

The Net

The Magazine of Priestfield Parish Church, Edinburgh
Living in the Way of Jesus



Priestfield Parish Church is a Registered Scottish Charity No. SC014499

Web: <http://priestfield.org.uk>

Minister: Rev Donald Scott



Dear friends,

“Build back better”, “New Normal”. Phrases we’re getting very used to hearing.

As we contemplate a world post-pandemic, but still gripped by an epidemic, how do we do church?

I read an article recently, some of which I shared with the Session.

I found it helpful as we think about how we re-build our church life and continue to serve our community in Christ’s name.

The article is from an American blogger called Carey Nieuwhof, and is entitled, “Is your Church becoming irrelevant?”

His premise is that whilst many churches very quickly adapted to online services and innovative ways of meeting local needs when the pandemic began, they equally quickly abandoned these new ways when things began to re-open, thinking that things would “go back to normal” and life would go on in the same slow decline as before!

However, things have changed. Society has adapted and if churches don’t adapt their vision and try to understand how communities have changed, they will simply drift off into irrelevance.

Yet a society hurting from loss, polarised by political conflict, and increasingly cynical about the leadership shown by governments needs the church more than ever.

It also needs churches, and by that I mean church people, to recognise that the last two years have caused real fatigue and exhaustion within the church as well as communities. We are very aware that things must change in how we do church and in how we utilise our resources.

But if we are doing that without accepting we need deep spiritual rebuilding through the work of God's Holy Spirit, then it will simply cause more problems.

The first problem will be that churches faced with change and new ways of being, tend to look inward and try to please the people sitting in the services, rather than open doors and hearts to people who haven't ever been before.

Our change needs to be mission driven, rediscovering the passion for sharing our faith and healing the wounds cause by isolation and loss.

As we open up our building again, let us also open our hearts to the Spirit's leading and learn to love and serve together in new ways.

It's the message of Easter. We are Easter people and called to witness to a God of new beginnings and resurrection.

Happy Easter!



~ The Presbytery Plan Consultation ~

Edinburgh and West Lothian Presbytery continues to progress its proposals for the future shape of Presbytery in the City and beyond.

The proposals for Edinburgh were set out in a consultation document of over a hundred pages which was published just before Christmas.

“The Plan is founded in the challenge to the church to find its voice and plan for its growth and sustainability as we move to the future. During biblical times, the church had an unshakeable belief that God was with them in their challenges. In the shadow of the Covid pandemic we must reaffirm our belief that God is with us: we need to find out what God is doing and join in this adventure.”



The Plan is based on a reduction of 40% in the number of ministers and others, a figure agreed by the General Assembly in 2021. Most importantly, it sets out to create a structure which is focused on mission.

Locally, Priestfield would join with Craigmillar Park and Mayfield Salisbury in a single new parish with two ministers.

The Kirk Session considered the Presbytery Plan Consultation Document on 12 January and 2 March 2022 and a Congregational meeting considered The Plan on Sunday 27 February 2022.

The Kirk Session submitted its comments in March, prior to Presbytery's deadline for comments. We said;

1. *We are supportive of the basis of the Plan and of the proposed parish of Craigmillar Park, Mayfield Salisbury and Priestfield.*
2. *We have a number of specific comments, concerns and questions but these do not detract from our broad support for The Plan.*
3. *We are supportive of the central place of mission in The Plan and of the importance of the 'Five Marks of Mission.'*

We made many specific comments from the calling of the two ministers, to the name of the new parish; from how to avoid people being marginalised and unable to get to their church, to the future of buildings.

I'll let you have a copy by e-mail or hard copy.

We envisage that once the Presbytery Strategy Team has considered all the responses to the consultation, they'll set about meeting with Kirk Sessions across the City to take matters forward. Presbytery must approve its Plan by December 2022 at the latest.

So, these are exciting and challenging times so do please remember all those involved in your prayers.

Barry Cross
Session Clerk



~ Financial Review for 2021 ~

As reported at the annual business meeting on Sunday 20 March, despite all last year's difficulties for our church, we were enormously encouraged to end 2021 in good shape financially.

Expenditure: We kept up with our monthly payments to the Church of Scotland for ministry and mission at home and abroad, insurance payments and loan repayments. We were able to continue giving to other charities, mostly from collections made for that purpose. The Property Group was careful to ensure that the church, manse and flat were kept in good condition with regular safety checks, maintenance and repair where required. With continuing Covid restrictions, the church building was not used as much as usual, and so we were able to save a bit on gas and electricity. Even so, our total expenditure for 2021 was nearly £85,000!

Income: What a blessing that most people were able to continue with their usual generous giving to our church! Thank you all! We were also fortunate to receive grants to help with electrical work and with new equipment for livestreaming the Sunday morning service online, allowing a much larger congregation to take part. Another surprisingly successful Gift Day in October brought in donations of £17,850. With Gift Aid added, the total for Gift Day was over £20,000. Total income for the year, with Offerings, Gift Day, grants and some payments or donations from the groups who use the premises, was over £105,000.

Our aim for the past few years has been to have in reserve sufficient funds to cover six months of normal expenditure, in case of emergency. The very good news is that because 2021 was, by God's Grace, such a successful year financially, we are now in that position, for the time being. **Thank you all for your continuing generous and prayerful giving.**

The Treasurers



~ Knitting Together! ~



Knitting Together! has been gathering since before Christmas every two weeks on a Thursday between 2 and 3.30pm. It is chance to knit, sew, have a really interesting chat or listen and have a coffee, tea and a biscuit. You do not have to knit or sew or talk, you can just come along and enjoy the time.

Everybody is welcome.

The next event will be **Thursday 14th April.**



The eNet

Did you know that a copy of 'The Net' can be sent directly to your inbox? If you would prefer to receive copies of the magazine by email rather than on paper, please let Eleanor know.

Thank you.

Messy Church

After having Messy Church on-line and Messy Church-in-a-bag over the last two years, we have now had three live Messy events, which have been a great experience.



On **Saturday 9th April between 4 and 6pm** we are having a journey to Easter to find out what it is all about. This is for all the family, with activities, songs, food and fun. **Do tell people about this.**

Advance Notice!

We'll be having a future Messy Time on **Saturday 14th May.**



Newington Churches Together

Christians working together for God's Kingdom
in the community of Newington, Edinburgh



Good Friday Walk of Witness on Friday 15 April

The Walk of Witness will visit four Newington churches, stopping outside each for a short time of reading, singing and prayer.



It will start at 9.30 am at Craigmillar Park Church of Scotland then proceed to St Columba's Roman Catholic Church on Upper Gray Street, then to St Peter's Scottish Episcopal Church on Lutton Place, to arrive finally at the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church in Nicolson Square.

You can join for the whole walk, a section or just for a church stop, whatever fits with your day. Everyone is most welcome to come along.



Church Services in the days leading up to Easter

This year we are joining with our friends and neighbours at Craigmillar Park and Mayfield Salisbury Churches for services during Holy Week. We will welcome visitors from other churches to Priestfield and we'll be welcomed there.

Sunday 14 April at 10:30 am at **Priestfield Church**

Our All-age Morning Service on Palm Sunday



Monday 11 to Friday 15 April at 7:45 am at **Craigmillar Park Church**



Every weekday morning in Holy Week we'll be having fifteen minutes of reflection to start each day. This will be followed by breakfast. A wonderful way to start each day.

Thursday 14 April at 7:30 pm at **Priestfield Church**

Our Maundy Thursday Communion Service



Friday 15 April at 7:30 pm at **Mayfield Salisbury Church**

A Good Friday Tenebrae Service.



The service of Tenebrae, meaning “darkness” or “shadows,” has been practiced by the church since medieval times. Once a service for the monastic community, Tenebrae later became an important part of worship of during Holy Week.

The story of the suffering and death of Jesus is divided into a number of separate readings. After each segment of the story is read, a candle is extinguished. After the final reading, which confirms that Jesus had died on the cross, the last of the lit candles is extinguished, or taken away, and a loud sound is made to convey the sense of total loss of God's presence and the effect of the death of Jesus on the universe. The final story of the burial is read in near darkness.

Worshippers leave in silence to ponder the impact of Christ's death and await the celebration of the coming Resurrection.

Sunday 17 April at Priestfield Church

at 7:00 am an Early Morning Easter Service *and*



at 10:30 am our Easter Day All-age Celebration



Christian Aid Week 2022

We will once again be supporting Christian Aid Week during May. This year the main focus for fundraising will be aid for vulnerable families in Zimbabwe. The combined effects of climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic, conflict and drought are causing severe problems for those struggling to grow enough food to keep their children from starvation. Christian Aid hopes to provide seeds which are drought-resistant and to set up water taps on farms in the worst hit areas of Zimbabwe to give families hope and a better future.

Here at Priestfield, envelopes will be delivered to houses around the local community, to raise awareness of Christian Aid Week and to ask people to take their donations to local drop-off points. We will also advertise opportunities to donate online. **If you would like to volunteer to deliver envelopes (15-18 May) please let Fiona Ferguson know.**

There will be a Café Time for Christian Aid on Saturday 21 May, and perhaps even another sponsored walk. **Watch this space!**



Prestonfield Foodbank started operating out of Priestfield Church in February 2020. Run by Edinburgh Food Project (EFP), who provide emergency food supplies to people in crisis, Prestonfield Foodbank is one of a number of similar projects operating from various locations across the city.

Inflation is expected to be over 8% by October this year. At the same time real term income will fall by as much as 6%. The financial strain on people is reaching dangerous levels and is forcing them to make impossible decisions.

Edinburgh Food Project's mission is to provide emergency food supplies and support to people in crisis, while working with people, communities, and our partner agencies to address the underlying causes of food poverty.

We provide an emergency food provision by...

- Operating 7 foodbank centres in North West, East and Central Edinburgh
- Providing >600 food parcels (3 meals/day for 3 days, plus household essentials) per month

And tackle underlying causes of food poverty through our 'More Than Food' programme within foodbank centres, by providing...

- Debt and benefits advice, through our FCA regulated Money Advice Service
- Advice drop-in sessions at the foodbanks, including Y People, Real Jobs, and Changeworks.
- Signposting to other partner agencies, such as FreshStart, School Uniform Bank and One Parent Family Scotland.

In 2021, we provided over 10,000 parcels to people accessing our foodbank service, either in person or via delivery (during COVID lockdowns). In addition, our Money Advice Service helped secure over £100,000 in financial gains for people via our telephone helpline.

Edinburgh Food Project is committed to offering the best support we can, to those who are being pushed into destitution as a consequence of the cost of living crisis.

Bethany Biggar
Director, Edinburgh Food Project

