

September 2022

The Net

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



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

Minister: Rev Donald Scott



Dear friends,

In many ways September has always felt like the start of the new term for me.

The summer has come and gone, bringing refreshment, hopefully, and this year a chance to travel more widely and safely.

Following the last two years there is also a sense of re-starting our life together, with something of a return to normality.

Except, so much has changed!

So much is uncertain!

Do you watch the news? I used to be an avid watcher, but of late every time I switch on I get a vision of John Laurie in Dad's Army muttering, "We're doomed!"



Chaos, crisis and collapse seem to be the themes nationally and internationally, in economics, politics, climate change and tension between nations.

Even in the life of our Church and congregation there is uncertainty about the future.

As Christians we place our trust and hope in the fact that God has sent his son into the world to bring about a new relationship with him, based on love.

In the midst of turmoil and confusion we rely on that, even when things seem dark and the future is far from clear.

Yet there are always signs of hope if we look hard enough.

A few weeks ago in church we spent some time talking about God surprising us.

We looked at Joseph and how the disaster of his dysfunctional family relations brought about personal power for him and economic safety for Egypt.

We saw how racism and xenophobia caused a holocaust, yet out of that disaster came the person of Moses, leading his people out of slavery, and encountering God in new and very surprising ways.

I wonder where you see God at work in your life today?

In the welcome and love shown to Ukrainian refugees?

In the bonds of friendship forged across garden fences and park walks?

In the myriad of small victories of love as we practice the way of life Christ challenges us to live out as His followers?

May God bless us all as we seek to live out the Good News day by day, knowing that we are not doomed, but free to live in fullness through Christ.

Your Friend,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Hail and farewell...

We are delighted to officially welcome to our Priestfield family **Mr David Cargill**. David has been sharing in worship with us for some months and recently transferred his membership to Priestfield from our sister congregation at Craigmillar Park Church. We look forward to getting to know David better and to sharing fellowship with him.

Our dear friend and member of the Priestfield family for many years, **Mrs Betty Scott**, has settled in well to her new home in Haddington and has decided to transfer her membership to a local church. We send Betty our prayers and every good wish for this next chapter of her life.

---oooOooo---

The Presbytery Plan: An Update on Progress

In the April 2022 Special Edition of The Net, I reported on the Presbytery Plan Consultation Document. You will recall that the Plan is required because of a 40% reduction in the number of ministers agreed by the General Assembly in 2021.

Most importantly though, the Plan is focused on creating a structure for mission. The proposed plan has a new parish created by Priestfield joining with Craigmillar Park and Mayfield Salisbury Churches.

Following a meeting of our congregation, the Kirk Session submitted its response to Presbytery supporting the basis of the Plan.

Once it had all the responses, Presbytery's Strategy Team sent representatives to congregations across the City to discuss their responses. They came and met with us in May. Over the summer Presbytery's Strategy Team has put a huge amount of effort into meeting with congregations in order to achieve as much consensus as possible. They hope to report back to full Presbytery with a finalised plan in the Autumn.



In the meantime, we at a local level have been progressing with working together. We had our wonderful, shared services in July which were so encouraging. We were able to enjoy worshipping and sharing together with our neighbours as we had never done before. Getting to know one another will be an important part of working together in an effective union.

We have been making progress behind the scenes too. A group comprising the Ministers and Session Clerks of the three congregations has met to discuss many of the practical issues around the proposed union. What is quite remarkable has been the extraordinary degree of agreement, surely a consequence of all our prayers?

So, as we approach the final months of 2022, and the December deadline by which time Presbytery must approve its Plan, it is important that we continue to encourage and support one another and continue to pray.

Barry Cross
Session Clerk

---oooOOooo---



Balfour House Annual Sale

Saturday 10th September
10am – 12 noon

£3 entry includes refreshments

There will also be a raffle for Macmillan



~ Choir ~

As the nights start drawing in, we are getting excited about returning to Choir practices after two years of not being able to meet together. A small group of us enjoyed recording the music during the pandemic but it's not the same as meeting and singing together.

Willie Brownhill, Mary McKendrick, and Ian and Chris Williams have sung with the choir for many years, (Willie, since the union of Rosehall and Prestonfield) but have now decided to retire, Del is also no longer able to sing with us regularly. We must thank them all for their loyalty, dedication and the contribution they have made to worship during this time. Although they will no longer be sitting up at the front, I hope we will still hear them singing lustily from the body of the Kirk.

We would love to welcome new singers, especially sopranos and altos. **If you enjoy singing, why not come along and have a go?** Practices are on Thursday evenings from 6 - 7.30pm and will be starting on 8th September. If you are interested or would like to find out more, **Speak to Sheila or any other members of the choir.**

---oooOOOooo---

Welcome!

We are delighted to welcome to Priestfield **John Strange**, who was recently appointed as our new organist.



John was born in the UK but grew up in Australia with his parents, brother, and sister. He started piano lessons at the age of six, and

also took up violin at the age of nine. Over the years, he has played in a wide range of musical groups including orchestral, chamber music, musical theatre and opera. At secondary school he first experienced the joy of massed singing of hymns accompanied by the organ. Despite the desire to learn, he only had the opportunity to play the organ itself in this setting on a few occasions, as well as for a friend's wedding service. In 2020, John and his wife moved to the UK and have been working in different locations as sonographers. They moved to Scotland in 2021 and since then have been enjoying life in Edinburgh. John is thrilled to finally be able to develop his skills on the organ and hopes that the congregation at Priestfield enjoy the music as much as he does!

---ooOoo---



Brownies

Hello from **127th Brownies**. We currently have 26 Brownies and 5 volunteers running the unit, who are looking forward to starting a new term.

Last term we managed to run our 1st pack holiday since COVID at Bonaly, where the girls had a weekend adventure away from home. This weekend consisted of many activities, including a visit from a real life skunk! We also managed to do a litter pick around Braid Valley and a random act of kindness dropping plants in decorated pots around the community. The girls loved doing their good turn and we hope to do more of this in the future.

We do have a **date for your diary** with our **Christmas Fundraising Coffee Morning (Saturday 3rd December)**.

If you are interested in joining Brownies (girls aged 7-10) **or would like to volunteer**, please send us an email: 127thedinburghbrownies@gmail.com



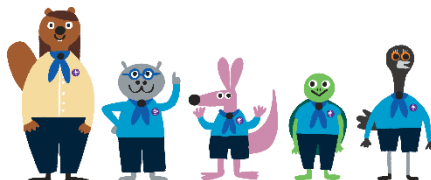
Hello from **27th A Rainbows**. We have just been taken over by a new unit leader - Amy Ravey - and we are looking forward to meeting the girls and having a busy term full of fun and adventure. We only have 5 Rainbows at the moment so **we are looking for new girls** aged 4-7 who would like to join in the fun. **If you are interested in joining Rainbows or would like to volunteer**, please feel free to email us: rainbows27a@gmail.com

Amy Harrison-Blaney
Brownie Leader

---ooOoo---



35th BRAID
BEAVER COLONY



The Beavers meet on Thursday evenings 6 to 7pm.

As our current Beaver Leader is no longer able to attend regular Beaver meetings (she is continuing the planning and programming functions), we are planning to run with a Parents' Rota. Whilst this will, we hope, keep the Beaver Colony running it is not ideal as the children will be seeing different leaders each week.

We are, therefore, **looking for a Leader (or 2) that is able to attend most meetings**. If you may be interested (or if you know somebody that you think may be interested) please contact our Group Scout Leader, Graham Christie by email graham.christie@blackwood.co.uk or phone 07801 306 491.



Well, the time is upon us again for the next Messy Church. This will be on:



**Saturday 24th September
between 4 and 6pm**

All families are welcome. As always there will be activities, food, songs and stories. Come and see - and tell other people about it too!

We are planning to have Messy times on the last Saturday of each month. **Please contact Diane if you would like to be on the email list or if you would like to help.**

---ooOOoo---



Praise and Prayer is an informal time of praying and singing on alternate Thursdays at 7.30pm at the church lounge, and everyone is welcome to come along.

Praise and Prayer is led by members of the congregation, who use themes and current needs to shape the content. Those who attend are invited to pray aloud or in silence.

Praise and Prayer will meet on 8 and 22 September.

Hooray! Café Time is back!

After a long gap, our Café Times are back again. Apart from a small number of trial 'toes in the water' Café Times last session, we haven't had our regular get-togethers since before COVID.

To begin the 2022/23 season we are having our regular Café Time in aid of Macmillan Cancer Care.

**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**



Our Café Time is part of a UK-wide effort. People all over the country host their own Coffee Morning and donations raised are passed to Macmillan. Macmillan's Coffee Morning is their biggest fundraising event to support people living with cancer. In 2021, Macmillan raised over £11 million and they hope to top that this year.

So, **get the date in your diary**. Our Café Time is on

*Saturday 1st October
at the usual time of 10:00am till noon.*

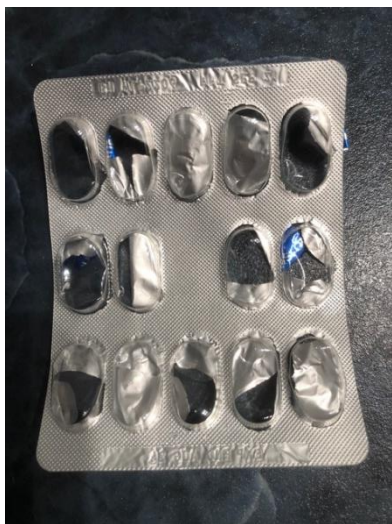
And why not bring a friend?

[Our next two Café Times will be on 5 November and 3 December]

BLISTER PACKS ~ another wonderful recycling opportunity!

Do you know what a blister pack is?

Well, I expect you will recognise them from the pictures below.



Yes! So much medication comes in blister packs nowadays! I believe we probably all have some of these around our homes, from Paracetamol and Strepsils to many health-promoting medications.

There have already been attempts to recycle these wee packets but most have failed. The High Street chain, Superdrug, had a scheme in partnership with Terracycle but it has never really got off the ground. The biggest stumbling block seems to be how to separate the foil and the plastic.

However, we have found an organisation that is having much more success in collecting the blister packs and passing them on to a major recycling company.

The organisation is called **Low Impact Living (LiL)**



(<https://www.dolilthings.org/>) and they are engaged in many recycling projects, from school uniforms to goods made from recycled plastic. They are based in East Lothian with a wee shop on the High Street in Haddington.

We think we could collect lots of blister packs in the church from all the groups that come and go during a typical week and, when we have several big black refuse sacks full of them, Fiona and I will plan to go for a walk in East Lothian (always a great pleasure!) or go to visit one of our former members who lives in a care home in Haddington, and drop the bags at Low Impact Living.

Surely this has to be a very easy and worthwhile recycling project for Priestfield (and our neighbouring churches)? Let's do it!

I will prepare a cardboard box to sit in the Lounge at all times for people to drop off their blister packs whenever they are in the building. Please start collecting them!

Thank you!

Kenny Ferguson

---oooOOooo---

Thoughts from the Newington Foodbank+

Foodbank+ is the Edinburgh City Mission network of food banks, located across 7 sites. The Newington Foodbank+ is based at Community Church, South Clerk Street. They provide essentials for those experiencing deprivation and food poverty, on a referral basis.

Julie* had been to Newington Foodbank+ for a few weeks. But last week was different.

"I just came to say, 'thank you'," she said. And it was a thank you not so much for the food but for the welcome, the listening ear, the suggestions for further help. I have been privileged to be alongside her over these few weeks, to pray with her and welcome her to church.

Julie is not out of the woods yet, but she is determined to be positive, and it's heartening to see modest improvements in her situation.

Much as we might grieve the necessity for foodbanks in our affluent but desperately unequal society, there is much to celebrate each Thursday at the Foodbank+ hosted at Community Church Edinburgh by Newington Churches Together in conjunction with Edinburgh City

Mission. A great team of enthusiastic and empathetic volunteers ensure there is always a warm and friendly welcome.

Each week we are blessed with an abundance of food – with fresh produce through FareShare supplemented by supplies from Edinburgh City Mission’s Storehouse. Mangoes, tomatoes, mushrooms, spinach – even raspberries last week, as well as the usual store cupboard items. So lots of good nutritious food for our guests to take home with them.

Newington Foodbank+ is pioneering ‘the pantry model’. Guests are welcomed by name and have a coffee or tea as we chat to see how their week has been, to listen to their news and signpost any other support that might be helpful, such as advice on benefits or housing or debt. Then one of the food room team will show them what’s available this week – while guests choose for themselves what they want and fill their bags.

“It’s so much better,” says Steve*, a food room helper. “We realise that some of the food we’d been bagging up week by week just wasn’t what people wanted. Now we know that people take only what they want and can use. And it also gives us more of an opportunity to chat with our guests.”

Newington Foodbank+ is offering a great service within our local community. Our guests may leave laden with supplies, but we hope that we may also help to lighten their loads in other respects.

We very much appreciate the support from all our volunteers, many of whom are from Newington Churches Together. Newington Foodbank+, formerly Basics Bank, has also in the past been well supported by members of these churches with donations of food. With changes in systems of supply and demand over time, we now find that, rather than contributions of produce, donations of money are more useful, allowing greater flexibility in meeting the needs of our guests. **If you would like to make a donation, please see your church’s NCT representative (Priestfield – Fiona Ferguson) who can advise on the best way to do this.**

*Fiona Anderson, Edinburgh City Mission
Mission Strengtheners at Newington Foodbank+*

*Names changed to maintain anonymity

~ Prestonfield Church Window ~

In 1974 Rosehall and Prestonfield Churches united to form Priestfield Church. The Rosehall building became the home of the new congregation, the Prestonfield building was demolished and Balfour House was built on the site.

Before the Prestonfield building was demolished, one of the stained glass windows was 'rescued' and was moved to the then new West Calder High School in West Lothian. In due course that building too was demolished and a brand new school was built; but the new building didn't have space for the 'Prestonfield Window.'



*The window in the 'old'
West Calder High School (left)*

*The pieces
arriving at
Polbeth
Harwood
church ready
for re-
construction
(right)*



So, the window was on the move again. This time to form a focal point in Polbeth Harwood Church. The Polbeth Harwood congregation planned to dedicate their 'new' window at a 60th Anniversary Service on 29 May 2022 and kindly invited us to send representatives.

June and Norman Henderson, Pat Smith and Eleanor Forbes were able to go along and enjoy the anniversary celebration.

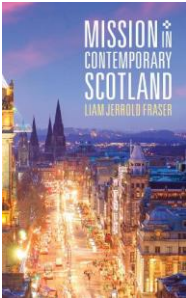
*The various stages of the
window's reconstruction
in the church*



The completed window with the visitors from Edinburgh; Norman, June, Pat and Eleanor



---ooOoo---



Book Review ~

Mission in Contemporary Scotland Liam Jerrold Fraser

This is an important book by a young-ish Church of Scotland minister. Since the 1970s Scotland has moved from being a Christian to a post-Christian society. Now 93% of Scots do not attend church. This book seeks to develop a **contextual missiology** for Scotland. It is divided into 3 parts:

- * the **background** to contemporary mission in Scotland
- * the **national context** of mission in contemporary Scotland
- * the **practice of mission**

The World that Was

Historically the Church in Scotland was linked to the Crown. The Scottish Reformation of 1560 separated Scotland from Rome; and created an enduring divide between Protestant and Catholic Scots.

The Reformation gave rise to the parish state. In Scotland “every part of society had to conform to the faith taught by the Kirk”. The Church had a monopoly on education; was the enforcer of morals; and the provider of upkeep of the poor. And, Fraser notes “this enculturation of Christianity in Scotland bore much fruit”.

The Secularisation of Scotland

The ‘parish state’ was undermined between the late 17th and mid-20th centuries by two key facts: **schism**, and **economic affluence**. “*The Reformed vision of Scotland as a godly nation, where kirk and people were one, died on May 18th, 1843*” with the Great Disruption.

The growth of biblical criticism and the decline in Calvinism led to a neglect of the **Catechism**. Religion came to be associated with Britishness; to be Scottish was to be Presbyterian, British, and loyal to Crown and country. By the 1950s the Church of Scotland appeared to be in a strong position. But its social role had gone, its ministers were being trained in faculties where the inspiration of Scripture was questioned, and its large membership was predominantly nominal.

The Kirk had little to offer to contemporary youth culture. Growing affluence led to a less restrictive form of morality. The BBC ceased to uphold traditional Christian values. The duplication of church buildings after 1843 led to what Robin Gill calls ‘*the empty church*’ phenomenon. And with the advent of the Scottish Parliament, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland lost its role as a kind of surrogate parliament.

The third part of the book explores new forms of practice.

Service

Fraser distinguishes two kinds of church: a. **inherited, communal**, and **institutional**, where worship is just one thread in community life; and b. **voluntarist, associational**, and **congregational**. The traditional denominations belong largely to the first kind; and a growing number of evangelistic and charismatic communities to the second kind. The first type of church will be less focussed on conversion and evangelism. “*The idea that mission should only, or primarily, be concerned with service is a legacy of Christendom.*” Fraser believes that service restores the significance of the Church in a post-Christian Scotland;

by modelling care and hospitality. But he insists that service must be wedded to mission and to Christian witness.

Evangelism

Community is essential for people to hold onto the faith. Why then don't church communities work? Fraser suggests that church plants in new housing areas are culturally isolated. **Church without Walls** recognised that the primary problem of the Church of Scotland was its prevailing 'church culture'; traditionalism and clericalism. But **CWW** was squashed by vested interests in the Church of Scotland and a refusal to invest in new training structures.

Fraser is more positive about **Mission Shaped Church**, and the Church of England's **Fresh Expressions**, which now make up 15% of the Church of England congregations. One aspect of their success is the emphasis on *worship*. "*If worship is dowdy and passionless and irrelevant, then non-Christians will think the Gospel is too.*" Fraser offers Messy Church as an effective fresh expression; possibly *the only* initiative that has reached unchurched families. The future will be a mixed economy [Rowan Williams] of traditional and fresh expressions of church. Fraser uses stark language: "*The creation of fresh expressions is analogous to the Church sending out lifeboats from the sinking Titanic, allowing the people of God to survive their impending disaster*".

Envoi

There is a lot of stuff in this book for us all to ponder. It is not a difficult book to read. Perhaps inevitably Fraser is stronger on analysis than on prescription. The book's primary focus is on the Church of Scotland. But what he says is valid across the denominations. Word is that Newington Churches Together are going to address some of these issues. We should pray for them. Before we need to take to the lifeboats.

*Chris Martin,
August 2022*