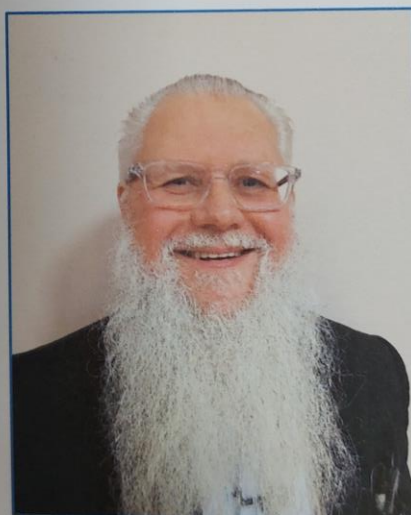


Gapp Inter-Connections

Welcome to Inter Connections June 2024

Dean Batchelor
Celebration Lunch
20 years of Ministry
Sunday 2 June 2024



Message from Dean

Rev. Dean L. Batchelor

Dear Friends,

PASTORAL LETTER # The first five months

I can remember it like it was yesterday, standing in front of the church all dressed up with my brother beside me. I was excited, full of expectation and yet nervous all at the same time. The music started the doors opened and Carol and her father came walking down the aisle, she looked beautiful, radiant, her hair tied up and filled with white roses. We stood before God, each other and a full congregation and said those important words "I do". That was twenty-five years ago now (for better for worse) and what an adventure we have shared, highs and lows, twists and turns. I often say to those I prepare for marriage on that day no one is thinking of getting divorced or splitting up, everything in the world seems in its place; perfect. But most will attest that that first year of marriage, after the honeymoon, is often the most challenging. It is challenging as we discover what we had not known or realised, or what we had overlooked because of the love in our eyes clouding our vision. They shower in the morning, you shower in the evening; now that doesn't work, how does that work? They squeeze the toothpaste at the top instead of the bottom, surely that is not the way to do it? They leave their hair everywhere and it clogs up the drain. They have so much stuff all over the bathroom, creams, sprays, make-up, make-up remover, where can I put my deodorant and hair gel? (And that is just one room!). The reality of marriage is that no matter how well you think you know each other, there is so much to discover – and some of it is surprising!

I have used the analogy of marriage for our church union – we are now one, "Gorgie and Palmerston Place Church". In a sense we have had a season of engagement but now we are one – sharing resources and working together to be the best we can be. Surely that should be the aim in marriage – the two become one but ultimately this should be for the purpose of each part becoming all they can be through the nurturing, encouraging and stretching of one another. Carol and I were blessed to go on a marriage course after only six months of being married – that was the most stressful time in our relationship, the sessions were extensive and the homework gruelling. In those three months we fought more than in all the years to come – I mean argued, debated, got frustrated, days

of silence. It was exhausting and frustrating at times. There were times when I thought: what have I done (getting married to Carol) and I am sure Carol had similar thoughts. I am sure we both thought how on earth are we going to make this work. Those three months were extremely tough! I am not saying there have not been tough seasons since but I believe those three months prepared the way and made the path far more life-giving and joy-filled. Those three months, I believe, saved us from many a heartache and conflict down the line. In those three months, in a sense, we got to discover and discuss our differences at a deeper level which were more important than matters such as toothpaste and shower times. We delved into, really wrestled with beliefs around finances, parenting and dealing with the in-laws, to mention a few.



Our newly formed parish is in a sense in this difficult phase of discovery. There are things that will surprise us, things that will frustrate and some may at times feel like walking away. I want to encourage all to stay engaged even when it is frustrating. I also want to encourage you to get involved as much as possible and ask the difficult questions. It is better to wrestle through the important things now. Rev. Sam Torrens, our Interim Moderator, shared a small word at our Session meeting in May that means so much: "Grace". That small word which our very faith is founded on and rooted in. That small word appears 138 times in the scriptures but none more relevant than the one shared by Sam: **"All the believers were one in heart**

and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all." Acts 4:32-33. Those verses describe the newly formed gathering (church community) post-Pentecost – a group made up of people who were extremely diverse in many ways and yet they were one. That concept of being “in one accord” is found scattered through the first few chapters in Acts. Were they one in heart and mind because God's grace was powerfully at work in them? Or was it because they were one in heart and mind that God's grace was powerfully at work in them? I think it is both. It is as we are gracious - giving and forgiving, seeing the best and overlooking the faults that God's grace abounds to us and through us. It is as we desire the best for each other that we will grow in unity and as we grow in unity, we will experience a greater freedom to be gracious and giving. It is God's grace (His uniting force) alone in us that can allow us to be still when we need to and to speak “truth in love” when that is what is required. As a church we have fundamental deep - seated beliefs in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit that unite us. Yes, there are differences in the way we work out and express our faith but in reality, we are one, bound together by the Holy Spirit. God has entrusted the church to bear witness to the world of God's graciousness in reconciling us to himself. This is understandably a difficult and demanding season but I encourage all to pray that God's grace will be powerfully at work in and through us. May we seek to do all we can to be one in heart and mind knowing that God will command a blessing as we work together (Psalm 133).

I could not resist - so I included the words to a song called Grace by U2.

GRACE by U2

Grace, she takes the blame
She covers the shame
Removes the stain
It could be her name
Grace, it's the name for a girl
It's also a thought that changed the world
And when she walks on the street
You can hear the strings
Grace finds goodness in everything

Grace, she's got the walk
Not on a ramp or on chalk
She's got the time to talk

She travels outside of karma
She travels outside of karma
When she goes to work
You can hear her strings
Grace finds beauty in everything

Grace, she carries a world on her hips
No champagne flute for her lips
No twirls or skips between her fingertips
She carries a pearl in perfect condition
What once was hurt
What once was friction
What left a mark
No longer stings
Because Grace makes beauty
Out of ugly things
Grace finds beauty in everything
Grace finds goodness in everything Songwriters:
Paul David Hewson, Adam Clayton, Larry Mullen, Dave Evans. For non-commercial use only.

As always there is an open invitation to meet up for a cup of tea or coffee to discuss life and faith. May the grace of God so abound in our midst that others are drawn to the presence of God.

Men's Prayer Breakfast

George Kay

The Men's Prayer Breakfast was revived recently with our first meeting held in Saltyard on Saturday, 4th May.

It was a good time of prayer, sharing and fellowship, and we were delighted to welcome two men who are not members of our church.

Saltyard is an ideal venue for this, and thanks must go to Polly for cooking us a delicious breakfast.



We plan to meet regularly on the first Saturday of each month at 9am, and would love to see more men coming along.

TWENTY YEARS ON #Ordination Celebration

Rev Dean Batchelor



I often get asked, by people of great faith and even those who proclaim to have no faith – how did you get to where you are or how did you choose to do what you do? I often tell them the very short answer: “God”. The reality is that God is the one who calls us to follow him – God always initiates and prompts, God is forever at work in our lives drawing us to himself. God is the one who empowers and strengthens – it is truly God who is at work as we surrender. We see that truth in the Old Testament as God calls Abraham, to leave what he knows, as God calls Moses dramatically in a burning bush to lead His people to freedom, as God calls kings and prophets to bear witness to His glory and grace.

The reality in the Old Testament, New Testament and even in modern-day stories of faith, is that many of those God calls are reluctant to lead, not really trusting God and often doubting their own ability and worthiness to represent God. I am sure you feel like that at times. Abram made his own plan when God seemed to be taking too long with the promises, Moses asked for numerous signs before he was

convinced God was who he said he was? Gideon had his own way of dealing with his questions, not to mention Elijah, Elisha and many others. In Christ, God incarnate, Jesus, continued to call disciples to follow him and they too often misunderstood and doubted God’s plan. They too, often asked for further explanation and though they were so close were often hesitant to truly follow through with the call. The Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity still calls those who are willing to listen to follow... and many like myself still doubt and often feel unworthy and ill-equipped, but in spite of us, I have still seen God work in and through my doubts and fears. In all truth, the times that I have seen God move the most powerfully are when I have felt completely inadequate and overwhelmed and yet I have trusted. I have done all I can and then entrusted the rest to God. Can you imagine Moses at the Red Sea? In his own strength and ability there was no way out of the situation. Only God could rescue them from their enemy and get them to the other side. God rescued them but it was Moses that stretched out his hand and it was the Israelites that walked through on dry ground.

I love a rescue story – a story of liberation and freedom. I love the scriptures; from the burning bush encounter Moses’ staff is referred to as the Staff of God. We are just the conduit -vessel through which God can work if we surrender to him.

I remember clearly a moment in my first church (I was the Assistant Minister – charged to look after those up to the age of 20 years), it had been a long day because the Minister was on leave – two services in the morning, a youth committee planning meeting at lunch time, a confirmation class at four in the afternoon and now it was 6:15pm; the worship team and myself were gathered in prayer before the evening service. There was silence and then I prayed something along these lines: “Lord you know I do not really feel like being here, I am tired and do not have anything to bring please help me, help us this evening, Amen.” (honesty is the best policy especially with God who sees our heart) I opened my eyes and I had all these young faces looking at me in disbelief – how could (Dean) the minister pray such a prayer? The simple answer is that I am human just like you – created in the image of God, redeemed by Christ’s precious blood and filled with the Holy Spirit. The service started as usual with praise and worship songs and I cannot explain it but I sensed God prompt me to do something I had never done before or since. Before the scriptures had been read or preached, I was prompted to ask people to come forward if they

were in need of prayer. I cannot explain it but as I was merely obedient to what God was prompting, many were prayed for that night and saved in various ways. It had nothing to do with me I was exhausted, and if truly honest frustrated, yet God showed up. God will always show up when we obediently set aside self and just do what he prompts us to do. I have experienced it over and over again – God will work in spite of us – He is faithful if we would just trust him enough to do as he prompts.

I have stood by many who are grieving great loss and tragedy, not in my own strength but in the strength of the Lord. I have counselled couples who have chosen to face their faults and failings and move forward together. I have journeyed with others who have had to learn to forgive the greatest betrayal of all. I have prayed for many who have not been healed in the way we would want and yet they have been strengthened by the journey and have grown in faith. I have spent hours with some which I feel did not bring about much faith or freedom. I have spent many hours in prayer with others and I know not enough hours on my own knees alone seeking God's face. I have had people openly confess their faith in God and promise to leave their old ways only to be sucked back in to the spiral. There are times, sadly too many I know, where I have leaned on truth at the expense of love and grace. Then there are those other times that I have leaned on love and not been bold enough to speak the truth. Through it all God has been faithful. Ministry is the best job in the world – it is one of the few Jobs where it is expected of you to expect outcomes which you cannot work for or achieve. Make no mistake ministry is tough because often you do not see the fruit of the seeds that you are planting. The joy though of just seeing one break free from guilt or shame; the joy of reconciliation; the hope of a different path in a place of worth. It is only God who can take away our guilt and shame – knowing we are forgiven fully and completely is truly liberating and transformative. It is only God that can bring about the transformation of reconciliation in our lives and in our relationships. (How the world needs reconciliation on so many levels) It is only God that can instil deep in us a contentment in who we are as His Children – knowing we have worth, belonging and purpose apart from all the trappings and strivings of this world.

As I end – I want to share a few of the lessons I have learnt and continue to re-learn along this path of following God's Call:

Our righteousness (trying to do good or be good) is like filthy rags before God – I need saving.

We cannot move forward/grow in any aspect of our lives until we acknowledge the problem, fault, flaw that needs to be addressed. Truth is vital for progress. You and I, all of us have an amazing propensity to hide our problems, even from ourselves, sometimes – consciously and unconsciously we are deceiving ourselves.

Comfort can be the biggest obstacle to growth and change.

True and real progress will require sacrifice, suffering and surrender.

That which is kept hidden in the dark can grow and continue to have a disastrous impact on our desired outcomes.

If we do not find our fulfilment and identity in Christ, we will seek them elsewhere.

Studying the scriptures will not necessarily lead to greater faith or character transformation. Jesus said you will be blessed if you do these things, before he taught the sermon on the mount.

Spiritual growth is simply (as many were taught in Sunday School) becoming like Jesus. Somehow many along the faith journey give up on this pursuit. Spiritual formation cannot be sustained in isolation – growth in faith and character requires community. Worship has nothing to do with the place, instruments or style it is about the attitude and desire of the heart to honour and encounter God.

The most important gift (in my opinion) is the gift of encouragement – all the other gifts will be inspired and enhanced if this gift is active in any community. Relationships are the essence of life – Joy, Peace and Hope are either advanced by good relations or dashed by conflict and tensions within our relationships. In and of ourselves we can do nothing that glorifies God – it is the Spirit that brings life as we abide in Christ.

Organisational culture trumps strategy every time. Unity is vital to our witness because it demonstrates reconciliation and reflects the Trinity.

The only way our love for God is truly authenticated and demonstrated is by loving those we encounter – even those that are not like us or may never like us.

May God richly bless you as you seek to follow him, for

we are all called to seek and serve God with all we are and all we have been given.

Below are a scripture and song that have played an important part in my call. I pray they will encourage and inspire you on your journey of faith.

"He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read,¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind,

to set the oppressed free,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."^[1]

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."²² **Luke 4:16-21**

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee Lord;
be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;
be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my whole armor, be thou my true might;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise:
be thou mine inheritance now and always;
be thou and thou only the first in my heart;
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won;
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.
Irish, ca. 8th century; trans. Mary Byrne (1880-1931)
versified, Eleanor Hull (1860-1935)

Nominating Committee Election

John Duncan, Session Clerk

As most of you already know, we held the election for our Nominating Committee on Sunday 21st April after our united service at Gorgie Church, with online voting possible for those unable to be there in person.

Our thanks to all who took part in the voting, and especially to the 21 people whose names were put forward for election. Above all, though, congratulations to the 13 successful candidates, who now have the grave responsibility of identifying a sole nominee to be presented to the congregation for election as our new Minister.

The members of the Committee will be (in alphabetical order): Pam Ashing; Sandra Blyth; Linda Cunningham; Brian Fleck; Sandy Gemmill; Mairi Graham; Carol Hajducka; Gregor Innes; Tricia Kingston; Iain McKinnon; David MacLennan; Norma Rolls; and Rachel Yule.



The Committee will now get down to work, beginning with an initial meeting with the Presbytery Vacancy Advisory Committee. Please note that the Committee has to keep its work and progress **absolutely confidential** until they have selected a sole nominee, so please don't trouble them with questions that they are not permitted to answer.

At this stage we have no idea how many candidates may apply for the vacancy, nor how long it will take the Committee to complete its work, but it is to be hoped that we will have a Minister in place well before the end of the year.

Let us all pray that the Holy Spirit will so guide their deliberations that they will select the candidate God in his Providence has already chosen for us.

N.B. Since this piece was written, Gregor Innes has been appointed as our Communications Co-ordinator and as a member of staff, cannot sit on the Committee. The person with the next highest number of votes, Gill McLean, has therefore taken Gregor's place.

Vision Day

Lisa Clark, Ministerial Assistant

On 23rd March, we came together again to discuss our Vision for how we should effectively outreach to our large parish, whilst also making sure that we are nurturing our existing members. The two vision days we have had, have provided us with many ideas. At this point, we can begin to go forward by running some pilot projects – projects such as the Men's Prayer Breakfast in Saltyard; a possible group for young people in Tynecastle High school in conjunction with Young Life; and projects to support some of the most vulnerable people who live in our parish. That sounds like a lot, but we don't need to worry about doing this on our own. There are excellent partners we can work with – other Churches based in our parish and charities who are working in the areas we have identified. All of us can work together on our Vision. Even if your present circumstances mean you can't respond to an appeal to volunteer in any of our new projects, your prayers are of immense value.

Another proposed group is one which recognises that change, loss and bereavement are issues that affect all of us. One of the roles the church can play, is to strengthen the social and emotional wellbeing of adults who are dealing with significant life changes, by exploring the impact of the change and loss on everyday life and learning new ways to respond to these changes. At present, I am exploring the idea of offering a short course to allow people, both from within the congregation and the parish, to explore these issues.

The hope is to build resilience and bring hope and confidence to adults who have experienced significant change or loss. Many people are living with grief, every day of their lives. This may be due to any number of experiences: bereavement, relationship breakdown or coming to a new country. It may be due to a recent loss, or something that happened a long time ago.

At the moment, I am having conversations with some of those in other churches who are doing something similar and trying to learn from them. We hope to take this forward and to offer a course to our community in time. If you are interested in helping me develop this programme, it would be really good to chat this through. My email is lisa@palmerstonplacechurch.com or my number is 07754509890.

Taizé Service in Saltyard

Raymond Fung

Instead of the hustle and bustle found in the café during the day, the space is now quiet. All the tables have been moved to the side, and the chairs are arranged in a circle facing a small table with candles and a cross. Relying on the flickering candlelight, I sit down and read the order of service. The environment is much more conducive for me to relax and focus on the worship.

The soft music breaks the silence, and everyone begins to sing the chants. Hymns in a Taizé service are known as "chants" because they are short and sung repeatedly several times. The lyrics are verses from the Bible, and the tunes of the chants are easy to pick up. The simplicity and repetitive nature of the chants facilitate easy memorization, enabling me to close my eyes and engage in deep reflection.



The service typically includes several chants. At intervals between the chants, there are one or two Bible readings and a prayer intercession. The traditional sermon takes a backseat, allowing the congregation to meditate on the verses read.

"Bless the Lord," which is taken from the first verse of Psalm 103, is one of my favorite chants. Taizé service advocates for participants to use the language they feel most comfortable with. As this chant has a Chinese version (my home city is Hong Kong, and Chinese is my first language), I can sing it without reading the lyrics and praise the Lord wholeheartedly.

After the service, I often find that I have had a sweet time with the Lord, and sometimes I gain a new perspective on the verses from the Bible. Join us at the Taizé Service in Saltyard on the last Sunday of each month at 7:00 PM. After the service, stay for tea, coffee, and meaningful conversations.

Messy Church

Reuben Addis, OLM

How do you make friends? The cliché is that for women friendships start around conversations, and for men they are based on a shared enterprise. However they started there was clearly a time when people made deep lasting friendships at Gorgie. But once you have a group of friends it's hard to let others in. To build bridges with those from Palmerston, or with people of a different age, ethnicity, or background. It's easy for strong friendships to become cliques.

At its core, Messy Church is an attempt to address this problem. It's a welcoming space where we cook together, celebrate birthdays, make things together, pray together. When it's working there is space to build trust and make friends. And because we are doing this as Christians, a central part of the love we share is our love of Jesus. We want space both to teach and to learn from each other. To quote our interim moderator, Sam Torrence, mission is about discipleship (walking purposefully together with Jesus).

Although it's been a great way for me to find my way into Gorgie - and to grow in my faith - Messy Church isn't just for Christians. People have brought families from the parent and toddler group, and neighbours, who have felt welcomed and comfortable despite not having a church background. Our prayers that as they get to know us, they will start to feel that Messy Church is their church, and a personal relationship with Jesus will be passed on to them. This will only happen if our conversations are real - and we let their experiences and perspectives affect us and change our thinking too. That we'll meet Christ in the stranger as they find him in us.

We meet in Gorgie at 3pm on the last Sunday of every month. All ages are welcome, and we want to get to know the whole family (for children to come with a parent or other adult). We have a starting activity, a Bible story prayers and songs, and then a wide variety of games and crafts. We end with a simple snacky meal (at 4:30 ish).

To find out more just turn up, or contact me.
Reuben.addis@churchofscotland.org.uk Mob
07867915022

Summer Solstice Ceilidh - Friday 21st June 6pm at Gorgie

Reuben Addis, OLM

"Long summer nights, when colours stir bright and hearts lift", what else can we do but dance! Gorgie is a church that has always loved to dance with Family Ceilidhs, Student Ceilidhs - and Ceilidh's for serious dances.

You are free to join, or leave, this Ceilidh at whatever point works best for you. We start at 6pm for a family hour - with simple dances and lots of fun for all ages. We take a break at 7 for (non-alcoholic) refreshments. 7:45 the music resumes for a mix of slow and faster dances (nothing too complicated). We'll take another break - and then have the final few dances for the more insatiable (or fit) dancers.



Please spread the word - put the posters up in your school and invite neighbours, students and friends. Book a place by following the link below and pay on the door (suggested price £5, or £12 for a family ticket. All the money raised goes to Water Aid). If you are struggling with the tech simply let me know how many tickets you want and I'll book you in.

It's a long Ceilidh so we are also looking for lots of musicians allowing everyone to get a chance to dance (or simply rest). We'll provide the drum kit and PA - and have some strong musicians to keep us all in time. It'll be great fun for seasoned players, but also a good chance to learn a tune or two and try your hand. Contact me if you want to find out more or to volunteer someone to play. Reuben.addis@churchofscotland.org.uk 0786 791 5022

Open door sales

Susan Kay

The Open door sales have started again on a Tuesday morning from 10 - 11.30.

It has started well, with lots of donations and a few Gorgie folk stopping to chat. Its amazing how many people stop and tell us that they went to Sunday School here and they often ask to see the sanctuary. We were able to give a homeless couple some spare clothes and a cup of tea and we have been able to point people in the right direction for help.



It is good to see the church doors open and people stopping by. We would love for more of the congregation to come and say hello.

We started this to raise money but it is now more about meeting the locals and sharing a kind word and letting the community know who we are and that we are here for them.

Our growing staff team

Norma Rolls

Since last time, our HR Team has been kept busy filling our vacant positions.

When Saltyard Café reopened after Easter, Ruaraidh Barron joined us as our Café Assistant. He is settling in well, having quickly learned the routines and soup recipes! If you haven't been in for a coffee recently, or for a bowl of soup, why not make a point of popping in before the summer holidays. We are delighted that the Kirk Session has agreed that Ruaraidh is to be a permanent member of the team.

Both Gordon Cooney and Paul Mitchell have been missed from our Church Offices. We made the decision to split their job descriptions differently and advertised for a Communications Coordinator and a Premises Coordinator, both part-time positions. Following a good set of applications, we interviewed four strong candidates. We put them through a lengthy day of questions, practical tests and tours of all of our buildings. We are delighted that Gregor Innes has accepted the Communications role and Joy McGonigal-Paget the Premises role. Gregor is one of our elders and has been at the forefront of our ICT (Information Communication Technology) at Palmerston Place Church for more than eighteen years.

Joy is currently Church Secretary at Blackhall St Columba's where she manages around 80 lets each week. Both will be bringing a depth of experience to us. The plan is that they will both work from the offices of both Gorgie Church and Palmerston Place Church and at times be in Saltyard too. We are planning an induction programme for each of them, with Gregor starting on 1st June and Joy on 1st July. It will take a little while for us to work out the most efficient working pattern for each of them but our aim is to have a system in place for the autumn so that you would know when each building is open and where to find them. If you meet them over the summer then do please make them feel welcome.

We are hoping that the HR Team can have a wee break now, while the Nominating Committee identifies our team leader/new minister.

Burn 24-7 UK

Judith Forbes, Director, Burn 24-7 Edinburgh

The heart of Burn 24-7 is first and foremost the passionate pursuit of the presence of God. We gather to worship regardless of denominational affiliation, crying out to God night and day for an awakening in the church, an unprecedented global harvest of souls, and the transformation of entire towns, cities and regions.

We want to create places where people can gather around the presence of God, worship Him as he deserves, become transformed into the likeness of Jesus and carry His heart to the nations. We believe that Burn 24-7 is an expression of the restoration of David's Tabernacle as prophesied in Amos 9:11 and Acts 15:16.

Burn 24-7 has core values that include:

First Love, we are a first love movement. Intimacy with God is our highest pursuit.

Biblical Kingdom Theology, we love the bible.

Honour and Unity, valuing local church and mothers and fathers in the faith.

God -Focused Worship, we prioritise God-focused 'vertical' worship as King David did in the tabernacle on Mount Zion.

Heart for Mission, the first and second commandments go hand in hand.

Creativity, We celebrate creativity. Our God is a creative God and there are so many different ways to worship Him!

Burn 24-7 UK consists of over 20 local Burn communities creating these spaces in local towns and Cities across the UK. These gatherings tend to be once a month with extended worship between 2-8 hours.

For more information please visit our website [Welcome - Burn 24-7 UK](#)

Edinburgh Fringe Event 2024 1st -3rd August 2024
Gorgie Church.

Each Year for the past 8-9 years Burn 24-7 have held a larger and longer missional event during the Fringe Festival. This year we are running the event again. This event consists of 2-3 days of worship coming before our first love and pursuing His presence.

During this event we aim to live out the heart of Burn

24-7. Worship continues day and night led by different worship leaders every hour or couple of hours. This time is open for people to come for as long or as short as they want. To come and worship in the ways that suit you best.

Be creative or just sit on a chair or lie on the floor in His presence.

Then on Saturday, we have a morning of mission training, followed by a team of people heading into the city centre to share the love of Jesus with people visiting Edinburgh for the Fringe . During this time a team also stays in the building to continue to worship and pray for the team on the street.

I myself have found this way of outreach and mission so easy, spending time with Him in worship creates an ease in which to share His love on the street. I have seen people impacted by the God given words and insights shared. I have also seen God heal people.

This event is open to all to come and join us in unity together.

The Chosen

Reuben Addis, OLM

"The Chosen is a television programme which has had a huge impact around the world. It's like an amazing visual sermon - you get the Bible story and a glimpse of what it might have been like to have been there. We watched the first two seasons as a way to launch Café church. This summer we are returning to watch season three. This starts with the Sermon on the Mount and the next 7 episodes show us how the Disciples struggle to live out these Kingdom values.



We are meeting at Saltyard café throughout July and August at 7pm (except the last Sunday of the month when we have our Taizé celebration). Come along, and perhaps bring a friend. If you have any questions, then contact me

Reuben.addis@churchofscotland.org.uk Mob
07867915022)

Monday Fellowship

Norma Steedman

Our Spring programme ended with a super outing on 22nd April. A full bus load of excited folk set off on a lovely trip to Dunbar with much laughter and chat. The scenery was beautiful with green and bright yellow fields and lots of lambs springing with their mums. We stopped for a short walk around Dunbar high street before going on to Winterfield Golf Club situated overlooking the picturesque Belhaven Bay. We had a delicious lunch much enjoyed by all. Then on to North Berwick where the sun shone on us all. Some of us visited the shops and found some good bargains! Others wandered around the harbour and admired a wonderful display of the most amazing varieties of tulips in raised beds around the town. Many treated themselves to an ice cream and enjoyed a seat in the sunshine in the superb garden. That's where our wonderful photographer, Jim, gathered us all for a group photograph before we set off for home.

Many thanks go to Laura and Kathryn for all the organisation of a lovely day out.

We are on holiday now until 23rd September when we hope to have a new and exciting programme for Monday afternoons. Do come along and bring a friend!



The friend who's always there

Simon Hall, Organist

Exactly twenty years ago, an ailing seventeen-year-old and his distressed parent sought the help of their local parish priest, hoping for spiritual support – or, more precisely, for some sort of miracle – amidst trying and uncertain circumstances. His secondary education had stalled, the journey towards a 'mainstream' career had derailed and, life in general, had reached a rather fragile point.

Circumstances were such that the parish organist had suddenly departed a few weeks earlier. The congregation battled on with their hymn singing, albeit with no accompanist. When the priest heard that we had a piano at home and I was regularly found playing it, I was told "Simon... that means you can become our organist".



I have always been struck by that comment – not just because the organ and the piano are two very different things, even though there are evident similarities – but also by the fact that this unexpected and, perhaps, bewildering gesture proved to be an entirely profound blessing... an example of God's watchfulness at a time when a clear way forward was not visible.

Indeed, that event was the initiation of what has become two decades of serving in one of the Church's ministries. I have had the privilege of working both as an instrumentalist and a composer for communities abroad, and providence has been such that I have had the chance to lead ceremonies in the presence of a handful of well-known personalities, ranging from a former French president to an internationally-celebrated Scottish football manager.

The one element that has made these things possible – and, which keeps me going – is a companion I can refer to at any time of day or night; a creation that, even in our temporary, earthly world, remains eternal. It cannot be destroyed, it has a lifespan without end – and is always there for us to raise our spirits, to communicate with others in ways that words alone cannot express. It can give us a sense of evasion, of solace, of devotion. That creation is music.

It is a sad – but, realistic fact – that numbers of those coming to church dwindle more and more as time goes on. With these diminishing numbers, there are often fewer and fewer people prepared to offer their services to support congregations in music and song.

Given this, it is entirely glorious that I have musical colleagues in both Gorgie and Palmerston Place with not only evident dedication but exceptional levels of musical talent as well. I hope all of us will cherish the provision that we are most certainly blessed to have, compared to an increasing number of churches with neither musicians nor ministers to bring the message of the Good News to the people in our world.

My own personal history alludes to notions of God's providence in our lives, and how it takes us forward in the face of difficulty. Wherever we find ourselves at the current time – and wherever we may be going – music is a remarkable solution for so many different things.

"Sing like never before, O my soul... I'll worship your Holy Name" – Matt Redman

News from Thies, Senegal

The Diedhiou Family

Clare is continuing her role of Language Programmes Manager overseeing ongoing translation projects and ensuring they run well. She is continuing to serve Wycliffe's partner organisation through the Leadership Team including networking with other churches and missions in Thies to learn who is doing what, to enable her to identify opportunities to work together to enable people to have access to Scripture in languages that speak to them. She is supporting the four translation projects that she is involved with to move forward and identify priorities for the coming year and find strategies to achieve them.

Seba now manages the head offices of Wycliffe's partner organisation, including the inauguration and installation of staff into the offices which opened in April 2023. He is still slowly recovering from his emergency back surgery and is regaining his strength and balance and receives weekly physio appointments. As Office Manager Seba continues to manage the daily running of the new centre and also hopes to help out with Media Services and move into more Scripture Engagement work encouraging the use of translated Scriptures by churches and individuals.

They have both been very involved getting the new offices up and ready and functional and working on the initial teething problems that come with a new building. Finishing up the final tasks has taken much longer than anticipated. Two translation teams are working at the centre as well as the Church-run Department for Translation and Promotion of local languages. The four translation projects that Clare is involved with managing are following their plans and making good progress.

Family Life

Francis will continue at the same school where he is settled and Adele will stay at home with the hope that she will start nursery in 2025.

As we did not manage to return to the UK to see people in 2023 we do hope to visit for a few months during the summer of 2024 visiting Belfast, Edinburgh and Gloucester to share about our work in person.

We look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Strength for Today, Hope for Tomorrow

Barbara Roberts

This meeting was held on 9th May to hear from the C of S about its plans for the future presented by Tommy MacNeil, Convener of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.

He explained the role of the team and made it plain that it is hoping over the next 5 years to turn things upside down. Presently the church is governed by a selected number at the top of the pyramid, but the plan is to have the people in the local congregations, who are at the bottom at the moment, have a much bigger say.



Since being commissioned at last year's Assembly the team spent time praying together and the consensus was that they felt the grief caused by the proposed changes throughout Scotland and the need to repent for the mistakes and hurts.

On the evening, they wanted to hear from everyone, so we were each given 2 post-its and asked to write down our grievances on one and then our hopes and dreams for the future on the other.

We then heard from Neil Glover, convener of The Seeds for Growth committee who spoke on the grants available to all churches. These are to enable the churches to fund work towards growth, prioritising new worshiping communities and work with people aged 40 and under. However, he encouraged all churches to engage with the grants office for advice as so far there has only been one successful project funded in the whole of Edinburgh over the past year.

Saltyard May 2024

Norda Barber (Catering Co-ordinator)

We continue to enjoy sharing with the church and the community in our work at Saltyard.

We were delighted to welcome Ruaraidh Barron to our team, recently. He is our Kitchen Assistant and is quickly learning expert, soup making skills from Alex, as well as, all the other tasks needed to run Saltyard smoothly. He is already receiving compliments for his soup!

We are glad to have George back with us for a week, and he is also teaching Ruaraidh from his wealth of kitchen experience. What a team! We are thankful for our faithful and hard-working volunteers who give of their time each week, and take time to chat to customers, as they serve in Saltyard.

We have had a few new volunteers, this term, and two girls from Boroughmuir High School who are helping as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award.

We were sorry that Meggie Sheriffs felt it was time to step down from being our main baker, as she has many demands in her job and church. She has baked for Saltyard since it opened in June 2013, and has given a high standard of home baking at very reasonable prices. We are thankful for her faithfulness in serving us in this capacity, and pray every blessing on her for the future. We hope to have a small presentation, in the near future, to show a little of our thanks!

We are pleased that Polly has volunteered to share the baking duties with myself, and we have already had encouraging feedback!

Alex, our chef, is now selling some of his photographs in Saltyard. Please come and take a look, or speak to Alex at church.

Thanks again to all who support us in prayer, giving, and being there, which is such an encouragement to everyone involved.

Every blessing.



General Assembly Youth Representative Report

Jessica Linde

As some of you may know, I attended the 2024 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland as a Youth Representative for the Presbyter of Edinburgh and West Lothian. As such, here is a report on one of my main takeaways from the experience of being a Youth Representative.

I went into the beginning of the 5 days of Assembly with conflicting feelings, and to be honest, I have come out of it similarly conflicted. Whilst I recognise it was a huge honour to have been selected to attend (and some pretty wild things ended up happening to me whilst I was there because of that honour), I couldn't help but end up having a question a commissioner raised during the very first report of the Assembly impact my entire perspective of it.



During the report of the Assembly Business Committee, which is in charge of putting on the Assembly every year (no mean feat!), a commissioner stood up and asked the convenor of said committee how much it was anticipated to cost the church national to put on the Assembly this year. The convenor's response? Approximately £810,000, which is an astonishingly high number! And in light of the fact that the church national's budget for 2024 includes a deficit of £8.1 million, it stung to hear that 1/10 of said deficit was going to be spent in less than one week. The church national and the presbyteries have already instructed individual congregations to give up so much by closing and uniting churches left and right, but yet, here we were spending a 1/10 of the deficit in one fell swoop. And so, I spent the rest of the 5 days asking myself if this Assembly (in its current form, anyway) was even really necessary.

It was mentioned multiple times how expensive and

labour intensive it is to maintain the Assembly Hall on the Mound, so should the church national even be holding on to it anymore? Might we perhaps meet in a conference centre, like the United Reformed Church does for its General Assembly? Might we perhaps meet in one of our particularly large church buildings, like the Scottish Episcopal Church does for its General Synod? And (even more boldly), do we even need the Assembly to happen in-person every single year? Perhaps we could move to in-person model for once every four years, with exclusively online (Zoom) assemblies happening in the intervening three years. Indeed, some presbyteries (such as Clèir Eilean i: the Presbytery of Highlands and Hebrides) have already moved towards such models—11 out of 12 monthly meetings happening over Zoom, with only one in the year actually taking place in-person.

If we, as a church national, are actually looking to save money so that the church can be preserved for future generations, then perhaps we really need to consider making significant changes to how and where we do our General Assembly. Whilst I can appreciate that if we moved to a primarily online Assembly model, the wild business of getting personally invited to join the Moderator and the Archbishop of Canterbury for lunch because of a comment I made on the floor of the Assembly would never have happened! However, said "fun" and wild moments are not ultimately what the Assembly is about. The Assembly is about discussing and discerning how God wants us to steward this church of His for its longterm benefit and ultimate flourishing.

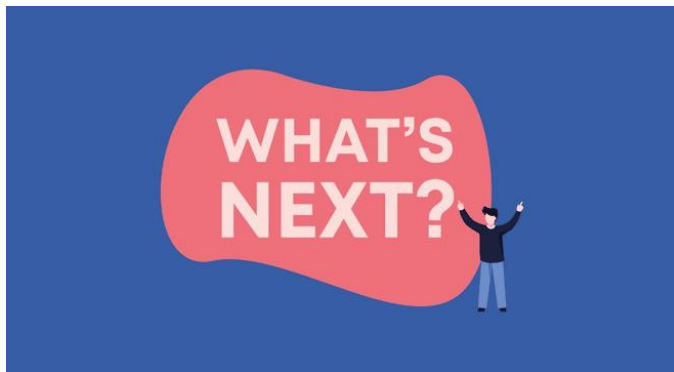
The Moderator, during his morning address to the Assembly on Wednesday, talked about how important it is for us to remain "in touch" as a church, and I can't help but wondering if continuing to spend £810,000 on this model of General Assembly is actually insensitive and "out of touch" when local congregations have already been asked to give up so much in order to adhere to presbytery plans.

The long and the short of it is that my 5 days as a Youth Representative to the General Assembly left me feeling even more emboldened than ever about wanting to be apart of bringing about the change that still needs happen, because I can see some of the problems that still need fixing, and I care enough about the Church of Scotland to want to be apart of solving them.

6 Month Review as Children & Families Ministerial Assistant

Jessica Linde

It has now been a little over 6 months since I started as GaPP Church's Children & Families Ministerial Assistant, and because of this, I presented to the May Kirk Session (13 May 2024) an outline of what I am currently doing in my role and what my future plans for the role are. Below, please find that outline for you, yourself, to take a look at.



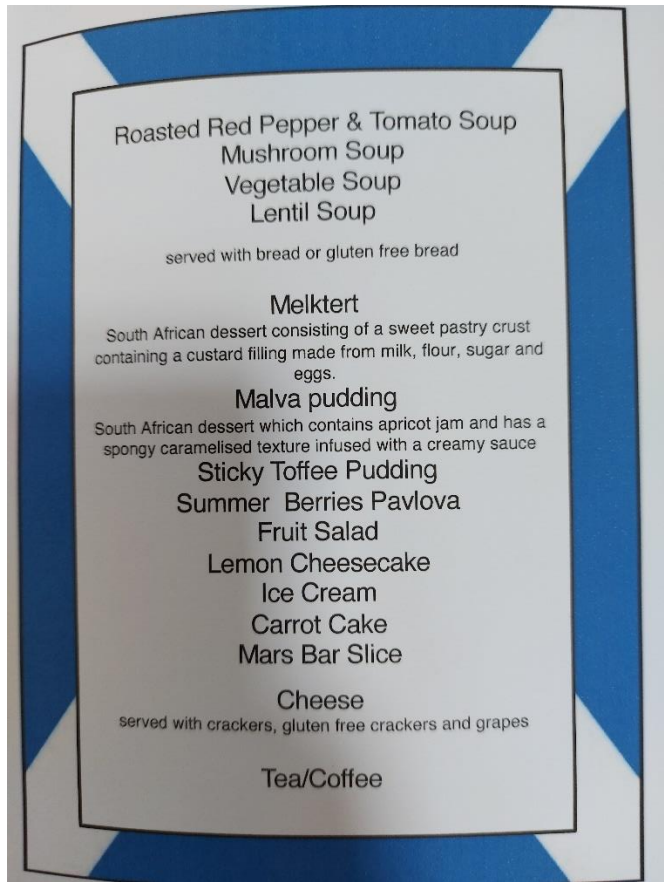
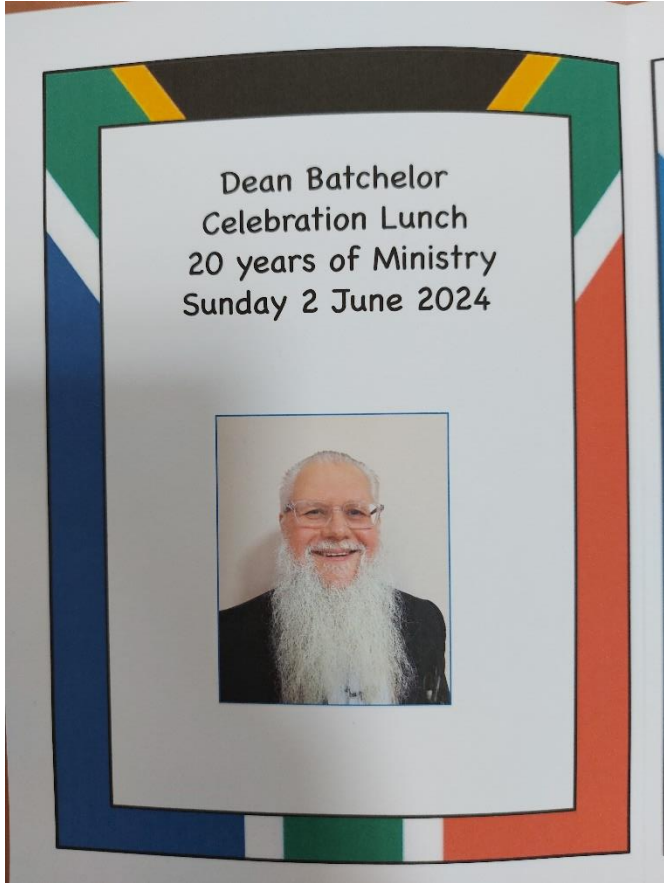
Current

- Regularly delivers All-Age Talks and Prayers from the front of church on Sunday mornings.
- Actively apart of leading Sunday school activities to kids/youth at Gorgie location.
- Attends and participates in ministry team meetings every two weeks.
- Attends Wednesday morning toddler group at Gorgie location. This has been good for meeting and connecting with local mums.
- Started "Book Lambs" in Saltyard in November 2023 on Thursday mornings. Whilst at first successful, it has had dwindling numbers. Perhaps it needs to be rethought.
- Actively apart of planning and running monthly Messy Church sessions (with Reuben, Netia, and other core volunteers) on the last Sunday of each month at Gorgie location.
- Started Godly Play training in April 2024. Training due to be complete at end of August 2024. This training has already proved helpful for Sunday school activities and Messy Church sessions.

- Currently half way through 6 session trial period of a group for secondary school aged girls in Annan House at Palmerston Place location. Parental feedback has been largely very positive.
- Attended Church of Scotland General Assembly as a Youth Representative from 17 to 23 May 2024.

Future Plans

- Working towards spending more Sundays at Palmerston Place location. The perfect balance between how I split time between Gorgie location and Palmerston Place location has been challenging to fine tune.
- Will be working with LEAD organisation to deliver their curriculum to students at Tynecastle High School at their 30 May 2024 session. LEAD works closely with Young Life, so the hope is that this will be the start to building closer connections with both Tynecastle and Young Life.
- Will be attending Messy Church training event on 8 June 2024 at Croftfoot Church, Glasgow.
- Will be running expanded version of the Gorgie location Wednesday morning toddler group for 6 summer sessions. The idea is to give parents/grandparents/childminders a free place to bring kids that will have Messy Church-like crafts, since many regular activities stop over the summer holiday.
- Will be a leader at the annual Summer Camp the Salvation Army (Central and Southern Scotland Division) runs in Stirling from 3 to 10 August 2024.







Regular Events

Sundays

Weekly at 11am – Sunday morning service, Gorgie Building

Weekly at 7pm – Sunday evening informal service, Saltyard

All are welcome to the informal service.

Monthly on the last Sunday of the month, Messy Church, Gorgie Building at 3pm

Messy church takes place the last Sunday of each month – for more details contact Reuben on 0786 791 5022 or Jessica on 07591 206901.

Monthly on the last Sunday of the month – Taizé service, Saltyard at 7pm

Taizé service in Saltyard at 7pm.

Tuesdays

10am – Open Door Sale, Gorgie Building

The church doors will be open for conversation with passers-by and selling books, toys, and other bits & bobs. If you can help, please speak to Susan Kay.

12pm – Prayer Time, Gorgie Building

All are welcome to attend.

Wednesdays

10am Toddler Group, Gorgie Building.

Thursdays - 10am Book Lambs in Saltyard

Story-telling with Jessica for pre-school children, but grown-ups can listen too.

Wednesdays – Fridays Saltyard is open

All are welcome.

Saturdays

Alternate Saturdays – 12pm - 2pm Open Church, Gorgie Building, next event is 8th June.

A time to meet with the people in our community and invite them in to see the church.

Monthly on the first Saturday of the month – Men's Prayer Breakfast, Saltyard, next event is 1st June

All men are welcome to attend, for more information please email George Kay:

g.kay@blueyonder.co.uk