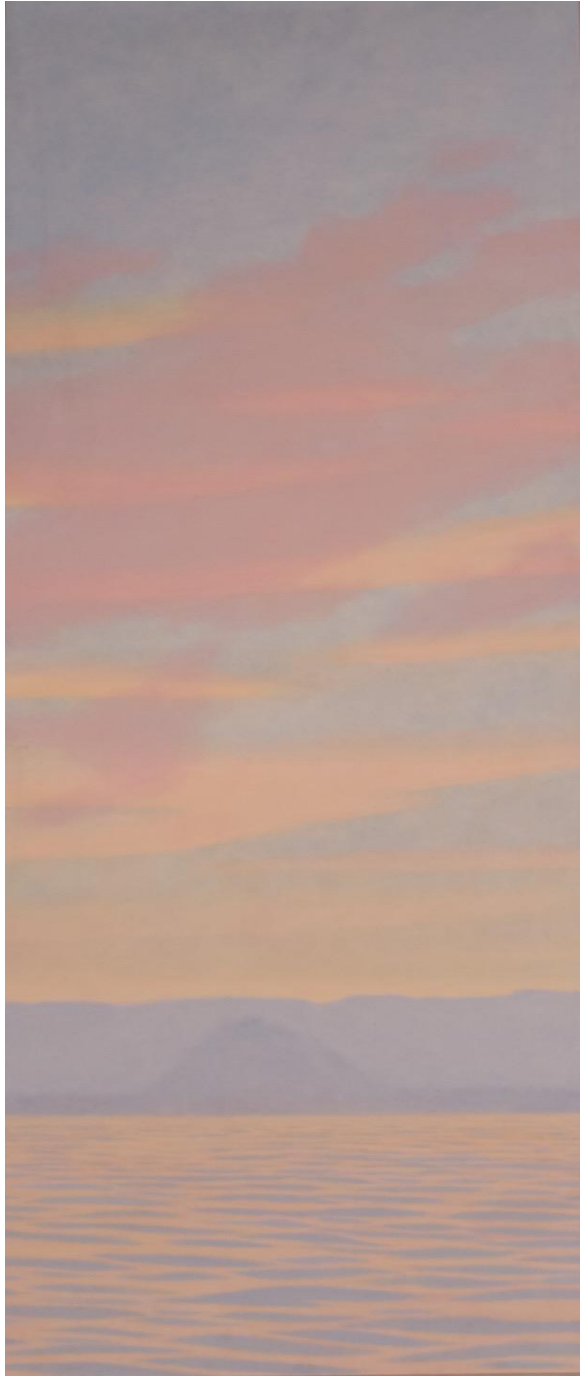


Stockbridge Church

bridging
the gap



The Bridge

Stockbridge
Parish Church
Newsletter

Saxe Coburg Street,
Edinburgh

www.stockbridgechurch.org.uk

Summer 2022

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
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Church Administrator	Sarah Teasdale, 0131 332 0122 admin@stockbridgechurch.org.uk
Church Officer	Martha Michael, 0131 332 0122 churchofficer@stockbridgechurch.org.uk

The church office is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 10am and 1pm.

Letter from our Locum Minister, Rev John Munro

Just when you begin to think that the pandemic is at an end, the numbers of cases are once again on the rise. Currently 1 in 40 people have tested positive for Covid 19, the highest figure in the UK, but thanks to the vaccines the symptoms of most people who have caught the virus are much less severe than when this all started. No need to panic then, but we need to keep on following the advice given by the health professionals – wash hands regularly, stay socially distant, and wear a mask in public especially if you think you are at risk.

This has undoubtedly had an impact on the number of people attending church, not just in Stockbridge, but right across the country. There are as yet no actual figures available, and anecdotally it seems to differ from place to place, but many people think that attendance in most churches is down by about 50%. Thanks to Zoom we can probably add a further 10% who are joining us online. This is helping us to stay together as a congregation even if we are confined to barracks for whatever reason, but it is far from being ideal.

My priority over the summer months, pandemic permitting, is to try and visit the members of the church whom we have not seen for some time. This work has already begun but it needs to increase for I would like to hear how you are and, importantly, what you think about our church in Stockbridge as we move closer to celebrating our 200th anniversary in 2023. I am happy to tell you that Alex Johnston, our parish assistant, has now been accepted as a candidate for ministry in the Church of Scotland and, until he has to move on to pastures new, he will continue with me in this work. Of course, our elders will be keeping in regular contact with their districts and should anyone need the assistance of a minister then please get in touch with us directly or ask Sarah in the church office to pass on a message.

We lately received a message from the former Presbytery of Edinburgh, *now* the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian, informing us that the long-awaited meeting with presbytery representatives allowing us to feedback on the Revised Mission Plan for congregations will be taking place before the end of June. This meeting has come just too late to share with you any likely outcomes, but it would be fair to say that in the interim our thinking at kirk session level anyway has moved on. The presbytery's proposal which we shared with you at the beginning of the year in which it was suggested that a union might take place between Inverleith St Serf's and ourselves has been put on hold until other options are properly explored. It is recognised that geographically speaking we are much closer

to St Stephen's Comely Bank and in any case both congregations are currently part of an informal grouping of churches in the Stockbridge/Comely Bank area. The Stockbridge and Comely Bank Grouping of Churches was formed in the 1980s and comprises (currently) Stockbridge Parish, St Vincent's Scottish Episcopal, St Stephen's Comely Bank Parish, St Ninian's Scottish Episcopal, and Bristo Baptist Church. From time-to-time St Andrew's Roman Catholic Church in Ravelston has played a part. I have been tasked with drafting a proposal for this grouping of churches which would allow us to retain our identities as congregations but work much more closely together in a mission project covering both Stockbridge and Comely Bank. It is difficult to say much more at this stage, but I have always believed that Christian congregations should work together in an area rather than be in competition. Part of my thinking involves the future use of 'Number 7', a valuable resource at the heart of our community. Please let me know your thoughts as together we go forward in faith.

God whom we call Father, we pray for your Church throughout the world, that it may share to the full in the work of your Son, revealing you to all men and women and reconciling them to you and to one another; that Christians may learn to love one another and their neighbours, as you have loved us; that your Church may more and more reflect the unity which is your will and gift; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Prayer based on a Prayer for Christian Unity, Chapel of Unity, Coventry Cathedral.)

Rev John Munro

Congregational News

We shared the joy of their family and friends when Anna and Graham MacGregor, having travelled from Australia, brought their daughter Eilidh to church for a Blessing, on 8th May.

Church of Scotland

Presbytery of Edinburgh & West Lothian

Resources Committee

Deployment Group (DG)



In our Easter issue, we printed in full the response of Stockbridge Church to the Revised Presbytery Plan for our church.

We have yet to receive an individual response, but feedback to all congregations was sent by the Resources Committee Deployment Group on 25th May.

Here are some excerpts from this letter:

"With the visits to congregations in the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian proceeding apace, and following requests from congregations for regular updates, it seems a good time to provide a summary of the process of creating a Presbytery Mission Plan. The information below will then be supplemented with further information and discussion at the Presbytery meeting on 21 June.

Visits: *These will continue during the month of June. It is hoped that every congregation, where possible, will be visited by 30 June, in keeping with the timeline. Reports from the visiting Deployment Group (DG) reps will be shared with the entirety of the team in order to provide an overview. An away day for DG is planned for the third week of June to begin the process of sorting and assessment.*

Timeline for approving the Presbytery Mission Plan: *A timeline running from 1 July to 31 December 2022 is currently under discussion. It is planned that a timeline will be brought to Presbytery on 21 June for discussion. Broadly speaking, discussions between the DG, congregations and mission districts will continue. It is proposed that Presbytery meetings will be arranged so that Presbyters will have an opportunity to discuss ideas, proposals and/or broad themes. Using the visits currently underway as a springboard, everything that can be done within the limits of time and capacity will be done to ensure the involvement of Presbytery in this process.*

Buildings: *The process regarding AMBA (the buildings) was mentioned above. The Resources Committee (RC) and DG are aware that this sensitive issue will require time, effort and conversations. These will continue where needed.*

Communication has been highlighted as a key factor in the successful creation and implementation of a Presbytery Plan. We hope that the information above is of some assistance in providing a view into the state of play at the moment. The Presbytery meeting on 21 June will also allow further dialogue and conversation. Whilst the work undertaken thus far will be shared it will be too early to put forward even a tentative draft: not every congregation will necessarily have been visited. This is, and will be, an ongoing process. The DG would like to thank Presbyters and congregations for their time, energy, insight and patience as all of us work towards a plan and more fruitful mission.

Stewart G. Weaver

Convener - Deployment Group

At the time of the Bridge deadline, Stockbridge Church had just been contacted about arranging a visit before the end of June.

The outcome of the meeting will be shared in the next Bridge, out at the end of August.

We welcome our new church officer, Martha

My name is Martha Michael, and I am so excited to be your new Church Officer! I am from Georgia but grew up living all over the southeastern US as my father, a minister, moved to different churches. I studied journalism in my undergrad at the University of Georgia and then spent several years living in Spain and working as an English teacher. Now, I'm working on a Masters in Architectural Conservation at the University of Edinburgh. In my free time I enjoy cooking, taking long walks around Edinburgh and discovering new restaurants and cafes (I'm always looking for recommendations!). I look forward to meeting and working with you all.





Christian Aid Week

15-21 May 2022

Writing in the Scotsman, the head of Christian Aid Scotland, Sally Foster-Fulton, reported how the charity seeks to help those where the need is greatest. She listed Ukraine, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Haiti and Burkino Faso. Millions of people are hungry, looking for refuge and something to eat. On the borders of Ukraine, Christian Aid is supporting local partners to provide essentials like clothes, food and temporary shelter.

To contribute to this work, our church members through our fund-raising have so far raised the grand total of £632, a great effort. The majority of this is gift-aided, which also adds to the totals.

This was raised through the filling of the red envelopes, our bread and cheese lunch on 15th May (thanks to Fiona and Liz for the lovely soups), and the sponsored daily 300,000 steps of Margaret MacGregor. (Margaret has so far raised in excess of £150, which will be added to the above total.)

Many thanks to all who contributed.

We also assisted in the collecting of items for the St Andrews and St Georges West grand book sale, which by the end of the week had raised £108,600. The last book sale was in 2019, so the return of the sale was a prodigious effort.

Margaret MacGregor writes further about her support for Christian Aid

The Easter issue of The Bridge contained an article about Christian Aid, and on Christian Aid Sunday many of us shared in a simple lunch – with delicious soup – to raise money for its work. This is one of the organisations which I have seen at work when I lived in Kolkata, a huge city in the East of India, near the border with Bangladesh. The whole area is completely flat as it is the delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers; it is therefore prone to floods and the cyclones which come up the Bay of Bengal. Migrant workers travel in from outlying areas to work in the city, and the city itself has many 'bustees' (slums that are villages in themselves) where many

poor people live. There is therefore a need for many social and relief organisations which are at work in these parts to try not simply to give food but to help people to find a living and stand on their own feet; this is much more valuable in the long run than simply handing out food parcels or money. It is with organisations like these that Christian Aid works, sometimes providing sewing machines and training for women, or helping people to learn how to mend bicycles – simple things that can make a big difference to people's lives. Workers with these organisations realised that something should be done in village areas also so that people could stay there rather than thinking they would have to move to the city to find work. I remember visiting an Industrial Institute in a town South of Calcutta and one in Bangladesh where young men were being trained, and the hope was that they would be able to set up their own business in their own areas, perhaps with some initial help.

In Bangladesh the Church is very small in comparison to the population, but they have been courageous in getting involved in social and relief work. I visited several of the bases they had set up in rural areas where they provided training courses for the people living there and from which workers visited villages round about to help farmers to understand about better ways of working their land and suggesting improvements in the kind of seeds they could be planting.

Nowadays many parts of our world are suffering from drought or flood, and Christian Aid is always ready to respond to the needs of people living in these areas. In Bengal people look forward to the coming of the monsoon, which brings relief after the hot weather, and many songs and dances have been composed rejoicing in the coming of 'the rains'. But there is also tension – if there is not enough rain the rice crop will be lost, and if there is too much rain it will be drowned. When I first went to Bengal in 1959 I was told that most farmers were dependent on one crop a year but over the years, with improvements through research on crops and seeds, there can be more crops each year, so if one crop is lost the damage is not so great. It is through organisations like Christian Aid that there can be great improvements in people's lives.

It is because of my experience in Bengal that I feel strongly that we should do all we can to support Christian Aid, so I was happy to join in the lunch on Christian Aid Sunday – though I realise that such a lunch would be much more nutritious than what many people in our world can afford to eat. So when I learned that one of Christian Aid challenges for this May was to walk 300,000 steps during the month of May I decided to see if I could rise to this challenge – and I did! Some people have been generous in sponsoring me. If you wish to contribute to Christian Aid some envelopes

are still available. Do continue to support Christian Aid by your givings and your prayers.

Margaret S. MacGregor

Castle Community Bank

In 2018, in my role as Treasurer at Stockbridge Parish Church, I led an initial investment by the Church of £50,000 into Castle Community Bank (CCB), <https://castlecommunitybank.co.uk/>. This is a Credit Union that was set up in north Edinburgh to support the financially disadvantaged in our midst. The Church made two further investments, the first being a further £50,000 and the second being for £35,000, to support this initiative, and following the second investment I elected to join the Board of Directors at Castle Community Bank in order to, amongst other things, protect the interests of the Church. I was subsequently invited to become Treasurer at CCB, which I agreed to do. This role is an appointment that is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), and I was subsequently invited to become Chairman.

The initial ethos of CCB had been to secure 80% of their business from individuals who could, with relative ease, secure loans, and place deposits, with mainstream commercial banks, and 20% of their business with the financially excluded, in connection with which, and prior to my involvement, CCB had opened a branch in Great Junction Street, Leith. CCB struggled to turn a profit with the commercial business that it was progressing, being the 80%, which was essential to the very survival of the Credit Union. We decided to change the business model, and this resulted in CCB pursuing a growth strategy that would allow us to be able to support the financially disadvantaged but doing so from a position of strength.

The subsequent progress for CCB was, understandably, hindered by the pandemic, but nonetheless we survived, and we slowly began to grow from late 2020 onwards. There have been a number of changes to the Board of Directors as we grew, and we were able to hire Adrian Sargent, an extremely capable full time CEO in early 2021. Much of what we have achieved over the past several months has been because of his input, duly supported by myself as Chairman, and by my colleagues on the Board of Directors.

We also brought about a significant change to our Common Bond, being the means by which CCB can trade, moving it from one which was geographically based, covering most of Scotland, to one which was primarily related to employment categories, thus, at a stroke, we opened

up a large number of potential new Members to our Credit Union. We also strengthened our working relationship with My Community Finance (MCF), from whom we source a great deal of business through their online portal, and to whom we also subcontract a great deal of our back-office support. The combination of the change to our Common Bond, coupled with our enhanced working relationship with MCF, meant that we were able to secure additional investment capital and, as a result, move forward with our expansion plans. When I assumed the role of Chairman CCB had an Asset Base of about £1 million, and, as I write, we now have an Asset Base of over £50 million. This rapid, but prudent, growth has enabled us to now refocus our efforts on supporting the financially disadvantaged in our midst, doing so from a position of strength, and we are now starting to develop a series of 'socially aware' investments that will enable us to meet the objectives that were initially set for the Credit Union.

We are also in discussion with the Church of Scotland and the Carnegie Trust with a view to perhaps using their outreach network to gain closer access to the socially disadvantaged in our midst.

We now have more than 9,500 Members, and, having turned a modest profit in the year to 30th September 2021, we are now supporting three Food Banks in Scotland, (two in Edinburgh and one in Lauder), by giving them reliable monthly contributions to their running costs. It is our intention to expand both the number of Food Banks that we can support, as well as being able to offer a greater level of support to them as we grow, plus use their 'client' base as a means of reaching out to offer financial support to the financially disadvantaged.

I am firmly of the view that if CCB had not taken the difficult decisions these past several months then I do not believe that the Credit Union would have survived as an entity capable of supporting the financially disadvantaged. Many of the decisions that we have taken have been extremely difficult to implement, but I am pleased to advise the Congregation that we are now in an enviable position, indeed we are, at this time, one of the fastest growing, most socially focused, Credit Unions in the UK.

I am also very clear that the above could not have been achieved had it not been for the investment made by Stockbridge Parish Church, indeed without the investment from our Church then I doubt if CCB would have survived, or be where it is today, and of that I have absolutely no doubt. We should all, in my view, be justifiably proud of the Credit Union that we have helped to develop.

The key to success, however, is not so much knowing what you can do, but rather it is knowing what you can't do, and, in that regard, I have concluded that in order for CCB to continue to grow, and indeed to continue to develop

its various strategies for supporting the financially disadvantaged in our midst, then it needs to be led by a Chairperson who is more firmly embedded in the Financial Services sector. It is thus my intention to step down from the Board of Directors just as soon as a suitable replacement can be found. We are currently working with a firm of recruitment consultants to find a suitable candidate.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with CCB, and I leave it well positioned for a very exciting future and, at last, it will be able to more fully deliver on the objectives that led the Kirk Session of Stockbridge Parish Church to invest into the Credit Union in the first place.

Ian Irvin
Elder, Stockbridge Parish Church

19th May 2022

Edinburgh City Swift Project Update.



The latest news is that all of the swift boxes are installed (many thanks to Bill) and that Katie O'Neill from the RSPB's Swift City project has just delivered swift callers for the church. The callers will hopefully help to attract swifts to the boxes - if not this year, then hopefully in 2023. The callers are quite expensive pieces of equipment, so she has asked us to pass them on to someone else (perhaps another local church?) trying to attract swifts once we have been successful.

We have provisionally arranged for Katie to come along on Sun 10th July to speak to our congregation about the Swift City project either during or after the service.

Ben Bond and Judith Walker

By Royal approval: Minister appointed as Chaplain to the Queen

Rev Moira McDonald will formally join her Majesty's Household as a Chaplain-in-Ordinary on the 6th of June.

The minister of Corstorphine Old Parish Church in Edinburgh said she was "shocked" and "surprised" to be appointed to the prestigious role which dates back to the 15th century.

It is today largely a ceremonial honour with members of the Chapel Royal taking part in formal state occasions and conducting services at significant national events.

Ms McDonald grew up in Renfrew in the west of Scotland and was called to ministry when she was 22, first serving in East Lothian before taking up her current role in Edinburgh.

"The things of life where I thought I would be out of my depth have been the happiest and most fulfilling times I could have asked for," she said.

"So here is another call - or a nudge - to do something that feels daunting.

"But that the few people whose counsel I've sought have all said 'go for it' says to me that I should stop worrying about being out of my comfort zone, and enjoy the adventure."



There are 10 chaplains to the Queen in Scotland and each normally holds office until the age of 70.

The chaplains, along with a physician, a surgeon, an apothecary, a sculptor, an astronomer, an historiographer and some others form part of Her Majesty's household.

The Queen is also served by her two domestic Royal Chaplains, the ministers of Canongate Kirk in Edinburgh and Crathie Kirk near Balmoral Castle.

All chaplains are all personally chosen by the Queen and are people in whom she has placed her trust.

EMMS International



Our former minister, Rev Dr John Cowie, wondered if these online prayer meetings might be of interest to us, especially in view of previous input from Mitchell and Runa.

We have unfortunately missed the last one which focussed on Malawi, with Dr Arie Glas from Mulanje Mission Hospital, but the next two are on June and September.

<https://www.emms.org/pray>

Monday, 27 June 1230 focussing on Nepal,

Monday, 26 September 1230 focussing on India.

EMMS International's Online Prayers are a chance to gather together online, hear updates from our international partners and the EMMS team, and pray for health and hope. Join us to hear about and pray for the work of our partners on the frontline caring for people tackling healthcare inequalities to break the cycle of sickness and poverty.

More information can be obtained from Amy Westendarp, Trusts and Foundations Manager

EMMS International, Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5QY

www.emms.org | 0131 313 3828 | amy.westendarp@emms.org

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

Celebrating Age Project

After an absence of over 2 years (guess the obvious reason) the members of CAP met on Wednesday 1 June to discuss what we should do about the Group. There are now only around 12-14 members but all thought we should try to continue. We plan to meet at 2-4pm, once a month on the first Wednesday of the month from October to April, that is if we can book the church hall and kitchen for the required dates.

Hopefully we might get a new member or two. They would be most warmly welcomed. Come and see for yourselves

Violet Hogg

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 autumn edition, is **Sunday 14th August, 2022.**

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.

A pre-recorded Wednesday reflection goes out on our social media at 1pm.

Our small group meets on Wednesday at 7pm on zoom.

Meeting ID 829 4416 9123 passcode 573862.

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.