

Soundings

Portobello & Joppa Parish
Church Magazine

May 2023



Portobello and Joppa Parish Church

From the editor



There's a lot in this magazine about Stewart, and I hope that he realises how much we appreciate him. My first memory of him is when he preached for us for the first time, and how self-deprecating he was (and still is) – totally without reason to be. It always amazes me that even when he has to be reminded that it's magazine week (as he occasionally (frequently) does), he can always produce a thought-provoking and cogent letter for us at a moment's notice. It may be that he's been thinking about it all month, of course, and is just *pretending* to have forgotten... but I don't think so.

In contrast to last month's issue, this is a full one. Michelle has contributed a lot of information about our young people, whether in Sunday Stars, Messy or Muddy Church or staying up for the Easter Vigil. We can also read about Junior Drama and the adult Drama Group, both of which have been busy and successful. And there are reports on the Pachamama Project and the Meadowbank Church Cook Club, which would welcome your help, and The Teapot Trust, another very worthy cause.

You can also find out which of our congregation worked in the BBC before and after World War Two. Hint: it wasn't Stewart.

There are articles, too, from our regular contributors. Thanks to all.

Pam

Stewart likes jokes. I feel that this one is suitably corny.

A minister asked his congregation to read Mark chapter 17 in preparation for his next week's sermon: on lying. Next week, he asked who'd read it; and every hand went up. "That's interesting," he said, "since Mark has only 16 chapters."

From the minister

Dear Friends and Neighbours,



*'We who are quicker to judge than to bless
fall silent at the extravagance of your grace.'*

These words appear in a Lent prayer from the Church of Scotland's *Book of Common Order* and they came to mind frequently over the course of Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

In the midst of our everyday lives there are moments when other people perplex us, anger us, irritate us, annoy us or infuriate us. As the French thinker Jean-Paul Sartre apparently and acidly quipped, 'Hell is other people.'

And it's so very easy to judge others. So often it's a knee-jerk reaction to an immediate situation or encounter that leaves us grumbling or upset.

To take a moment, step back from such a situation and look afresh is a posture of wisdom. It is perhaps a way of posing to ourselves what wonderful question 'why?'. It is a state of gentle curiosity.

But – this line asks for more. Not just understanding but blessing. To move beyond the internal reflection and back towards that person with blessing. It may sound or seem a bit patronising but it is also an expression of a desire for healing. A healing of the moment, a healing of a relationship. Reaching out towards another.

How often too might we be the ones blessed rather than judged. Isn't that preferable?

Yet what we do is minor compared to our Christian story. We who were made in the image of God, we into whom God breathed, we to whom God came in Christ continually fail to love or heal or bless.

Judgment may be justified but grace is poured out upon us instead. Blessings abound in the gift of Christ's teaching, healing, life, death and resurrection.

And silence is an appropriate or even inevitable reaction.

Silence is so appropriate during the time of Lent with its reflection and self-scrutiny. Holy Week, when the tension mounts. Even more so on Good Friday. And, perhaps for different reasons on Easter morning: the silence of awe and wonder.

So, maybe silence is indeed the only suitable response. It draws together Lent, Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter.

Giving up something for Lent has a rich and well-founded history. Some prefer to take up a positive practice, such as praying each day or consciously spending time reflecting or turning off any internet connection for 30 mins. of detox.

Perhaps we could give up something for the Easter season, between now and Pentecost (28 May)? Maybe we could give up judging others and perhaps stop judging ourselves too harshly (or too leniently)?

On the positive side, when that judgment reflex is just about to kick in, maybe we could bless instead of judge? Care rather than criticise?

Such a practice is a spiritual and holy practice. It is a moment and act of grace. And perhaps the silence is the moment of wonder, gratitude and astonishment at a life of faith grounded in extravagant, overflowing grace.

Stewart

WORSHIP

Sunday 7 May

- 9.30am** Quiet, reflective service
- 10.30am** Interactive, intergenerational service
- 11.15am** Traditional service

Sunday 14 May

- 9.30am** Quiet, reflective service
- 10.30am** Interactive, intergenerational service
- 11.15am** Traditional service

Sunday 21 May

- 10.30am** **Celebration Service**

Saturday 27 May

- 3.30pm** **Messy Church (Main Hall)**

Sunday 28 May (Pentecost)

- 9.30am** Quiet, reflective service
- 10.30am** Interactive, intergenerational service
- 11.15am** Traditional service

Sunday 4 June

- 9.30am** Quiet, reflective service
- 10.30am** Interactive, intergenerational service
- 11.15am** Traditional service

Sunday 11 June

- 10.30am** **Celebration Service**



20 Year Anniversary for Stewart



On 29 April 2003, Dr Stewart G. Weaver was ordained by the Presbytery of Edinburgh to become the Rev Dr Stewart Weaver in Portobello at St Philip's Joppa Parish Church. Our church family at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church is celebrating twenty years of Stewart's inspiring, patient, encouraging and transforming ministry work. We are also giving thanks to Katie, Nick, and Ben for sharing their husband and father with our church family for so many years. Above all, we give our thanks to God for the call to ministry in Portobello which brought Stewart and his family to us.

Since ordination and induction at St Philips, Stewart has shepherded our church through many changes, including the merger of the three churches in Portobello into our one church, Portobello, and Joppa Parish Church. Stewart has led many worship services, baptisms, weddings, and funerals. He has sat at several pastoral care tea parties, Burns Suppers, and Messy Church meals. He has walked alongside so many of us through grief and joined us in celebrations of life events. He has offered pastoral care and support. He has been into care homes, Porty High and aptly led many Towerbank Assemblies sharing well enjoyed stories as "Mr. Weaver."

Stewart has been a touchstone of the community – forever stopping and chatting on the beach and promenade with people whilst out to walk his dog. He has been a key member of the "Holy Huddle," working ecumenically with the

Portobello area churches and he has faithfully volunteered at the Portobello Holiday Club in the summer – always ready to sit and listen to the children taking part. He founded our Messy Church alongside Reuben and Rosie Addis. Stewart has been the first to dive into leading the biggest or messiest activities at Messy Church – whether that is leading den building, making rafts for Noah’s Ark, making big paint splats, or playing with oobleck*.

Stewart’s sermons have inspired many and often challenged us to think deeper on our faith and how it relates to the world around us. He has taken part in many outreach efforts and supported the eco walk and the Make Poverty History campaign march.

Through the twenty years, Stewart has led our church with patient, steadfast leadership. Such leadership has been respected by the Presbytery so much that Stewart has played a key role in the Presbytery Planning and implementation of the planning for the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian.

His ministry of twenty years has been full and though the workload is exhausting, he has always maintained a ministry of presence. When he sees you, he stops and checks in with you – as interested in the children in our crèche as those he meets in the care homes. Stewart values the full church family, and he has a remarkable memory of details when following up in conversation with you later.

This is only a glimpse of the blessing that has been twenty years of the ministry of Rev Dr Stewart G Weaver in Portobello. I wonder what memories you have.

We surprised Stewart with a presentation in honour of his anniversary at our Celebration Sunday worship on 23 April. If you missed that service, have a look on our YouTube channel for the recorded livestream.

Michelle Brown

**This is slime. The editor had to look it up.*

Tributes to Stewart

Here are the tributes to Stewart given at the celebration service. The first three are from young people; the fourth from Sarah, who's the mum of two of them and is also one of the daughters of a previous, and also much-loved minister, of St Philip's (as was) – John Cook.



When Michelle first asked me to say something at the service for Stewart, my mind immediately went to primary school, when a few times a year, the whole school would walk down to the church for a special service around the time of Christmas or Easter.

Stewart would always be standing at the front door, welcoming each student, and I felt so proud that I knew him and could say, “Hi, Stewart” as I walked past. At the end of the service, Stewart would say a little speech and a prayer that included the words, “May the wind be always at your back”. That image stuck with me, so that when I was walking back along the prom and the wind would blow my hair into my face, I felt the presence of God.

I left Towerbank five years ago but I’m lucky that Stewart also does assembly at the High School. Every couple of months he comes in and captures our attention with a story about someone he knew or a book he’s read, before ending it on a note about perseverance or hope.

I’m only seventeen so I’ve never known any other ministers but I’m confident that Stewart is one of the best!

Ishbel



One of the many benefits of having a family rooted in the church

was the fact that I grew up in this community. The church family is one that I feel deeply connected to and has provided me with countless blessings. While I have several things I could talk about in my faith journey here at PJPC, when tasked with finding an idea, the first experience that came to mind was possibly the earliest memory I have of the church.

When I was around three years old (I believe) I remember sitting at home when my mum told me about the Easter story. And as an inquisitive child (much to many people's misfortune) I asked her about when the stone is rolled away from Jesus' tomb. I can't remember why that stuck in my head but what I do remember is the following week at church. When Stewart called up all the children to sit on the steps, I decided to put up my hand to contribute something. Now, I hope you won't find me accountable for my attention span, Stewart, but I proceeded to say nothing to do with what the story of the week was, but instead informed the church all about how the stone was rolled away from Jesus' tomb.

What stands out for me in my memory is the fact that instead of swiftly moving on, or trying to stay on topic, Stewart chose to comment further on my contribution, praising me for my knowledge. And I think many people will have similar examples of times when Stewart has made you feel important. This is something that has stuck with me on my faith journey. And one of the reasons I am so grateful for this church community, and especially to Stewart, is the constant reminder of feeling seen, both by one another and in the eyes of God. It makes me feel that whatever contribution I give, even if it's just a small story about a rock rolling away, that contribution matters to God.

Thank you, Stewart.

Alice



I was actually born about a week after Stuart became the minister here at PJPC, meaning I will have been one of the first children Stuart baptised, and I can say that since then he has been a constant and guiding figure through my journey in the church.

Stuart has always had a big part in everything I've done at PJPC and my faith as a whole, from providing insight at Breakfast Club and Messy Church to talking at assemblies in both primary school and secondary, and even once sending me out into the Forth on a raft that he and I had built from old lilos and plywood.

He has always found interesting and engaging ways to encourage mine and others' faith.

What I have always admired about Stuart is his willingness to throw himself into whatever activity Michelle or my mum can come up with to make him do next, all while making everyone laugh and still linking it all back to God (and yes, he even had a Biblical reason for me to trudge back up the road soaking after our masterpiece inevitably sank).

I hope he can continue to inspire and nurture many others as he has with me, but before that there's another person who would like to share their thanks for your ministry here – yet another member of my family, my mum, Sarah.

Tom



This morning is a very special celebration Sunday. We are celebrating a very special twenty years: twenty years of Stewart. I want you all to cast your minds back twenty years. What was happening in your life twenty years ago? I was waiting for baby Tom to be born; some of us were about to be married; some of us were sitting in different pews. We can all look round and remember some of the people whom we miss sitting next to us.

I'm afraid that I can't remember Stewart's first service. I do remember travelling to Linlithgow to hear him preach, and I do remember the early days: a thin minister in his blue robes (it's been a while since we've seen those).

We were not long in this "new" building after our dreadful fire. And since those days, we've had a lot of changes, too. We've had a successful joining with our sister Portobello churches and made some wonderful new friends. We've got an amazing Family Worker and a wonderful Associate Minister. We've come through the difficulties of the pandemic and kept our church family together.

We'll all have lovely memories of special occasions here. Some of mine are of Stewart encouraging my children into the sea at Messy Church and some wonderful Messy Church meals, special Easter beach services after the vigil, amazing concerts and singing and shows; Stewart's great Christmas Eve children's stories and silly nonsense at the Community Carols on Christmas Eve and moments of awe and reverence as midnight struck.

This is all due to Stewart's good leadership, all through good preaching, thoughtful prayer and great pastoral work.

So we want to thank Stewart for all his years of care for us and ours; also just to thank Katie and Nick and Ben for your years of support too. As a "manse kid" I know what sacrifices you've made as part of your husband's and dad's job. Thank you to all the Weavers.

Sarah

Twenty years; many thanks!

It is only a few hours after the service on 23 April, in which the congregation so kindly marked 20 years of ministry in Portobello.



A heartfelt thank you to all who organised, assisted and gave gifts.

In my rather incoherent, stumbling and tearful way, I think I was trying to express my thanks for all of the ministering and pastoral care from the congregation. Not only over the past 20 years but especially over the past 18 months, when commitments have been numerous and have bordered on the overwhelming. Support not only for me, but for the family as well.

It is the give and take of living in a community of faith. It is the movement between a time to listen and a time to speak. It is the moment of being understood rather than hearing to understand.

Perhaps that is why, after 20 years, the image of the Trinity continues to inform and infuse my thinking, praying and acting. It is the relationship that is always giving, always receiving, always sharing graciously and openly and generously. As stated so very often (too often?), it is the perfect relationship of love.

How blessed we are to have a church community built on the gifts of so many that have preceded us, so many here with us now and so many who will follow us.

It truly is humbling. And inspiring.

Oh dear, I think I need another tissue.

Stewart

Messy Church

This winter our Messy Church shared the story of when Jesus was lost in the temple, the story of Jonah and we shared about Easter. It was a season full of big and small crafts, messy play, construction with cardboard boxes, games, delicious food activities, singing together, hearing stories, and sharing food around the tables with our Messy Church congregation.



In January, we also said goodbye to Reuben, the co-founder of Messy Church at PJPC. We have been blessed by Reuben's volunteer ministry with us for over thirteen years! Now, as we give thanks for Reuben's ministry in Portobello, we wish him well and pray for his ongoing ministry as an Ordained Local Minister with Gorgie Dalry Stenhouse Parish Church.



Reuben began our Messy Church in 2009, alongside his wife Rosie and our minister Stewart Weaver. Just over thirteen years later, our Messy Church continues to meet on the last Saturday of the month from 3:30pm-5:30pm. We start in the church for a celebration time with story, song, and prayer before moving to the halls for crafts and games activities. We finish with dinner. Messy Church is for everyone – all ages and stages of life. You do not need to bring a child with you to attend, though children do need to bring an adult with them. It is an informal church gathering that always ends with a meal and laughter

around the tables. I hope you will join us sometime to worship with our Messy Church congregation.

Michelle

Sunday Stars

Every Sunday from 9:30am to 10:15am, our Sunday Stars meet up in the Session Room. During the school year, this includes a Bible story, craft, and snack, sometimes with a song or game. During the school holidays, we share full Godly Play Storytelling sessions which include a welcome, story, wondering, free response time and snack.

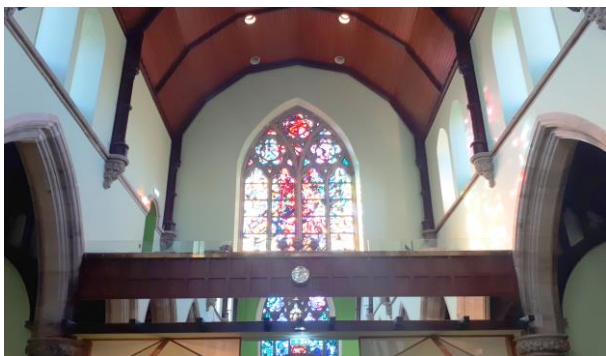


We currently meet with all the Sunday Stars together from aged three through to P7. Our numbers are slowly growing again though, so some weeks, the volunteers might share the story with everyone together, and then work with nursery to P2 in one part of the room and our P3-P7 Stars on the other side of the room.

In the last couple months, we have thought about listening to each other and God; we heard stories of when Jesus was tempted in the desert, when Jesus fed 5,000 people, when Jesus blessed the children, Palm Sunday and Easter; we had Godly Play story sessions on Elijah and Jeremiah; and we made Mothering Sunday cards and Easter crafts.

The Sunday Stars also launched a project for the whole church – we are making our church family bunting to decorate the church for Promotion Sunday in June. Each Sunday Stars leader and some special guests decorated a fabric piece of bunting with their name and pictures of their talents and gifts they share as part of our church family. Bunting pieces were also created by Breakfast Clubbers at the Easter Vigil. In April and May, Michelle will bring more bunting pieces to the choirs, coffee mornings, Messy Church and to the Rolling Café to try to include as many people as possible from our church family in this giant string of bunting. Look for Michelle or a Sunday Stars volunteer in the main hall after each church service in May to decorate your piece of the bunting! Our thanks to Ann Smuga for getting us started on this project and to Kay and Muriel for preparing more bunting pieces for us.

Michelle



Staying up until sunrise

From 10pm on Holy Saturday (8 April) until the 7am Easter morning service on the beach (9 April), fifteen young people and five volunteers stayed up

throughout the night at the 2023 Breakfast Club Easter Vigil. We were joined by two more young people and Lourens until just after the midnight communion service.

As we do each year, we begin the vigil with a trip to St Andrew's Chip Shop and then after our late-night supper, the big youth group event properly begins. We have ice breaker games to welcome in the new P7s and get to know everyone taking part. Then at midnight, we go into the church for a midnight worship service with Lourens – hearing about the Last Supper and Good Friday. We share communion and the peace with each other.

Then the rest of the night is full of arts and crafts projects, more games, baking Easter treats and more surprises in the hall. Meanwhile, every hour we go back into the church for a ten-minute timeout from the activities – this is time to pause, sit in the silence and then share a faith discussion about another part of the Easter story. We keep vigil through the night until Easter sunrise, reflecting each hour on the death and resurrection of Jesus. When we reach 6am, we tie together all the talks from the night as we think once more about what the Easter means to us.

Then there is a mad dash to clean up the church and main hall and set up for Easter Breakfast. We close the night by joining in with the ecumenical sunrise service at the beach at 7am. If you were there and spotted some exhausted young people toasting marshmallows in the morning campfire, then you will

have spotted some of the fantastic youth group members who took part in the all-night youth event.

Once again, we were blessed with wonderful young people to keep vigil with! An incredible team of volunteers gave of their time and talents and gave up their sleep to take lead as well – many thanks to Elaine, Jamie, Graham, and Michelle M! Thanks as well to Lourens for leading our midnight worship. Huge thanks to Carol and Kay for preparing Easter breakfast; to Sophia and Jonathan, who helped set up breakfast; and to David, Tom, Tim, Avril and Margo for serving the breakfast and hot drinks to the many folks who worshipped with us at 7am. Happy Easter from the Breakfast Club!

Michelle



Muddy Church

Our Muddy Church meets at Duddingston Kirk Gardens on the first Saturday of each month from 11am to 12:30pm. Our team of volunteers from PJPC collaborates with volunteers from Richmond Craigmillar Parish Church to put together this outside worship time each month. We meet rain or shine, snow, or warm weather.

Muddy Church is a deliberate setting aside of time to be open to awe and wonder outside and to connect to the world around us and connect with God.

We do this together and all are welcome (from the very youngest to the very

oldest). We meet on the lawn of Duddingston Kirk Gardens just outside the garden café and we begin with a welcome and a game. Then we get to explore Dr Neil's gardens and the glebe lands near the lake, sometimes with a nature activity. We end at 12:30pm with a Bible story and a time to reflect through an interactive prayer. You are welcome to stay after with a picnic lunch. We will be off in May for Coronation Day, but back 3 June, 1 July, and 5 August. Hope to see you in the gardens this summer!

Speak to **Michelle** to find out more.

Junior Drama - The Lost Monster of Scotland

Junior Drama are excited about their next show, a great performance of "The Lost Monster of Scotland". It has been a busy and exciting seven months since returning to rehearsals last September. You may remember the Ceilidh where we performed "The Ghost of Dundee", and "The Selkie" puppet performance. At Christmas we performed "The Bossy Christmas Fairy" at Christmas. We also loved watching the performance "Calamity Jane" by the adult drama group in March.



Since we returned after Christmas we have been rehearsing for our new show "The Lost Monster of Scotland". During rehearsals we have played a lot of games with Charlotte which the children love. We have also been singing with Fiona and



learning new songs for the show. We have been taught by dancing by Robin and Lesley, which has also been fun to learn.

The story includes a news reporter called Katy Allbright, guardians who look after the Loch Ness Monster, three fun American tourists, a schoolteacher and her class of young cheeky children, a scientist, and a professor. This is a mixed-up cast of characters, songs and dances that make for a funny show. What is it about?

Well, Katy Allbright is a pretty rubbish reporter to be quite honest, so her boss sends her up to Loch Ness out of the way to report on the non-existent monster people call Nessie. While camping on the banks of Loch Ness Katy meets up with the three Guardians, Mo McDonald, Maggie McDougal, and Malcolm McPhee, who are there to protect Nessie, though they have never seen her. Miss Taggart the lovely schoolteacher, along with the school children, arrives on the loch to learn about Nessie for their school project. American tourists also arrive on the

scene, unhappy that they have paid lots of money to see Nessie but have failed to see her yet.

Two nasty people, Prof. Cecil Franklin Pyke and the weird scientist also arrive on the scene. I will not say any more, but does Katy Allbright get the big newspaper scoop she has always been looking for? Who knows (apart from the cast and me, and we are not telling). The show has lots of laughs and great singing and dancing throughout that will make you want to jump up on stage and join the cast.

Date: **Friday, 19th May 2023**
Doors open 6.30pm
Show begins 7.00pm
Show finishes 8.00pm

Hope to see you there.

Jamie

“Calamity Jane” by PJPC Drama Group

Calamity Jane is one of the older, popular musicals packed full of fun and well-known, immediately recognisable tunes so it's little wonder that the audience was humming along after the first few bars of the overture.

The opening, 'The Deadwood Stage', got the show off to a flying start with the company in fine voice. Indeed the choral singing throughout was most impressive, with harmonies loud and clear especially in 'The Black Hills of Dakota', when the company entered through the auditorium before lining upon stage.

Calamity Jane herself is rarely off the stage and is a most demanding role and Katie B was made for the part. She gave a strong, assured performance, never faltering in her tomboyish swagger and mannerisms as the rough and ready, brusque

Calamity Jane belting out her musical numbers. The transition in character when she makes an attempt at femininity, then realising that Bill is the man for her and not Danny, was well portrayed and 'Secret Love' sung with passion and sincerity.

There is ongoing conflict between Calamity and Wild Bill Hickock. Tommie T was a most charismatic Bill, subtle in his responses to Calamity. His 'Higher Than a Hawk' was delivered with real ease and meaning, showing off his fine voice.

There are many 'mix ups' and lots of confusion in this musical comedy.

Much of the action takes place in 'The Golden Garter Club' and John L gave a commanding performance as the frenetic Henry Miller, the club proprietor, trying to keep everybody and everything under control when so many things appear to be going wrong. The first setback is the arrival of Francis Fryer, a young man, instead of the expected Frances, a female entertainer. Martijn VW brought real comedy to the part as he is forced to appear in drag with his song and dance routine 'Hive Full of Honey', which was full of character. Mariel M was a flirty, coquettish Susan, Henry's niece, eventually finding love with Francis.

Poppy C gave a most demure performance as Katie Brown, the maid of the much-adored Adelaide Adams, whom Calamity has promised to bring to Deadwood City. The change in her character and singing voice when she is the shy imposter Adelaide and then the real genuine Katie was well handled. Totally relaxed in her performance, she and Joe W, the dashing Lieutenant Danny Gilmarton, were a most believable couple, their voices blending well in the tender 'Love You Dearly'.

The real Adelaide Adams was played with real style by Sylvia C.

The many supporting characters all gave noteworthy performances and the dancing girls at the cabaret were slick and looked very glamorous in their cancan outfits.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable production, supported by a small but well-controlled orchestra. The colourful period costumes and effective lighting

enhanced this lively, musically sound production, which was most entertaining and very well received by the capacity audience. A real crowd pleaser from this small but dynamic company. Very well done.

Dorothy J

Meet Ella

I would like to introduce you to Ella.

Ella is in her early twenties. She is just about to sit her final University exams. Just before the Covid pandemic hit the world, she was planning on spending some time working in a refugee camp. She couldn't travel. Instead, she borrowed a sewing machine and taught herself to sew. Together with her friend and her mother, Heidi, they started making reusable period pads.



This was the beginning of what became known as The Pachamama Project. (Pachamama was an Inca goddess of fertility.) Membership started growing and has now blossomed into a band of hundreds of people (not just in the UK!) making pads for refugees and women and girls in crisis situations, including, for example, asylum seekers in the UK.

Having joined the Project, I was given the names of a couple of members in Edinburgh. We three strangers (no longer!) met for coffee on Waverley Station. This was the beginning of E Pachas. In November a meeting was held in our church hall to seek further support. As well as locals, there were people from Hawick and Kelty, and supporters from Edinburgh Direct Aid. The challenge was on!

To cut a long story short, by the time you read this E Pachas will have made and sent over 1000 pads to Heidi's home in Chelmsford, and more than 260 drawstring bags. We have had a couple of workshops, mainly adding snaps for fastening the pads to underwear and threading cord into the bags. Each recipient

gets an attractive drawstring bag containing 8 pads, 2 pairs of pants and a cake of soap, the latter added by partner organisations at the receiving end.

The need is huge, numbering into millions. The most recent sending was to Pakistan, where volunteers from the Pakistan Abaseen Foundation distributed Menstrual Hygiene Management Kits to flood affected families of Swat, in Mohala Bangladesh Mingora. These included over 4000 reusable pads sent by The Pachamama Project.

Every little helps restore dignity to menstruating women and girls living in really poor conditions in various refugee camps and communities in various countries. The pads last from 3 to 5 years, and the recipients are taught how to maintain them – education and the breaking down of stigmas play a vital role in the Project’s vital outreach work.

Angela Stewart and I plan to set up a table exhibition in our church hall one Sunday morning soon. Please visit when you are there for tea or coffee. I think you would like to meet Ella and her mother Heidi.

I would.

Kay



Don't miss the annual Christian Aid Book (etc) sale at St Andrew's and St George's West Church, from 13-18 May.

An opportunity to help at Meadowbank Church Cook Club



We met many years ago when we both lived around the West End and went along to Palmerston Place Church and the youth fellowship there. After marrying and the arrival of three children we moved to a house in Seaview Terrace nearly thirty years ago, where we still live. However we didn't move church and eventually both became elders and served respectively as session clerk and treasurer. Six years ago we heard an appeal for assessor elders at Meadowbank Church, newly established from the union of Holyrood Abbey and London Road Churches, and felt the call was for us. Peter was appointed Session Clerk and, having expected to help out for 6-9 months we remained as assessor elders until the end of 2022.

Rev. Russell McL came to Meadowbank as Transition Minister and he took the small congregation on a programme of activity - 'Journey of Discovery'. This involved linking with local churches in discussions relating to what developed into the Presbytery Plan and making contact with local groups in the parish with the aim of forming working relationships and partnerships with them to support their activities. A link was established with Edinburgh Cyrenians to use church volunteers and the Meadowbank kitchen and hall facilities to run a Cook Club. This has survived the traumas of Covid and changes in personnel and is of great benefit to our vulnerable adult guests attending weekly.

We both still help regularly at Cook Club, despite having given up our assessor elder roles. Peter's role involves collecting the food order from Fare Share, a Cyrenians project that distributes surplus food from supermarkets and restaurants, preparing tables and chairs to seat our guests, welcoming and registering the guests as they arrive around 11.00am, chatting and sharing latest news, helping with simple food preparation tasks along with our guests and participating in a short Bible reading. Isobel helps in the kitchen with cooking and serving up a two-course lunch, a main course with either a soup or a pudding. Volunteers and guests sit down together to eat lunch and chat, then the guests

leave and the volunteers clear up, with Isobel looking after dish washing (the Meadowbank kitchen is well equipped with a professional steriliser).

At the moment 6-8 guests usually come for lunch and we have 5 or 6 volunteers to chat with the guests and work in the kitchen. This small team means that volunteers have to commit to being there almost every week and we would like to invite you to consider whether you might be able to offer some time to enable the team to become larger. The Presbytery Plan envisages the union of Meadowbank and Willowbrae, and a Willowbrae member already volunteers every week at Cook Club. The next step is expected to be a further union with Portobello and Joppa and it would be good if that were anticipated by beginning to work together in projects like Cook Club. If anyone would like to explore volunteering at Cook Club the best first step would be simply to come to Meadowbank Church at 11am on a Thursday (entry is by the side door opposite the shopping centre) and take part as guest.

Peter and Isobel G (who have recently joined our worshipping community)

The Teapot Trust

The McDonald family has supported the Teapot Trust since 2012 when it was the Charity of the Year at Eric's work. This Musselburgh based organisation was set up in 2010 by John and Laura Young after they saw the gaps in care for children who were regularly visiting hospital. Their daughter, Verity, spent much of her short life in hospital coping with illness and managing the effects of her treatment. Art gave her a way of expressing herself, and was an essential coping strategy for the whole family. John and Laura wanted to use their experience to help other children and their families cope with the stress and anxiety tied to frequent hospital visits.

Teapot Trust's charitable purpose is to enhance the lives of children, young people and their families who are suffering the impact of any chronic or long-

term conditions, including 'hidden' health conditions. They organise one-to-one art therapy with children in hospitals and hospices, and small peer-group art sessions to support children with similar needs. They also provide art therapy sessions to the families of those in hospital, so both the children and those who support them can benefit from the soothing properties of art.

Teapot Trust is delighted to have won a show garden at this May's RHS Chelsea Flower Show, being the only Scottish based charity to have done so. Made possible by a generous grant from Project Giving Back, and designed by the widely respected garden design firm Semple Begg, the garden will be on display throughout the show. It will then be relocated to its permanent home at Glasgow's Royal Hospital for Children, where Teapot Trust has been working in partnership to support families in need over the last decade.

We began volunteering for the Teapot Trust at the Edinburgh Yarn Festival by winding yarn for donations to the charity. We have walked the Kilt Walk, staffed stalls at fairs and festivals, and helped facilitate an online stitching session to raise funds. When we heard that volunteers were needed at RHS Chelsea to raise awareness of the charity, we jumped at the chance and are delighted to say that we will be on duty at the Elsewhere Garden on Friday 26th May.

Sheena is a knitter and crafter, Eric is a keen gardener, so we support the notion that Art (as with craft and gardening) can help children and families come to terms with life-limiting conditions. We are excited to volunteer at Chelsea, which will allow us to visit this iconic show whilst helping the charity we have supported for just over 10 years. You can find out more about the Teapot Trust at www.teapot-trust.org and we will give you an update on our experience when we return at the end of May.

Eric and Sheena (the new one!)



Book group – The Fair Botanists by Sara Sheridan

This book had lots of local interest for many of us as it was centred on the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and its move from Leith Walk to its present site at Inverleith Row.



Some of us enjoyed the story while others thought it all a bit too far-fetched. The book is an interesting mix of locally correct historical facts and the fictional life of residents of Edinburgh's New Town. William McNab and his son James were well-developed characters and in the main part were correctly portrayed, although one wonders about Mr McNab Senior's secret agreement with Mrs Dickson, the local nursery woman, over the seeds of the giant Agave. However, there are many plants in the RBGE that can be traced back to Dickson's nursery so its existence is correct.

The main character, Elizabeth Rocheid, was well portrayed and developed but her friendship with Belle seemed to many a bit unlikely. Belle herself was an extremely unlikely character, a courtesan experimenting with the effects of different love potions on the performance of her high-profile gentleman friends. There is an interesting thread of intrigue introduced through the celebrity status given to the Rocheids' coachman, who was purported to be the illegitimate son of Robert Burns, and his eventual liaison with the blind girl who was an expert in perfumery and beer making.

Mix all this together with the preparations for forthcoming visit of King George with mentions of Sir Walter Scott and one has an interesting mishmash of ideas and story threads which often stretched credibility to the limits.

Robert Graham was not correctly portrayed and was indeed well-respected in botanical circles. Neither pompous nor self-important, he oversaw the successful move of the large trees from Leith Walk to Inverleith Row.

There was a strong opinion that the book ended too suddenly and on a too sweet and sugary note. We were not sure that it was a book we would reread or indeed recommend; it was not intellectually challenging.

Our next read for the end of May is 'Leonard and Hungry Paul' by Ronan Hession.

Happy reading.

George

Gardening with George – *More plant lore from George, horticulturist and star of the small screen.*



I usually sow my pumpkins and squash seeds around the middle of April so that by the time they germinate and have been hardened off, the worst danger of frost is passed. The same applies to my French beans and runner beans. Both crops are frost sensitive and will need some fleece protection when they are first planted out. In the cold, unheated glasshouse the tomatoes' seedlings are well advanced and will soon be ready to plant into their grow bags on the glasshouse bench. I plant three in each bag. At the allotment, carrots, parsnips and spinach have been sown and the first of the cauliflower and cabbage plants planted out. All have been protected with some insect-proof mesh netting which not only keeps the little pests at bay but also increases the moisture content around the growing seedlings.

The first of the apple, pear, cherry and plum blossom is opening and if there is no serious frost and a plentiful supply of pollinating insects, a good crop of fruit should follow.

According to folks much more expert in such matters than I am, pollinating insects are in decline and we should all be doing our bit to encourage and help them. Moths, butterflies, hover flies, bees and even wasps and flies are important pollinators and their activities can be aided by sowing or planting hardy annuals in and around the garden or patio. There are lots of seed mixtures available from seed suppliers all suggested as suitable for pollinators. I will be sowing one such seed mixture at the allotment but even if you don't have lots of space at home, a handful of bright cheery flowering annuals in a pot by the door will not only brighten up your day but also help our insect friends. Plants with pale coloured and scented flowers attract moths while those with yellow petals seem particularly attractive to hover flies and bees.

Most of the daffodils and tulips have finished flowering now and there is a compulsion to cut the foliage down. DON'T. Leave all the foliage on daffodils and let it die back slowly. All the nutrients in the daffodil leaves will be transferred down into the new, young developing bulbs. I don't like to see the foliage all gathered together and tied in a knot. Leave it alone to die back naturally and if you are anxious about tidiness, plant your daffodils in amongst some



groundcover so that as the foliage dies back, the groundcover extends and smothers the bulbs' dying leaves. I am not a fan of keeping tulip bulbs from one year to the next, so the ones I grow in pots are discarded once they have finished flowering. Some might say that it is a horrible waste of resources but I salve my conscience by suggesting I am supporting the bulb growing industry.

Time to think about replacing all those pots of bulbs with annuals to give some summer colour. By the time you read this, garden centres will have shelves stuffed with lots of tempting bedding plants. However, I will not be planting my pots of summer bedding out until after the middle of May at the earliest. Remember, we live in Scotland and often get damaging frosts in late spring, so stay vigilant and wait.

Wherever you are and whatever your outdoor space, enjoy the fresh air.
Happy Gardening.

George



The Word for today

Focus on what's good

Think about things that are...worthy of praise – Philippians 4, 8

Paul writes, "Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honourable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise... Then the God of peace will be with you." (Philippian 4, 8-9)

General Robbie Risner described the seven years he spent as a prisoner of war in a Vietnamese camp as "the essence of despair". But he survived; he prised the cover off a drain in his cell and saw a solitary blade of grass, the only colour in his colourless world. He began to spend each day in prayer, lying on the floor with his head down, focusing on that single blade of grass.

When things don't go well in our lives, we have to choose what to focus on: fear or faith, despair or hope, problems or solutions. When we focus on God, He lifts us above our circumstances and gives us peace in the midst of our problems.

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Getting to know you – Rita



Rita says: I was born in Jersey, Channel Islands where my father had his business but from the age of 5 grew up in the most northern borough of London & went to Sunday School at the local Methodist Church where I later became a member together with Ron, whom I married in 1951. We lived in Enfield on the edge of the London Green Belt for 45 years. We moved to Edinburgh on Dec 21st, 2020 as lockdown started, and Ron was the first resident of the newly created care home Harbour House, by the sea at Musselburgh, where sadly he died earlier this year after 71 years of happy marriage. I am comfortably installed in my daughter and son-in-law's home in Portobello and at PJPC, which Ron and I attended over many years when visiting the family.

Q. What is a favourite hymn, and why?

A. Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided

Q. What was your job, and in an alternative life, what job might you have chosen?

A. *My first job was working for the BBC on the 5th floor of the tower at Alexandra Palace when TV re-started after the war, picking up the Donald Duck film where it had been stopped on TV screens at the point when all TV closed down as war was declared. I worked in the newly-formed Film Unit on the administrative side with a boss who was newly demobbed from the Army and as ignorant about film-making as I was. We soon learnt! I left to have my children and later resumed work as a school secretary in a Catholic secondary school until retirement.*

Q. What are you reading at the moment?

A. Wojtek The Bear – Polish War Hero by Aileen Orr, *who came to the Guild last month.*

Q. What book do you feel you should have read, but never have?

A. *Alice in Wonderland.*

Q. What is your most prized possession?

A. *My lifetime collection of family photographs.*

Q. Tell us something that not many people know about you.

Although I enjoy most natural things, I have a horror of anything without legs! i.e. worms, snakes, eels etc.

Q. What single thing would improve the quality of your life?

A. *To be able to remember people's names within ten minutes of being introduced!*

Q. What do you do to relax?

A. *Sit quietly for a few minutes, take a few deep breaths and try to push out troubling thoughts and empty my mind using methods taught at 10 years of yoga classes.*

Q. What is a favourite quotation?

A. *Be still, and know that I am God.*

Q. What kind of music do you listen to?

A. *Light classical especially piano music.*

Q. What do you miss (or not miss) about being a child?

A. *I didn't have a very happy family life – so I don't miss that.*

Q. How would you like to be remembered?

A. *As somebody who enjoyed listening and talking with people.*

Q. What gets you up in the morning (apart from your alarm clock)?

A. *The thought of wasting precious time, which might be short now because of age, and all the things I would still like to do like writing a book about living through a war using detailed diary entries, getting back to playing the piano...*

Q. Where would you like to be right now?

A. *Sitting in sight of the sea when it is rough and the sun is warm.*

Q. What makes your heart sing?

A. *Seeing small contented babies.*



Brain-teaser



This month sees the coronation of King Charles III, which is beginning to sound not so odd as it did a few months ago. With this in mind, this month's quiz centres round the word "CORONATION". The answers to the clues begin with the letters C-O-R-O-N-A-T-I-O-N. However, every second letter has been omitted. Can you work out the answers?

C-N-A-	The promised land
O-R-N	Often played in church
R-T-	She has a book in the Old Testament
O-E-A	"I am the Alpha and the ...?" (Revelations, 22)
N-A-	Useful chap to have around in flood situations
A-B-	Name for "father" in Aramaic
T-O-A-	The one who doubted
I-A-C	Son of Abraham, father of Jacob
O-W-R-	"... Christian soldiers"
N-B-C-A-N-Z-A- *	The second king of the Neo-Babylonian empire

Alison

*We didn't want to make this *too* easy. Good luck with the spelling...

Remembering

- 18 February** Bill Thomson of Portobello
21 March Sandra Moffat of Portobello
23 March Eric Matthews of Craigentiny
24 March Janet Bogie of Joppa
13 April Ray Thomas of Joppa
17 April Christine Thomson of Portobello



LIFE AND WORK MAY 2023



The Coronation Stone Ian Bradley reflects on the Scottish influence on the King's coronation

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June/July/August 2023

September 2023

October 2023

Sunday 21st May 2023

Sunday 20th August 2023

Sunday 17th September 2023

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