

Stockbridge Church

bridging
the gap



The Bridge

Stockbridge
Parish Church
Newsletter

7B Saxe Coburg
Street, Edinburgh

www.stockbridgechurch.org.uk

Summer 2023

MISSION STATEMENT

Being aware of the love of God in our lives, we, the congregation of Stockbridge Parish Church, as part of the world church seek to meet together in worship; to demonstrate faith in God in our everyday lives; to reach out to others, showing God's love and compassion; and to raise awareness of matters of justice locally and globally.

CONTACT US

Locum Minister	Rev John Munro, 0131 446 9363 revjohnmunro@hotmail.com
Session Clerk	Ben Bond, 07910 770572 sessionclerk@stockbridgechurch.org.uk
Treasurer	Kerr McLaren, 0131 226 2338 treasurer@stockbridgechurch.org.uk
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Church Administrator	Laura Field, 0131 332 0122 admin@stockbridgechurch.org.uk
Church Officer	Colin Clark, 07856 485384 churchofficer@stockbridgechurch.org.uk

The church office is open Mondays – Fridays, 10am - 3pm



Letter from our Locum Minister, Rev John Munro

I loved Paris in the Springtime!

It was assumed that when I said I was going to Paris that I was going on holiday until I mentioned that it was for 2 months!

It all started when the interim moderator for the Scot's Kirk in Paris called me last year and asked if I would go for 2 months to Paris as the locum minister. Having explained that I already had a locum's position in Stockbridge where I had been the minister, I was persuaded to go to Paris further down the line when the Presbytery Plan had come to an end towards the end of 2022 - except that it didn't, and it hasn't.

To be honest, it didn't take too much persuading and, in any case, "somebody had to do it!" Having committed myself to this plan and having found familiar faces who were prepared to take my place until the two months were up, I packed my bags and took the train to Paris at the beginning of March. A warm welcome awaited me, and I was shown where the manse was and handed the keys. The manse in the 9th district close to Montmartre was a third floor 'apartment' with an 'escalier', and not far from the nearest Metro which would take me to church on Sundays not far from the Champs Elysée on Rue Bayard.

The church building is the third one to be constructed on this site. The first one, built in the middle of the 19th century, had suffered some damage during the Second World War, and so money had to be raised at the end of the conflict to build a new one. However, for whatever reason, the new building was full of faults and eventually an agreement was made with a developer to demolish the building and build a new church and hall at ground and basement level with flats above. This was opened 23 years ago, and the church can seat up to 100 of a congregation. Unfortunately, just like everywhere else, the number of members has been declining and the church is now run by a small group of dedicated workers, ex-patriate Scots, nearly all of whom live some distance from the church and must travel into the centre of Paris for worship on Sunday, mainly by car. It is fortunate that parking is not a problem on a Sunday, and the session clerk lives in Caen, Normandy.

Numbers attending worship vary considerably, but in any case, are much lower than the numbers attending church here in Stockbridge. By way of compensation there is a full church made up of Sri Lankans earlier in the morning and a full church of Koreans in the afternoon. I would expect that the numbers would increase in Paris over the summer with tourists jetting

in, Paris, many of whom are Americans and conscious of being 'presbyterian'.

The Kirk's claim to fame is its former minister, Rev. Donald Caskie, who was the minister during World War Two. He wrote about his work with the resistance in his book called 'The Tartan Pimpernel' that still sells today having gone through many re-prints by various publishers. During my time there, Donald Caskie's nephew, Gordon, like me a former pupil of Whitehill school, Glasgow, pitched up one Sunday to add a contribution of a wooden collection bowl that had belonged to his uncle, a gift to the congregation who already have several pieces of Caskie memorabilia on display.

What then of the future of the Scot's Kirk? At present they have a small but committed group of office bearers and their Presbytery Plan - the plan put together by what is now called 'The International Presbytery' - has decided that they are to be united with Brussels, a 90-minute train ride away. However, it seems that this will not now take place until the current Brussels minister retires in two years' time. All of which means that they will soldier on with the help of an interim moderator and the help of locum ministers.

Did I learn anything from this two months working in France's capital? I learned that we in Stockbridge are not the only congregation to be facing an uphill struggle. Their set of problems are different as they rely on people coming to visit them - some from a great distance - whereas we have our present and future membership right here on our doorstep. Both churches have a 'history', and it is this sense of history and 'history in the making' that keeps them going forward in faith.

And, yes, I did get time off and managed to visit many of the museums and galleries although booking in advance for many of them is essential! And, yes, it is good to be home!

Rev John Munro

Congregational News

We bid a fond farewell to our former outreach worker, then parish assistant, Alex Johnson, who supported our work for over six and a half years. We shall miss him, and wish him all the best in his studies.



We offer a warm welcome to our new church administrator, Laura Field, who introduces herself here:

"Hello! My name is Laura Field. I am originally from San Diego, California, and I moved to Edinburgh a few months ago after marrying my husband, a UK citizen, in December. In addition to being the church's new administrator, I am also an artist and graphic designer. I enjoy reading, cooking, watching films, and playing a sport called Pickleball in my free

time. I am so excited to be starting a new chapter of my life in Edinburgh and to be working at Stockbridge Parish Church. I hope to meet all of you during my time here!"



(Editor's note: Laura and her husband are searching for accommodation to let near our church. If you hear of anywhere available, do get in touch with her.)

A memorial service for Isabelle Harrison was held on 17th May, bringing back many warm memories of George and Isabelle. These are two of George's poems, read at the service, to remember them:

Isabelle

You are

A silent temple space –

A candle-lit quiet

Where even the gods are still.

With wonder and delight

You fill my world.

And the ocean of your comfortable ways

Washes my rugged shore.

The high woods of your glorious summer

Shelter my days,

And your broad understanding

Fits my soul like a glove.

Do not doubt Eternity is now

Do not doubt Eternity is now,
In the blushful rose, the fading leaf,
In an autumn garden's smell of death.
Do not doubt Eternity is now,
Within the smile, within the angry glance,
Over the traffic's roar,
Across the heath where only bird and wind
Breathe their age-old songs.
Do not doubt Eternity is now.

When last and first are one,
When truth and falsehood, pain and ease,
Blend in that massive empty fullness
That time and non-time make.
Do not doubt Eternity is now.
When things that matter do not matter,
When hope and reality hold hands together
And nonsense is common sense at last.
Do not doubt Eternity is now.

George Harrison

Our treasurer, **Kerr McLaren**, updates us on the latest church information:

Status of Presbytery Plan:

The Presbytery Mission Plan for Edinburgh & West Lothian was, as expected, approved by the Faith Nurture Forum and General Trustees on 25th May. However, we are making a Call for Review of the process as we are entitled to do, which will be submitted on Friday 16th June. Beyond that date the exact timing of the process of review is somewhat uncertain, and we are unlikely to be able to provide an update on the Review to the Congregation by the date of the Stated Annual Meeting of 25th June.

As soon as we have further information, we shall update the Congregation. Irrespective of outcome of the Call for Review it is the determination of the Kirk Session on behalf of the Congregation, and Stockbridge Community, that Stockbridge Parish Church remains open as a Place of Worship, and as a community hub.

Status of 2022 Annual Accounts:

The 2022 Annual Accounts have been completed and are about to be submitted to Presbytery for review. Headline information on the 2022 financial outcome will be shared at the Stated Annual Meeting scheduled for 25th June.

Bicentenary Planning

The calendar for Bicentenary activity for the second half of 2023 is being updated and will be shared at the Stated Annual Meeting (SAM) on 25th June - for those unable to attend the SAM the calendar will be posted to the Church website.

Kerr McLaren, treasurer@stockbridgechurch.org.uk



Our session clerk, **Ben Bond**, gives an update on our Bicentenary plans:

Bicentenary: update on how plans are progressing

Our new Church Administrator, Laura Field, has started in post and once she has settled into the main elements of her role, she will be taking on some pieces of work for the bicentenary. For example, keeping up to date a calendar of bicentenary events and helping with the production and distribution of posters, flyers, social media and website content publicising our bicentenary and associated events.

Our bicentenary logo and tagline ("Welcoming everyone for 200 years") is now visible on church e-mails, our website, our Facebook page, Orders of Service and The Bridge. Our bicentenary banners are now proudly displayed on each side of our church entrance.



Photo – Judith Walker

A range of other "bicentenary" materials - including mugs, tee-shirts, baseball hats and tea towels - have been designed. If anyone might be interested in buying any such commemorative items, please do get in touch.

Our locum minister John Munro has reached out to former ministers of our church to invite them to be involved in special service(s) in November. The new Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rev Sally Foster-Fulton, has been invited to come along to Stockbridge one Sunday close to our anniversary. Another idea for bicentenary worship would be to base part or all of a service(s) on the original Order of Service used when the church opened in 1823. We might also look to have a Sunday close to the date of the anniversary when anyone with a link to our church - e.g. anyone who was married, baptised, attended in the past, had a parent, grandparent who was a member etc - is invited to attend.

A range of events are being planned for the coming months to provide opportunities to celebrate our bicentenary in different ways:

- Bicentenary celebration bring-your-own picnic in Inverleith Park in June/July/August.
- Dr Graham's Homes Cross-Scotland Run for Hope is to finish at our church this summer.
- Paint/draw a picture of the church. Invite pupils from Stockbridge Primary School (and any other local or budding artists) to draw or paint a picture of our church over the summer. These could then be put on display in the church for the Doors Open Days and other bicentenary events in the autumn.
- Doors Open Days on 23rd-24th September. Elspeth Porter is kindly leading on this but will need some other volunteers to help both on the weekend itself and beforehand. For example, this could include preparing display boards to put up in the church highlighting aspects of our history and bicentenary.
- Sale of Work / Christmas Craft Sale will be taking place on 25th November. Judith Walker is leading on this, but again would welcome some other volunteers to help.

We also hope to host a small series of "bicentenary lectures/talks" at the church (through the autumn months) as well as a number of music events, including a bicentenary concert, a Soko Fund Malawi Concert and a Special Organ Recital in October and November. We also plan to invite the Stockbridge & New Town Community Orchestra and the Loud & Proud Choir to provide music and singing at either special services or other bicentenary events.

For many of the above events and talks to succeed, help will be needed. So, if anyone would like to volunteer and help with particular events (things like the picnic or drawing a picture of the church) or with more general parts of the programme (such as co-ordinating the talks or music) then please get in touch with Laura in the church office (0131 332 0122 or admin@stockbridgechurch.org.uk).

Scripture Union Club – Appeal for Help

A successful Scripture Union group for Stockbridge Primary School children has operated from our church since 2015. We are very keen to see it continue, but due to the recent departure of a couple of group leaders, some more volunteers are now needed to enable it to continue to run at our church.

So, if anyone has the desire and availability to support this weekly (Monday afternoon) ministry, please do get in touch with Ben (sessionclerk@stockbridgechurch.org.uk or 0791 077 0572). The Club is about to start its summer break, but when it restarts in early September, anyone interested would be very welcome to come along on a Monday afternoon to see what SU is like and work out if volunteering to help might be for them.

Ben Bond, sessionclerk@stockbridgechurch.org.uk

Thanks to Christine

For some time now our member Christine MacLachlan has been sending out the copies of the Bridge to people on our postal list. This has involved putting them in envelopes adding labels and stamps and getting them posted. Very many thanks to Christine for doing this valuable task. She has now moved house and she has decided to give up this role. Our best wishes and gratitude go to Christine and of course if there is anyone out there who would like to do this in the future, please let me know.

Anne Wallace

Roll Keeper

Doors Open Day

As part of our 200th Anniversary celebrations Stockbridge Church is taking part in Doors Open Day on **Saturday 23rd** and **Sunday 24th September 2023**.

In this uncertain time for churches this gives us an opportunity to demonstrate that we are open and welcoming by inviting members of the public to come and see our lovely church building and find out a bit of its history and how we use it today.

If you have any interesting pictures of the church particularly from the past, and of the other churches which were in the area, it would be great to have a copy of these.

Likewise, if you have any interesting information about the history of the church, or when the other churches in the neighbourhood joined with Stockbridge, that would be of great interest.

Please e-mail your contributions to admin@stockbridgechurch.org with **DOORS OPEN DAY** in the Subject line OR put your item(s) in an envelope marked **DOORS OPEN DAY** along with your contact details so that we can return items to you, and hand them in to the Church Office.

As with all the 200th Anniversary events we will be looking for people to help at the event. For Doors Open Day we will need people to welcome visitors to the building and people to serve refreshments.

And if you haven't been in the church for a while, perhaps because of Covid related issues, do take the opportunity to pop in and see us. You will be very welcome.

Craft group



As can be seen above, the craft group are making plans to mark our bicentenary. Come along and contribute to the creativity!

If you'd like any more information please speak to Judith or Liz.

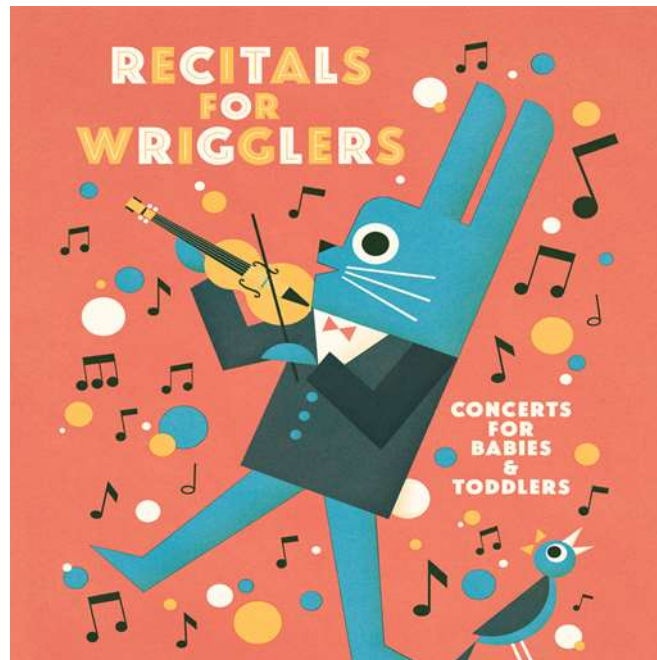
Judith Walker

Christian Aid totals (so far)

While we still have to finalise the total from our red envelopes (which are still coming in!), we have raised £41 from the quiz and £118 from our bring and share lunch, so the total so far is £159.



Clea, our community music practitioner, wanted to share with us her concerts planned for the Fringe:



There will be a run of Recitals for Wrigglers shows most days 16th-26th August 10.30am 'Kings and Queens' and 2.00pm 'Wriggle Around the World'

Tickets are on sale now via <https://tickets.edfringe.com/>

We tend to sell out so booking is advised!



graphic courtesy of applemike.co.uk

Our annual stated congregational meeting is being held after the service on 25th June. Come along!

Malawi Coffee Morning is now meeting in person, at 10.30 – 12 midday on the first Friday of the month. All welcome!

Bottle tops

Please save your plastic milk bottle tops. Washed bottle tops can be left inside the cabinet at the back left of the Church, and will be taken for recycling.

Your contributions for The Bridge are very welcome

Just email bridge@stockbridgechurch.org.uk, or leave in Bridge pigeonhole, or speak to Shona Cameron in church.

All contributions for the next issue should be e-mailed to Shona at above email address. If you do not have access to email, please phone her.

The deadline for the next Bridge, the September edition, is **Sunday 13th August, 2023**.

Our worship continues online, as well as in person, on Sunday at 11am. Watch live, or on demand, by visiting our website, Facebook, or YouTube channel (Stockbridge Parish Church).

Stockbridge Church

STOCKBRIDGE PARISH CHURCH

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Stockbridge Parish Church of Scotland, Edinburgh

Registered Scottish Charity, Charity No – SC002499

Enquiries about use of the church and halls are welcome, contact the church office, or see our website.