THE SHUTTLE

Marchmont St Giles'
Parish Church
At the Heart of the Community
September 2025

marchmont st giles
church of scotland

1a Kilgraston Road, Edinburgh, EH9 2DW

Meeting Matters

September

14 10.30 Morning Worship at Reid Memorial Church
21 10.30 Morning Worship
28 10.30 Morning Worship

October

5 10.30 Morning Worship
Closing date for material for the next issue of The Shuttle
12 10.30 Morning Worship

Front Page

'Mouseman'

Viewers of a recent episode of the Antiques Roadshow on BBC may have seen a segment about the work of John Thomson - Mouseman who developed an Arts and Crafts business which featured a mouse as his trademark.

Production of artefacts ranged from tables through to cheese-boards but each was adorned with small mouse.

Read more here about the company which still manufactures to this day
https://www.robertthompsons.co.uk/history .

At Marchmont St Giles' we have a lectern and pedestal table produced by the company with their little mouse on the base of each.

Reflection

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God, Matthew 5

I conducted the Scottish Victory in Japan Service in the Scottish National War Memorial on Friday 15th August

. As I thought about what was to be said and how I needed to balance the prayers and the Call to Remembrance, what could I say. The horrors of the jungle and the prisoner of war camp should never be contrasted or compared to what happened to those souls in Hiroshima or Nagasaki – one doesn't cancel the other out.

War of any kind is horrific and the suffering of combatants and civilians alike, in the day and age, is almost a given. The aftermath of war and hopefully what we call peace should never be taken for granted. It is hard won; it is to be made and is something that needs continual commitment and work

The stories I heard were very moving on 15th. Jenny, born into Changi prisoner of war camp; not knowing what cold was, nor food. Her normal was far from what anyone would wish for a child.

Then there was Nigel Robb, the son of two of our members, Ann and George. George served with the RAF as a navigator and flew over Burma and India, living afterwards with the horrors he had witnessed, particularly to his fellow combatants, who were captured by the Japanese and then executed.

Lastly, Charmaine spoke. Her dad was Eric Lomax who wrote the book, The Railway Man. The torture he endured and the effects both to his wives and the DNA changes and health challenges in his children as a result of the torture.

Each of these men returned to civilian life; each forever changed; each finding a meaningful life. For Eric Lomax, he found reconciliation with the interpreter during his torture. Jenny gives talks about her experiences; George was a blessing to his family and had a successful career.

The peacemakers remind us why war should never sleepwalk into conflict; whether it be amongst friends, families, institutions or nations.

Jesus talked about conflict and acknowledged it was part of the human condition. He also turned up at the gates of Jerusalem on donkey. The King of Peace, who held no power in worldly terms, terrified the Roman authorities to the point where he was executed.

It is the Christian responsibility still today, to stand up to those things in worldly terms which are wrong. Equally we are to be the hand who reaches towards the conflict and tries to speak peace to them.

The hand of peace and welcome is also our calling as we move towards Union with Reid Memorial. They feel uncertain about leaving their building and moving to something new. We will also be doing the same, in what a Sunday will be shaped, and the church will look like. We will also have to consider how we run the church and who steps up to convene committees and take forward our vision to serve the community.

I hope you agree that we must intentionally be a hand of welcome and step forward as we work to come together as one. The future is hopeful and we walk together into the future in faith, hope and love.

Karen K Campbell

We are united!

On Sunday 7th September 2025 the congregations of Marchmont St Giles' (48 - 0) and Reid Memorial (41 - 2) Parish Churches under the watchful eyes of representatives of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian Deployment Committee voted to unite under the name of 'Blackford and Grange Parish Church'.

A combined team from both churches now have a work plan to action towards integrating activities and functions so that we can look forward to the Union becoming a reality on 01 January 2026 with a service shortly after.

Let us look forward in faith!

Lectionary

September
15 Psalm 94;
16 Jeremiah 5:18-32 ;
17 Jeremiah 14:1-10, 17-22;
18 Psalm 79:1-9;
19 Jeremiah 8:1-13;
20 Jeremiah 8:14-17; 9:2-11;
21 1 Timothy 2:1-7:
22 Psalm 106:40-48;
23 Jeremiah 10:1-16;
24 Jeremiah 10:17-25;
25 Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16;
26 Jeremiah 23:23-32;
27 Jeremiah 24:1-10;
28 1 Timothy 6:6-19;
29 Psalm 119:49-56;
30 Jeremiah 32:36-44;
October
01 Jeremiah 33:1-13;
02 Lamentations 3:19-26;
03 Jeremiah 52:12-30;
04 Lamentations 1:7-15;
05 2 Timothy 1:1-14;
06 Psalm 137;
07 Lamentations 2:13-22;
08 Lamentations 5:1-22;
09 Psalm 66:1-12;
10 Jeremiah 27:1-22;
11 Jeremiah 28:1-17;
12 2 Timothy 2:8-15 ;

CHURCH FAMILY & PARISH NEWS

On 31st August 2025 Nan Braes was confirmed by The Minister and welcomed by the Kirk Session as a member of Marchmont St Giles'. Her husband, Nigel Robb, is pictured here with Nan and the Minister.

Nigel was ordained by the Minister as an Elder of Greyfriars Kirk on 2nd August. Nigel became a member of Greyfriars as a young man, and was the Youth Rep on the Committee which chose David Becket as their Minister. Nigel's parents lived near Greyfriars and were members there, before moving across the Meadows to The Grange, where they then joined Marchmont St Giles'. The circle is now joined with Nan joining Marchmont St Giles'. Congratulations to the Robbs.

Ed - The Minister is Interim Moderator at Greyfriars Church during their vacancy following the retirement of Rev Richard Fraser.

Easyfundraising is a platform that allows you to raise money for a cause by shopping online. When you shop with participating retailers through Easyfundraising, the retailer donates a portion of your spending to your chosen charity or good cause, at no extra cost to you. To use it, you sign up, choose a cause, and then shop via Easyfundraising or the app before clicking through to the retailer's website.

AROUND THE AISLES

CONGRATULATIONS to Margaret Landels on her 100th birthday in July. Margaret has had a busy couple of months. She was surrounded by her family and friends for her birthday, along with a visit from the Chairman of Legion Scotland, David Boe, who brought Margaret a card.
Margaret was also present at the Tattoo as a guest of the Secretary of State for Scotland, our local MP, as he took the salute. She was also at the Castle for the Scottish VJ Day Service.

Southside Guild session for 2025/26 starts on Tuesday 7th October at 2 pm. Our meetings are held in the Bill MacDonald hall in Newington Trinity Mayfield centre ,
Our speaker is Rev Dr Karen Campbell from Marchmont St Giles' Church who will be talking on our theme "Living Stones"..

On 15th August, The Minister conducted Scotland's Service for the ending of the War in Japan at the National War Memorial in Edinburgh. The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh were in attendance along with veterans from WW2, which included one of our Congregation, Mrs Margaret Landells, who served in the WRENS during the war. She is pictured below chatting with the Duke of Edinburgh. The Congregation heard from children of Far East veterans, including Charmaine McMeekin, the daughter of Eric Lomax who wrote the book The Railway Man; and Nigel Robb, the husband of Nan Braes and son of Ann and George, who flew in Burma during the War.

Sylvan Place has now reopened after almost two years of closure. The top building is student accommodation and the rest is affordable housing units and a social housing block at the foot of the street. Residents are delighted to have access to their houses , although the new build affordable housing will not be handed over until mid September.

Quite a big change from the Sick Children's hospital!

What is the Community Grants Fund?

The CGF is a small grants scheme provided by the City of Edinburgh Council as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to empower citizens and support grassroots initiatives. Grants of up to £5,000 can be awarded to constituted groups for community-based activity. There are 13 local pots of money, each covering a different area of the city including Southside Newington.

Whay do I need to know before I apply?
The CGF Applicant Guidance includes all the information you will need to apply, including what groups are eligible and what types of projects can be funded.
Please use the online application form to apply. If you want to access the application form in a different format, please contact communitygrantsfund@edinburgh.gov.uk.

Marchmont Music, EIFF August 2-23 2025.

This was the fourth year for our series of 10 concerts held in Marchmont St Giles' Church on Saturdays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, forming part of the 2025 Edinburgh International Festival Fringe Programme.

The Church was pleased to receive a donation from the Grange Association in support of the concerts.

The 10 programmes were wide ranging and included a great starting programme by the Co-operation Band; a concert of piano and guitar music; three concerts of soprano and piano music; two string concerts from the Harris Quartet and Leader Ensemble; two concerts of guitar, flute, soprano and piano from emerging young performers; and, as a finale, a concert by two brilliant young performers (violin and viola) from St Mary's School of Music.

Audience numbers averaged 40-60 (minimum 30, maximum ~300) at each of the concerts, which were excellent, well received and greatly enjoyed by the audience. Members of the congregation supported the concerts by acting as ushers and by attending throughout the series.

Butterflies Café was open 10-4 weekdays (Tuesday to Friday) and 12.30-4.30 (Saturdays) and provided food and beverages and a meeting place before and after the concerts.

The concerts were free of charge with a retiring collection at the end to provide support for the performers.

The performers expressed great satisfaction at the venue (noting the excellent acoustics and the lighting) and appreciated the support of the audience. Many of the performers have indicated they would like to participate in future concert series.

Telephone service news! As you may already be aware land-lines are changing, and the UK's telephone network is going digital. By January 2027, the old analogue network will be completely switched off and replaced by new digital land-lines which will work using broadband. This change affects all industry providers and their customers. It is important that we help support members of our communities, especially the more vulnerable, to ensure that they are not adversely impacted by the switch off deadline as best we can.

There are two key campaigns that we wish to draw your attention to:

'National Telecare' campaign: This campaign relates to customers that use a telecare device such as personal alarms, pendant alarms, lifeline devices and home care monitoring systems. It is important that they take action to ensure that their equipment is compatible with the new digital technology. While many modern telecare systems are designed to work with both traditional and digital land-lines, older models may require upgrades or replacements. Users should be encouraged to make contact with their land-line provider for support as soon as possible. Further information is available at:
https://digitalphoneswitchover.com

BT Connected-Together campaign: This initiative encourages friends, family, colleagues, neighbours to support vulnerable members of the community through the switch. This involves helping them to understand why it is happening, and how to prepare. The BT guide and the BT website can be accessed here:
https://www.bt.com/about/all-ip/connected-together

Anyone who needs extra support to make the switch to Digital Voice, should register for this using the BT webform available on the website. An engineer will then be made available to assist them with transition.

KnitWellbeing – From Edinburgh to Kakuma

Back in 2020, during the challenges of lockdown, the Marchmont St Giles' knitting group was one of the very first to help bring CAL the Wellbeing Octopus to life. Colourful CALs, stitched with 'Care And Love', were soon shared with nurseries and primary schools across Scotland, helping children learn about wellbeing in a playful and comforting way via the Wellbeing Toolkit.

Edinburgh meets Kakuma! Start at the Beginning meets the founders and teachers at Restore Hope for Street Children

Now, this story of care is reaching even further.
Through a new partnership with Restore Hope for Street Children, led by Patrick Mbeleci Nyongolo in **Kakuma Refugee Camp, Turkana County, Kenya,** the #KnitWellbeing project is expanding its impact to children who need it most. RHSC supports children aged 4 to 24, many of whom live in challenging circumstances. Teachers have been introduced to the Wellbeing Books, Postersand Games, and are looking forward to receiving the hard copies of the books, alongside a knitted CAL for each of the children - a very unique gift.

Your knitting, and the joy it has brought to the children, is now inspiring a global journey of hope. Every stitch is a reminder that community, compassion, and creativity can cross borders and transform lives.

If you'd like to get involved, learn more, or knit your own CAL, visit: www.startatthebeginning.co.uk

Learn more about Restore Hope for Street Children here:
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/restore-hope-for-street-children/posts/?feedView=all
Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61575714480732

CAL and BIG CAL continue to travel around Scotland to early years settings, and of course we'd love to start sharing CAL internationally! CAL's journey
https://www.facebook.com/StartattheBeginningWellbeingTeam

Together, we're knitting wellbeing – from Edinburgh to Kakuma and beyond.

CAL

New Beginnings

There may be those who have a firm plan regarding what their 'career path' might look like… but I'm not one of them. For me, it's felt more like making it up as you go along! But of course, it's been deeper than that; it's been about trying faithfully to respond to the gentle inner nudges of the Spirit.

I've just started reading Justin Brierley's new book The Surprising Rebirth of Belief in God and it seems to me that my life in ministry has been like that; surprises galore! When starting my training in 1986, you'd have caused me to laugh out loud if you'd suggested my probationary period would be spent at Christ Church on the Island of Bermuda. And upon returning from 'My Island in the Sun' (as their national anthem puts it), it was to Dundee. Compare and contrast! I'd never been to Dundee other than to watch Rangers playing against the two Dundee teams!

But if it hadn't been Dundee, perhaps Elaine and I wouldn't have been open to the call that came next. I was as sure as sure can be that my ministry would be in Glasgow; my home town and the city I loved deeply and still do.

Arbroath? You must be joking!

And yet Arbroath it was and though it would never have been in my plan, as the years unfolded it became increasingly clear that it was the right place at the right time. At the end of my 31 years as minister of Arbroath's St Andrew's Church, it was nothing if not heart-breaking to leave after what had been the most wonderful, enriching season of ministry.

Now, after serving the Church nationally for the last 2½ years as part of the People & Training Team, there comes the biggest surprise of them all; a return to Bermuda for what will, in all likelihood, be my final ministry chapter. When leaving Bermuda first time around, we had always wondered 'Might we ever return?' but never for one-minute thinking we actually would. We really do serve a God of Surprises.

There's a sense in which we're understanding it as the completing of the circle; finishing where we started. But there are other ways in which the second time is going to be entirely different from the first.

For a start, I was 25 when first going and 61 this time. I'm not the same person I was then. Life has shaped and moulded me in a myriad of ways. And beyond that, the world has changed dramatically in these intervening years. I didn't own a computer back then let along a smart phone. And generally speaking, the Christian Church was in a much healthier place back in the early 90s – in many places still thriving (certainly in Bermuda and in Arbroath) rather than surviving as in much of the western world today.

So ministry is, by definition, going to be different but isn't that the way it should be? The aims of the role may be essentially similar but the approaches must adapt according to the circumstances.

How am I feeling about that? Surprised and excited and very much looking forward to being an old minister doing a new thing!

By Very Rev Martin Fair

Note since the retirement of Rev Alistair Bennett, formerly of Melrose and Bowden, Christ Church has been served by Very Rev John Chalmers as Interim Moderator and Very Rev Angus Morrison as Locum Minister.

Very Rev Martin Fair will inducted into the charge next month.

Pic - a Moongate seen all over Bermuda

And finally ……

Modern observations!

1 "My husband and I went through the McDonald's driveway window and I gave the cashier a £5 note. Our total was £4.25, so I also handed her 25p. She said, 'you gave me too much money.'

I said, 'Yes I know, but this way you can just give me a pound back.' She sighed and went to get the manager who asked me to repeat my request.

I did so, and he handed me back the 25p, and said 'We're sorry but we don't do that kind of thing.'

The cashier then proceeded to give me back 75p in change.

2 We had to have the garage door repaired. The repairman told us that one of our problems was that we did not have a 'large' enough motor on the opener.

I thought for a minute, and said that we had the largest one made at that time, a 1/2 horsepower. He shook his head and said, 'You need a 1/4 horsepower.'

I responded that 1/2 was larger than 1/4 and he said, 'NOOO, it's not. Four is larger than two.' We haven't used that repairman since.

3 "My daughter went to a Mexican fast food and ordered a taco. She asked the person behind the counter for 'minimal lettuce.' He said he was sorry, but they only had iceberg lettuce."

4 I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked,

'Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?'. To which I replied, 'If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?'

He smiled knowingly and nodded, 'That's why we ask.'

Education, education, education

MARCHMONT ST GILES' PARISH CHURCH

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