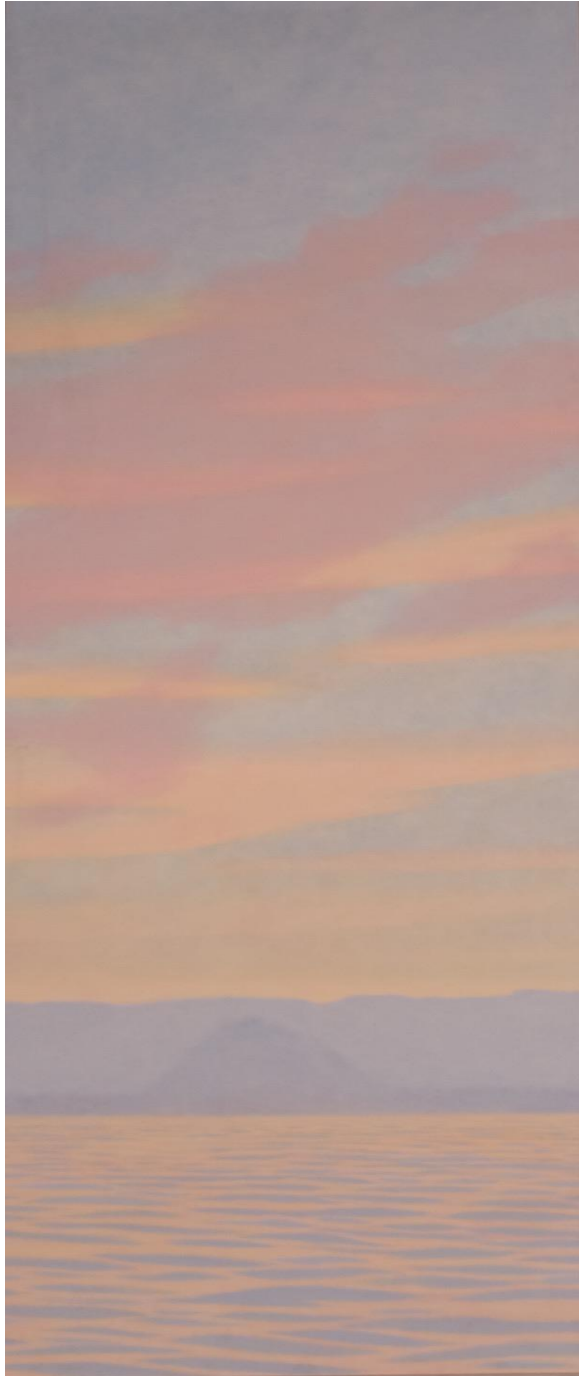


Stockbridge Church

bridging
the gap



The Bridge

Stockbridge
Parish Church
Newsletter

Saxe Coburg Street,
Edinburgh

www.stockbridgechurch.org.uk

Easter 2024



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

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The church office is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9.30am to 5pm, and by email on Thursdays.

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Letter from our Locum Minister, Rev John Munro

Many people still enjoy a good Christmas. The Christmas tree, the Christmas dinner, the singing of carols and even, some, the message of a saviour's birth. It's a time of great joy for all the people even if it is in the middle of a northern winter! Easter by comparison is something that these days many people shy away from. The good old days when children used to roll their hard-boiled eggs down a hill, symbolic of the story in the gospels about the stone that covered Christ's tomb being rolled away, is being replaced in the secular society by the gifts of chocolate eggs not to mention the ubiquitous Easter bunny.

Of the two, Easter is the more important Church festival with its story of a crucified Christ and his subsequent powerful resurrection from the dead. One can understand the significance of the crucifixion in terms of his self-sacrifice, that 'greater love for his friends' talked about in John's gospel; but what are we to make of the idea of bodily resurrection?

'Resurrection', the idea that people in general and Jesus in particular, 'rise physically from the dead' is not something that the 'man of science' would want to take literally in the 21st century. And yet, the whole business of Christ's resurrection from the dead is something that is so central to any celebration of Easter it simply cannot be ignored or played down by those who think they may know better.

The stories in the gospels that tell of his rising from the dead give the impression of an incredible transformation having taken place in those who were numbered among Christ's followers and friends. *Something happened very soon after his death on the cross that changed his followers for ever* - from being frightened stragglers, the beaten remnants of a failed revolt, into a fearless body of men and women who were determined to tell his story and their story to the ends of the earth if need be. Popular preachers talked about this transformation as "thirty-six hours that changed the world," and with this I couldn't disagree. What happened was that all their fears had turned to freedom, past mistakes were forgiven (but not forgotten), and they lived no longer for themselves but for others, even as Christ had done.

Such is the quality of the new life we enjoy 'in Christ' here and now, that we are encouraged to believe that such a life, in a word, must be 'eternal' - a quality of life that some have described as 'resurrection now' rather than 'pie in the sky when you die'.

"Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he gave us new life by raising Jesus from death. This fills us with a living hope..." (1 Peter 1.3)

I hope you will be able to join us in person this Easter for the various services advertised in this edition of 'The Bridge'. If not, then our Easter Sunday service will be broadcast live at the usual time of 11am.

I wish you a happy Easter,

John

Worship programme at Easter

We are going to hold an evening service on Thursday (Maundy Thursday) at 7pm, followed by a Good Friday service at 7pm on the Friday of holy week. Easter Sunday will include a celebration of communion preceded by a re-affirmation of baptismal vows."

Thursday 28th March - 7pm service

Friday 29th March - 7pm service

Sunday 31st March - 11am re-affirmation of baptismal vows and communion

Stockbridge Parish Church will be joining with other local churches - members of the Stockbridge & Comely Bank Churches Together - for a Witness in Raeburn Place on **Good Friday morning** from 11am until 1pm. Everyone is most welcome to join in. Please speak to Ben Bond if you would like to know more.

Following the Presbytery Plan:

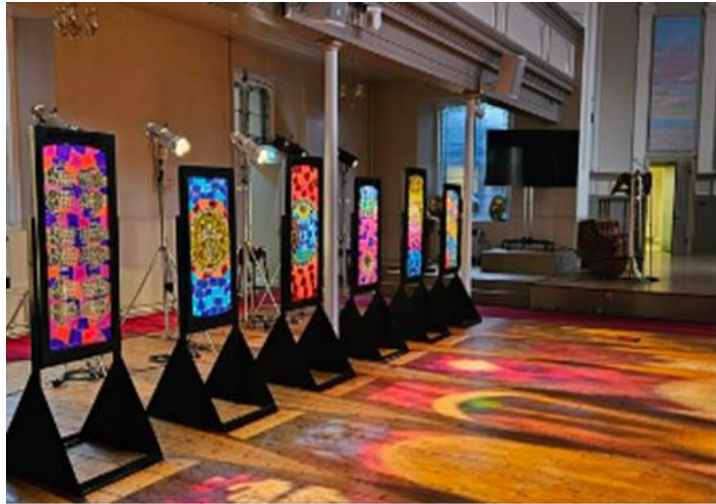
Over the past month or so, your Kirk Session has been engaging in meetings with the Presbytery Deployment Group and several local churches to consider possible options and to understand where others have reached in their thinking. More such discussions are planned for the next few days and weeks.

Whatever the eventual outcome, we remain committed to retaining Stockbridge Parish Church in Saxe-Coburg Street as a centre for congregational Worship and Community Service

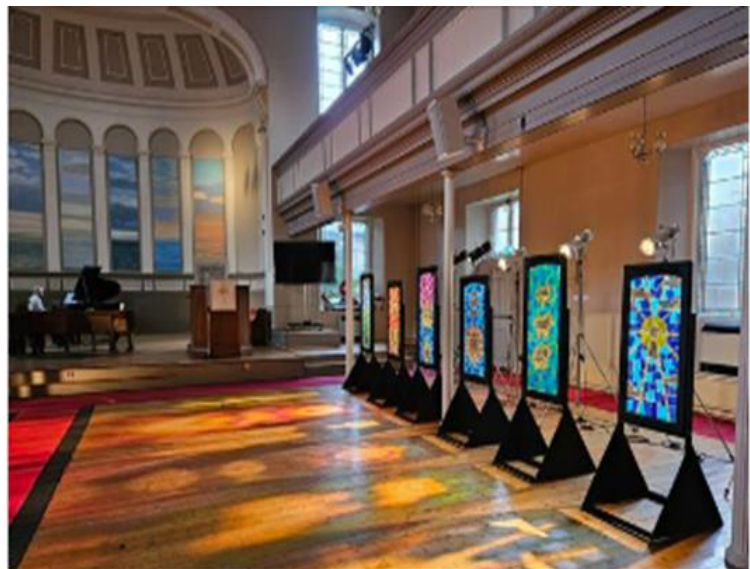
We plan to hold another Congregational meeting in the coming weeks to update everyone on progress and to listen to everyone's views on ways forward.

Ben Bond, Joint Session Clerk

At the start of Lent, our church hosted "Windows on the Resurrection", an art installation produced by the Sanctuary First team. Each of the 12 windows depicted a different scene from the story of the Resurrection of Christ. The church was open for visitors to view the panels, reflect and pray.



The panel on the left represented the Road to Emmaus.



Malawi Coffee Morning meets at 10.30 – 12 midday on the first Friday of the month. All welcome!

Celebrating Age Project

CAP continues to meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 2pm in the Session Room. Our final formal meeting is 3rd April when four different members will talk for between 5 and 10 minutes (no longer) on a subject of their choosing.

We hope to arrange outings for the summer dates.

ALL welcome!

VH

Craft Group

Craft Group meets on the last Tuesday afternoon of the month, from 2pm until 4pm in Number 7 (7 Raeburn Place). All crafters are welcome, just come along and join us and bring your current project.

JW

Kirk Fellowship Group

The Fellowship group meets every Tuesday from 7pm until 8/8.30pm. We meet online on Zoom.

Friendly informal meetings involve prayer, Bible readings, reflections and a lot of lively discussion. The current Lent study is based on material supplied by the Ecocongregation group.

If you are interested have a chat with some of the group members to find more details. Chat to Ben, Fiona, Margaret (Macgregor), Chris or Judith. If you want to join, give your email address to Chris and he'll add you to the list when he sends out the Zoom link.

JW

Stockbridge Music Hub



As most of you will know, Stockbridge Music Hub operates as a collaboration between Amati Global Investors and Stockbridge Parish Church.

Generous support from Amati Global Investors has enabled us to work with local community music practitioner Clea Friend. We are very lucky to have Clea with us as she brings over twenty years of experience of working with children and adults with additional needs. She also brings a wealth of experience and knowledge in promoting integration, communication and socialisation, promoting health and wellbeing, through music.

We are now in our third year of providing monthly free concerts featuring musicians from various musical backgrounds and genres as well as a monthly ticketed Culture Club event. Both have been very well attended and found their rightful place of high regard with audiences and reviewers alike.

Clea also works with children in Stockbridge Primary school and children on the autistic spectrum through Hear My Music, as well as facilitating The Cello Choir.

You will see details of our up-and-coming French Week 16th - 23rd March, elsewhere in this Bridge edition, culminating in what will be a fantastic community concert, Carnival of the Animals with words and narration by Sir Alexander McCall Smith.

The Music Hub is largely dependent on ticket sales and donations, so please come along and support this unique Music Hub treasure in our community.

BM

PS Anyone who would like more information should subscribe to the mailing list at the bottom of the home page of the website:

<https://www.musichub.uk/>

Clea has let us know that the Hub will be winding down from September unless we can find replacement funding.

If anyone would like to be involved in finding a way to keep the Hub going please get in touch with Clea cleacello@hotmail.com

French Week

March 16-23 @ Stockbridge Music Hub



16th Steven Osborne & friends 6pm

17th Film Night 7pm

19th Taylor Wilson sings Piaf 7pm

22nd Zarathustra Trio 6pm

23rd Carnival of the Animals 3pm

**words and narration by
Sir Alexander McCall Smith**

in collaboration with

Stockbridge Church, 7b Saxe Coburg St, EH3 5BN

Tickets and info: www.musichub.uk



Fiona McN reports from the Christian Aid online gathering on 27th February. Val Brown, the interim head of Christian Aid chaired the Gathering.

This year's main focus for Christian Aid are Ukraine and Burundi.

The Ukrainian people living there want to live as normally as possible. To facilitate this Christian Aid are providing micro grants to help local communities come back to life and regain their dignity. People from the local community are supported in their application for a grant. Form filling to apply for the grant is made simple and those applying are supported and advised in their application. They will write the proposal and budget and then implement the outcome. Micro grants provide funding for a multitude of needs. Greenhouses, small livestock, generators, communal washing machines, playgrounds and support for disadvantaged groups. It is the local communities who decide what they need.

Burundi lies to the south of Rwanda in East Africa with a population of approximately 12.55 million. It is described as the second poorest country in the world with 75% of the population living in poverty.

Three main areas are being addressed with the assistance of Christian Aid.

- Climate adaptation and resilience
- Gender justice
- Peace building and resolution.

Ngozi a town in Burundi has been supported by Christian Aid since 2016. 21 women who have been helped by micro grants now run their own businesses and provide loans to other women. They have been able to buy land, grow and sell their crops. Pay for their children's education. Afford to buy medical insurance for themselves. They have been so successful that they have been able to form two new groups.

Christian Aid believes in life before death and a vision to end poverty.

Dates for your diaries:

The annual booksale for Christian Aid is again being held by St Andrews and St George's West church, on Saturday May 11th, then Mon 13th onwards for the rest of the week. For sale this year: books, antiques and collectables, pictures, stamps and postcards, sheet music and toys. Since it started in 1973 the sale has raised over £2m for Christian Aid's work to end poverty.

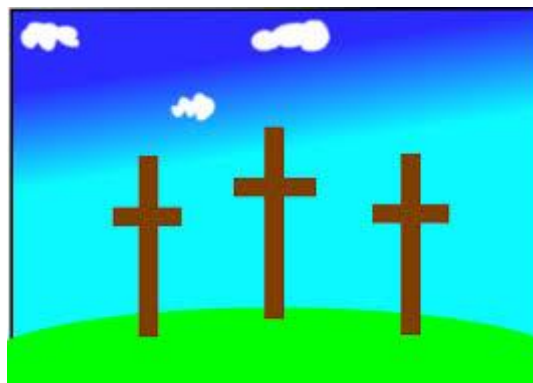
If you would like to donate anything to the sale, we will place a box at the back of the church for your donations in the weeks running up to the sale, last donations on **Sunday May 4th**, and we will transport them to the church during the week.

In our church, we are planning our usual lunch for Christian Aid on **Sunday May 19th**, so come along and enjoy soup, bread and cheese, as well as some excellent fellowship!

Easter - The Women's Story

The Edinburgh Easter Play brings the story of Easter to life in a new version every year, beneath the iconic backdrop of Edinburgh Castle. This year's production is a large-scale traditional passion play in full costume, told by 11 women whose lives were changed by encountering Jesus. Meet the ordinary people at the heart of the Easter Story who witnessed the events of Jesus' life, death and Resurrection. Join us to watch one of the world's great stories brought to life in Edinburgh's most dramatic location.

Saturday 30th March, 2pm, West Princes Street Gardens.
Free and unticketed.



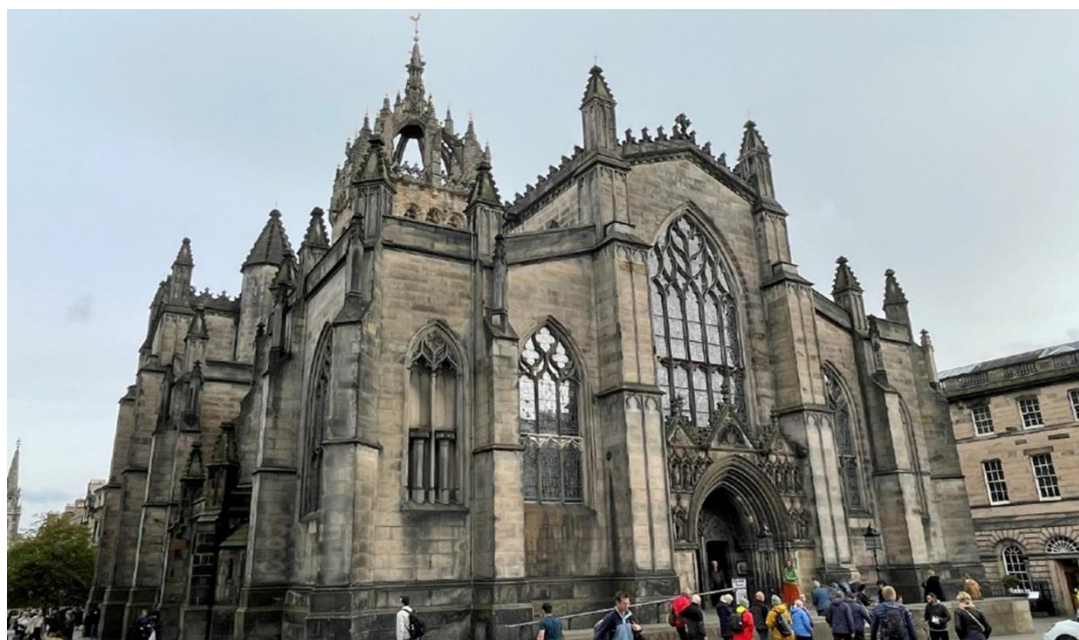
News from the Kirk

Scottish Parliament recognises
'iconic' St Giles' as the congregation
celebrates 900 years



A motion has been laid in the Scottish Parliament recognising St Giles' Cathedral as "a prominent part of the life of Edinburgh and Scotland for 900 years".

It commends the "iconic" cathedral, which was probably founded by King David I in 1124, for "its various projects, designed to reach out to people of all ages, backgrounds and faiths across the city".



The citation continues stating that "1.5 million people from around the world visited St Giles' in 2023, underlining its status as a dynamic centre celebrating Scotland's heritage and culture, as well as being an active place of worship".

Rev Dr George Whyte, the interim moderator of St Giles', said:

"We very much appreciate the recognition given by the Scottish Parliament and we remain committed to continued service in the years ahead."

If you would like more information about the 900th anniversary, please check for updates on the [St Giles' website](#).

Could you help with stewarding at the General Assembly?



Stewards have a vital role at the General Assembly to ensure the safety and comfort of those attending. Stewards provide a friendly welcome to the Assembly Halls, ensure the security of proceedings by checking passes, are alert to security threats and disturbances and have a responsibility to ensure the safe evacuation of the Assembly Hall if this is required.

Individual shifts last for three hours and volunteers can select the day or days upon which they would seek to help. For more details, please contact Sandy Gemmill, Chief Steward assemblystewards@churchofscotland.org.uk

Pat B wishes to share with us her report from the pastor Munther Isaac's talk at a vigil for Gaza at Bloomsbury Baptist Church in London:

Christ Under the Rubble: Gaza and us

Inspired by the late Dr Runa Mackay, my interest in Palestine is longstanding. It is not just a concern for me or the others who have visited the Holy Land or raised funds for Medical Aid for Palestinians. It is a concern for all people of humanity that the progressive, ongoing destruction and occupation of Palestinian land, the exile and suffering of so many over 76 years have been unjustifiable and must end. It has also been to powerful governments a concern that they seem to think can put aside. Why?

The pastor of the Christmas (Lutheran) Church in Bethlehem, the Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac, preached on December 23rd, 2023, in Bethlehem with the image of Jesus born not in a sweetly hay-lined manger but under rubble as a symbol of where Christ is to be found, with the oppressed and 'sore wounded'. However, that does not mean we can and should leave Him there.

The Rev. Munther spoke last weekend (17th and 18th February) both at the Saturday demonstration in London and on Sunday in Bloomsbury Baptist Church thanks to the Christian organisations Embrace the Middle East and Sabeel-Kairos UK.

On Sunday the talk was headed by the verse from Isaiah 58:6, '...is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen, to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?'

The pastor pointed out, passionately, that while organisations, churches, governments 'debate and deliberate', they are unable to get humanitarian aid into Gaza, make the excuse for the suffering of Palestinians a matter of 'self-defence' for Israel (what about self-defence for Palestinians?), and dehumanise the victims, who are not seen as equal.

It is Lent and we were asked to reflect on three things: the need for repentance, for piety and for suffering.

Repentance: for the racism and apartheid contributing to the silence from some churches as well as institutions of government.

Piety: to build and act upon a hunger for justice and a compassion which goes beyond charity, the latter being potentially a cover for non-action.

Courage - part of piety - is in taking sides: neutrality is not an option and allows truth to be hidden.

Suffering: it was pointed out that we claim to follow a crucified Christ, a Christ on the Cross where God IS. Solidarity with the suffering is costly and takes the courage to speak truth rather than avoid controversy.

Pastor Isaac reminded us of the SUMUD, or resilience, of the Palestinian people, with the hope that the world will rally to restore a truly Holy Land.

This, I believe, is a challenge to us all.

PB

(To explore further, see the website of 'Embrace the Middle East' and watch the service from 18th February: 'Vigil for Gaza'. This is also available through YouTube.)

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all affected by the violence in the region:-

As the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton, recently wrote:

If you pray, pray from your guts, not your lips – offer a prayer that moves in you and through you – one that calls you to reach out to a fearful neighbour, to speak up for peace and calm and the unity of humanity. Pray for all those many people injured and those mourning the loss of loved ones and those living in abject fear who await news of family members missing.

Wherever you are, check in on your Jewish neighbours, friends and colleagues.

Wherever you are, check in on your neighbours, friends and colleagues who have family in Gaza.

Wherever you are, be mindful of your words. Tarring with a broad brush adds more fuel to the fire, so be kind to one another wherever you find each other.

The Zulu phrase, Ubuntu, is the theme for my year as Moderator and its challenging truth resonates powerfully today. 'I am because you are.' We are one global family. When we look into the face of another human being, God looks out from the windows of their souls. Today, love God by loving each other.

A further prayer from the Moderator - A prayer for peace

"In days to come ... they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore."

God, it is said that you are the peace that passes all understanding. We sit now, staggered at how quickly the fragile half-peace we had pieced together has unravelled.

The lessons we have so desperately needed to learn have been laid aside as the instruments of war begin their horrible, haunting reprise. Call us back to our senses.

For the angry, abused and frightened among us, who strike out in a distorted quest for victory, help us find ways to convince that there is no victory to be found in violence.

Peace-making is a daunting path to tread, especially when fear follows so closely behind, so breathe your loving spirit into our hearts and help us walk your way.

We pray ceaselessly for our family in Israel and Palestine, for we are all family and when one part suffers, we are all depleted. Peace in pieces is a collective, shared shame.

God, you are the peace that passes all understanding, so help us understand how to find you.

Amen.

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, due to be circulated in May ahead of Christian Aid week, is **Sunday 28th April, 2024**.

Our worship continues on Sunday at 11am, and online. Watch live, or on demand, by visiting our website, Facebook, or YouTube channel.

Come and join us!

You will be very welcome

Stockbridge Church

STOCKBRIDGE PARISH CHURCH

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0131 332 0122

www.stockbridgechurch.org.uk



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.