



## Presbytery of Edinburgh Presbytery Planning Consultation

### Feedback (February 2021) from the South Cluster

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#### Introduction

This is the response from the South Edinburgh cluster to the questions asked by Edinburgh Presbytery's Planning Strategy Team. The cluster is made up of the congregations of Fairmilehead, Greenbank and Morningside Parish Churches.

The cluster group met four times. It was facilitated by the Rev Iain Goring and attended by Mrs Pauline Weibye from the Presbytery's Strategy Team. Their involvement was much appreciated. The three churches were each represented by their Minister, Session Clerk and one other elder. At our second meeting we decided to prepare a shared statement of our intentions in the context of the Presbytery Plan. It has been shared with each Kirk Session and is set out below.

Here are the answers to the questions.

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#### ***What would be the benefits of a shared mission?***

We already have a shared mission as part of the Church of Scotland, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, and we feel that our individual charges are fully focused on that mission in the unique contexts of each congregation. We feel that we have opportunities to do some things together which would be difficult on our own and which would make big impacts in our part of Edinburgh. We also feel that there are some practical matters that can be successfully shared, potentially with financial savings for each charge.

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***How are you as individual congregations fulfilling the Five Marks of Mission?***

The individual responses are set out in the Appendix (p.9).

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***How might you be able to fulfil them more effectively together?***

Our agreed joint statement, approved by our respective Kirk Sessions, provides:

The congregations of Fairmilehead, Greenbank and Morningside recognise the unique histories that have led us to inherit three dynamic congregations with distinctive strengths and buildings which are tremendous centres for mission. We commit to support and encourage each other in our uniqueness, to learn from one another in our differences, and to collaborate where we can be more effective in our mission together than apart.

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***What structures and tools as discussed in recent webinars might be useful to do so?***

We feel that the momentum of mission in this cluster is with single congregations each with its own minister. There is increasing opportunity for the three churches to work together in our cluster. We recognise that the pending vacancy at Greenbank will create a significant element of uncertainty on the cluster, particularly set against the forthcoming debates about numbers of ministries available and affordable across the whole Church of Scotland. Our cluster does not operate in isolation from the rest of our denomination. All three congregations in this cluster understand that each one will face different challenges, over the next ten years, in relation to human and financial resources. That being said, there may be scope for aspiration to help congregations beyond our cluster that are short of resources, both human and financial. This would require further exploration, particularly within the context of the likely changing shape of the Presbytery over the next five years.

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***What assistance from the national church or Presbytery would be helpful?***

Reduced M+M contributions would release local funds in support of mission. Less bureaucracy would free up local energies for mission. Central provision of training would be very helpful.

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### ***Beyond Mission which are the most important of the secondary principles?***

These are working in our community, being ecumenical, caring for the poor, regarding the whole people of God as potential ministers, being outward looking, including “virtual” church, being financially responsible; and prioritising our buildings for mission.

For ***Greenbank***, the most important of these is being outward looking with a strong focus on our online community.

For ***Fairmilehead***, it is creating a sense of belonging for those in their parish i.e., being together in person. While we recognise the importance of online worship. Post Covid-19 the focus will be on rebuilding the people of God in person, within our church, and building relationships, in person, in the community.

For ***Morningside***, working and developing the sense of community and caring for its needs, and in particularly addressing issues of isolation and exclusion experienced by different age-groups. Support for the younger age-group and for the older age-group would be to build on work already begun but needing further development.

In a new Presbytery Plan that places every congregation in a cluster for mission and ministry where might each of your congregations belong? (With this current cluster or in a different grouping?)

The three churches are content to be in the South Cluster but, while its work can progress, the fact of the upcoming vacancy at Greenbank produces uncertainty about the future of the planned work.

### **Additional Questions**

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#### ***1. How would you describe the context of your congregations?***

***Suburban*** – the cluster area makes up a corridor of the city that has developed steadily from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present and is still growing as the city expands to the south. Most of the commercial activity and public buildings are in the Morningside parish area, with the other parishes largely residential.

***Fairmilehead*** parish is on the outskirts of the City. It sits at the centre of its community. There has been significant new house building since the fifties but

with very few amenities – few shops, the post offices have closed and there is no library or sports centre. Population estimate (2019) – **7,910**.

**Greenbank** parish has a varied mix of property types, almost all main door. There are very few commercial or public/community buildings. There are four nurseries in the parish, two of which meet in the church halls. Greenbank runs the Pre-school as a Partner Provider with Edinburgh City Council. A large housing development of over 400 homes but no community facilities was built in the parish around 20 years ago and still offers mission possibilities. Population estimate (2019) – **4,473**.

**Morningside** parish is large with a wide cross section of homes ranging from large stone villas to small traditional tenement flats some of which are rented student accommodation. There are also four large blocks of sheltered housing and three care/nursing homes. South Morningside Primary school, (and the new primary school under construction in Canaan Lane), the Royal Blind School and the Royal Edinburgh Hospital are all in the Parish as are the majority of the shops and businesses serving the cluster area. Population estimate (2019) – **12,116**.

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## **2. How might you describe the community (people) in which your congregation is located?**

**Fairmilehead** – There is a gradual shift in the age profile. As the older generation, who moved into the new built homes of the 1950s and later, down-sized or moved into nursing homes, more young families are moving into the area to benefit from good primary and secondary schools. There is an excellent suite of halls which are much used by the surrounding community. Hall users are estimated at just over 1,000 per week. Pre Covid-19, two of the halls were identified as spaces where activities with a focus on mission and discipleship in the community, rather than commercial lets, would take place on a regular basis. As well as the South Morningside Nursery, 62 church groups, uniformed organisations and community groups use the halls as week, not including occasional birthday parties.

**Greenbank** – Mostly middle class people in employment or retired, living alone or in families. There are settled, and well established community networks. There is significant community activity around the church which acts as a community hub with potential for more. The church buildings are used by many local groups,

around 60, involving probably over 1,000 users a week, with birthday parties and other one-off hires in addition. Greenbank runs its own Pre-school as a partner-provider with Edinburgh City Council. There are good local schools; many children attend private schools.

***Morningside*** – The community served by MPC is large. It includes a very diverse range in age, health, and prosperity as indicated above in the mixed accommodation available; and people working in or attracted to the variety of businesses in the parish. Problems of loneliness and social isolation exist in the community across the age range. There is also significant community activity hosted by the church which attracts around c1,500 users each week. MPC hosts c130 church and non-church groups over the period of a year. With the completion of recent building works we were, pre-pandemic, planning actively for further expansion in the recently upgraded facilities.

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***3. What stands out as significant in your area of Presbytery? Are there influences of business, education, arts, tourism, new housing? How might local congregations respond in mission?***

The South Cluster area forms a mostly prosperous suburban community with shops and businesses that meet many of the needs of the population. It is well placed for any Post Covid-19 shift to more local lifestyles. There is good public transport to town, one cinema, one theatre and many cafes, restaurants and pubs, mostly located in Morningside Parish. There are various housing developments underway or anticipated – in the former Craighouse grounds, on the city boundary at Fairmilehead and, scattered around, some new, high value infill apartments.

Greenbank and Fairmilehead parishes lack community facilities, and in Morningside there is very limited suitable “community space” outside that provided by the church. All three churches have excellent hall accommodation that puts them at the heart of community life for young people and adult activities, including youth organisations, music groups and adult leisure and exercise. These all provide mission opportunities.

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**4. *Bearing in mind what has been said above about sharing resources, which framework or mix of frameworks for church might work in your area?***

The local churches are well attended for worship and discipleship though numbers are not as strong as in earlier years. The actual and potential community outreach is strong. In such a large area, and especially for families and to minimize car use, proximity to facilities is important. For these reasons we think that the best model is still single charges with pooling of resources for community mission. Examples already discussed include youth ministry, dementia care and practical matters relating to property and finance management.

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**5. *What kinds of leadership are needed across your cluster area that takes into account a reduction in the availability of full-time ministers of word and sacrament and parish nationally funded Ministries Development Staff (MDS)?***

Parish ministry with some sharing of youth ministry and input from one of the other recognised ministries (OLM, MDS, and Deacon) and development of “ministry” roles for elders and congregational members. Each charge is heavily loaded for a single minister and so there would be a significant reduction in all that we do for the members in our congregations and our outreach to the wider community if there were to be an immediate departure from the present structure of three full-time ministers.

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**6. *What kind of space is needed that would prove sustainable across the cluster? Which would you deem to be ‘well-equipped spaces in the right places’?***

There is still strong attendance at worship. There is also very heavy use of the buildings for church groups, non-church groups, and outreach and community activities. This means we favour retaining existing buildings. There is a strong commitment to continuing sharing support for joint events, as already happens at Morningside and Greenbank e.g. for the autumn lecture series and Holy Week worship. Christian Aid is an organisation that spans the three congregations. All of the facilities are well equipped and heavily used. Each church has observed a reluctance from some of its members to take part in activities held at the other

churches. Although this can be worked on as we grow closer together, future sharing might not guarantee a lot more wide-spread participation.

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***7. What resources are available locally both in terms of financial resource and people with the skills and training or willingness to be trained to carry out mission in the cluster area?***

Each congregation is currently self-sufficient in finance and other skills needed to run its own affairs but there may be scope for economies or greater efficiencies through a joint approach. We have started to explore possibilities of sharing resources within the cluster, for example in our outreach to young people and those with dementia; and sharing our skills in practical matters and purchasing “services”. The cluster might also be able to offer help to other churches as has been done in the past.

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***8. What resources are needed from Presbytery and the national church to enable your mission – e.g. training, people, and specific expertise, financial, other?***

We could all benefit from fresh insights and elder and congregational training for mission and discipleship; ***Greenbank*** seeks training resources on pastoral care and dementia awareness; ***Morningside*** from fresh insights towards youth ministry.

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***9. How should Presbytery together address the sectors of arts, business, new housing, education, health, etc.?***

We suggest asking local congregations what is happening in their parish areas, then consider how Presbytery might help to equip them to engage. There is also a place for the deployment of specialised chaplaincies not associated with local congregations.

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**10. What is your prediction for your congregations (plural!) in five years' time in terms of health, age, demographic, financial and building viability?**

The demographic challenge means that the death of elderly members will continue to affect the size of each congregational roll. More specifically –

**Fairmilehead** – Pre Covid-19, and with the start of a new ministry, we were seeing growth, especially from young families but also several older members returning to worship with us. Post Covid-19, it is difficult to imagine what it will be like in five to ten years' time.

**Greenbank** – In five years, the current congregation will be five years older, but we anticipate growth that will compensate for deaths. In recent years we have seen increasing attendances at worship and a significant number of participants who are not members but are active. These numbers are now being supplemented by our online worshippers for whom we are planning a new form of outreach. Our five year strategic plan aims to increase the size of the congregation by our outreach. Given this mix of factors, we anticipate the congregation being about the same size in number, but different in profile. Our buildings have been well maintained and developed over the years, but continuing maintenance and development will be needed, with associated fundraising, to safeguard the buildings and ensure that they are as effective as possible for mission.

**Morningside** – Likewise in five years the existing congregation will be five years older but we continue to attract new members and attendees. They are attracted by the choice of worship services, the music, the pastoral care not just to members, but to young families, the bereaved and lonely, those living with dementia and patients from the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and generally our welcoming social activities. Our numbers have held up throughout a long period of disruption caused by building works which have transformed the facilities we offer. We too have embraced on line services both live and recorded.



## **Appendix:**

### **Activities of each congregation set against the Five Marks of Mission**

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The Five Marks of Mission are:

1. to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom;
2. to teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
3. to respond to human need by loving service;
4. to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation;
5. to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

## **Fairmilehead Parish Church**

### **1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom**

- Our church is at a busy Crossroads yet just a short walk to the foot of the Pentlands.
- We have one Sunday service and other services during the week so that worship is more available and in different formats appealing to different demographics.
- Pre Covid-19, our Sunday Worship was at 10.30am and was well attended and growing in numbers. We have a flourishing Young Church as several new families have joined us over the past two years. The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated each month and a Dementia sensitive Communion is offered at home. Our Minister has worked closely with FIOF for several years.
- Holy Week is shared with the Episcopal Church of St Fillan's.
- A service of Memory and Thanksgiving for the Bereaved is held in November. A Blue Christmas Service is held each year.
- At present our Church is still closed because we were not given permission by Presbytery to reopen. Work is being carried out to allow the sanctuary to reopen. We hope to reopen in the New Year. At present worship is offered online through video recordings. Telephone worship during Covid-19 is now also available for those not online. This is something which we will continue to offer even once we have returned to worshipping each Sunday in the sanctuary.
- Facebook is used regularly to offer a short reflection, more information on what the church is involved in and opportunities to be involved in worship and fellowship. The number of those engaging with Facebook has greatly increased over the past two years.

- At the beginning of our new ministry, which began in 2018, the need to connect and reconnect with the parish was identified as a priority. Reaching out to people locally, especially with younger families. Encouraging the parish to see that 'Church is not just on a Sunday'. The introduction of our Thursday worship for families with tots and toddlers has proved successful and is also an excellent connection into church with baptismal families. We also use Mothering Sunday as an occasion to re-invite baptismal families into church.
- We also have a service of Stillness with music on a Thursday which has reached out also to non-church attendees.
- On Sundays, we have introduced regular Sermon Series and have identified Elders who would like to be more involved in worship. Four elders attended the Presbytery lead worship training course and now support our minister, when needed, to lead worship.
- We have introduced a monthly prayer diary.
- Two of our halls are now used exclusively for our mission work and not as commercial lets. A ministerial presence in the Church Centre during the week has also helped connect with hall users.
- We have redesigned our graphics and the visuals in the entrance to the halls which tell our story as a community of faith and share the Good News, so we begin to move away from the perception by some of being a 'community centre'.
- We have a prayer station in the foyer where we receive requests for prayer and a small prayer group who pray weekly.
- We have introduced a seasonal Messy Church and also Messy Vintage bringing our elderly and nursery school together.

## Notes

Our focus has been on how to grow the church, not just outwardly but also inwardly. Asking what mission intentionality looks like and feels like? How do we reach out with intention to the community? How do we reach in, and grow in fellowship? Reaching out and reaching in and growing in fellowship is key to our vision of growth. How do we ensure ministry continues in a local context? How do we train lay leaders?

## **2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers**

- The teaching programme has recently been adapted to meet these needs of the growing numbers of younger children worshipping with us, alongside the increased number of teenagers. On a Sunday there is a Crèche, two groups for the younger children and a group for the teenagers. We have introduced a new teaching structure into Pathfinders and a new style of teaching with children in church.
- We are reaching out to parents and new families, building on house groups and offering a small but varied adult education programme.
- We have a Minister led Bible Study Group and a study group led by the Worship Team. Our Parish Assistant has started a Book Club and a Monday morning Bible Study, currently on Zoom, but will meet in the halls once restrictions permit.
- We are building and rebuilding relationships with the Community especially with our uniformed organisations. We have a flourishing relationship with our parish school with whom we had no contact two years ago. Ministerial involvement includes School Assemblies and invitations to go along to the School for varied events.
- Our Minister took over the running of the Holiday Club with a new teaching programme and advertising.
- Pub Theology was introduced in 2018 and was a joint venture among the three churches, meeting in Morningside.

## **3. To respond to human need by loving service**

- There is an active network of Pastoral Care here in FPC and now with Covid-19 we also have an active telephone care service. We have introduced the new paid role of a Parish assistant, and part of this role is pastoral for the housebound and bereaved. At present we are looking into training opportunities for our pastoral visitors, re-imagining pastoral care, Pastoral Care Team and Elder visitation, Bereavement Group.

- Pre Covid-19 there were different opportunities available for us to respond to others in loving service. We were actively involved with St Catharine's Mercy Centre. Our Young Church fundraises annually for a different local charity. We had identified the need for men to be able to come together to combat loneliness and isolation and a new men's group The Shed had been introduced. A weekly Pop up Cafe takes place for young parents attending our centre for activities and for the elderly. The expansion of this is on hold because of Covid-19.
- We offer a Ministry of welcome by all our staff to hall users and are introducing a visible ministerial and worship presence during the week. Our Caerketton hall has recently been refurbished and is now Caerketton chapel, which will be open to all (post Covid-19) as a place of sanctuary and quiet retreat, with soft furnishings and music during the week.
- There are many opportunities for fellowship through our new Hospitality and Fellowship committee. We meet regularly on a Sunday after worship for tea and coffee, and numbers have increased because of the introduction of one service on a Sunday. We have also organised different events on a Sunday including lunches. Several of these lunches have been fundraisers especially for Christian aid.
- Our Knitting Group have knitted welcome teddies for the Primary One children at the local primary school, cardigans and jumpers for the Edinburgh School Uniform Bank, learning octopuses for Primary Schools and hats and glove for the homeless who attend St Catharine's Mercy Centre.
- We reach out to the isolated through an increased distribution of our church magazine 'Crossroads'. During Covid-19 we have produced newsletters and our elders have been in more regular contact with their districts, building and rebuilding relationships.
- Our Community Youth Choir "The Voice Project" moved to zoom during Lockdown to offer our young people a safe fun place midweek to sing, perform and come together socially. The Voice Project will continue on zoom until we can return to church. This will be divided into two groups in spring to accommodate growing numbers.

- We have recently distributed Advent candles and 'Boxes of Blessings' to those who are alone or housebound. A Christmas card will be delivered to all our members this year.

**4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.**

- We were awarded the Eco-congregation Bronze Award.
- We have introduced a new committee for Social and International Justice. This now incorporates the Eco group. Each September we hold a Creation month with different preachers/speakers on Sunday.
- During Covid-19 we began a Collection point for the Foodbank, and are now collecting weekly. The focus of this collection of donations for the Foodbank has been for families with young children and babies. When St Catharine's Mercy Centre reopens we will continue our collection of clothes and food for them.
- We are also encouraging our members to understand more about Fairtrade and what it means to be a Fairtrade church. We introduced, pre Covid-19, a Fairtrade stall which has proved to be successful.
- At Christmas we have been involved with Women's aid in Edinburgh collecting new toys. This year we are collecting toys for REACT (refugee families).
- Fairmilehead, Greenbank and Morningside work together to support Christian Aid.

**5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth**

- We became an ECO Congregation as a result of our awareness of the importance of caring for Creation and reducing our consumption and the need to recycle. We hope to achieve our Silver Award post Covid-19. It is important that our Church family is at the forefront of safeguarding the integrity of Creation and all that that entails.

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## Greenbank Parish Church

### 1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

- We place Christian faith and worship at the heart of congregational life.
- We want to win new disciples for Christ and so are looking at new ways to communicate the message of faith, including how faith translates into practical action e.g. in care for creation.
- We have harnessed new technology to share our worship online in our digital streaming project.
- We are reaching out to new enquirers through our livestream.
- We plan to appoint a team of virtual elders to support our online congregation.
- We have been developing our Facebook and Twitter feeds to engage with the wider public as well as our congregation.
- We are developing a new website to enhance our “shop window”.
- We continue to develop our culture of blended worship at our main Sunday service. We aim to use signs, symbols, colour, spoken word and music to stimulate the emotions, senses and intellect.
- Our worship pattern has been expanded to include opportunities for families to share communion in a more creative setting.
- We have begun more contemplative worship on a Sunday evening.

### 2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

- We have reviewed our arrangements for connecting and communicating with our members, wider church family and beyond through live streaming, website, weekly newsletter, social media. We have developed our database to help with this.
- We have a locally funded Youth Associate who is responsible to the Minister for work with our young people.

- Even in lockdown we have been energetic in our outreach to young people with online weekly meetings for different age groups, resumption of in person meetings for the oldest members of our young church; and an online borrowing box for parents to use with children during the livestreamed service.
- Every August we run a week of Holiday Club for children of members and the wider community. A similarly targeted event is held in early December. This year these events have been online.
- We run Messy Church around 4 times a year.
- We organise short life home groups for Bible study and discussion during Advent and Lent and at other times.
- We organise intergenerational activities e.g. afternoon teas; talks to young church by members about their faith journey.
- We have started a dementia friendly type of worship once a month.
- We have a competent church choir which meets to rehearse weekly and sings anthems each Sunday morning under normal circumstances. The choir has undertaken some virtual choral work for Sunday worship during lockdown. The church choir is a significant pastoral network too.
- We have a community choir each Advent, leading up to our Advent Carol Service, which engages a mix of members and friends from the community.
- We are home to a number of uniformed organisations, including Explorers, Scouts, Brownies, Cubs, and Beavers. There is a significant overlap between the Scouts and church membership.
- We run our own Pre-School as a Partner Provider with Edinburgh City Council, providing a service to the community and enabling engagement with local families.
- We are exploring the formation of a Community Youth Choir at Greenbank. It would sing at worship once a month.
- Our blended worship culture means that choral, organ, and band-led music is included in worship.



- We share in the South Morningside Primary School chaplaincy with Morningside Parish Church.
- One of our congregation has started a running group to engage the church with the community.

### **3. To respond to human need by loving service**

We aim to offer spiritual, emotional and practical support to all in need, so

- We are adapting our traditional model of pastoral care by the addition of new style pastoral visitors who will support the Minister and elders with specialist care or relief for elders when they are under pressure. We are appointing coordinators to match needs to support and liaise with the Minister and elders.
- We are restructuring our Neighbourhood Group to provide practical support e.g. with shopping, transport.
- We are working to provide a safe listening place for those in a crisis.
- We continue to support initiatives to help the homeless e.g. food boxes. Normally we do evening duties at the Bethany care shelter. At present we are encouraging our members to give money.
- We support the Friends of Braidburn Valley Park in their environmental efforts by hosting their meetings and providing storage space for their equipment.
- We continue to take a keen interest in the work of Scottish Love in Action (working amongst the Dalit caste in India).
- Our staff and members run a Babies and Toddlers group twice a week to provide a service to local families and to build relationships with the community.
- We have a growing relationship with Edinburgh City Mission.
- A number of our members run a Friendship Club for the elderly on a weekly basis.
- We have an active branch of The Guild, which consistently focuses on opportunities to help the vulnerable.

- We host the Nile Grove Playgroup and aim to support them in their work of care for children
- We have a work party that creates knitted goods for those in need.
- Our clergy and volunteer musicians play a part in leading worship for the Greenbank-Morningside Care Home rota.

#### **4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation**

- We maintain strong links with Christian Aid, not only by financial contributions but by highlighting through our publications the issues on which they campaign e.g. climate change, poverty, third world debt.
- We are part of the Christian Aid group run by neighbouring churches.
- We have invited inspiring high profile speakers to take part in worship (e.g. Sally Foster-Fulton of Christian Aid, Ian Murray MP) to address themes of concern around the environment and social justice. We aim to do more of this outside of worship and to use these occasions to connect with the wider community, both in-person and through the global reach of our livestream facility.
- Our safe listening place project will include helping those experiencing domestic abuse.
- Our relationship with our Mission Partner in Jerusalem, John McCulloch, is giving us an insight into the “on the ground” realities of Israel-Palestine. We are planning a pilgrimage in 2022 jointly with Morningside Parish Church.
- Our engagement with Scripture in worship draws out themes of peace and reconciliation.
- Our Strategic Plan includes a new “social justice” agenda in response to the enthusiasm of our members for work in this area.

## **5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth**

- We have a growing commitment to climate change mitigation. We are now striving to gain a silver award from Eco-congregation Scotland.
- We have a strategic plan to steer our work on care for creation.
- We are helping the whole congregation to make the link between their Christian faith and environmental concerns e.g. through a walks programme.
- Care for creation is regularly reflected in worship, prayers, bible studies and sermons, including a particular focus during Creationtide in September and in Lenten studies.
- We are challenging and supporting members of the congregation to find ways of significantly reducing their own impact on the environment in areas of energy use, recycling, travel and food.

## **Morningside Parish Church**

### **1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom**

- Our prominent location, floodlit at night, proclaims the church's presence in Morningside and being easily accessible enables our premises to be a convenient community centre much in demand, Central to our church life is Sunday worship. Pre Covid-19 we had services at 9.30am and 10.30am on Sunday. The 10.30am is a traditional service in the sanctuary. Music is an important aspect in our worship and the 10.30am service with significant choral input boosted by choral scholars. The 9.30am service is shorter, more informal, uses PowerPoint and takes place in the Cluny Hall.
- We are keen to promote the involvement of children. At the 10.30am service a child always does a prayer and/or reading and all join in the taking of the offering. One of the quarterly communions has been adapted to be child friendly and children are invited to share in the elements.
- There are regular all age services throughout the year and annually a Service of Remembering for the bereaved and a "Blue" Christmas service for those who find the Christmas season difficult.
- We hold periodic week-day afternoon services to cater for the frail and elderly and those suffering from dementia, all of whom find it difficult to attend the earlier or longer Sunday morning services.
- With the impact of the pandemic we moved from simply recording the service for distribution to the housebound, to live streaming of a modified version of our usual 10.30am service.
- At Christmas and Easter we deliver 5,500 cards to every household in the parish with invitations to Easter and various Christmas services. The response to these has been very good.
- Once a year we set up a stall outside Waitrose and the former Post Office site to invite passers-by to our Harvest Festival but also hopefully to attract interest in what is available at MPC as the flyer has wider information about the Church.

- With Greenbank we share the provision of services to three nursing homes and also we alternate in providing an evening service each evening during Holy Week. In 2018 with Greenbank and Fairmilehead we organised a Festival of Peace to mark the World War One Centenary.

## **2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers**

- All these are undertaken as opportunities arise.
- There is a Crèche, Sunday Club and monthly meetings at the manse for a small group of secondary pupils but as ever, it is difficult to sustain older children's involvement against the demands of sport commitments, etc.
- Bible Study Groups are held at the manse during Lent and Advent. In conjunction with Greenbank we offer a series of four Autumn Lectures in the evening which attract a range of attendees beyond our congregations.
- A further learning opportunity is available in an informal setting through our Speaker Suppers to hear, after an evening meal, a speaker followed by an opportunity to ask questions. We have been able to attract some excellent speakers and the topics covered have been very varied and interesting. They form an excellent opportunity of a "soft sell" to invite people to share fellowship but also to learn and discuss. There have also been, in association with the other churches in the South group, informal meetings in a pub to discuss "The Big Questions".

## **3. To respond to human need by loving service**

- For years the "Men's Club" has hosted disabled men to a weekly entertainment and supper.
- Visits are offered to the bereaved by our volunteer bereavement visitor.
- New children's clothing are donated at Christmas to the Edinburgh Clothing Store for the neediest in our city – last year over 200 items were given.

- Our Pastoral Assistant, Jacqui Lindsay, has developed our pastoral care work. She has run training courses for congregational volunteers in pastoral care and has recently set up Music and Memories in Morningside for dementia sufferers, and their carers. She has established a link with George Watson's College to encourage and give students opportunities for voluntary service.
- A weekly coffee morning is held which attracts a regular clientele of the elderly and a group of Royal Edinburgh Patients, with their carers.
- A popular Baby and Toddler group meets twice weekly and draws large numbers of children with their parent/grandparent/ childminder/ nanny. For the adults it is an opportunity to make new friendships and speak with others with the same responsibilities, hopes and concerns. Helpers are available, not only to make coffee but to be a listening ear.
- Social Activities – the creation of extra halls has enabled MPC to continue to operate as a community hub – supported by full time caretakers. This has made possible a wide range of social activities including after-service coffees which offer an opportunity for the congregation to come together every week in a relaxed informal environment. This is particularly true for many who would never admit to needing it and would resist being identified as wanting/needing a “church visitor”. The full kitchen facilities have also enabled congregational celebration events to be held at Easter and Christmas. A Summer Lunch is held each year and the celebration of other events in the life of the congregation are enjoyed by many. Annually a group of the housebound are transported from home to be treated to a special afternoon tea with other members.
- Funds raised from social events have supported a range of charities. These have included Headstart, SLA, Bethany and Marie Curie The charities currently supported are The Edinburgh Clothing Store(ECS) and “the Pad Project “ which helps girls in Africa who miss out on education every month because of a lack of sanitary products.

- The recent removal of the pews in the sanctuary will enable varied forms of worship and help increase usage including more concerts for which our Father Willis organ is already a draw. Funds raised can be for charity or for the work of the church.
- A positive response in relation to sustained commitment, generosity and openness to new projects but as ever more is always possible.

#### **4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation**

- We are a Fair Trade church. We support the ECS and the “Pad Project”, part of MPC’s effort to address in a practical way issues faced by some of the most needy, locally and abroad. MPC supplies two thirds of ECS’ volunteer workforce who deal with c2,050 referrals annually. Many of our Speaker Suppers have a theme on issues of social justice. At most elections we hold Hustings.
- We work with Greenbank and Fairmilehead to support Christian Aid.

#### **5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth developed**

- We recycle – even our former pews! MPC has sought to reduce its use of fossil fuels by installing roof insulation and LED lighting throughout. We are considering moving towards eco – congregational status. In the new build works we required the ventilation of the new halls to be by ducted air rather than electrical fans, and replaced an obsolete electrical heating in the sanctuary for underfloor heating, the most efficient system available to us. Indeed the focus of our building works over the last 12 years has been to create modern accommodation on a single site thereby reducing our legacy of three listed Victorian buildings to a single complex of well-equipped spaces fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

