Stockbridge Church bridging the gap







The Bridge

Stockbridge Parish Church Newsletter

Saxe Coburg Street, Edinburgh

Winter 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 core hours are Monday to Friday, 10-3 pm.

Letter from our Locum Minister, Rev John Munro

As I finish my third year as a minister in Stockbridge it is clear to me that things have moved on and now at last the church is going in the right direction towards an amalgamation of parishes in Stockbridge and the New Town



served by at least one minister of Word and Sacrament. In the hope that friendly relations can be quickly developed between Stockbridge and the congregation at Broughton St Mary's in the first instance, then my time as Locum Minister at Stockbridge is fast coming to an end.

When I arrived back in Stockbridge having been a minister in my own right for several years in the church formerly known as St Bernard's, I anticipated that I might be with you for about a year or two at the most. Clearly, I was being overly optimistic! Time has flown as it does and now the question arises as to how much longer I can continue with this work. In the meantime, there will be a pause, as some time ago I agreed to return to Paris for a month's pulpit supply in December this year. In my absence there will be a few different leaders of worship on a Sunday and any pastoral emergency throughout the week will be undertaken by the interim moderator, Peter Bluitt, the minister of Newhaven.

I have by and large enjoyed my second spell as a minister in this parish, and I am grateful for the opportunity of catching up with some old friends in the congregation and getting to know some new ones. True, it has not been without its challenges and not least moving on from the pandemic and negotiating with the presbytery representatives as to the future of this church that has recently celebrated its 200th anniversary. At the same time it has been a frustrating experience for the role of a locum minister is not without its drawbacks, chief among them being handed the pastoral responsibility of a congregation without the power to initiate the changes that in my opinion are both necessary and desirable.

It is unlikely in the current church climate that a new locum can be found quickly, and as I understand it the point has not yet been reached in the negotiations with the presbytery representatives where a minister could be shared with a neighbouring congregation. I am happy to be proved wrong, but in the meantime should the services of a locum minister be required I will return in the New Year for a time should an agreement be reached with the Kirk Session.

Until then may I wish all of you a very happy Christmas.

John

Stated Annual Meeting - October 6th



(graphic courtesy of applemike.co.uk)

Kerr and **Ben** presented an overview of progress in the last year

2023 headline observations in a busy bicentenary year:

- Successful bicentenary concerts
- Windows on the resurrection exhibition
- Christian aid lunch
- Successful craft fayre (£1500 raised)
- Successful music hub programme
- Highly valued baby and toddler group
- Continued success of fellowship groups craft, CAP, Malawi
- Regular fellowship bible study group (new member welcome)
- Small but sustained scripture union group
- Continued participation in Stockbridge and Comely Bank churches together
- £6000 in funds collected on behalf of others distributed to Malawi, Fresh Start, the Yard, Edinburgh Women's Aid, Bethany, Poppy Scotland, Afghan Aid, Mary's Meals.
- Unfortunately girls brigade company closed as numbers too low

Where we are now in our organization:

- Interim moderator (Rev Peter Bluett) and locum (Rev John Munro)
- Kirk Session closed year with 10 members; now 9 as a result of 1 retirement but 5 members of the congregation have agreed to be ordained or transferred as elders and join the Kirk Session.
- 3 staff at year end but now 5 in 2024: Hannah has replaced Laura who moved on to a new job, Colin as church officer, Ann as church cleaner
- 2 church musicians: Ben and Esther
- 5 key operating committees:
 Admin, Halls letting, HR/staff, Finance and Property management

Some financial headlines (2022 versus 2023):

Income:

Offerings down from £45.7k (2022) to £40.1k. Hall letting income up from £23.1k (2022) to £33.5k.

Manse letting up from £32.5k (2022) to £36.8k.

Income from investments up slightly from £13.8k (2022) to £15.0k.

Transfer from consolidated fabric fund shown as income was £37.5k in 2022 for audio-visual/lighting upgrade – no comparable transfer in 2023.

Expenditure:

Giving to grow (ministry & mission) contribution down from £38.6k to £33.7k.

Salaries reduced from £61.4k to £36.5k.

Church building costs down marginally from £9.4k to £7.8k.

Manse expenses down from £15.3k to £10.6k.

Independent examiners fee down from £5.2k to £1.2k.

Bad debt write off of £2.1k in 2023 also reflected some past years catch up.

(For more detail on above, enquire of Kerr, who can supply detailed tables)

Presbytery plan update:

Broughton St. Mary's (BSTM) interested in exploring union discussions with us.

BSTM direction of travel preferred by congregation at our informal meeting; endorsed by Presbytery.

Limited discussion to date largely as a result of the BSTM minister's surgery.

BSTM approach is to take things slowly and get to know each other.

Session clerks met with central mission district deployment group reps on 30th September to share thoughts.

Session clerks + Be Morris to meet with BSTM minister (Laurene) and session clerk (Ian) in October to start discussions. (NB Ben B and Be met informally with Laurene/Ian back in May – only previous meeting).

We'll need to build a team to progress discussions and would suggest this should not be solely populated by the kirk session so volunteers are welcomed.

Looking ahead - mission planning 2025 onwards:

Based upon the 5 marks of mission

To proclaim the good news of the kingdom

To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

To respond to human need by loving service

To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Underpinned by activities in 7 mission areas:

Worship

Discipleship

Pastoral
Fellowship
Service/outreach
Ecumenism
Preserving creation

Organised through 7 mission teams - you are invited to join one or more mission teams.

Post-SAM we are suggesting a series of mission planning clinics or focus groups to develop our approach in each of these key mission areas. Please take the opportunity to participate and give input to our thinking on and implementation in these areas.

Kerr McLaren and Ben Bond

Congregational News

Clare Hughes, Pamela Abernethy, Carolyn Thurston-Smith, and Rob Cowie are pictured on their day of ordination, and/or joining our Kirk Session (a 5th elder, James Hill, could not be there in person).



Clare's first career was as a professional dancer and dance teacher, where she worked UK wide until she retired in 2010.

Then in 2012, she graduated as a Dance Movement Psychotherapist. She now offers Movement and Wellbeing sessions for Seniors and people living with dementia.

She lives locally and was recently confirmed into the Church family. She now looks forward to contributing to the Church as a new Eldership member.

Pamela

I was brought up in Aberdeen and qualified as a doctor at Aberdeen University in 1973. Douglas and I married towards the end of that year and moved to Glasgow where I worked in the Southern General and other hospitals , finally qualifying MRCGP . We then returned to Aberdeen where Douglas became a partner in a law firm. Between 1978 and 1983 I had 3 children - all girls - and continued to work in General Practice. I finally decided to do a law degree and qualified in 1990. I realised that to combine my expertise in law and medicine I should move to Edinburgh to specialise in medico-legal work. We eventually moved the children to Edinburgh and I eventually became a partner in Simpson and Marwick solicitors. I had a very enjoyable career until my retirement.

The children are now all married, one in London, one in The New Forest and another in New York. We have 5 grandchildren ranging from 14 to 6. We celebrated out 50th wedding anniversary last year and feel very blessed..

Carolyn

The Church of Scotland has been part of my life from the very beginning, as my grandfather was a minister. He had a decidedly ecumenical outlook, which I've realised in more recent years probably had a big influence of my own understanding of faith. I grew up in Dean Parish Church in Edinburgh and considered it "my" church until it closed and I joined Stockbridge Parish Church a few years ago. I also have a strong affection for St Machar's Cathedral in Aberdeen and St Columba's Pont Street in London, and I went to a number of services at St Andrew's Church while I lived in Brussels. I'm somewhat surprised to find myself an "Elder" (can we change the name?!) but when I was asked to consider it, I quickly realised that I was going to say yes. Like many of the adventures I sign up to, I'm not sure where it will take me but I'm looking forward to getting to know more of you better. More generally, I'm a lawyer by training and have spent most of my career working in law reform and policy (regulation/data nerd, sustainability, trade geek etc), I usually turn up to church from the swimming pool and I've embarked on a mission to walk Scotland's Pilgrim Ways. If anyone else is keen on walking and would like to join me up hill sometime, do let me know.

Rob

I'm very happy to be joining the Stockbridge Church Kirk Session.

I served as an Elder for many years at Cramond Kirk, where we were married, and for fourteen years lived in Silverknowes. We moved to this area in 1993, after a stint looking after a school boarding house in Kinnear Road. Eventually, on the retirement of the Cramond minister and Covid, we lifted our lines and joined Stockbridge Church.

Most of my working life was spent at Edinburgh Academy, next door, so I knew this church, and often visited it. I always liked what I saw.

Since joining up I've found it a most friendly, open minded and welcoming congregation. I'll do what I can to help that tradition continue.

James

I was born and grew up in Millport on the Isle of Cumbrae, secondary school in Rothesay Academy, then to Edinburgh University and Moray House. I studied English then trained as a secondary teacher. 6 years teaching English in Sweden, then as an educational publisher and editor in Brighton for 20 years. In 2022 I returned to schoolteaching in Edinburgh, teaching

English in Trinity Academy.

I joined Millport East Church of Scotland when I was 17. While living in the south of England, I spent 20 years in Central United Reformed Church, Hove, as member, elder and lay preacher. The URC is the union of the Congregationalists and the Presbyterian Church of England, the closest church to the Church of Scotland in England.

In the summer I sail, this summer from Largs to Stornoway and back. In the winter I teach country dancing and run courses for primary schoolteachers to

encourage them to teach dancing to their classes.



We enjoyed sharing the joy of **Scott and Margaret's** 60th wedding anniversary – and the cake!



New members: We welcome **Peter and Jenni Chalmers** who have joined the congregation from Grampian.

Our former minister, Rev Dr Anne Logan, remembers our long-standing missionary partner, **Rev Roy Dodman**:

Rev Roy Dodman, who died on 15th September was a longstanding visitor and friend of Stockbridge Parish Church. Roy and his wife, Jane, were our missionary partners for many years and it was always a pleasure to have them home on furlough and hear of their ongoing work in Jamaica. That relationship became much closer in 2004, when budget cuts saw the Church of Scotland remove funding from Jamaica. Rev Jim Wilkie encouraged us, as a congregation, to work together with other partner congregations (most notably Greenbank and Balerno) to continue to fund the Dodmans work for the remaining seven years until Roy retired.

Roy served as minister of Shortwood Church within the UCJCI (United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands) and Jane worked in Education and was instrumental in the development of the International University of the Caribbean.

We remember Roy's cheerfulness; his ready smile; his love of Bob Marley's music; his infectious sense of humour, but above all for his deep and committed faith. We give thanks for his life and keep Jane, David, Mary and their families in our prayers.

Anne Logan

We offer a warm welcome our new administrator, **Hannah Morris**.

Hannah writes:

"I'm excited to step into the role of Church Administrator, bringing my Christian faith and a strong dedication to serving this church community. With experience in both ministry and administration, I'm passionate about ensuring everything runs smoothly so that we can focus on worship, fellowship and outreach. Outside of this role, I am a keen photographer, and I'm part of a worship band at another church, where I love serving through music and leading others in praise. In addition to worship, I have a deep passion for community outreach and am eager to

explore new ways to engage and serve our local community. I'm also very interested in international missions and believe in the power of the global church to bring hope and change around the world. I'm loving the job role already, and have enjoyed working with the team, supporting the church's mission, and helping it grow both spiritually and in its impact on the community."



On Saturday 26th October, over 140 singers joined together in Stockbridge Parish Church for **Music for Malawi** – Faure's Requiem and Vivaldi's Gloria.



This was the 7th Come and Sing fundraising

event for The Soko Fund, a Scottish charity that supports women's education in Malawi, and the second time the Stockbridge has supported our work by hosting the event.

A country like Malawi faces many disadvantages and was, recently, once again ranked as the world's poorest country, economically. But one advantage Malawi does have is its indigenous female talent. And this is what the Soko Fund seeks to support.

There is a saying in Malawi – when you educate a girl, you educate the nation. Through offering women the opportunity to complete their higher education, the Soko Fund has seen these ripple effects – some of our scholars are the only young women to go to university in their area and they have returned to support their community; many, possibly most, end up supporting a sibling or family member or community member through secondary school.

The Soko Fund works with the 6 public universities in Malawi in order to identify young women who will benefit from higher education and be able to contribute to Malawi's development. This is why we focus on vocational subjects. We have seen our students become teachers, doctors, surgeons, pharmacists, engineers, business women, midwives and we now have over 150 graduates contributing to and working in Malawi. The Soko Fund began with 2 scholarships supporting 2 women to become teachers. Now, we have over 75 Soko Scholars in the programme at one time. We also have a Soko Fund Graduate Association, which is run by some of our graduates, and offers internships to our graduates to gain much needed work experience. It also offers a peer support programme to encourage younger women to pursue their education.

We were delighted that so many people – both singers and audience – came along to practice and listen to the wonderful works of Faure and Vivaldi. We raised £3265, which is a fantastic amount, and we could not have done this



if it had not been for the kindness and support from Stockbridge Parish in enabling us to hold the event in the church. The funds raised will offer even more young women the opportunity to complete their education and contribute to Malawi. Thank you.

Lindsay Graham

Celebrating Age Project

CAP is still up and running on the first Wednesday of each month at 2 pm. We would love to welcome new members to the group.

One celebration was afternoon tea at the Queen Charlotte Rooms in September:



Our planned programme for 2024-2025 is as follows:-

4th December Christmas Party
1st January NO MEETING

5th February Anecdotes from the Wards Liz McLaren

5th March How Music Enhances Health and Wellbeing Clea Friend

2 April TBA

Violet Hogg

Craft Group

In December the Craft Group will change from the usual schedule. We will meet in the Church Halls on Tuesday 17th December from 2.00 – 4.00pm for an afternoon of mince pies and Christmas crafts. As always, new members are very welcome but please speak to Judith first so we can get an idea of numbers and make sure there are enough craft kits for everybody.

In January we will meet as normal on the last Tuesday of the month, the 28th, and in our usual venue of Number 7.

Judith Walker

Kirk Fellowship Group

The group continues to meet on Zoom on at Tuesday evening at 7pm. Currently we are discussing the Acts of the Apostles. If you are interested in joining us for informal Bible study with our friendly and supportive group speak to Ben or Chris.

Judith Walker

11th Edinburgh & Lothians Girls' Brigade

It's with sadness that we note the closure of the Girls' Brigade Company. It was founded in 1929 and served the local community and St Bernard's Church, later Stockbridge Church for almost 95 years.

Hundreds were involved over the years, as members and leaders, and great support was given by the Ministers and members of the Session and Congregation. As well as Tuesday meetings there were opportunities to enter competitions, work for Duke of Edinburgh Awards, attend camps, support charities and train for leadership roles and girls learned many subjects that helped equip them for their future lives and careers. Great friendships were formed and there was a lot of fun and laughter. All of this was done with a solid background of Christian teaching and principles.

In recent years it became difficult to attract committed leaders, and the Company survived with a dedicated team of ladies from the Church who joined a rota of Mums to support the Officers on a Tuesday. A series of students, all Officers or trainee Officers, each in Edinburgh for just a few years helped keep things going and gave greatly to the Company bringing ideas from all parts of the UK and as far away as Malaysia.

However, membership continued to decline despite recruitment events, and like many organisations GB was hit hard by lockdown, although the $11^{\rm th}$ met weekly on Zoom throughout. Returning to in person meetings brought a few new girls but after three years the leaders, Islay and Rachel, reluctantly took the decision to close the Company. In fact, the Company numbers had been below the GB Scotland threshold for some time.

Life has changed for young people. When the Company boasted huge numbers the Church also had a large Young Church Group. Stockbridge was a different community with many more families, and youngsters longed to belong to uniformed groups. There was a need which GB and BB filled.

We give thanks for the many lives touched by GB here in Stockbridge, the friendships made and the women who through GB came to know and love Christ.

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During December there will be an opportunity to support the work of Fresh Start with their Cookers for Christmas Appeal. A retiring collection will be taken each Sunday after the service. Last year this appeal led to 282 cookers and white goods being purchased for homeless people moving into permanent accommodation.

Judith Walker

Gifts for Life

This Christmas, you may want to consider giving your friends and family a Gift for Life through Christian charities, such as Christian Aid or The Leprosy Mission. These thoughtful gifts provide practical help -such as clean water, medical care, or education- to those around the world that need it most. By choosing a gift that supports these life-changing causes, you're sharing the true spirit of Christmas and making a lasting impact on communities in need. As we consider this season of giving, we're reminded of 2 Corinthians 9:7: "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." This Christmas, let's embrace the joy of giving, reflecting Christ's love to those in need. Here are the weblinks to explore these life-changing options:

https://charity-gifts.christianaid.org.uk/collections/all-gifts
https://www.leprosymission.org.uk/donate/other-ways-give/gifts-for-life/



Hannah Morris

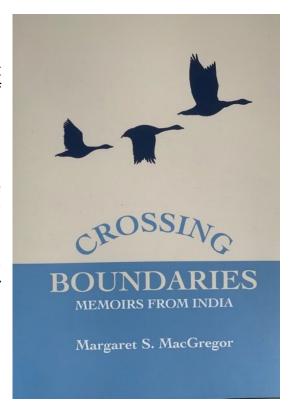
Crossing Boundaries.

Crossing Boundaries, Mitadi, the first female ordained minister of Church of North India.

If, like me, you do or did not know to whom or what these words refer you need to look around the Stockbridge Parish Church congregation and find the 91 year old with all the answers!

When you find her, you may have difficulty getting her to own up to her many achievements.

She will not be so reticent in answering any queries you put to her regarding explanations for the harder to understand subjects in the Bible. You



may disagree with her answers, or you may be asked a return question to make you think, but you will come away encouraged in your Christian faith and better equipped to give account for our Christian faith.

You will also be astounded by her memory recall, Bible knowledge that link events from New and Old Testaments together, roles that women played in the early Church, and much Biblical history. (Question for Kirk Session - why have we not seen her in the Pulpit?).

Do ask her for a copy of Crossing Boundaries – "We are sending you to India" - her life story of the Indian years, written during Covid and after 'pestering' by relations and friends. There are limited copies; she will say there is no charge, but she would love a donation that will end up in Bishops College, India.

Chris Morison.

(If you would like regular benefit from Margaret MacGregor's insights – and others' - do join The Fellowship Group Zoom meetings on a Tuesday evening)

Malawi: Mulanje Mission Hospital Updates

Dr Thorsten Koenig, chairman of the Mulanje Mission Charitable Trust wrote to thank us ("the lovely people of Stockbridge Parish Church"!) for our loyalty and generosity, after our recent donation of £2000.

Here is some of their latest news:

- One specific praise reported from MMH is the success of their youth centre, which now has a library with schoolbooks and offers free tutoring, a valuable resource for students, many of whom don't have their own books. Additionally, they've recently installed a computer room, and starting in November, they will begin offering computer classes for both students and staff.
- They are also very enthusiastic about the expansion of their eye department. A theatre specifically for ophthalmology is currently being built so that they can perform more cataract surgeries in the future and hopefully help many people regain their sight.
- A specific prayer request is for the girls who received vocational skills training this year as part of their Teenage Pregnancy Prevention programme. Please pray that their training will help them to start successful businesses, enabling them to support their families. Ongani, a 22-year-old from a small village, became a welder through vocational training in the TP programme. Despite challenges, she now makes metal furniture and repairs items at a youth centre workshop, supporting herself and her child. Her story inspires young women to develop skills through hard work and passion.
- The vast majority of Malawi's population are subsistence farmers and therefore very dependent on the harvest. As Malawi enters the rainy season, please pray for successful planting and a good harvest. After the difficulties of Storm Freddy and the drought, let's pray for balanced rains that will nourish the crops and bring a generous harvest to the community.



News from the Kirk

Cornerstone Bookshop

After over 30 years trading, it is with great sadness that we have to announce the time has come to close the bookshop. Trading has been challenging for some years, particularly since the pandemic and cost-of- living crisis, and



while our sales have been rising slowly they are showing no sign of reaching sustainable levels. Unfortunately, we have been operating at a loss since Covid and the charity's reserves are running out. That means, if we continue, we will no longer be able to meet our fiscal commitments. We are therefore winding up the charity and Cornerstone Bookshop will cease trading by the end of the year. We are grateful for the support given to us by St John's from the shop's inception and are pleased to hear they are planning on opening a smaller bookshop within the church at some point next year. Most of all, we would like to thank all of you for your loyalty and custom over the years. We have enjoyed the conversations and good cheer and will miss you all. In these final weeks, we would very much appreciate your continued support which will enable us to fulfil our financial responsibilities. We look forward to welcoming you.

The Cornerstone team

Life Care in Cheyne Street wanted to publicise some of their appeals:

They offer a **Meals on Wheels** service to local older people. If you know of someone who could benefit from this service, call 0131 343 0940 or email enquiries@lifecare-edinburgh.org.uk.

Help us keep local older people warm and well

You can help us keep local older people warm and well this winter by supporting our Winter Warmer Appeal.

- By phone on <u>0131 343 0940</u>
- By email at fundraising@lifecare-edinburgh.org.uk
- In person at 2 Cheyne Street, Edinburgh, EH4 1JB

Stockbridge Music Hub

The lunchtime concert on 6th December is the trad duo 'Morag and Lewis' - violin and guitar.





The important one is the 21st December - Triptic - a fantastically dynamic trio (formerly Moishes Bagel) who play music from around globe with a wonderfully warm and entertaining vibe. This concert will be supporting the charity Edinburgh Direct Aid who is currently actively working in Lebanon and Ukraine. I have been working in both countries and can attest that every penny that goes to Edinburgh Direct Aid makes its way to those in need.

Looking ahead to January and Burns Night 25th- Hannah Rarity is joining Artisan for what promises to be a special celebration.

As ever tickets can be booked via https://www.musichub.uk/ and the Eventbrite links.

Clea Friend

Our worship in December:



Stockbridge and Comely Bank Churches Together, of which we are part, have sought and got approval to sing Carols outside the new M&S Food store in Stockbridge on **Sunday 15th December** from 12:30pm for about an hour. Folks from our Church will be most welcome to come along, sing and support. We will be collecting for Bethany Christian Trust, a charity which we already support.

Ben Bond

Your contributions for The Bridge are very welcome, the editor would be delighted to hear from you, just email bridge@stockbridgechurch.org.uk or contact Shona Cameron.

All contributions for the next issue, the first of the new year, should be left in the Bridge pigeonhole or e-mailed to above email address.

The deadline for the next edition is **Sunday 19th January 2025**

Worship at Stockbridge Church.

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

Come and join us!
You will be very welcome





Sunday service, 11am

Visitors and new members to the church are always welcome, whether in person or online.

Inquiries about use of the church and halls are welcome.

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www.stockbridgechurch.org.uk

Stockbridge Parish Church of Scotland, Edinburgh

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