihoods, and personal safety, for those in the poorest parts of the world. By supporting Christian Aid in their efforts to provide basics such as soap, water, and food, we can ensure that vulnerable communities stay safer as they wait for vaccination.

In this very tangible way, as we seek global justice, here is a practical opportunity to give real expression in 2021 to loving our global neighbours. I sincerely hope that you will join with me and together we will respond generously, as a mark of our gratitude for what we have received.

To give a gift, please click on the following link:

<https://giving.give-star.com/online/christian-aid/cos-just-vaccine-rollout>

I urge you to share this message with your whole congregation. I would also like to share the following prayer from Christian Aid for your use:

A Prayer of Thanksgiving  
God of Hope, Sustainer of all life,

We give You thanks for the Coronavirus vaccines, for the skill and wisdom of scientists, NHS staff and Key Workers.

By the power of Your Spirit, may we overflow with hope and joy as we see our friends, families and neighbours protected.

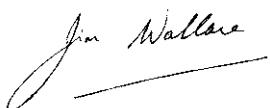
God of Justice, Protector of the vulnerable, may we be your well-washed hands and willing feet.

Move us to give and act, to challenge the injustices that anger You.

May we seek to protect all Your children, particularly those for whom the vaccine is out of reach.

With hope and trust we pray,  
Amen.

Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness QC, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

## **142nd Guiding Units**

We are having a well-earned break after zooming throughout last summer.

The girls and parents were pleased when we could get back into the halls. We've enjoyed seeing the girls face to face. Here's hoping everything will stay the same so we can continue face to face in August.

Thank you to everyone for their continued support.

*Kirsty, Nicola and Michelle*

### *Out of the mouths of babes!*

*The following statements about the bible were written by children.*

Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree.

Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.

The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.

## **Leith Churches Holiday Club 2021**

### **My Opinion**

I think that this year's holiday club was as good as the others even though it was outside (Park Road Park) instead of inside. I prefer it being outside because there is more wildlife (which worked really

well with this year's theme being 'Jungle Adventure'), fresh air and more outside activities. I don't really mind where the location is as long as we get to meet up, have lots of fun and give people the chance to learn about Jesus that wouldn't normally. At the end of each day some of us got a packed lunch brought and we stayed at the Park and had a picnic and explored the Park more, there were lots of places to hide.

### Crafts

I really liked the crafts where it was 3D and used the deco pens or when you painted the animal of your group (I was in the elephants, there were tigers, monkeys, frogs and giraffes). The reason I liked the 3D crafts because it took a bit more time and it was made out of wood. The reason I liked the painting because you don't get to paint much and it is very enjoyable (there is a picture of all the crafts we did at the end of this article).

### Games

The games I liked the most were the parachute games and splat. I liked the parachute games because there was a variety of games you could play and you can play with a big or small group. I liked splat because it is a different game and is very enjoyable.

The End!

**By Lucy Mackenzie**





## In Starbank Park

Through the years  
and through the tears  
    Pause a while  
    and catch a smile  
    Take a seat  
    and feel complete  
Let the busy world go by ...  
Look around to catch the eye  
    Enjoy the breeze  
    and see the trees  
    gently moving to and fro  
Hear the bird song as you go  
    A lovely place  
    To find some space ...

*A sonnet by Norma Macarthur, June 2021*



## Fresh Start - Donations for the Shop

We welcome donations of:

- Children's bedding
- Cushions, Throws or blankets
- Vases, Mirrors, Small pictures, Photo frames
- Bathroom accessories such as towel racks, bathmats, toothbrush holders
- Tea pots and tea sets, Wine and beer glasses, Kitchen utensils
- Small electrical items such as lamps, slow cookers, blenders, clock radios

**We unfortunately cannot accept donations of:**

- Bric a brac, Books, CDs, Videos, DVDs, Toys
- Clothes, Shoes, Children/Baby items of any kind
- Furniture

### **From Mark Cooper**

*"Thanks to all those who helped me raise money for Canine Partners.*

*I raised over £2700."*

Well done, Mark!

### *Offer from Occupational Therapist*

A local occupational therapist has contacted the church to offer her services to any of our older members who may have lost confidence in their ability to walk outdoors during these last months. Anyone interested, for themselves or on a family member's behalf, can contact the church office for more details.

### *Pause for Thought*

When I look round at all the poverty and injustice I say to myself; 'thank you God that I am not God'. Then when I remember that in every place of human suffering there are many caring women and men and children, I say to myself, 'thank you God that you are God'.

*Desmond Tutu*

The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw, and knew I saw all things in God, and God in all things.

*Mechtild of Magdeburg writing in 13<sup>th</sup> century*

## From the Treasurer

A quick update on the half-year position at the end of June: total income for the six months was £35,606, total expenditure £43,584, giving a deficit of just under £8,000.

Perhaps most disappointing for me was the offering on the last Sunday in June, communion Sunday, which in normal times is usually one of the biggest offerings of the first half of the year. This year the total offering was only £159.50. The church was closed at this time last year, but this figure can be compared to the offering on the last Sunday in June in 2019 when the total giving amounted to £640.30 – quite a difference.

I am very grateful to those who, perhaps not able to attend church, are still sending in their offering envelopes, and to those who have recently reviewed the level of their bank standing orders.

Congregations have been encouraged by the General Assembly to participate in a church-wide National Giving Day at a time of their choosing over the season of Harvest 2021. This will provide people of all ages an opportunity to reflect on God's presence with us through these challenging times and to offer gifts of thanksgiving back to God. The money raised through the congregation's involvement in the National Giving Day will not be assessable for Ministries and Mission purposes. Please look out for more details of this nearer the time.

*Anne Lamont*

## Clerical Errors

( From James A Simpson's compilations in his book *Holy Wit* )

*A Dorset minister was surprised to receive a typed note listing possible hymns for a funeral, beginning with Amazing Grave.*

*In a wedding report it was stated that 'the three tiered wedding cage had been made by the bride'*

*The birth notice in a local newspaper read, 'To Mr and Mrs John Mackay, a son, a bother for Susan'*

## How terribly strange!

If you were in church a few weeks ago you'll remember that Katherine intimated that both Ellen and I had had our birthdays

during the previous week. Mine was one of those BIG birthdays. I'd become a septugenarian. In normal times the church fairy cakemother would have provided a large cake for us all to enjoy at coffee time.

I'm sure that you will have had that annoying experience of having a song go round and round in your head and you can't get rid of it. You may have heard it on the radio or TV or blaring from a car at traffic lights. I've heard it referred to as an "earworm". You wake up in the morning and there it is again.

Back in the 1960s I was quite a big Simon and Garfunkel fan. I had most of their albums and my friends and I played them over and over. One album, Bookends, is a particular favourite. I didn't own a copy but my friend John did and he was later to be best man at our wedding. He still lives in Belfast and though we rarely see each other we have long phone conversations every 6 months or so.

Now you may be wondering how, if at all, these first three paragraphs are connected.

A few days before my birthday I woke up with an earworm. The words and tune of a Bookends song were going round in my head. But I couldn't think how on earth it had got there. I had not heard that song for as long as I could remember. The song is called "Old friends." The words go as follows

"Old friends, sat on a park bench like bookends.  
The sounds of the city sifting through trees settle like dust  
On the shoulders of the old men.  
Can you imagine us years from today, sharing a park bench  
quietly.  
How terribly strange to be seventy."

I eventually came to the conclusion that as my birthday approached and the word "seventy" crossed my mind some little brain cell in my head decided to Google "seventy". It came up with that song, and there it was in my brain's inbox when I awoke that morning.

I told a few people this little anecdote unaware that the story was not quite over.

On the day of my birthday I received an email. It was from John in

Belfast. We hadn't been in touch since Christmas. The email subject was "Old Friends." The message simply said. Have a great birthday. But there was an attachment. There, printed out were the words of that Simon and Garfunkel song.

How terribly strange!

*Jimmy Hudson*

## **Church Family**

We are sad to record the following death since our last magazine: Dennis (Danny) Kaye on 27 March 2021.

### **Changes of personal details**

Please remember to let us know any changes of **address or phone number** in order that we can keep the roll up to date. Also we will be pleased to have any new / updated **email** addresses.

Similarly, for those who give by Gift Aid, please let the treasurer know if your income tax status has changed.



### **Magazine Contributions**

Thank you to those who contributed to this magazine.  
Please keep contributions coming in for future publications.