

# Soundings

Portobello & Joppa Parish  
Church Magazine

November 2021



*Portobello and Joppa Parish Church*

## ***From the editor***

One of my favourite poems is “Snow” by Louis MacNeice. The poet is sitting in a room with roses tapping against the window outside when it suddenly begins to snow. He’s delighted by the unusual sight of the snow-covered roses and he muses about the astonishing variety of things we encounter in everyday life, saying:

“World is crazier and more of it than we think,  
Incorrigibly plural.”

It reminds me of an occasion when we were visiting my aunt in Norfolk at Easter time. The gardens were in full spring flower – and then there was a snowstorm. Walking to church, we came across a snowman “holding” a daffodil. The contrast made us smile.

In his letter, Stewart talks about the huge variety of congregations he’s seen in Edinburgh, of members of these congregations and of the possible forms of services. We’re all different! Michelle reports on our recent experiments with worship and meeting together – variety again.

You’re invited to join the Breakfast Club and the Eco Group – Mairead, Katie, Elaine and others – to hear about their thoughts and experiences with regard to climate change and to walk in an eco-pilgrimage along the prom and up to Duddingston Kirk. Mairead and Katie have also kindly filled in our “Getting to know you” questionnaire this month.

Thanks as ever to all contributors – gardening, reading, quizzing, thinking.

**Pam**





## ***From the minister***

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

What do you think the future of the church is?

What do you think the future of the church should be?

Who are we as the Church of Scotland?

These and other related questions have been percolating in my mind recently for a number of reasons.

Firstly, as we begin to move out of the more stringent Covid restrictions into something that bears a resemblance to pre-Covid life, such questions press more insistently.

Our experiments with worship online, at 10am and at 9.45am, have generated a range of reactions and observations. No matter what our future worship schedule looks like, we have thought and prayed long and hard about our worship, what we are trying to do, what we hope speaks to a varied congregation and, most importantly, what helps to deepen our relationship with God.

Secondly, I have done a couple of baptisms recently for families within the wider orbit of the church. Conversations about life, child rearing, faith and community have been refreshing and also challenging. How can the faith and commitment so important to me be conveyed in a manner that encourages others to take a step on the road of Christ's eternal wisdom? It is a different world through which that road now winds. How do we respond?

Lastly, and perhaps most vividly, I have spent some time recently visiting numerous churches in the Presbytery of Edinburgh. It's a part of my contribution to the ongoing work of the Presbytery and the momentous challenges facing us. Over the past few years, I have visited or at least clapped eyes on every church in the Presbytery.

The variety of churches and congregations, many of whose stories I know and/or have read, is absolutely staggering. The traditional Victorian. The socially aware. The enthusiastic and spirit-filled. The pastoral and rural. The struggling. The (outwardly) successful. The housing estate. The city centre. The complacent. The fearful.

You name it, we've got it in the Church of Scotland right here in Edinburgh.

But who are we?

Some of us would be delighted to plant a soapbox on a street corner and tell the whole world about Jesus.

Some of us love to meet at exactly 11.00am, bow our heads to the words of prayers, listen attentively (or not...) to a learned sermon – and sandwich all of this together with a few well-known hymns.

Some of us prefer the quiet and contemplative.

Some of us prefer the informal and spirit-filled praise band.

What ties all of this together?

A faith in the God manifested in Christ, a faith fuelled by the Spirit of grace and holiness. A belief that the world is a wondrous gift created in love, a love so deep that it suffered to draw us back into its fold and sustains us with joy.

So many people, so many congregations, so many expressions.

So, who are we?

Or, is that the wrong question?

Who are you, God?

Where are you, Christ?

What are you telling us, Holy Spirit?

Standing in a desolate housing estate, the church was a place of hope.

Standing on a busy street, the church was a place of community.

Standing in an anonymous suburb, the church was a place of welcome.

Standing in a rural field, the church was a place of sanctuary.

As I travelled round the city, the needs were apparent.

As I travelled round the city, good, faithful and sacrificial work was palpable.

As I travelled round the city, I wondered: where next, God?

It's an open question.

And so I, and I hope all of us, continue to keep eyes and ears, hearts and minds, souls and spirits open to the voice calling to us.

Then, grounded in God, we may move as nimbly as the Spirit guided by the love of Christ.

**Stewart**

## ***WORSHIP***

### **November**

<b>Sun. 7 November</b>	9.30	Reflective Service
(Eco Sunday)	11.00	Traditional and Zoom
<b>Sun. 14 November</b>	9.30	Reflective Service
(Remembrance)	<b>10.50</b>	Traditional and Zoom
<b>Sun. 21 November</b>	9.30	Reflective Service
(Christ the King)	11.00	Traditional and Zoom
<b>Sun. 28 November</b>	9.30	Reflective Service
(First Advent)	11.00	Traditional and Zoom

**December Worship** Please keep an eye on electronic communications, the church magazine and the church website. Discussions will be taking place during November to assess our experiments and consider how best to offer worship during December.

## **JUNK MAIL!**

If you think you should be getting the world famous, award winning e-newsletter produced weekly by a dedicated editorial team (see photo of sub-editor) but nothing seems to be landing in your in tray, a few thoughts!

Check your spam folder or check your junk mail. Many e-mail systems have been sending the E-newsletter, Midweek Reminder and Sunday Nudge straight into the bin. Shocking! However, roll up your sleeves, reach down into it and retrieve it!



You can also mark the e-mail or sender so that it may not go in next time.

If you would like to be put on the distribution list, or have any thoughts or questions, or simply can't get the e-mails, do let the sub-editor know. Or Stewart.

Many furry thanks,  
The elusive e-mail editor

*"Dogs are our link to paradise."* **Milan Kundera**

*"No one appreciates the special genius of your conversation as the dog does."*  
**Christopher Morley**

## ***Experimenting in Worship Together***

For the month of October, we tried out a new informal and interactive worship service on Sundays from 9:45am to 10:15am. This service was intentionally planned to welcome all ages together as we gather to worship God through word, symbol, action and emotion worship styles.



In the service, we gathered with candle lighting and an opening response followed by a song and a prayer. Then we Opened the Word with sharing the Bible story followed by a short, visual reflection from our ministry team. Next we Responded to the Word through an interactive prayer and final song. Finally, we Went Out into the World with a blessing, said and sung together.

October was a trial run to try something new in worship as we began holding two in-person services again – something new at 9:45am and something more traditional at 11am. In November, we'll move back to a 9:30am start time for the early service which will be a more reflective worship service. This will be offered whilst the Sunday Stars meet in the halls from 9:30 to 10:30am each week, working on the nativity for Advent 2021. We hope to re-start crèche in November as well at this earlier service time. Meanwhile, Breakfast Club will continue to meet at the later time of 11am in the main hall, alongside the 11am traditional worship service.

Our Session will meet at the end of November. With feedback from the worship team, staff and conveners, we'll reflect on the different worship services offered

in the autumn (online and in-person) and we'll figure out what's next as we plan for worship in 2022.

As we have just tried something new, your feedback and ideas are very valued by the worship team, staff, conveners and session. If you attended the 9:45am "experimental" service, please can you email Stewart with your thoughts? [sweaver@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:sweaver@churchofscotland.org.uk)

Everyone's responses are valued as we engage in worship as a whole church family and each perspective is welcome. Thanks!

**Michelle**

### ***Telfer Blacklock***

With great sadness we announce the death of Telfer Blacklock, aged 92, on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Telfer was Session Clerk at the Old Parish during Neil Buchanan's ministry. He will be sadly missed by his family and his many friends in the parish.



## Eco-Pilgrimage for Climate Justice



The Eco Group and Breakfast Club are hosting an eco-pilgrimage around Portobello and Duddingston on Sunday, 7 November to share about climate justice as part of COP26. It will begin outside of our church at 2pm with some short talks on climate justice

and some songs. This short gathering time will be led by leaders of the eco-group who are also part of our youth group, Mairead and Katie. They have been very involved in getting our eco group started with Elaine. They will be sharing more on why climate justice is so important to them and a bit about their experience going to Glasgow to be part of a gathering for COP26.

From 2:30pm, we'll walk with banners and signs along the promenade, up Bath Street, along Brighton Place, then Duddingston Road, and finally Duddingston Road West to finish our eco-pilgrimage at Duddingston Kirk Gardens.

We'll have hot chocolate and more chats in the garden, hosted by Duddingston Kirk where we hope to connect more with the eco group at Duddingston Kirk.

Everyone is welcome to join us for the walk as we share with the Portobello community our interest in being a more eco-friendly church and our support of those working for climate justice.



*Peter, whom many of us know, is a member of our congregation and also an artist. He recently wrote this and has kindly agreed to share it here – it's very relevant to our thinking at the present time and in this edition of our magazine.*

## ***My Grandfather's beech trees***

Here is a charcoal drawing I made in Kirkcudbright recently. That's my grandparents' house to the left, with the trees behind. My grandfather planted the beeches when he realised that the lime trees that stood tall in 1946 would one day have to be felled. He took the long view. They came down in 1984, and within a few years the beech trees had majestically filled the space that was left.



As we await the outcomes of COP26, and try to fully understand what each of us can do to make a difference, I can't honestly claim to be taking the long view, never mind taking much meaningful action. But I'm hoping my grandfather's example can inspire me.

**Peter**

## **The Book Group – “Hamnet” by Maggie O’Farrell**



All who read this book thoroughly enjoyed it. Beautifully written, the narrative transported the reader into the situations described and invoked the scents and sounds of each event.

Written as an account of Shakespeare's life from his time as a glove maker to his period as a Latin tutor and eventually as an author, it covered much more and its descriptions of the strong bonds between family members, especially twins, was outstanding.

It was suggested that the author had called on her own personal life experiences in order to bring that strong sense of reality to the situations she described.

Part of the story was set in the time of The Black Death and the chapter describing the way in which the disease spread from shore to ship and ship to shore via its various animal and human carriers was a classic example of how pandemics spread. Like much of her writing, the text showed the depth of her historic and subject research and her understanding of human behaviour and emotions.

There was a strong focus on motherhood throughout the book and in the chapter describing the death of her son Hamnet/Hamlet, grief was well described from the mother's point of view as well as the feeling of abject loss and sorrow of the twin that was left behind.

An excellent book enjoyed by all.

The book selected for the end of November is “Circe” by Madeline Miller.  
**George**

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

As I write this, the cheery weather girl has been suggesting that we are due for an Arctic blast of cold air and perhaps even the chance in some sheltered areas of a slight air frost.



The cold air and frost have an effect on plant leaves. With the reduction in light levels and lowering of temperatures that accompany the season of autumn, the green leaves of summer leaves turn to yellows, golds, oranges and fiery reds. mirroring the colours in the sun's fading rays. It is all to do with the decay of chlorophyll, the green pigment in leaves, and the revealing of orange carotene and red anthocyanins.

Red is also one of the colours that indicate ripeness in fruits. When strawberries, raspberries, plums and apples assume their red rosy cheeks, their sugar levels have reached their peak and we know that they are ready to eat. What intrigues me is: how do birds know when holly, cotoneaster and rowan berries are ripe and ready? Often they will ignore red berries for weeks, when to me they look ripe, and then all of a sudden they fall upon them with delight and within a short period all the berries on the tree or shrub have been eaten.

One of my least favourite jobs in the allotment year is lifting potatoes. Perhaps it brings back too many memories of the Tattie Howking holidays of Octobers past. Cold, damp days spent in windswept fields grubbing through the wet soil in search of potatoes, memories too of sore backs and soil-ingrained hands and fingernails. The soil on our allotment was dry when we lifted our spuds this year. While the top inch of soil was damp from recent rains, the underlying layers were almost bone dry.

We try to lift our potatoes around the beginning of October and often this coincides with the first skeins of pinkfoot geese arriving overhead on their migration south to their winter grazing grounds and the sanctuaries of lochs, reservoirs and shores. This year was no exception. Bang on cue, the geese arrived.

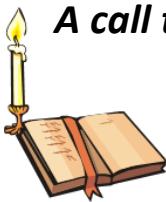


Potato harvest over, it's now the turn of the apples – some with bright obvious red rosy cheeks, others with just a faint blush while yet others are barely flushed with the colours that suggest ripeness. Apples are ready for harvest when by simply cupping them in your hand you find that they detach easily from the branches with little effort. Some are best eaten straight from the tree; others achieve their flavour peaks after a short period of storage. We wrap our apples in the pages of old gardening magazines and pack them in old polystyrene fish boxes stored in the garden shed or glasshouse. We have had a reasonable crop this year in spite of the cold spring and general lack of pollinating insects at the crucial time.

I'm off to make an apple dumpling now.

Stay safe and Happy Gardening  
**George**





## **A call to prayer**

### ***Be aware of God in your situation***

One night, Jacob had a dream. He saw a ladder with angels on it extending all the way to heaven, and God said to him, “I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go” (Genesis 28, 15). The next day, Jacob said, “The Lord was in this place and I was not aware of it.”

When it comes to recognising God, we can be spiritually tuned in – or we can be like Jacob and not be aware of Him.

It was business as usual for Moses the day he noticed the burning bush – not an uncommon sight in a hot desert climate. Except that this time the bush kept burning and “when he turned aside to look, God called to him”. (Exodus 3, 4).

There is no event so commonplace but that God is present, and we can recognise Him – or not recognise Him. Be aware.

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ST6 4JF

## **Brain-teaser**



This month I've been thinking about RIPPING SHOW, or to put it another way PORPHIN WIGS or HIPPOS WRING.

Or at least, these are anagrams of the (one-word) subject that's on my mind.

Need any more clues?

How about ROPING WHIPS? PROP WISHING? SOPPING WHIR? HOWS RIPPING?  
Or – this is a bit easy but I like it – PING WORSHIP?

If you *still* don't get it, here's the actual word with every second letter missed out:

-O-S-I-P-N-

How about in alphabetical order?

GHIINOPPRSW

Of course, it's what we do in church (and elsewhere).

It comes from two Old English words for *worth* and *quality* or *condition*. Got it now? Just in case you haven't, the answer's at the bottom of the page.\*

**Alison**

\*Worshipping



**Getting to know you – Mairead.** Hi, my name is Mairead. I'm 12 years old. I'm part of the eco group at PJPC, and Breakfast Club. I'm in S1 at Porty High School. I like listening to music, I play netball, and I have a cat whose name is Pearl. I've lived in Portobello almost all of my life, but I was born in Melbourne, Australia.

**Q. What is an early church memory?**

A. *I used to always make a craft in Sunday Stars every week!*

**Q. What job might you like to do?**

A. *Something creative like fashion, or something to do with psychology.*

**Q. What are you reading at the moment?**

A. *I am re-reading some books I read when I was younger, the particular series being Percy Jackson.*

**Q. How did you find lockdown?**

A. *Lockdown wasn't bad for me, I enjoyed most of my school work (emphasis on most) and I had my own laptop to do it on as well. I texted my friends every day but it still wasn't the same as seeing them in person.*

**Q. What are you longing to do once Covid is no longer a major problem?**

A. *Go to Australia!! I was born there and haven't been to see my family for almost 3 years now. We are aiming to go in the coming summer.*

**Q. What luxury would you take to a desert island?**

A. *Probably a book entitled 'How to build a raft'! - but I would quite like to have my laptop as well.*

**Q. What do you do to relax?**

A. *I like to listen to music.*

**Q. Where would you go in a time machine and why?**

A. *Probably back to the 27th of July 2021 because it was my mum's birthday then and the Indian takeaway we had was REALLY good.*

**Q. What kind of music do you listen to?**

A. *I like listening to pop music.*

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

A. *Breakfast! Best meal of the day.*

**Q. Where would you like to be right now?**

A. *On a bus this evening – I'll be going to see a film with my friends – but right now it's just me with my music, looking at the autumn leaves on an empty bus.*



## **Getting to know you – Katie.**

Katie has lived in Portobello all her life. She was baptised with her brother in Portobello/Joppa church in 2014 and currently helps with the Eco-group.

**Q. What's your earliest childhood memory?**

A. *Seeing younger children at nursery when I walked past the open door.*

**Q. What job might you like to do?**

A. *A TV host/ presenter/ director.*

**Q. What are you reading at the moment?**

A. *The Man Who Died Twice by Richard Osman.*

**Q. How did you find lockdown?**

A. *Lonely – I am a very sociable person.*

**Q. What is your most prized possession?**

A. *An old toy owl.*

**Q. What do you do to relax?**

A. *Go on my phone or watch TV.*

**Q. Where would you go in a time machine and why?**

A. *The future to see if it is happy.*

**Q. How would you like to be remembered?**

A. *For doing a good thing.*

**Q. Where would you like to be right now?**

A. *Somewhere snowy – maybe an alternate reality of Portobello, where it snows properly in winter.*



## ***From a (very) old St Philip's Guild recipe book***

### **Border Tart**

1 oz margarine	1 egg
½ cup sugar	2 teaspoons flour
1 cup raisins	A few halved cherries
A few chopped walnuts	A few drops almond essence
Shortcrust pastry	

Method: Cream margarine and sugar, add egg, almond essence, flour, fruit and nuts. Line a sandwich tin with pastry. Pour mixture into tin and bake in moderate oven for half an hour.

***Contributed by Mrs Cranston, 67 Brunstane Road – did your aunt bake this for you, Morag P?***

### **Beetroot Chutney**

3lbs beetroot	½ tsp ground ginger
1 and a half lbs apples	juice of one lemon
½ lb sugar	1 pint vinegar
1 tsp salt	2 onions

Method: Boil beetroot with salt in water for 1 and a half hours. Skin. When cold, cut into small cubes. Chop apples and onions finely and boil for 20 minutes in vinegar with sugar. Add beetroot and boil for another half hour. When cold, pot and tie down. Ready for use in a week.

***Contributed by Mrs W Nicholson, The Manse, 6 St Mary's Place.***

*(A trip down memory lane for some; the editor had a page to fill.)*

## ***News from CrossReach – the social work arm of the C of S***

### **1) Transitions**

Leaving school is a daunting step for any young person. It can be particularly difficult for young people with learning disabilities.

Young people and their families have told us that, while they were very well supported throughout their school career, this support had to stop as soon as they left, and they were left to navigate the world of adult social care services on their own. CrossReach has been looking for opportunities to bridge this gap.

Working alongside the social work department in the City of Edinburgh Council, we have been able to establish a successful ‘Transitions’ service. Our staff get to know the young people while in their final year, and continue to support them when they leave school. Whether they choose to stay with CrossReach or move on to another service, we know we have made the transition easier for each young person, and less stressful for their family.

At the moment, we are supporting 15 young people in Edinburgh, and we continue to look for opportunities to establish transition services in other places too.

**2) CrossReach Christmas cards and calendars** – If you would like to support the work of CrossReach by buying their Christmas cards or calendars, you can do so by visiting the website – [www.crossreach.org.uk/shop](http://www.crossreach.org.uk/shop) or by phoning 454 4374 during office hours.



### **3) Determined kind-heartedness**

When acclaimed Scottish singer and songwriter Bruce Davies generously approached CrossReach in early 2020 with an offer of a fundraising concert in November 2020, none of us had an inkling of what lay ahead. Surely lockdown would be over by the end of summer!



We excitedly began preparing the event and were greatly humbled, not only by Bruce's kindness but also by that of the minister and session of Inverleith St Serf's Church in Edinburgh for giving us use of their beautiful church building for the venue.

Our disappointment at having to cancel the event was immense, but both Bruce and the church insisted that it was only a postponement and that the concert would take place. So... a year later than originally planned, we are pleased to announce that concert plans are once again in place.

Bruce shared, "My family, like so many others, has been affected by mental health issues. We've benefited when appropriate help has been available and suffered when it wasn't. I have seen the work of CrossReach first-hand and have been very, very impressed. The professionalism, dedication and ethos that is present in all their work is something I want to support. I want CrossReach to be able to do even more and am delighted to have the opportunity, with this concert, to help them help others."

#### **Concert Details**

Date: Saturday 20th November

Venue: Inverleith St Serf's Parish Church, 280 Ferry Road, Edinburgh, EH5 3NP

Time: 7.30pm Tickets: [crossreach.org.uk/bruce](http://crossreach.org.uk/bruce)

## ***Baptisms***

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 26 September 2021 | Susanna Ada Rose, daughter of Steven and Lesley of Joppa |
| 24 October 2021   | Elizabeth, daughter of Stephen and Hayley of Joppa       |

## ***Remembering***

- |                   |                                 |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 23 September 2021 | Philip Douglas of Joppa         |
| 30 September 2021 | Andrew Glanville of Musselburgh |
| 4 October 2021    | Audrey King of Portobello       |



# LIFE AND WORK NOVEMBER 2021

## COP26

**The Church of Scotland and COP26** How the Church and wider Christian community is engaging with the climate conference in Glasgow

**'The Most Important Thing We Can All Do is Talk'** The work and faith of Jen Morris, a co-ordinator of the YCCN climate relay

**'Our Faith Demands Our Commitment'** The Moderator emphasises the importance of speaking up for the vulnerable at COP26

**'We Love Our Neighbour – and We Demand Change'** In this month's youth column, Rachel Walker highlights a global day of action on climate change

## Remembrance

**100 Years of Poppy Sales** Marking the centenary of the first Poppy Day

**Freedom Isn't Free** With Remembrance season approaching, the Very Rev Dr John Chalmers reflects on the withdrawal from Afghanistan and its impact on the injured and the families of those killed in the conflict

**Remembrance Prayer** From the Moderator of the General Assembly

**The Big Question** What Does It Mean to You to Wear a Poppy?

## Plus

The first in a new series of studies by the Rev David Searle looking at the Lord's Prayer

The Very Rev Albert Bogle urges us to let go of the familiar to create new memories of worship for future generations

John R Hume reflects on the history of New Laigh Kirk in Kilmarnock

News, letters, readers' pictures, crosswords and registers

## Online

Visit [www.lifeandwork.org](http://www.lifeandwork.org) for news and exclusive features, including Coronavirus Diaries from Church of Scotland partners across the world

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## **MAGAZINE/DIARY DEADLINES**

December 2021/January 2022 Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021

February 2022 Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2022

March 2022 Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022

***Scottish Charity Number : SCO11728***

[www.portjoppachurch.org](http://www.portjoppachurch.org)

Photography by Kim Kjaerside