# Greenbank Connections



December 2022 / January 2023

Issue 712

Scottish Charity SC011325



Willie Wilson's Nativity Window (see article p8)

# Greenbank Parish Church, Edinburgh

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

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Saturday 10th December

# **Minister's Letter**



#### Light and Dark

I love this time of the year when the nights grow longer and we begin to do some serious candle lighting in our home. This is the season of the interplay between light and dark. At this dawn of Advent, we see the light on the horizon. We know the light of Christ is growing stronger in this dark season as we move towards Christmas. At Christmas we will celebrate Emmanuel, God with Us, in a baby boy born to a young couple in humble surroundings in the little town of Bethlehem.

During Advent, we are reminded to be patient and wait, setting hurry aside. What is promised, will come. We step into the mystery that the dark is never just dark no matter how overwhelming it might seem. The Book of Genesis tells us that God created light after darkness, and then both existed together.



Candles in Bethlehem

Without this interplay of light and dark, the sun and moon and stars wouldn't be able to serve their function of indicating night and day, or the change of seasons. Light and dark are interwoven into the fabric of our lives.

As wonderful as this celebratory time of year can be, Advent and Christmas can be a difficult season for some for many different reasons. For all of us this season and into the new year, I pray that we are reminded of the mystery of joy, the stubbornness of light, and that wonder is part of healing and repair. As the Christmas hymn and poem by Christina Rossetti reminds us, "Love came down at Christmas". Love came and is here to stay. God is with us in the light and the dark. Always.

Julia A Cato

#### Scottish Chamber Choir Concert 7.30pm Saturday 17th December

in Greenbank Parish Church

# **Presbytery Planning**

The Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian met on 15th November. They approved the draft plan which had been circulated. There were no amendments. This means that, as I outlined last month, Greenbank, Morningside, Fairmilehead and St John's Colinton Mains churches have been given a year to work out a mutually acceptable future structure that will enhance mission in our area. Discussions between us and the other churches will start in the New Year.

#### Valerie Macniven

# Advent and Christmas appeal for Christian Aid



Throughout Advent we will be having our customary annual appeal for Christian Aid. This year Christian Aid's Christmas appeal will focus on Malawi. Most families there depend upon small-scale farming and are therefore extremely vulnerable to the climate crisis. Christian Aid is helping families and communities grow food crops resilient to climate change and thus preventing hunger.

- The preferred way of donating is by bank transfer to the Collections account - see below. By using a reference including your name, the church can claim Gift Aid where relevant and this will be passed on to Christian Aid. - We will also have Gift Aid Advent envelopes available in the church vestibule and in pews from Sunday 27th November. Any cheques should be made payable to "Greenbank Church Collections." There will also be an opportunity to donate at the Christmas Eve service.

#### **Bank Details**

Account name: Greenbank Church Collections; Sort code 80-02-27; Account number 10786266;

Reference – Your surname ADVENT Thank you for your continued support and generosity. We regularly receive messages from our colleagues at Christian Aid Scotland expressing appreciation of our fundraising efforts and gifts, which

help families around the world to transform their own lives.

Fiona Watt Christian Aid Coordinator

# **Christmas Concert – Saturday 10th December**

For the first time since 2019, Edinburgh Chamber Orchestra will be performing a Christmas concert at Greenbank Parish Church on Saturday 10th December 2022 at 7.30pm. The programme includes: **Mendelssohn** Schweizer Symphony

**Gade** Die Weihnachtsglocken **Bridge** A Christmas Dance and a selection of Christmas carols. Tickets: £10 full price, £5 for students, Children, Free

Tickets can be purchased in advance via our Eventbrite page:

tinyurl.com/43vatjcc Tickets will also be available at the door on the night. (Please bring cash). Donations: www.justgiving.com/edinburghchamberorchestra

We hope to see you there!

#### Alberto Massimo

### **Thought for the Month** The Spirit and the spirit of Christmas

In one of his songs Ray Charles sang of the "truly amazing spirit of Christmas". For most of us this includes being with family and friends, sharing what we have with others, especially those less fortunate than ourselves, and spreading peace, love, and joy.



He also sang about "listening to a children's choir singing songs about Jesus, the blessed way he came to us", a reminder that at the heart of it all is the coming of Jesus.

How did Jesus come to us? In their Gospels both Matthew and Luke make the remarkable claim that Mary's pregnancy was not from Joseph but from the "Holy Spirit", the Spirit of God. Much time, thought, ink, and paper have been expended in exploring the meaning and significance of this assertion.

For many Christians this has been taken as a literal fact about the parentage of Jesus: Jesus had a human mother, but no human father. If this were not so, Jesus would be simply an ordinary human being, with two ordinary human parents.

Others deny this claim, arguing that a being with one divine parent and one human parent would be a hybrid. This is not what the church has asserted down the ages: it has claimed that Jesus is both fully divine and fully human. Do we have to choose: fact or fable? truth or fiction? Or do we fail to understand the intention of the Gospel writers. They were not writing reports for the next day's newspapers. In particular, these ancient stories were not intended to describe a gynaecological miracle. Rather, we must see them as a pointer to a profound mystery.

Have we overlooked the

emphasis on the Holy Spirit in these ancient tales? God's Spirit has always been the catalyst of the new, "the Lord, the giver of life", in the words of the Nicene Creed. To say, then, with the angel in Joseph's dream that Mary's child is "from the Holy Spirit" is to say that this is a radically new beginning and as such is God's doing, not ours.

In Jesus, the Spirit of God was at work as never before. In Jesus there came into the world God's life-giving and creating power. This same power, which brought order out of primeval chaos, has come to bring order to disordered human lives and chaotic human society. This same power, which opens human minds to the truth. enables us to recognise the truth about God, about our neighbours, and about ourselves. This same power, agent of renewal, can revive in us the ideals we have abandoned, and restore the good intentions we once cherished, helping us to put them into practice. By so doing, with the help of the Spirit, we may enter more truly and more fully into the truly amazing spirit of Christmas.

#### Peter Graham

# Julia Cato Interviewed

Julia was born in Homestead, Florida in the United States, but was brought up in Germany. Her mother is German and her father American. Her father worked in accounting for the US Army, and after working two years in the US, returned to Germany as a family of three.



Julia and her younger sister were educated at the Department of Defence (DoDs) School on the US base in Germany, which also housed the NATO Headquarters and a large hospital. From an early age Julia was bilingual in German and English, mixing with children of many different nationalities, and a diverse group of teachers.

Although her family were not regular churchgoers, when children in Germany reached the age of 12 they were enrolled in Confirmation classes, so Julia attended the Lutheran course, which she found rewarding, challenging and enlightening. Her American Aunt Daisy, deeply religious, would send Julia bible storybooks, and gave her her first Bible. She remembers always being curious and asking lots of questions about faith and religion.

Julia left Germany to study English Literature at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, Florida, with a view to becoming an English teacher. While English was her Major subject she took as her Minor, Religious Studies. The tutor, an Episcopalian priest, offered a course on 'The Historic Jesus' which many of the students found too challenging, but which stimulated young

Julia immensely.

She worked in various roles in social services, volunteering with the US Army social services, and later with the Army Chaplaincy. After earning her Master of Divinity (MDiv) at Union Theological Seminary in NYC, she was employed for several years at The Sister Fund, a major donor to Faith and Feminism projects. While at Union, her hope was to work for the UN: however, involvement in grassroots community organising brought her passion to a local level. While living in NYC, she met Jewish people for the first time, and made Jewish friends. As a German Christian, she was interested to know how people learned about the Holocaust, and participated in an International Study Programme on the Holocaust for the 18-25 age group, which included secular East Germans. Jews. Christians, Germans, Americans and

Poles. This inspired her to write her Master's Dissertation: *Holocaust Remembrance and Family Narrative*.

While in NYC Julia met her future husband. Ian Alexander. at a mutual friend's birthday party. Keeping in touch through email and occasional face to face meetings they married in Germany in 2011. Life together in Edinburgh began when lan started work at the Church of Scotland offices at 121 George Street. Julia's first job here was for the Edinburgh Interfaith Association and the Festival of Spirituality and Peace (now Just Festivals), writing grant reports, which she loved, getting to know faith people round the city. Their first son. Hamish, was born in 2013 and Max followed in 2016.

Julia felt a strong call to ordained ministry – coincidentally on Pentecost Sunday 2015. She began her training in September 2017 with her first placement at the Canongate Kirk, and she enrolled at New College to complete the additional academic credits required by the Church of Scotland. A spell at Colinton Parish was followed by a summer placement at Greyfriars Kirk and then Probation at Marchmont St. Giles, before Covid took hold.

Julia's year with Greenbank as Youth and Families Worker has enabled her to get to know many Greenbank people, and she has learnt a great deal about families and young children. She repeatedly said she has felt God's hand in her life, and finds herself closest to God in nature.

We hope her time with us as Associate Minister will be happy and fulfilling, and we ask for God's blessing on her and her family as we welcome her back to Greenbank in her new role.

# Lent / Easter Appeal 2023

Members of the Congregation are invited to nominate local charities to be recipients of monies raised in next year's Lent / Easter Appeal. Nominations can be sent to me via the Church Office, left for me in the appropriate pigeonhole in the Main Hall or emailed to in advance of Friday 6th January. Selection of a nominated charity (or charities) will be made at the January meeting of the Congregational Board.

Alan Ramage Joint Clerk to the Congregational Board

# Greenbank's Stained Glass The Nativity Window

Given the season, it seems appropriate to start a series on the stained glass windows in Greenbank Parish Church by considering William Wilson's beautiful Nativity Window, completed in 1957 and situated in the North Aisle of the church.

#### (see front Cover)

Wilson also designed and executed the War Memorial Window (1950) and the Parables Window (1954). He was the subject of a recent exhibi-

tion at The Royal Scottish Academy – "William Wilson: Print | Paint | Glass" – to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his death in 1972, at the age of only 66. Concerning his approach to stained glass, the exhibition catalogue comments: "Wilson's painterly training brought a fluid,

balanced design to his windows, while his skill as a draughtsman delivered a unique linear strength through the window's lead lines." Elsewhere it notes "In the thirty years that Wilson's studio was in operation, it designed and installed an astounding 300 plus windows around the world. There are examples in the USA, Canada, Mexico, South Africa, Malawi and New Zealand, and many in the great churches and cathedrals of the UK." We are fortunate indeed to have three windows by such an artist.

The second edition of the Rev Donald Mackay's Guide to Greenbank's stained glass windows is available online:

#### tinyurl.com/3nhszwv4

Copies are available for £5 from the Church Office. A detailed description of each window is given in the Guide.

Why is this my favourite window in Greenbank? Although it is full of

intricate detail, there is a warmth generated by the colour range and a pleasing coherence to the overall design, with the Holy Family in the centre, the Shepherds to the left and the Wise Men to the right. Above, the Divine Hand points down in blessing, carried earthwards by the

dove of the Holy Spirit to the Holy Family. Below the main design are three cameos of the life of Jesus: (Left) helping Joseph in his carpenter's shop, (Centre) welcoming little children, and (Right) asking and answering questions in the temple. Notice the delicacy with which Wilson depicts various hands, in particular those of the young shepherd, of Mary and Joseph, of the



The young shepherd

# Guild

We had two very different meetings in November, the first was a lesson on how to create a floral Christmas decoration and the resulting practice gave a good number of amazing decorations to be

this year - Home for Good.

taken home in triumph. The second

meeting was a video presentation

for the project we are supporting

This charity provides encourage-

ment and support for families

adopting or fostering children.

It is dedicated to finding a home

for every child who needs one by

coordinating and resourcing a rap-

idly growing network of people,

churches and local groups, raising

awareness of the needs of vulner-

able children and young people,

inspiring individuals to explore fostering, adoption and supported



lodgings, and equipping churches to understand and support the programme. It is child-focused and faith-rooted. The video was informative and had several speakers who were care-experienced. It was a

thought-provoking afternoon.

Our next meeting is the members' Christmas party on 6th December at 2.30pm in the Lower Hall. We expect much fun, fellowship and festive food.

In the New Year we start with an open Coffee morning on 10th January in the Main Hall and then on 17th January we will learn more about the Braidburn Valley Park.

We wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year.

Edith Armit

Wise Men. The young shepherd with his crook, kneeling while holding a lamb, is a mini-masterpiece in itself. We have turned to this window many times over the years in selecting images for the Greenbank Christmas Card!

I would urge you to go and study the window, particularly when daylight is streaming through it.

John Murison



A favourite Greenbank card from the past

# Christmas Gift Service – 11th December

Each Christmas, our children, young people and members of the congregation bring presents to the Gift Service. These are divided between two projects in Edinburgh. Some go to Barnardo's centre at the prison for prisoners' children and others go to the Old Kirk and Muirhouse Parish Church to be shared with children and families in need in their area.

We would love to have a collection of gifts to pass on and so we are asking everyone who can to join in. Last year we extended the invitation to Babies and Toddlers and our uniformed organisations as well as, once again, Pre School.

We know that the presents are always appreciated. Please bring gifts to the service preferably UN-WRAPPED in a gift bag or loosely wrapped in tissue paper. Please include a detachable tag saying whether the gift is suitable for a boy or girl and what age range it is appropriate for.

The age range requested is from O to 14 years old. Whilst your child or children might want to choose a gift suitable for their own age group, could I ask any young people or adults to consider choosing a gift suitable for a teenager.

Last year we had a number of gift vouchers donated. These were appreciated by teenagers who were given a gift token and bus tokens to allow them to purchase their own gift without any additional expense for their parents.

The prison service use the vouchers to buy age appropriate gifts. For convenience of use, the projects have suggested the following vouchers: 'One4all' (available at Post Offices, Tesco and Morrisons), or Morrison's, Sainsbury's and Argos vouchers. Any denomination is welcome – whatever you can afford.

If you can't make it to the service, but would still like to donate a gift, you can hand it in at the Church Office during office hours. Please could you put any gift vouchers into an envelope marked "Gift Vouchers" and put them through the post box in the Office door.

There will be a box for gifts in the office corridor in the evenings in the weeks beginning the 28th November and the 5th December. All gifts should be handed in by the 9th December or brought along to the Gift Service on Sunday 11th December at 10.30am.

Both projects want to emphasise how much they appreciate all the donations they receive. Thank you for your support.

> Hazel McLachlan Young Church Administrator

# **Friendship Club**

Our November meetings were as promised, excellent, with Tom Kelly covering so many 50s events, beginning with Elizabeth II's coronation, including the conquering of Everest, the Munich air disaster, the fashion and the music, and we sang along with gusto. Also after Allan Shaw's very interesting talk we know all about our water sources around the city both near and far.

After Maureen Kelly's talk on 14th December "Did the Victorians invent Christmas?" we'll know a lot more about Christmas past and the origins of some of our Christmas customs, all very appropriate for our Party. And now to the New Year when on 11th January we welcome back Colin Chase who, in his own enthusiastic style, will give us the history of the "Union Canal", then on 25th January, birthday of Rabbie Burns, Alan and Paul, "The Forget-menotes" (no, not a misprint), will get us singing 'Scottish', Burns and all.

On 8th February, with Sabine Chalmers, there will be an opportunity to learn about the position of refugees from Afghanistan here in Scotland.

But for now we wish all our members a very happy and healthy festive season. Val Smart

# **Fresh Start**

**Fresh Start** is an Edinburgh-based charity helping people who have been homeless to establish themselves in their new homes. At this time of year, Fresh Start run their *Cookers for Christmas Appeal*, which aims to raise funds to purchase cookers, fridge freezers and washing machines for those moving on from homelessness or living in poverty. Further details can be found at tinyurl.com/2tsuc38h

Additionally, donations of small electrical items, kitchenware or household items in good condition are always needed. Items can either be taken directly to Fresh Start on Ferry Road Drive (see foot of their page

#### www.freshstartweb.org.uk/

for address details), or contact me to arrange a convenient time for collection or local drop off.

**Eileen MacKinnon** 



#### 447 3144

# Sustainability at Christmas



I was brought up in the austere 50s. How we used wrapping and decorated were so much more sustainable than the current throwaway habits.

#### **Re-use**

Recyclable wrapping paper is now widely available, but why not re-use what you can. My mother had a bag of neatly folded wrapping paper from the previous Christmas. By unpicking or cutting off the tape and folding away, much of the current year's paper could be re-used. It was easier to reuse if the giver had used string instead of sticky tape. Every shop we used to go to were dab hands with the brown paper and string. Maybe it's time to recover a lost art.

Of course, it is easier to use gift bags, which can be used again and again.

#### Make Your Own

Although they only lasted for one year, we used to make many of our decorations from various kinds of paper. But paper chains and crepe paper streamers were fun to make and nowadays could be recycled.

Paper angels can be recycled from old bibles like the Edwards' atelier, or get your compasses out and try the angel made from stiff paper at

#### www.greenbankchurch.org/ adults/eco-group/

Have a lovely sustainable time. Alison Murison Eco-Group



### **Operation Orange** Direct Support and Disrupting Exploitation of Migrants in Calabria

mediterranean Mediterranean Hope (MH). FCEI's\* refugee federazione delle chiese evangeliche in italia and migrant programme has. since 2019 had a base in Calabria, a fertile region in southern Italy, facing the twin challenges of poverty and organised crime. MH projects support migrants who toil in the region's fruit fields, the overarch-

ing objective being to break the cycle of exploitation.

One key partnership is with local cooperative SOS Rosarno, which has created an ethical supply chain through its commercial enterprise, Mani e Terra. This binds local producers to a code

of practice, guarantees workers a decent wage and assures buyers of excellent, fairly-traded products bearing the brand "ETIKA". A proportion of the price paid is ploughed back into social projects, with 10% going to Mediterranean Hope.

The Church of Scotland is now in its second year of supporting a project to bring the ETIKA brand here. Church of Scotland mission partner Fiona Kendall made a short

video about the project that you can watch here:

#### www.youtube.com/ watch?v=SUYFQDoAj3o

Fiona says that buying ETIKA citrus fruit is a really simple way to help beat exploitation.

Peppe, the manager at Etika Fairtrade Co-Op in Calabria, has said that the last year has been particularly difficult with issues relating to

> lack of rain at particular times in the growing season which means fruit may be a little smaller but no less sweet! Other issues related to general cost of living are affecting them just as it affects us here. Also, the bureaucratic

hoops are always an issue.

In support of the project, the Greenbank World Church Group has ordered a crate of oranges and lemons, which we hope will be available for you to purchase after the service on Sunday 18th December, bringing the taste of Italian sunshine to your Christmas fruit bowl.

#### Clare Campbell World Church Group

\* Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy

### **Greenbank Pre School Open Afternoon** Saturday 14th January 2 to 4pm

We welcome families with children under the age of five who would like to find out more about our staff, activities and environment and see the interactive spaces where learning takes place. Just come along, no need to book.

Pre School is open from 8.25am to 3.30pm during school terms. As a partner of the city of Edinburgh Council we receive funding for up to 1140 hours per child.

Applications are welcome from a child's second birthday. Children can start from their third birthday.

For further information about Greenbank Pre School please go to

#### greenbankpreschool.org

Joan Ritchie **Chair, Management Committee** 

Pre School in the Centenary Hall

# **Coffee Rota**

#### Dec

- no coffee Communion 4
- Christina Morrow D41 11
- 18 Janet Edwards World Church Group
- 25 Christmas Day no coffee

#### Jan 2023

- New Year's Day no coffee 1
- Richard Dunbar Help the Homeless 8
- 15 Caroline Kehoe D70
- 22 Edith Armit D12
- 29 Sue Black Ladies' Badminton

#### Feb

Neil Ross 5

D58

## **Flower Rota**

provided by

- Dec
- Julia Dunbar 4
- 11 Advent
- 18 Advent
- 25 Christmas Day

#### Jan 2023

- 1 Epiphany
- 8 Ishbel Clark
- 15 Diana Teasdale
- 22 Pauline Walker
- Anne Patrick

Win Kerr

Aileen Thomson

delivered by

Jill Powlett Brown

Janet Edwards

Feb 5

29

Louise Coghill Katy Maguire



# Welcome Teams

#### Dec

- 4 John Ritchie, Susan Inch, Gillian Sweetman, Clare Campbell, Stephen Hadden, Mary Hadden
- **11 Stuart Sanders,** Moira Davidson, Julia Dunbar, John Murison, Alison Murison
- **18 Ian Thom,** Keith Clark, Ray Dely, Elizabeth Htet-Khin, Isobel Thom, Charles Black
- **25 Caroline Kehoe,** Ian McWilliam, Jean Roynon-Jones, Anne Kinnear, John Mowat, Lyndsay Kennedy

#### Jan 2023

- 1 Ian Thomson, Kathleen Patrick, Diana Teasdale, Jill Powlett Brown, Karen Young, Heather Kay
- 8 Christina Morrow, Edith Armit, Louise Coghill, Susan Black, Nora Kellock, Margot Gillon
- **15 Donald King**, Jan Corbett, Roderick Morrison, Jim Young, Elaine McRae, Jane Harkin
- 22 Keith Winton, Richard Dunbar, Chris Horne, Robert Nimmo, Hazel Macaulay, Moira Small
- **29 Rosemary McCulloch,** Moira Land, Malcolm Reid, Joan Ritchie, Fiona Grant, Martin Struthers, Barbara Middleton

#### Feb

5 John Ritchie, Susan Inch, Gillian Sweetman, Clare Campbell, Stephen Hadden, Mary Hadden

# The Ministry Team can be contacted directly

Ms Julia Cato (Associate Minister) tel: 07957 586 898

e-mail: jcato@churchofscotland.org.uk

Administrator: Ms Jackie Wilson-Tagoe phone and fax: 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 sentto: **greenbankweekly@gmail.com** 

Material for the Feb 2023 issue of *Greenbank Connections* should be delivered to the Church Office by Sunday 15th January 2022 or sent by e-mail by 8pm on Thursday 19th January 2023 to greenbankconnections@gmail.com

# The Open Door 40th Celebration

# Thank you to all who attended the Thanksgiving Service for 40 years of The Open Door. It was a great celebration of this wonderful charity.

As Greenbank's nominated Board member for The Open Door, I would like to add a very sincere note of thanks to all those Greenbank members who responded to my requests for help with all aspects of the service. So many members responded generously and with joyful heart. 'Your efforts were a true blessing that benefited all who attended the celebration'.

#### **Diana Teasdale**

