

Greenbank Connections



April 2020

Issue 688

Scottish Charity SCO11325



The Light shines in the darkness

Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

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

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*Have you looked at the
Greenbank website recently?
www.greenbankchurch.org*

From the Minister

Dear Friends and Neighbours,



What a strange beginning to 2020. We are in the grip of Coronavirus (COVID-19) and are living through the uncertainty of what it will mean for us. How will our family, friends and church be affected? What will be the fate of the most vulnerable in our communities? How will we cope? What will emerge from the wreckage of our world when we win a medical victory over the virus?

In the aftermath of the First World War, Lewis Grassic Gibbon wrote a brilliant scene for the ending of *Sunset Song*, the first volume of the *Scots Quair* trilogy. He describes the local Minister and community climbing to the top of the hill to be part of a ceremony to dedicate the new war memorial to the local farming folk killed in the carnage of the trenches. The Minister's sermon, drawing on Revelation 2: 28, *For I will give you the Morning Star*, is a great elegy for an age that was destroyed by the war, and a call to build a

better society:

So lest we shame them, let us believe that the new oppressions and foolish greeds are no more than mists that pass. They died for a world that is past, these men, but they did not die for this that we seem to inherit. Beyond it and us there shines a greater hope and a newer world, undreamt when these four died. But need we doubt which side of the battle they would range themselves did they live today, need we doubt the answer they cry to us even now, the four of them, from the places of the sunset?

The scene continues with the pipe tune, *The Flowers O' The Forest*, the musical notation for which is movingly printed in the text, bringing the music to our reading of the page. As we imagine the elegiac strains of the tune that we often hear at Greenbank on Remembrance Sunday, take a moment to think of the threshold that Coronavirus is bringing us to. We are being called on to care throughout for those in need, and to support efforts to combat the virus' spread. Let's do that wholeheartedly. But let's also plan for a future where the blank page of catastrophe turns into the first page of a new story. What do we want our world to be like when we have

conquered this virus? Will it be "new oppressions and foolish greeds" or will we be part of a new creation inspired by remaking the world in the image of Christ, and building a new common good that enriches a "big society" rather than a society which seems to allow the flourishing of only the wealthy and powerful?

These are important days for us all, and especially for the Church, to stand up and be counted. When catastrophe happens, there is an opportunity to rebuild from the ashes. Let's find inspiration in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, which enables us to find light in the dark and the fulfilment of new life out of the death of our old ways.

*Goodness is stronger than evil;
Love is stronger than hate;
Light is stronger than darkness;
Life is stronger than death;
Victory is ours through Him
who loves us.*

Words by Desmond Tutu

With my love and prayers for you all as we navigate Coronavirus.



Martin Ritchie

Staying in Touch

Martin is now sending out a weekly email to the congregation and friends. In order for us to comply with Data Protection regulations, unless you are an Elder or Board member you need to register on the website before you can receive it. This is done by going to: www.greenbankchurch.org then click on the line '[sign up for regular email contact with Greenbank](#)' and follow the instructions.

Since all events normally held on Greenbank premises have been cancelled meantime, there is no monthly calendar in this issue. However, details of the **Holy Week & Easter Services** are given on the back page.

All 10.30am Sunday morning services are now broadcast live (see article on p4).

Editors

Watching Services Online

For those at home wishing to access live-streaming of worship from Greenbank, the instructions are as follows.

Using a computer connected by cable (or wirelessly) to the internet via broadband, open the web browser, search for and select the 'Greenbank Church Edinburgh' website, at

www.greenbankchurch.org

The website's homepage has a button 'Watch Services' (shown separately below, and in the image of the homepage.) Click this and a new tab opens which on a Sunday morning shows a black rectangular box. During the Sunday setting up time,

between 10.20am and 10.30am, this displays a picture and the pre-service organ music should be audible. To move to a full screen display, click on the angled arrows (bottom or top right of rectangle). From 10.30am you should be able to watch the live service. To watch a recording of a service, visit the same web page and scroll down to the rectangle showing an arrowhead. Click on the arrowhead to play the most recent service, or select a previous date along the top of the player and click on the arrowhead. Recordings take you to services for the last four weeks, but no more.

David Ferguson



The screenshot shows the homepage of Greenbank Parish Church Edinburgh. At the top left, the text reads "Greenbank Parish Church Edinburgh". To the right is the church's logo, a green circle with a white cross and radiating lines, with "GREENBANK PARISH CHURCH" written around it. Below the header is a red navigation bar with links: Home, Worship, About Us, What's on, Halls, Adults, Youth, Church Business, Calendar, Recordings. There are also links for Register and Log in. The main content area features a large image of the church entrance with the logo above it. Below this image is the caption "Greenbank logo above entrance to church at night". To the right of the image is a "Welcome" section with text: "Welcome to Greenbank Parish Church of Scotland, Edinburgh. We aim to be a friendly and outward-looking Christian congregation with a desire to love and serve God and our parish and community. You will find us at the corner of Braidsburn Terrace and Cassellan Road in the Greenbank/Morningside area of Edinburgh. Our services are currently online only, because of the Coronavirus outbreak. Please click the 'Coronavirus Advice' button below for more information. Sign up for regular email contact with Greenbank". Below the welcome text are four buttons: "What's On", "Worship Times", "Coronavirus Advice", and "Children's Events". There is also a "Watch Services" button with a play icon and a Facebook icon. At the bottom, there is a "Donate" button with logos for Visa, Mastercard, American Express, and PayPal.



Live streaming by the pool in Spain

Summer Walks Update

A programme of summer walks had been in mind for the period from Easter onwards, but obviously there is no prospect of group walks with a social element in the current circumstances.

Hopefully the chance to undertake some convivial joint trips will arise in the late summer, but meanwhile I hope to prepare a few walk routes and recommendations which are in line with the Government guidelines on social distancing. I will put these on the church website and offer them to Martin for his weekly church email as and when I have checked them out.

Close to home, for example, it was perfectly possible in recent days to navigate the round of the Braid Hills without being close to other walkers, and

the same can be said of the Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve. The latter can now only be accessed using a car, given the reduction in public transport services, and so we may for the time being have to sacrifice our eco-objectives for the walks.

If you are new to this interest this year, please provide your email address to me; I think I have most participants from last year on my email list.

I will send route information out to you when I have prepared it!

David Jack

(davidinnesjack@gmail.com)

Friendship Club

The club has had a good year with many interesting speakers. Sadly, due to the virus, our final meeting – an afternoon of songs from Raymond Williams – has been cancelled but we hope to have him on the programme for next session. Thanks to Donald MacLeod and his team we have enjoyed five splendid experimental Soup and Pud lunches, a great success which we will definitely continue next year. There will be no Outing so we have a whole year to plan the next one!

Val Smart

Lent with the Desert Fathers (and Mothers!)

‘The wilderness’ is a frequent theme of the Bible – it was a place of the unknown and the dangerous. Yet, it is also a transformative place. In the wilderness, the newly free Israelite people redefined themselves from their traumatic Egyptian past. Jesus, we read in Mark’s Gospel, frequently retires to deserted, wild places to pray. Later, in 270 AD, a young man named Anthony attended an illegal church service. In a sermon, he heard ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me’ (Matthew 19:21). So he did. (Is your heartbeat quickened?)

Anthony left for the wilderness, both to pursue perfection and, perhaps, to evade persecution. But when Christianity became legalised, in 313, Anthony did not return. In fact, more and more Christians felt a pull to the wilderness – to the desert. These ‘desert Christians’ found something in the silence of the natural world. What was it? What did they find out there? When everyday people braved the trip out to them for pastoral care, these Christians truly became the desert Fathers (abbas) and Mothers (ammās). Some of their wisdom survives today: *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. The title is misleading, though, as there are recorded statements of the Mothers too. As would happen with the mystics of the Middle Ages (e.g. Julian of Norwich and Catherine of Sienna), these women were often visited by their male contemporaries who sought spiritual direction. They were powerful movers and shakers in their own right.

Now, like John the Baptist’s camel hair cloak and honey diet, the desert Fathers and Mothers have stories which are mystifying and strange. But their transformation is unmistakable. Their social isolation

provided them with the time and space to wonder and to wander in the hinterlands of the soul. And, like Walt Whitman, they are large, they contain multitudes. So do we.

In the introduction to Athanasius’ *On The Incarnation*, CS Lewis wrote “There is a strange idea abroad that in every subject the ancient books should be read only by the professionals, and that the amateur should content himself with the modern books.” He disagreed with this strange idea, and recommended that his students read outside their century. To read outside one’s time is “to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books.”

Yes, at first we might find these old books as arid as a valley of dry bones. Yet as Lent turns to Easter, we are reminded of the potency to be found in dry and wild places. In ‘the wilderness’ – whether physical or spiritual – there are springs where abbas and ammas have walked before us. May we drink deeply of their wisdom.

Steve Chaffee

Lent/Easter Appeal 2020

At its January meeting the Congregational Board decided that the recipients of the Lent/Easter Appeal 2020 should be the **Coastguard Association**, with a request that the donation should be directed to its activities in the Lothians. To donate to the Lent/Easter Appeal, please use internet banking if you can.

The bank account details are:

Full Name: Greenbank Parish Church

Sort Code: 80-02-77

Account No: 00371917

Mark payment with identifier “LENT”.

Alan Ramage

Saving a Little Plastic (2)

Last month, Alison Murison wrote about the beautiful ranges of shampoo (and shower) soap bars now available, cutting the use of shampoo and shower gel plastic bottles.

Quite recently, the McWilliam household discovered how to refill our washing-up liquid bottle easily... and just down the road from Greenbank Church! This is thanks to our wonderful local health shop, Good Food, 255 Morningside Road, who will also refill your bottles of shampoo, conditioner, body wash, laundry liquids, toilet cleaner and more. Bring your bottles along to the owner, Karen, who would be delighted to see you! Her products

are environmentally sensitive and the shampoo, for example, contains beautiful essential oils.

Rachel McWilliam



Jesus said “Feed my lambs” John 21:15

This command of Jesus has been taken up in a very poor and drought-affected area in the Western Province of Zambia by the *United Church of Zambia*, in partnership with an aid charity, *World Renew*, and the *United Church of Canada*. Last year’s harvest failed due to lack of rain. A feeding programme has been a lifeline for 4,000 households. This year there has been rain and the harvest is looking better. Seeds have been given out to meet longer term needs.

During my recent visit to Zambia with the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt Rev Colin Sinclair, I went to one of the distribution centres on the day of the

monthly allocation of the food. The organisational arrangements were amazingly efficient and the people both patient and cheerful. A registration system ensured that only those who had earlier shown that their harvest had failed were helped.

Around 170 representatives of families from two villages arrived, one group from over 20 kilometres away, to receive their monthly ration of maize meal, millet flour, beans, oil and salt – enough to give a family of seven people at least one nutritious meal a day. Before the provisions were distributed, we saw an example of another of the project’s aims – addressing gender inequality. This was done via an amusing



Impromptu service

sketch about a woman who was in work yet was also expected to see to the domestic routines, while her unemployed husband did nothing. The message was clear: women are often the breadwinners but need to be empowered to have greater independence within the traditional patriarchal family structures.

Arrangements to take the food home were many and varied: if home was nearby food was carried on heads, while “Scots carts”

(two-wheeled bogies drawn by hand), bikes and donkey carts were used for the distant village.

The final part of our visit was humbling. We were taken to the village’s old and new churches for a spontaneous service of praise and thanks with much singing and dancing. These people have nothing material but their faith is strong and their hearts are joyful.

Valerie Macniven



Donkey cart ready for the trip home

Greenbank Church JogScotland

We have had a great spring term of running! The Tuesday morning beginner group almost completed the *Couch to 5km* successfully before we had to pause the group in view of the Coronavirus. Several of the group have gone on to complete the 5km/30mins themselves which is a great achievement!! The Thursday group has met each week



Some of the Thursday evening group taking part in the Hermitage 10km race

this term despite running in the dark, rain, blizzards and high winds!! We have started to run a 5km loop to start with and then for anyone who feels like running further we are adding another loop to take the total distance to nearer 8-10km. This has allowed a bit more choice on the evening. We are currently getting club T-shirts printed – let me know if you might like one. In view of the Coronavirus we have been advised by JogScotland to stop meeting as a group. We are continuing to maintain runs and fitness by setting distance challenges to achieve as a group whilst running individually. We are also posting on our Whatsapp group photos of our runs to keep each other motivated to keep getting out and running. If anyone would like to join in to keep as healthy as possible in this time, please email me (cwrightman@doctors.org.uk) to find out more.

Katie Bogie



As mentioned in the February issue of *Connections*, a new system is now operating, whereby donated items left in the ladies' cloakroom or the church office are taken down to Fresh Start by the last Friday of the month.

In brief, contributions needed are:

- dishes and cutlery, pots and pans,**
- bed linen and towels, curtains,**
- small electrical items such as toasters and kettles**

For further information about the work of Fresh Start, please see

www.freshstartweb.org.uk

or telephone 0131 476 7741.

Alison Ambler (alison@ambler.me.uk)

Work Party Report

Every year our members produce beautiful knitted items to give to charities. Approximately 250 items were divided between baby hats for Simpsons; hats for the homeless; jumpers and cardigans for the Edinburgh Clothing Store; twiddle muffs for the Saturday Club at The Open Door; jumpers, cardigans and baby blankets for a church in Muirhouse and Children 1st; knee rugs and bedsocks for Morlich House; and knee rugs and twiddle muffs for The Elms. As always our ladies enjoyed the craftwork and the meetings. Our final meeting in March has been cancelled due to the Coronavirus risk, so if any of our members are out of yarn during the summer they can stock up on Sundays at church, when it re-opens, or by contacting me. We can't have idle hands and bored ladies!

Anne Oxbrow
(anneoxbrow@hotmail.com)

Guild

We have had a very good session, with excellent talks on subjects from Arctic convoys to the Sinai desert, via Dr Elsie Inglis and antiques, fundraisers (the Gilbert and Sullivan evening raised over £740 for our Malawi Fruits Project), games, services and, of course, a party. Sadly, we were unable to finish the session as planned as our Annual Business Meeting and our summer outing were cancelled. At the moment we can't forecast when the Coronavirus restrictions will be lifted so the Summer Coffee Mornings are in doubt. We'll just have to hope things are better by then, and won't we all have lots to chat about when we get together again?

Edith Armit



Christian Aid Week

Unfortunately the House-to-House Collections due to take place in May have been cancelled.

The **Holy Corner Book Sale** has also been cancelled, and so the organisers do not want any further donations of books.

Fiona Watt



Dementia Friends

We held our first Dementia Friendly Service on Thursday 27th February. Everyone met in the Main Hall for a splendid selection of cakes, tea and coffee, before moving through to the church to enjoy a short act of worship led by the Rev John Stevenson. There was a peaceful atmosphere as we gathered together to sing well known hymns and think about friendship.

On 5th March the Dementia Advisor from *Alzheimer Scotland* provided two excellent 'Dementia Friends' sessions, sharing important information and a real insight into what it's like to live with dementia. We were given some very positive strategies.

Jan Corbett has been working with David Allan to make the environment more dementia friendly, and Greenbank Church now has blue toilet seats, blue hand rails, yellow signs and some chairs with arms.

Thank you to all who have supported us as we work towards becoming a dementia friendly community.

We plan to hold further services but at present the plans are on hold due to the Coronavirus.

Mary Hadden



Life and Work: April 2020

Easter

Reflection by the Very Rev Dr Derek Browning.

Prayer from the Rt Rev Colin Sinclair.

Children and Communion

The experiences of churches actively involving children in their communion services.

From D'Oyly Carte to Dunfermline

Interview with opera singer and church elder Frances McCafferty.

A Celtic Pilgrimage

Gemma King describes her walk on the Columba Experience, a week-long pilgrimage for young adults.

Under Par

The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers reflects on the importance of good mental health.

No Short Cuts

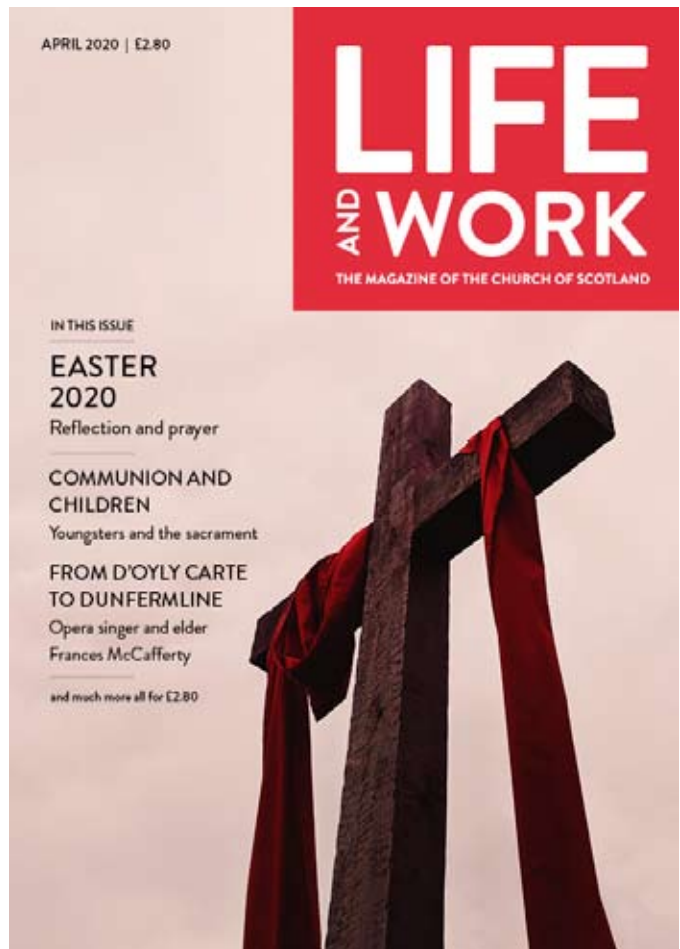
In his final column, the Moderator of the General Assembly explains why Jesus is still worth following.

The Cruellest Month

Ron Ferguson reflects on the gift of April.

Plus news, reviews, letters, registers and crosswords.

Online visit us at www.lifeandwork.org for regular news and exclusive features, find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter [@cofslifeandwork](https://twitter.com/cofslifeandwork)



Thought for the Month

Reading and studying the Bible over many years has been a source of great encouragement and challenge for me. I don't take the Bible literally and if someone says to me you must believe every word in the Bible, my first response is "what version?" My view on what is the Word of God has changed over time. For me, Jesus is the Word of God, not the Bible, and everything in the Bible – Old and New Testament – should be read in the light of the life and teachings of Jesus. It doesn't say in John's gospel that the Word became flesh and then became Word again. So, for example, when we read in the Old Testament of God ethnically cleansing a people, we must ask if this is the same God we read about in the life and teachings of Jesus.

When Jesus tells the story in the gospels about the human house being cleansed of evil, this is a great challenge for me. After

the cleansing it doesn't remain vacant for long. It either becomes a house of God or of sin. The same is true of Christian assemblies.

However, standing outside our "house" we have the one who rescues. "Behold," says Jesus, "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in." I often resist this offer from Jesus as I know He can be very challenging. He will be asking if I can resist the impulse to gossip mischievously or asking what I'm doing to support Greta Thunberg. Jesus' difficult teaching reminds me that a nice, clean, empty soul-house is not what He wants from me.

Because self-deception is so easy, I never assume that Jesus is the sole tenant of my soul, but remind myself again and again who He was, and therefore is, by reading and re-reading the gospels.

Stephen Hadden



Welcome Teams

Since the congregation is not currently attending worship at Greenbank on Sunday mornings, there will be no requirement for Welcome teams until further notice.

Welcome teams will be contacted when congregational attendance at Sunday morning worship resumes.

Flower Rota

As the Church is currently closed, provision and distribution of flowers is suspended until further notice.



Congregational Register

Omitted from the online version of Connections

Coffee Rota

Since the congregation is not currently attending worship at Greenbank on Sunday mornings, there will be no coffee after the Sunday Service until further notice.

Coffee teams will be contacted when congregational attendance at Sunday morning worship resumes.

The ministry team can be contacted through the Church Office or directly:

Rev Dr Martin Ritchie

tel: 07984 466 855

email: MRitchie@churchofscotland.org.uk

Mr Steven Chaffee (Youth Associate)

tel: 07729 000 788

email: stevechaffee@greenbankchurch.org

For information about church organisations, please contact the Church Office: (Mon–Fri, 8.30am–12 noon, 1.30pm–3pm)

Mrs Virginia Johnston

tel and fax: 0131 447 9969

email: greenbankchurch@btconnect.com

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***

Material for the May 2020 issue of *Greenbank Connections* should be delivered to the Church Office by **Sunday 12th April, or emailed by 9am on Friday 17th April to greenbankconnections@gmail.com**

GREENBANK AND MORNINGSIDE PARISH CHURCHES

Holy Week and Easter 2020

We've had to create a Plan B for Holy Week due to Coronavirus and the restrictions placed on public worship by the Church of Scotland, but we are glad to be able to livestream some of our worship. You'll be able to view the following services online live on our website www.greenbankchurch.org

Our Monday to Wednesday services are around 30 minutes long, and include prayers, readings, music, and a reflection by members of the Greenbank and Morningside teams.

Mon 6th April 7.30pm *Live Broadcast of Evening Worship*

Tues 7th April 7.30pm *Live Broadcast of Evening Worship*

Wed 8th April 7.30pm *Live Broadcast of Evening Worship*

Thur 9th April 7.30pm *Live Broadcast of Communion Service – have your own bread and wine ready to share in this virtual service*
(Maundy Thursday)

Fri 10th April 7.30pm *Live Broadcast of Evening Worship for Good Friday*
(Good Friday)

Sun 12th April 10.30am *Live Broadcast of Worship for Easter with Communion – have your own bread and wine ready to share in this virtual service*
(Easter Day)

THE EDINBURGH PASSION

“LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS”

Website – www.edinburghpassion.com

The play has been postponed, but the website is still running and will have online content over the Easter weekend. There will be reflections for each hour to allow you to connect with the Easter story.

Cutting Edge Theatre will be meeting over the next few months to plan the way forward and hope to produce the play in 2021.

Connect with us, feedback via social media: ‘The Edinburgh Passion.’

Let's come together to be a community who join together to tell the story.

REMEMBER – HOPE IS HARD TO KILL