

Greenbank Connections



April 2025

Issue 733

Scottish Charity SC011325



Forest Church: Making binoculars to take on the Trail

Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

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

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From the Locum



Jesus and John Wayne

Kristin Kobes Du Mez, a lecturer at Calvin University, a Christian College in Michigan, worked on a book over 15 years. She called it 'Jesus and John Wayne' [published 2020]. A teacher of US history, she discussed how the American ideal of masculinity has been influenced by politics, economics, religion and race.

Du Mez argues that, since the early 20th century, white, conservative, evangelical Christians in America have been at least as influenced by culture as they have by the Bible or theology: their views on masculinity have always been in tension with the figure of a loving Jesus, but they have consistently aligned with the militant paradigm as presented by John Wayne. For her, John Wayne serves as a 'model' for militant, masculine America, inspired by mythical and gendered

ideals, white supremacy, the nuclear family and American exceptionalism. Evangelicals are on the side of America, so their detractors are enemies of America.

She believes that conservative white evangelicals have consistently and increasingly betrayed the Christian faith that they purportedly claim by embracing anti-Christian values such as men first and women second; racism; nationalism; militarism, both explicitly and implicitly. The book reached number four on the New York Times bestseller list.

In last Sunday's sermon I pointed out that this approach has not been followed by the Evangelical movement in the UK and does not fit with the Jesus we are following in Greenbank as we study Luke's gospel through the season of Lent. Consider that this gospel begins with Mary and Elizabeth, strong female figures who reveal leadership, confidence, ideas and energy. Consider Jesus' interaction with Jairus' daughter and the woman who touched Jesus' cloak in Luke 8:40-56.

Consider the Wise and Foolish Builders Parable which emphasises the importance of building one's life on the teachings of Jesus, as opposed to building it on a foundation of human ideas (Luke 6:46-49).

Consider The Good Samaritan, a parable which illustrates the importance of compassion and neighbourly love (Luke 10:29-37).

Consider the parable of the Rich Fool, warning against the danger of accumulating wealth and forgetting God and emphasising the importance of a life focused on spiritual riches rather than material possessions (Luke 12:16-21).

Consider The Prodigal Son, a parable about repentance, forgiveness and the boundless love of God, often seen as representing God's willingness to welcome back those who stray (Luke 15:11-32).

As we journey towards Easter, please remember that women often led and certainly supported the Early Church and that women were the first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection.

I leave you with the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester:

Thanks be to you, our
 Lord Jesus Christ,
 for all the benefits which
 you have given us,
 for all the pains and insults which
 you have borne for us.
 Most merciful Redeemer, Friend
 and Brother,
 may we know you more clearly,
 love you more dearly,
 and follow you more nearly,
 day by day.

Blessings,
Ian Y Gilmour
Locum Minister

Thought for the Month

This year Holy Week, starting on Palm Sunday and continuing through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday to Easter Day, falls in mid-April. At Easter we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. There is nothing more central to Christian faith and to the continuing existence of the Church than the good news of resurrection – not only the resurrection of Jesus Christ but also the consequent transformation of human lives, filling them with energy, love, joy, and hope for the future.

However, we cannot have Easter without Good Friday. There is no way to resurrection except through the cross. When we ‘survey the wondrous cross’, we can do so only in the light of Easter. Equally, when we celebrate the dawn of Easter Day, the empty cross is ever in the background.

In one of his Letters St Paul refers to “the doctrine of the cross”. However, even Paul did not attempt to reduce to one single set of words his interpretation of the cross. Many theories have been developed to explain and make sense of the death of Christ. At best, they may be seen as complementary to one another, each being but part of the whole truth.

At one level the death of Jesus, his cruel execution, was the inevitable result of a sinister coalition of human

forces. Three main human forces brought about the death of Jesus:

- organised religion, in the person of the Jerusalem priesthood
- ordinary human nature, as represented by the mob which howled for his crucifixion
- the powers of law and order, the state, in the form of Pilate and the Roman forces of occupation.

Then there was the self-determination of Jesus. Jesus must have been well aware of the growing opposition that sought to eliminate him and his movement. And yet there was no turning back: as Luke records, he set his face resolutely towards Jerusalem. Jesus faced the final, fatal showdown with mixed emotions, both hope and uncertainty, with no precise knowledge of what lay ahead.

From the earliest days Christians have seen the killing of Jesus as not just an act of barbaric inhumanity, not simply the death of a good man, not merely a great human drama, but as the making known of God’s true nature. It was not that God willed that an innocent person be nailed to a cross. It was with hindsight, from the perspective of Easter, that Christians came to believe that behind Calvary was the throne



Guild



We are coming to the end of this session; it seems like no time since it started. We have had interesting talks with good speakers. We heard a good report of the very valuable work going on in India with support from Scottish Love in Action. It is amazing that, 25 years after it began, SLA is still making a difference to the lives of young people, particularly girls, in India. Look out for SLA activities this year to celebrate this significant birthday. Kathleen Patrick gave us one of her excellent illustrated talks about her travels. The Rev Jane Howitt told us about the extraordinary range of activities organised by the Chaplaincy Team at Heriot-Watt University, and Andrew Marsden explained the work done by the Friends of the Pentlands in Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of the Hills.

Thought for the Month (continued)/

of heaven. God's nature and character were made known on Good Friday and Easter Day. And that nature and character can be summed up in one word: love.

There is more, much more, to the Good News of Holy Week, but it may be enough that we keep on singing: "Inscribed upon the cross we see in shining letters, 'God is love'". Hymn 405, v2.

Peter Graham

Prof G Fitton and Dr M Ellis gave us an outstanding description of their work in the incredibly intricate making of the beautiful

Elizabeth Sword, showing us samples of the Stones from Iona which were chosen to decorate the hilt.

We are now looking forward to our Summer Outing and the Summer Coffee Mornings – more details in next month's *Connections*.

Edith Armit

Singing Group

April

2 Tom Inglis will lead the singing.

16 Easter break – no meeting.

30 Alan Irvine expects to return.

The meetings are 2.00pm in the Braid Room with tea or coffee afterwards.

Gillian Sweetman

Prisoners Week Scotland 2025

Initiative of the churches in Scotland with the Scottish Prison Service.

Prisoners Week 2025 will take place from 16th–23rd November, with the launch service on the 16th. Save the date and think how you or your community could engage next year? Let's listen, learn, and act together!

Hazel Macaulay

The Edinburgh Repair Café came to Greenbank

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, the Main Hall was transformed into a busy workshop and café.

All shapes and forms of objects were brought in by around 80 people of all ages, not just our members, but a lot of new faces too. The volunteers from the Repair Shop and Tool Library provided a wide range of skills, besides a great deal of enthusiasm and good humour.

Almost everything that was brought in was fixed or improved, so that happy faces carried their items away.

Thanks to the Eco-Group bakers who provided cake to go with the tea and coffee.

Alison Murison
Eco-Group



Lent / Easter Appeal 2025

At its January meeting the Congregational Board chose the under-noted charities to be the recipients of this year's Lent / Easter Appeal:

Held in our Hearts

heldinourhearts.org.uk

a Scottish charity providing baby loss counselling and peer support to families, and

Edinburgh Tool Library

edinburghtoollibrary.org.uk/

The Edinburgh Tool Library has an extensive inventory of tools for lending to individuals and community organisations, and runs training events to introduce people to the tools, including training sessions for people with disabilities.

Envelopes for this purpose will be in the pews for four weeks beginning Sunday 30th March. There will also be the opportunity to donate via the Church's website

Alan Ramage
Board

Recycling Medicine Blister Packs

Recycling of medicine blister packs is now available at the following branches of Boots: St James Quarter, Princes Street, Shandwick Place, Earl Grey Street, Ocean Terminal, Cameron Toll, Craigleith, The Fort, The Gyle.

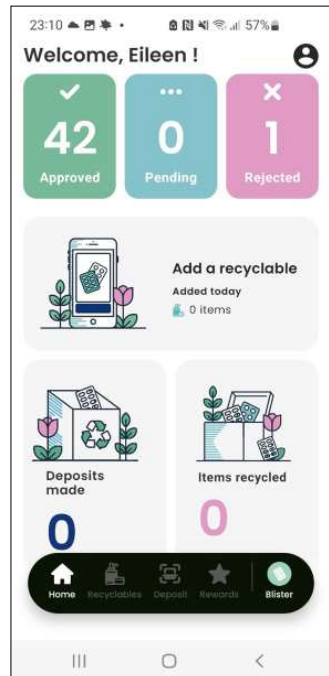
However, it first requires users to download the **Recycle at Boots** app (not the Boots Advantage Card app) and then upload photos of the items they wish to recycle. 24 hours later the app will confirm if the item can be accepted.

Further details can be found at:

tinyurl.com/blister-packs

The **Recycle at Boots** app is also where you recycle items like toothpaste tubes, toothbrush heads, make up etc and other difficult-to-recycle items not collected by kerbside recycling. Again, a system of logging items for approval lets you know if they can recycle the item or not.

Eileen Mackinnon





Christian Aid Week 11th to 17th May 2025 – volunteers needed

The **Christian Aid Week Appeal** this year will focus on Guatemala, a country dealing with immense challenges. More than half the population work in agriculture, yet there is widespread hunger. It is also one of the countries in the world most vulnerable to climate emergencies, where traditional livelihoods are threatened by droughts, savage storms and industrial plantations that monopolise the water supply and deforest the land. Christian Aid is supporting families in vulnerable communities and there will be more information about this during the campaign.

Christian Aid is also marking its 80th anniversary in 2025 and is asking churches to recommit to the work of this remarkable charity to commemorate everything that has been accomplished fighting against poverty and injustice over eight decades.

For the last four years we have distributed delivery-only envelopes in our parish, inviting donations to an online fundraising page or by returning envelopes to the church office. This has been very successful, and last year we raised

over £4,000 including Gift Aid. The Christian Aid Week appeal in 2024 raised over £5 million in the UK.

Greenbank will be using delivery-only envelopes again in 2025 and I am presently contacting volunteers from previous years. It would be good to have additional volunteers – it involves delivering envelopes to between 30 and 50 houses during Christian Aid Week 11th–17th May. There is no need to return to collect the envelopes.

Please contact me if you can help with this.

Holy Corner Book Sale 10th, 11th and 12th May

Following successful weekend sales over the last three years, this will be held again in Morningside United Church on **Saturday 10th May (all day), Sunday 11th May (afternoon) and Monday 12th May (morning only.)** There will be a huge range of books on all subjects at very reasonable prices: look out for further information.

Fiona Watt
Christian Aid Co-ordinator

A Way Forward

At the last Session Meeting the elders voted to continue to explore union with Morningside Parish Church (MPC). This decision has come after much discussion, where we have met with representatives from both Fairmilehead and MPC. The relationship with MPC seemed to prove the most productive and possible.

The group from Greenbank Church (the Interim Moderator the Rev Moira McDonald, Session Clerk Rona Sommerville, the Treasurer Robert Young, elders Richard Dunbar and Anne Kinnear) who have been meeting with members of MPC reported on their recent meetings and felt that although there were many unanswered questions this could be a way forward.

We are in a fortunate position in that in this area we are not losing

any buildings. We have resources that will allow us to expand work with the "Missing Generations" particularly the young, and to serve the greater area in partnership with our neighbours.

This is an emotional and uncertain time, and I would ask you to bear with the Session as we explore further. Greenbank is so obviously a congregation with a real faith and many talents. I hope we can continue to use those talents in the witness and service of the Church.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or comments and I will do my very best to answer them or pass them on to the right person. This is an ongoing conversation and one which we can continue to pursue.

Rev Moira McDonald

Friendship Club

Our last normal meeting was on 26th March. There is no meeting in April but on Wednesday 7th May at 2.00pm in the Main Hall there will be entertainment from the Ceilidh group followed by a special Afternoon Tea.

It will be free for Members of the Friendship Club. If anyone else would like to join us (£3 per person) please contact David Allan (0131 313 4445) or Gillian Sweetman (0131 447 1048).

Gillian Sweetman

In Prison

Until about six months ago I wouldn't have paid much attention to this road sign or wondered what happened inside HMP Edinburgh (Saughton Prison). Then I was offered the chance of teaching adult literacy and numeracy courses for the prisoners. Most of my career has been spent working in education at various levels, but



I had never taught in a prison before, so my curiosity got the better of me and I accepted the offer.

Saughton can be a dark and dangerous place but, if there is a bright spot, it is the willingness of some prisoners to improve their situation through education. I quickly discovered that most of the students in my classes had little or no schooling (which partly explains why they ended up in prison). One man now in his 40s was brought up in a travelling family and was never in one place long enough to attend school. Consequently, he can't read or write properly but he now wants to learn. Another student has good number skills and, when he gets released, he plans to get into college to gain qualifications.

I'm under no illusions that my contribution is but a drop in the ocean

as regards their rehabilitation. Ex-prisoners face enormous challenges to "go straight" on the outside. In Scotland the statistics show that around 27% are re-convicted and jailed again within one year of being released. To break this vicious circle of "prison - release - reoffend

- back to prison" it will take more than just education. They will also need suitable accommodation, financial support and help with finding jobs. None of this is easy, but education is a good place to start.

Working in Saughton is not for everyone (two of my teaching colleagues withdrew from the programme). I'm not even sure how long I will be able to continue due to funding problems and reorganisation within the prison. However, I've learned a lot in the last six months. From the prisoners I've learned about problems such as overcrowding, delays in court hearings and coping without cigarettes. I've met some interesting people such as prison officers, NHS nurses, chaplains and librarians who all work inside Saughton.



Family Travel

Edinburgh's Travel Service is part of Sacro's Throughcare Service enabling prisoners to maintain important contact with their families and friends. Research has shown that reoffending is reduced by providing a regular transport service to many of Scotland's prisons.

Registered passengers are picked up from their home address and taken to their arranged visit before returning home again free of charge.

Could you join this volunteer drivers service?

<https://tinyurl.com/travel-service>

Hazel Macaulay
Social Justice Action Group

In Prison continued/

You might wonder what all this has to do with the church but the Bible mentions prisons several times, most notably in Matthew 25:36 "when I was in prison you visited me" – to which I might add "and helped me with my reading, writing and arithmetic!" So perhaps the next time you are driving along Stenhouse Road and see the sign to "HM Prison" you might spare a thought, and a prayer, for those who live and work there.

Tom Inglis

Open Hand

On 12th February we were delighted to receive a donation of 130 books from the Scottish Book Trust. In our family bags which are delivered with the birthday gift are books suitable for the birthday girl or boy and his or her siblings. As you can imagine we have a regular turnover of books, so this substantial donation is a real boost.

Faye Channon of Scottish Book Trust delivered the books to us which allowed her to see our operation in action. We are excited about the benefits of being involved with the Trust not only in relation to potential donations but as a resource providing information as to suitable books.

We very much value our existing relationship with the Edinburgh Bookshop whose support we have had from the beginning.

Rona Ferguson



Recent Actions Regarding Prisoner Justice

In 2021 Greenbank Church was one of the first churches to sign the Prisoners Week Charter. In doing so our congregation committed to support those affected by imprisonment and to help raise awareness of the impact of the Scottish justice system on individuals, victims, prisoners, families and communities.

Last November, the Rev Dr Sheena Orr, (Chaplaincy Advisor for the Scottish Prison Service) and Greenbank's Social Justice Action Group ran a workshop where we learned that there were 17 prisons and 8,500 prisoners in Scotland, which come second in Western Europe for the highest number of prisoners per 100,000 of the population in 2023.

Our Group wrote to Angela Constance MSP, Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs, expressing our concern at the limited opportunity for a 'humane, rehabilitative experience' for an increasing number of prisoners, often who have mental health problems. We referred to other nations, eg Portugal, where prisoner numbers have decreased, partly due to

decriminalising drug use combined with a comprehensive package of health and social care support.

A reply from the Directorate for Justice stated that the Scottish Government has taken and will take measures to address the issue and highlighted the Emergency Release measures which give early release for most prisoners serving sentences of under four years. The response also advocated for an increase in the use of community sentences, structured deferred sentences and bail supervision and referred to a forthcoming independent review of sentencing in Scotland, due to report by the end of 2025, which will seek ways of reducing re-offending.

These issues, highlighted over many years in reports from the Chief Inspector of Prisons, are not going away. We will continue, through political lobbying and awareness-raising, to focus on this serious matter.

Stephen Hadden
Social Justice Action Group

Church of Scotland – International Presbytery

(information taken from an August 2024 *Life and Work* article by Thomas Baldwin)

For almost as long as the Church of Scotland has existed, there has been an international element to its work: taking Christianity to other parts of the world, providing medicine and education, establishing congregations, serving the Scottish diaspora. The remaining overseas congregations, except for those in the Holy Land, now fall within the Presbytery of International Charges. It numbers 12 congregations: 10 in Europe (two each in the Netherlands and Switzerland, Paris, Brussels, Malta, Lisbon, Rome and Budapest), Christ Church Bermuda and St Andrew's Scots Kirk in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The International Presbytery includes some of the Church of Scotland's most venerable churches – the Dutch congregations go

back to the 17th century – and also some of its most storied, with connections to such legendary figures as Jane Haining (Budapest) and the Rev Donald Caskie, the 'Tartan Pimpernel' (Paris).

Many are very active in work with people who are hungry, homeless or refugees. St Columba's Budapest was at the forefront of welcoming refugees from Ukraine after the Russian invasion, and Lausanne in Switzerland has also had a project working with the Ukrainians who moved there. In Malta, St Andrew's Scots Kirk has helped to support people attempting to get from North Africa to Europe. In expensive Bermuda, Christ Church has served breakfast to people who are struggling, along with a chance to shower and have clothes washed.

While there may be a temptation to regard the overseas churches as historical oddities, these congregations continue to have a valuable role.

"Go, then, to all peoples, everywhere... you will be witnesses for me to the ends of the earth."

Janet Edwards
World Church Group



Inside the "English Church" Amsterdam

Forest Church

Long ago, the Cherokee native American Indian people were forced to leave their homeland, carrying with them only what they could hold. This was called the Cherokee Trail of Tears. Among their treasures was a small, dark bean—now known as the Cherokee Trail of Tears bean. Though the journey was full of sorrow, the bean was a sign of hope and endurance, passed down through generations.



Over 30 bags of beans were handed out for the participants on the Forest Church Trail in the Hermitage,

led by the Rev Ian Gilmour, Karen Young and two dogs. The children (and some adults) had made binoculars to spy birds, trees and flowers. They came back to tea and cake and were able to plant their beans to take home and grow on.

**Alison Murison
Eco-Group**



Welcome Teams

April

- 6 **Christina Morrow**, Edith Armit, Louise Coghill, Susan Black, Nora Kellock, Margot Gillon
- 13 **Ian Thomson**, Kathleen Patrick, Diana Teasdale, Jill Powlett Brown, Karen Young, Heather Kay
- 20 **Donald King**, Jan Corbett, Roderick Morrison, Jim Young, Jane Harkin
- 27 **Stuart Sanders**, Moira Davidson, Julia Dunbar, John Murison, Alison Murison

May

- 4 **Rosemary McCulloch**, Moira Land, Malcolm Reid, Joan Ritchie, Fiona Grant, Martin Struthers, Barbara Middleton

Coffee Rota

April

- 6 Caroline Kehoe D70
- 13 Janet Edwards World Church
- 20 David & Janet Ferguson D13, 26 & 28
- 27 Rachel McWilliam D58

May

- 4 Helen & Phil Barnes D39, 42 & 89

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 **13th April** or sent by e-mail by 8pm on **Thursday 17th April** to:

greenbankconnections@gmail.com

Congregational Register

Flower Rota

provided by *delivered by*

April

- 6 Jill Powlett Brown Margaret Mack
- 13 Janet Walker Fiona Watt
- 20 **EASTER** Norah Kellock
- 27 Hazel Macaulay Valerie Macniven

May

- 4 Margo Fraser Sarah Whitty



Scouts @ Greenbank

Be prepared for "probably the best..."

JUMBLE sale

...in Edinburgh"

SATURDAY 12th APRIL 2025 : 9.30am - 12 noon

GREENBANK CHURCH, BRAIDBURN TERRACE, EH10 6ES

4th Braid Scout Group is registered as a Charity number SCO15021

No Cards - CASH only please

Adults £2

We're having a party!

Quest & QII

are celebrating 80 years of adventure at Greenbank Church

Save the date -

**Saturday evening and Sunday morning
27th-28th September 2025**

to step back and share happy days and lasting friendships.

We hope you can join us and that you will help to spread the word to all former Quest and QII members.

We will be in touch again soon to reveal further details of the 'revue' of 2025.

Watch this space!

To keep up to date with plans, please register your interest at
quest@greenbankchurch.org