

# THE PARISH PUBLICATION

EDINBURGH PENTLANDS PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Issue 10 . December 2025 / January 2026 . Distributed free

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**Interim Moderator**  
Rev. Ian MacDonald

**Locum Minister**  
Rev. Rita Welsh

**Church Office**  
Dell Road, Colinton, EH13 0JR  
Tel: 0131 441 2232  
Lindsey Rowlands, Secretary  
office@edinburghpentlands.church  
Ruth Burns, Assistant  
admin@edinburghpentlands.church

**Website**  
<https://edinburghpentlands.church>

## THE PARISH PUBLICATION

### Magazine Editor

Kath Hay  
editor@edinburghpentlands.church

If you would like to submit an article for consideration for inclusion in the magazine, please provide an unformatted Word document (**not PDF**) together with hi-resolution JPEG image(s) which should be attached separately.

**Article: 500 words**  
**Notice: 150 words**

**Please note:**  
**Early deadline for the February / March 2026 issue is Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January**

Articles can be sent to the Editor at the email address above, or contact the Church Office. Please note that all articles are subject to editing.

The magazine is printed by  
Printwell, Airdrie

*This is an Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church publication.  
Registered Charity No. SC010313*

## CHURCH CONTACTS

<b>Catering: Juniper Green</b>	Sandy Watt
<b>Catering: The Swing Café</b>	Lynn Leslie
<b>Church Beadle</b>	<i>Vacant</i>
<b>Church Officer</b>	Hugh McCreadie
<b>Director of Music &amp; Organist</b>	David Turner (Colinton) Florence Kinnear (Juniper Green)
<b>Dreghorn Loan Hall Letting</b>	Sheila Porteous
<b>Flower Convener</b>	Helen Drury (Colinton)
<b>Magazine Distribution</b>	Irene Falla (Colinton) Isabel Campbell (Juniper Green)
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<b>Property Convener</b>	Ian Lochhead
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<b>Session Clerk Deputy</b>	John Sharp
<b>Treasurer</b>	Clare Laybourn

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<b>Green Strollers</b>	Jeanette Campbell
<b>Guild of Friendship</b>	Margaret Woodrow
<b>Ladies Badminton Group</b>	Linda Sharp
<b>Leprosy Mission</b>	Rita Brownlie
<b>Messy Church</b>	Alison Downie
<b>Open Door Baby &amp; Toddlers</b>	Karen Barry & Linda Johnston

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**Kath Hay**  
Editor



## WELCOME to the Festive edition

We are delighted to welcome our new Locum Minister, Rev. Rita Welsh, and Pastoral Care Development Worker, Steven Leung. A very cheerful and caring message from Rev. Rita can be read below.

This issue is full of interesting articles: from a visit to the beautiful city of Florence or the influence of St Francis of Assisi, to a couple of items about bringing light into darkness, which have links to our

Nordic and Celtic neighbours. Readers might also remember something involving candles and lanterns that happened in Bonaly/Colinton in 2022.

Thanks to all our contributors and, if you are planning to send an article for the *next* issue of our magazine, please note the **early** deadline is **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January**. In the meantime, I do hope you all have a happy festive season.

**Felice Editrice**

## DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

*Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love endures for ever. Psalm 136*

Thank you for the warm welcome I have received as I start as your Locum Minister, hopefully for a short period, while the vacancy process continues. I also thank God for the support you give to all involved in the task of prayerfully seeking the person God has planned to lead the congregation into the next phase of its life and work in the community.

As a member of the Vacancy Advisory Group from Presbytery, I am well aware of the hard work carried out by the Nominating Committee, Session Clerks and Interim Moderator during recent months.

So, a little about me. I live in Currie in a multigenerational home with my husband Ian, daughter Jaqi and the younger two of her four children. Oh, plus three labradors and three cats!

And I am constantly surprised to find myself in the position of Ordained Local Minister at Holy Trinity, Wester Hailes, and now as your Locum

Minister. Why? Because a call to ministry came rather later in life than for most of my colleagues! I was born in Hertfordshire and had the blessing of a Christian mother and grandparents who taught me about the love of God from an early age.

In my mid-teens, I realised that this love and the promise of eternal life required a personal response and acceptance, and I made a commitment to Jesus. After school, I studied teacher training and, during that time, was challenged by a member of the Christian Union: "Where does God live?" I replied: "It should be in my heart." The response: "Well, have you really asked him in?" Later that evening I prayed and asked Jesus to come fully into my life, to forgive my sin, to give me the new life promised to all who believe. And he did! The experience of the presence of God was overwhelming - and still gives me goosebumps when I talk about it. And the Holy Spirit has never left.

From that moment my life changed and I have, sometimes



**Rev. Rita Welsh**

hesitantly, followed the leading of the Holy Spirit into all the adventures across the years.

At the age of 20, I came to East Lothian with a summer mission team, then met a local lad who had just given his life to Christ. Ian and I have now been married for more than 52 years!

Having moved to Scotland, I loved life as a wife (supporting Ian through his 30 years in the Prison Service), as mother of Jaqi, and granny to her four children. Throughout the years I have been involved in the church and trained in leading worship, youth work, small group work and preaching – but never felt a call to full time ministry.

In my 40s, I embarked on a course of study that led to a

*Continued...p4*

*Rev. Rita Welsh ...continued.*

degree in tourism management. The following decade, I had the opportunity to research a PhD in Ethnic Minority Business Motivation and lecture in People Management at Queen Margaret University. During this time, I felt an increasing frustration about being able to share the Gospel of Jesus, see people accept him into their lives and help them to develop their faith – but I was unable to baptise or bless them in communion.

Finally, in my 60s, that tension was resolved and I embarked on the process of training for Church of Scotland ministry. At an age when most people retire, I was ordained and placed at Holy Trinity, Wester Hailes as OLM, part of

the amazing team there, led so well by Rev. Ian McDonald.

Apart from being a member of the preaching team, my main role there is to lead the Crisis Foodbank - meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable in our community. And I feel it is quite a sad comment on society that I am involved in the same activities as my grandparents were when, as part of their church, they helped run a soup kitchen in the poverty-stricken East End of London, 125 years ago!

What a place God has led me to - knowing his presence and the guiding of the Holy Spirit in my life, sharing the gospel and seeing people come to a personal faith in Jesus and obey Christ's command to feed the hungry and

remember the poor. I now have the opportunity to work in your parish for this interim period.

God is so, so good - but how good? I suggest you read Psalm 136 to see how King David expressed the wideness of God's goodness. Not only is God good, but he is with us.

So, as we enter the Advent period and wait to celebrate the coming of Christ to live as one of us, giving his life that we might be set free from sin and also experience the fullness of life this brings, my prayer is that we all are blessed, we all know the presence of the Holy Spirit - and are constantly surprised at what God is doing in our lives and for his people.

*Blessings  
Rita Welsh*

**We invite you to join us at  
our Services during the  
Festive Season**

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

9:45am Colinton / 11:15am Juniper Green  
**Carol Service** / 6:30pm Colinton

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December**

9:45am Colinton / 11:15am Juniper Green

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December  
Christmas Eve Family Service**

will be held at 6:30pm at both  
Colinton and Juniper Green Churches

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December  
Christmas Eve Watchnight Service**

11:30pm Colinton

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December  
Christmas Day Service**

11:15am Juniper Green

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December**

Joint Communion Service will be held at  
11:15am at Juniper Green

*Colinton Church, Dell Road, EH13 0JR  
Juniper Green Church, 496a Lanark Road,  
EH14 5DH*



This year's **Carol Service** will take place at 6:30pm, in Colinton Church, Dell Road, on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December. It will be very much focused on congregational singing, with plenty of well-known carols for everyone to join in with. So please come along, and encourage your family and friends to join us too. I look forward to seeing you there.

**David Turner, Choirmaster  
and Music Director,  
Colinton Church**





**IAN MORRISON**  
**SESSION CLERK**

## IMPORTANT UPDATE FROM THE SESSION CLERK

will have an opportunity to sign the Call to Callum to be our new Minister up to Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December, after which the Call will be sent to Presbytery.

An Induction Service for Callum will then be arranged by the Presbytery. This is likely to take place at Juniper Green Church on a weekday evening in the latter part of January, or in early February.

from Graeme Clark, who became Treasurer at Colinton Parish Church at the end of March 2020 then, following the Union between Juniper Green and Colinton Churches, became Treasurer of Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church. I thank Graeme very much indeed for all his work during the course of the past five years.

### Beadle at Juniper Green Church

Our sincere thanks also go to George Anderson who, after many years of faithful and dedicated service, has been gradually stepping back from his role as voluntary Beadle at Juniper Green Church.

### Welcoming at Colinton Church

At the October Kirk Session meeting, it was agreed that we would encourage those members of the congregation who are able to use the Foyer doors, to enter Colinton Church that way, rather than via the Tower door. The Foyer provides a more welcoming space for people arriving at Colinton Church, and this change returns the welcoming arrangements to those in place prior to the Covid pandemic.

The Tower door will remain open for those who wish to avoid the need to use the steps between the Foyer and the Sanctuary. This will also comply with Fire Regulations!

### Juniper Green Organ

I am pleased to report that Juniper Green Church organ has been repaired. The fault required the replacement of a very large electrical cable-form which had

### Christmas Services

During the Christmas period, there are a number of special services taking place. These are outlined on page 4.

### Christmas Eve Offerings

As in 2024, extra offerings will be invited from the congregations at the Christmas Eve services. The offerings will be split evenly between these three charities:

**CHAS** (Children's Hospices Across Scotland), **Love From Jamie** and **Christian Aid**.

### Sole Nominee

The Nominating Committee of Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church unanimously decided to invite Callum Macfarlane-Grieve to preach as Sole Nominee to become the new Minister of Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church. It was then planned that Callum Macfarlane-Grieve would preach at the joint service at Colinton Church, at 9:45am on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November. This was communicated to the congregation by Edict.

I realise that, by the time this issue of the church magazine is distributed, the service on 30<sup>th</sup> November will already have happened and a vote taken as to whether Callum is approved as our new Minister. If the vote was in favour, then the congregation

### Locum Minister

Rev. Rita Welsh (Ordained Local Minister at Holy Trinity Church, Wester Hailes) has kindly agreed to act as our Locum Minister for the next few months, prior to a new permanent Minister taking up the post. Rev. Matthew Ross, our previous Locum Minister, took up the post of Minister at the Parish of North West Lochaber on 8<sup>th</sup> November.

Thank you to all members of the congregation who contributed to a generous gift for Matthew on his departure from Edinburgh Pentlands Parish.

### Pastoral Care Development Worker

Steven Leung has been appointed as our Pastoral Care Development Worker and started with us on 5<sup>th</sup> November. Steven has provided an article about his background, which you will find on page 7. During the coming months, Steven will be in touch with everyone on our pastoral care list. He can also be contacted via the email below.

[pastoralcare@edinburghpentlands.church](mailto:pastoralcare@edinburghpentlands.church)

### Treasurer

At the Kirk Session meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> November, Clare Laybourn was appointed as our new Treasurer. Clare takes over

*Update from the Session Clerk...continued*

to be manufactured, and then installed, with multiple connections to be made at both ends of the cable-form. Therefore, it was several weeks before the repair could be completed.

**Juniper Green Boiler Room Flooding**

There continues to be an issue with flooding of the boiler room at Juniper Green. Rewiring earlier in the year now enables the pump to be re-started without having to wade through accumulated water. Additionally, at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> November, the Kirk Session authorised a replacement pump which will hopefully function without the need for frequent manual intervention to restart it.

**Dreghorn Loan Hall Stairlift**

Three quotations to replace the stairlift at Dreghorn Loan Hall have been obtained and were considered at the November Kirk

Session meeting. The Kirk Session then agreed to go ahead with the replacement of the stairlift. The cost will be in the region of £15,000 (VAT included).

It is not known when the new stairlift will actually be installed, but we aim to have this completed as soon as possible, as we realise how important it is for everyone who goes to events or gatherings at Dreghorn Loan Hall.

If there are any members of the congregation who would consider making a donation towards the cost of this new stairlift, then that would be much appreciated. If so, please contact the Church Office.

**Car Parking at Colinton Church**

A revised Car Parking Planning Application for the area beside Colinton Manse has been submitted to Edinburgh Council. Compared with our previous application, the number of new



**Entrance gateway to Colinton Manse & garden**

parking spaces proposed has been reduced to five. This also reduces the potential adverse impact on the trees in the area, to the extent that our Arborist advises this should be acceptable to Edinburgh Council. We expect a decision from the Council in the next two or three months.

**Ian Morrison  
Session Clerk**

**CHURCH FINANCES**

We are rapidly approaching the end of our first full year as **Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church of Scotland**, and it is fair to say that it has been an important year of transition.

The Finance Group met recently to review the church accounts for the nine months to the end of September, and to start the budgeting process for 2026. The current year will see us recording a deficit, but at a lower level than forecasted in the budget prepared at the end of last year. The reason for this is, although regular givings are lower than expected, savings have been made in fabric costs and also ministry costs.

Next year will be another challenge if we are to avoid recording a further deficit, particularly as costs continue to rise. This is something that we all need to be mindful of, as we move into the New Year.

One way of ensuring that we keep any deficit to a minimum, is for us all to review our annual giving and, if possible, increase our regular standing order or cash donation.

The Finance Group takes this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the total offerings of the church throughout the year. As ever, your giving has enabled the church to sustain, build and develop relationships and partnerships with many individuals and groups in our congregation and beyond. The church can only perform its work through the generosity of the congregation and, as the Bible says:

***Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.***  
*(2 Corinthians 9:7)*

No matter how large or small, every offering is gratefully received and is a commitment to ensuring our Church in Colinton and Juniper Green will be here for many years to come.

**Finance Group  
Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church**

## PASTORAL CARE DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Hello, my name is Steven, and I am the new Pastoral Care Development Worker for the Parish. I look forward to getting to know you all during the Church services, at the Swing Café, or through 'phone calls and visits.

Prior to this, I was a research student of the Hebrew Bible at New College. My wife Karen and I moved up to Edinburgh in 2022, after living in Norwich for around a decade. That is also where we met and married and Norwich has become our home-town ever since. During my time there, I first trained as a Meteorologist but later became a Lay Pastor in the Norwich Methodist Circuit - but my passion for the weather has never left me. I like observing clouds and spending time in nature, sitting with a cup of coffee for relaxation.

When I walked around the Juniper Green and Colinton area I was stunned by the vitality of the



Water of Leith and amazed how it links not only both ends of the parish, but also flows all the way through to the shore, where Karen and I now live. This leads me to think of Jesus' promises in John 7:37-38:

*Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.*

Jesus simply invites us to come and receive, being filled with the Spirit and thirsting no more.

As another verse explains, the rivers of living water refer to the giving of the Spirit, who nurtures, repairs and regenerates the one who thirsts. This river of living water flows and links up all of us who believe in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 4:1-3) just as the stream flows.

My prayer is that, as we accompany each other on our journeys, together we may recognise the fact that this living water is "flow[ing] from within" us. In other words, the love and grace of God is always right here within us. We simply come and receive.

**God Bless,  
Steven Leung**

### Blythwood Care 2025 Shoebox Appeal

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Blythwood Care Shoebox Appeal.



A total of 130 boxes were collected then delivered to the local Distribution Centre and they are now winging their way to various destinations in time for Christmas.

Once again this is a fantastic achievement!

Thank you  
**Irene Falla**



the  
**colinton &  
merchiston**  
community choir

Please join us on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December in the Memorial Hall at Merchiston Castle School for our **Christmas Concert** which will start at 7:30pm.

**Music:** We shall be singing some beautiful Christmas music, including Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, Cornelius' *Three Kings from Persian Lands Afar*, Telemann's *Der Jungste Tag wird bald sein Ziel* and a very varied selection of Christmas carols.

**Tickets:** £10pp or £5 for under 18s are available from choir members or at the door of the Memorial Hall, which will open at 7pm.

**Who we are:** We are a welcoming, non-auditioning community choir, with a mixed range of ages and singing and sight-reading abilities. If you would like to see what it would be like to sing with us, please join us in the Memorial Hall for an **Open Rehearsal** on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm. There will be no commitment or pressure to join. Our rehearsals usually begin at 7:15pm and end at 9pm. We look forward to singing Mozart's *Requiem* next term.

**Get in touch:** For information about the choir, please visit our Facebook page or website:  
[www.colintonchoir.org](http://www.colintonchoir.org)



This year, my husband Ian and I celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with a special trip in August. We embarked on our first-ever cruise to the French and Italian Rivas, followed by a six-night stay in Florence. I had never been to Florence before, but Ian had, and he assured me that I would really enjoy visiting the city. He was indeed correct.



Wherever we travel to, be it in the UK or abroad, we enjoy visiting local churches and feel a sense of calm in these places, as well as finding out many interesting facts.

I always make a point of seeking out visual depictions of the Holy Spirit in the form of the dove. To me, this forms a link to our own Church here at Edinburgh Pentlands Parish.

Florence is full of wonderful culture, churches, artefacts places to visit – and there’s a lot to take in. In addition to the Uffizi Gallery, Vasari Corridor, Ponte Vecchio and Boboli Gardens, we visited several churches, including the Cathedral - the Duomo (Santa Maria del Fiore) - which is pictured bottom right. As well as admiring the really wonderful



exterior and the detailed interior, we managed to ascend the 474 steps (!) to the top of the dome to take in the wonderful views across the city.

A church which I particularly felt an affinity to, was the Santa Croce (Holy Cross), pictured top right, the largest Franciscan Church in the world. It is located in the Piazza Santa Croce and has a wealth of art, history and spiritual and faith aspects for people to experience.

In addition, there are a number of tombs of significant people, including Machiavelli, Galileo, Dante and Rossini. Then, by

### FLORENCE - A BEAUTIFUL CITY WITH GLORIOUS CHURCHES AND THE FIRST HOME OF AN IMPORTANT LADY



chance, in an outside cloister we discovered a statue of Florence Nightingale. She was an important pioneer in modern nursing and was born in Florence, hence her name. Ian and I are both retired nurses, so discovering this was meaningful.

The statue, sculptured by Francis William Sargent in 1913, is of a young woman with a lamp and inscribed at the base are the words *Horam Nescitis* [You do not know the hour] which comes from Matthew’s Gospel 25:13. There is also a plaque which details Florence Nightingale’s work and contribution to nursing.

While in the Santa Croce, I felt a particular sense of emotion, unlike anything I had experienced in similar buildings. On our last day in Florence, I felt compelled to revisit Santa Croce - which I was really pleased to do.

Recently, while recounting my experience to one of my friends, she mentioned a syndrome called ‘Stendhal’ which is a psychosomatic reaction, described as feeling physical symptoms, including increased heart rate, dizziness and fainting, triggered by emotional and sensory overload when encountering overwhelming beauty in art. This was first described by Stendhal, who was a 19<sup>th</sup> century French author, when he was inside Santa Croce. Although I didn’t notice physical symptoms, perhaps some of what I felt relates to Stendhal’s experience.

We hope to return to Florence, as there is so much more to see and so many places that we would like to revisit - as well as the great restaurants and shops too! It was certainly a very meaningful and enjoyable trip.

**Ruth Burns**  
**Assistant Administrator**



## SHINE JESUS SHINE

This past year just seems to have flown by, and we now find ourselves in the season of Advent, with only a few weeks left until Christmas.

This is a busy time for most of us as we juggle all the preparations that need to be made in the run-up to Christmas, while looking forward to the special day itself, when we celebrate the gift of the Christ Child born into our world, bringing light and life into the dark days of December.

As I write this in the middle of November, I'm aware of another Advent which is fast approaching and begins, not on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, but on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November. This date is the beginning of **Celtic Advent** which lasts 40 days, reflecting the 40 days of Lent in the run-up to Easter.

Celtic Advent was the traditional beginning of monastic fasting and preparations for the Feast of Christmas. It originated with St Martin of Tours, who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. He was one of the early Christian Saints who established a pattern of sending out his followers to spread the Good News of Jesus. This pattern of evangelism was to influence the Celtic Saints of the future, many of whom are familiar names to us today, including St Columba, St Aiden, St Cuthbert, St Mungo and many more.

Through observing this longer period of Advent, it gave more time to prepare the way for Jesus to be welcomed right into the centre of hearts and lives. A time of unhurried personal reflection, examination and seeking forgiveness. It was said that the door to the stable where the Christ Child was born was very low - and only those who knelt would gain access.

Being really ready for Christmas would mean that our thoughts are focused, not only on letters, cards, food, drink and presents, but also on repentance, humility and having our hearts ready to receive the love of Christ and share it with those around us.

Whether you observe Advent or Celtic Advent, the most wonderful thing about the weeks before Christmas is the light that



shines into our lives in the darkest period of winter. Cities, towns and villages everywhere are ablaze with Christmas lights and decorations. So, as you celebrate Christmas this year, may the light of Christ shine brightly upon you and all those you love.

**Moira Shirreff**

You may find it helpful to reflect on the words of Graham Kendrick's well-known song:

### SHINE JESUS SHINE

Lord, the light of Your love is shining  
In the midst of the darkness, shining  
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us  
Set us free by the truth You now bring us  
Shine on me, shine on me

#### *Chorus*

Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire  
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy  
Send forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light

#### *Chorus*

Lord, I come to Your awesome presence  
From the shadows into Your radiance  
By the blood, I may enter Your brightness  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness  
Shine on me, shine on me

#### *Chorus*

As we gaze on Your kingly brightness  
So our faces display Your likeness  
Ever changing from glory to glory  
Mirrored here, may our lives tell Your story  
Shine on me, shine on me.

#### *Chorus*



Hello again. I'm just back from the biggest ecumenical adventure of my year, as an Intern at the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC).

This past month I have been in Thailand at the WARC General Council gathering in Chiang Mai. It was such an incredible experience, meeting church leaders from across the world. After I arrived in Chiang Mai, my first few days involved attending many meetings and lots of staring at spreadsheets.

Once the General Council started I shifted hats and served as lead minute-taker and also as one of the two Church of Scotland delegates. I had a fantastic time meeting Marvella Harberts, seen here on the right, who is from the Reformed Church in America. She made my work on the Minutes Desk a real joy.

As Church of Scotland delegate, I was busy attending the Listening, Discernment and Decision-making sessions. During the Decision-making sessions, I spoke four times, moving new amendments on a variety of different issues. This was definitely the biggest group I've ever addressed - and the least preparation I have done before speaking.

Out-with the business sessions, I experienced several highlights. The first was taking part in the Youth Caucus at the start of the General Council. The second was attending worship in one of the local churches where I was asked to give a testimony of my faith journey. That was then translated into Thai. One of my lasting memories of that church was the hospitality we received. After the service, they invited us for lunch where they gave us Khao Soi, a creamy chicken noodle soup which is a speciality dish of Chiang Mai, and is now one of my new favourite foods.

## ECUMENICAL ADVENTURES WITH GEMMA KING



The third highlight was the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration where we marked 150 years of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, of which the Church of Scotland is a founding member.

After the General Council finished, I took the opportunity to have some holiday time in Thailand and explore a bit more. I stayed for a few days in Chiang Mai where I enjoyed doing all the tourist things of visiting temples and taking a tour up Don Inthanon, the highest point in Thailand. It's double the elevation of Ben Nevis.

I then flew to Bangkok where I spent a week exploring. Definitely a very different pace of life to that in Chiang Mai. I very much enjoyed the food there, as well as an adventure to Ayutthaya, the old capital city of Thailand. It was fascinating seeing all of the temples, which are mostly ruined.

My adventures then took me to Seoul in South Korea, where I spent a day on a solo trip to Gyeongbokgung Palace and also

had the joy of attending the wedding of my friend, Jooeun.

I shall finish writing now, and get back to my final items of work for the WARC, before I come home to Juniper Green at Christmas. I can't quite believe that I have just written my last **Ecumenical Adventures** article.

*Gemma King*

### CAN YOU HELP?

Colinton Church will be installing a new stairlift at **Dreghorn Loan Hall**.

If anyone would like to make a donation to help cover the extensive costs, please get in touch with

**Property Convener  
Ian Lochhead**  
via the **Church office**.



Thank you.

**I took the colourful 'photo below while on a visit to a church in West Lothian last year. It is of a stained-glass window that shows St Francis of Assisi, which led me to discover that St Francis is the patron saint of ecology. (Ecology is the relationship between living things and their surroundings or environment.)**

Saints help me feel a connection to God because they are people. I feel connected to St Mungo through place (*please see my article 'Well, Well' in Issue 5 of The Parish Publication.*) I feel connected to St Francis through his care and respect for nature.

There is an inscription at the foot of the window which says 'Praise ye and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility'. I wondered what this text was, so I looked it up. I was delighted when I discovered that it is a quote from a song that St Francis wrote called **Canticle of the Sun**. It's a song that many readers of this article will be familiar with because there is a translation of it in the purple hymn book (CH4) at number 147. The first line is 'All creatures of our God and King'.

St Francis thought of parts of the natural environment - such as animals - as siblings to humans. In his canticle he thanks God for some of these things and says what they give us. For example, he praises God for 'Sister Mother Earth' who sustains human beings and provides us with fruits, flowers and herbs. As someone who cares deeply about nature and delights in it, I am grateful to have discovered St Francis and his canticle. As a disabled Christian, I am also encouraged that St Francis was physically blind when he wrote it. But he was able to see clearly - through his mind's eye - that humans are connected with our environment and depend on it to survive.

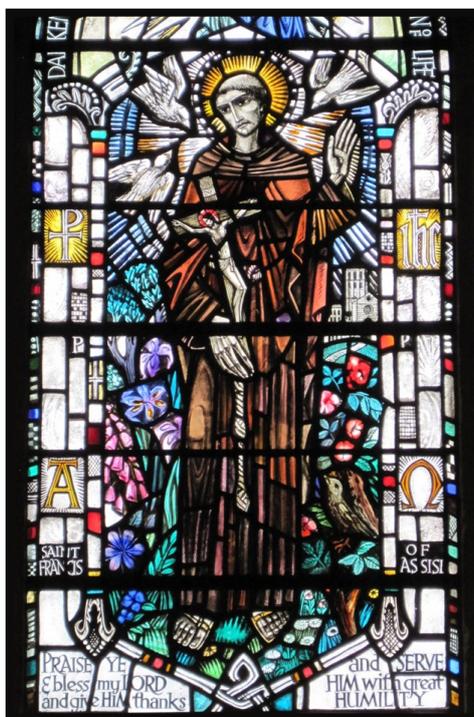
This demonstrates that St Francis, as a blind person, was able to see clearly, mentally rather than physically, and that he also had a brilliant, unique contribution to make to the church through his insight and creative ability. But in order to make it, he needed a bit of support. Because he received that support, we have the **Canticle of the Sun** today.

This is a perfect example of disability inclusion in the church. I am grateful to St Francis and his scribe for giving me a song to

sing that lets me thank God for our environment and for reminding me that we are entirely dependent on our environment for our survival. So it is not only our Christian duty, but also in our best interests, to respect and protect nature like a sibling, rather than seeing it as inferior to humans.

If you would like to find out more about St Francis, the team at Rosslyn Chapel has produced some educational resources about him. They are aimed at children, but I found them helpful as a starting point. You can download them from the Rosslyn Chapel website. You can also find an English translation of the original text of St Francis' song on Wikipedia under 'Canticle of the Sun'.

## ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI AND HIS CANTICLE OF THE SUN



*Article and image of the church window provided by a member of the congregation*



## SHINE A LIGHT - A REMINDER OF A SUPERB EVENT WHICH TOOK PLACE IN DECEMBER 2022.

Led by Minister Rev. Rolf Billes, scores of people holding lanterns and candles walked from Bonaly Store to Colinton Church. Then a concert took place inside the Church, which raised more than £540 for 'Shelter'.



## LIGHTING UP THE DARK WINTER SKIES

As daylight hours fade and dark evenings wrap around us, there is a traditional event that lights up the dark skies for many people in Nordic countries such as Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Lucia of Syracuse, also called Santa Lucia and better known as Saint Lucy, was a Christian martyr who died during the Diocletian Persecution period in 304AD. I don't want to provide details of her hard life and very tragic death, but she was a strong, caring and determined young lady.

Lucy is venerated as a saint in Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Christianity. Her name means 'light' and she is the patron saint of the blind.

References to her are found in many Catholic texts and she was cited by the Venerable Bede, the 6<sup>th</sup> century English monk and scholar. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century, she had two churches dedicated to her and she also had her very own saint's day in England that forbade non-essential work. But her popularity, and her saint's day, were swept into obscurity by Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and her story faded into the past.

However, while she may be less familiar to people in the UK, Saint Lucy is as important to children in certain parts of Europe as Santa Claus is to us here.

The feast day of St Lucy is held on 13<sup>th</sup> December and is celebrated with a variety of ceremonies. In Sweden, St Lucia's Day marks the beginning of Christmas celebrations. On that day, the eldest daughter of the family traditionally dresses in a white robe and wears a crown, which is an ever-green wreath studded with candles.

The festival aims to bring hope and light during the darkest time of the year.

For hundreds of years, St Lucia's Day coincided with the Winter Solstice, as established in the Julian calendar. Since we now work to the Gregorian calendar, which was introduced by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582, the Winter Solstice falls on 21<sup>st</sup>

December. However, this has not altered the date for celebrating St Lucia "bringing light into the winter skies" and it continues as 13<sup>th</sup> December.

A few years ago, I visited some of my family who live in Sweden and was able to experience this special celebration. I was amazed to watch young girls walking, so gently and carefully, with lighted candles on their heads.

With Rev. Rolf Billes' own European links, that was most likely why the superb **Shine a Light** parade and concert took place, here in Colinton, in December 2022. That was a wonderful experience that also lit up the dark skies.



*Editrice Kath*



## THE GREEN STROLLERS



On Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September, eighteen Strollers headed to Pitlochry for a three-day walking break. We set off by car and coach and arrived at Fisher's Hotel around 3pm. The hotel is located in the centre of Pitlochry and ideally placed for a spot of retail therapy.

After checking in, we explored our surroundings before sitting down to an excellent dinner. It was good just to relax after dinner and enjoy catching up with one another.

The next day the weather was sunny and warm and we headed off to walk round Faskally Loch, to visit the dam and the fish ladder, then had a snack lunch in the Festival Theatre coffee shop. In the evening, we all enjoyed a game of Bingo, with one of our members acting as a Bingo Caller. To some of us, this was a fairly new experience which, I think, was enjoyed by all.

The next day we walked to Moulin, a very picturesque hamlet, close to where the Danes Standing Stone is situated. We then stopped for

coffee in the local hotel before heading back to Fishers. In the evening and, after dinner, we met again in the lounge to relax and socialise.

Then it was off home. Throughout the three days, the weather was sunny and fairly warm. Imagine our relief when, on the day after our departure, the storm hit - can't remember the name, but it was female!! We had a lucky escape.

I think I speak for the group when I say a good time was had by all. We are now back safe and sound, ready for our next challenge.



*Happy holidays  
Jeanette Campbell*





# The 'Lit'

## Colinton Literary Society

The 113<sup>th</sup> season of Colinton Literary Society is well underway with excellent talks already presented. Just take a look at the information regarding the Colinton Tunnel Mural, which was presented by Eddie Banks and Mike Scott at one of the November evening meetings. Our 2026 meetings will commence on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January and are listed on the right. Do come along and find out more. Everyone will be made very welcome.

History, poetry, mystery and art are just some of the topics that feature in the wonderful selection of presentations by our guest speakers. Meetings are held in Dreghorn Loan Hall, Colinton, EH13 0DE.

Coffee, tea and wine are served from 7:30pm and the talk or event commences at 8pm. The evening ends at around 9pm.

The last event in 2025 will be the **Buffet Supper**, which takes place on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Music will be provided by the wonderful **Glencairn Ensemble**.

Please note this event is for Lit members and their guests.

- 14 Jan Winter Worlds:** Donald Smith explains why fairy tales still work their magic and lighten the darkness
- 21 Jan Thomas Hardy in Context:** David Dow and the **Dovecot Singers** explore the world in which Thomas Hardy lived and wrote
- 28 Jan Holyrood Elections 2025: What might we expect from the next Scottish Parliament?** Sir Paul Grice reflects on the current Parliament and looks ahead to the next one. What could the possible outcomes mean for Scotland and the UK, if the Reform Party send MSPs to Holyrood for the first time?
- 04 Feb The Queen's Funeral:** Tim Purves tells the story of the most important British funeral this century
- 11 Feb The Burrell Collection - Renaissance of a Museum:** Duncan Dornan describes the riches to be found in Glasgow's Burrell Collection
- 18 Feb French Royalty and Scotland:** Odile Hughson talks about the famous French royal connections with Scotland
- 25 Feb The Vanishing Earth:** Jamie Crawford discusses the content of his latest book
- 04 Mar AGM / Harvie's Dyke - The People, their Liberty and the Banks of the Clyde:** After a brief AGM, Prof. Christopher Whatley tells the remarkable story of one of the country's earliest right-of-way campaigns



## COLINTON TUNNEL MURAL CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Colinton tunnel is home to *the* most beautiful and original artwork, created by Chris Rutterford, pictured on the left. Chris works with an inspirational team, including Eddie Banks and Mike Scott, who presented an update about the continuing work on the tunnel at a recent Colinton Lit evening.

At the end of their talk, folk were able to buy some of the super Christmas gifts that have been produced. This is a way for people to support the project, as all proceeds from sales go towards preserving the Colinton Tunnel Mural. It has been on show for years, but important restoration work is carried out all the time.

If you would like to buy tunnel-themed gifts such as notebooks, calendars, colouring books and jigsaws, you will find them on sale at Colinton's Olive Deli & Post Office, Currie Gift Shop and the Water of Leith Centre. They will certainly make great stocking fillers!



Eddie and Mike



## ORDAINED LOCAL MINISTRY TRAINING

JANET SHEPHERD

Dear Friends

I am now in my second month of probation as part of my preparation for Ordained Local Ministry (OLM).

This year, I am based at St David's Carrick Knowe, with the Rev. Fiona Mathieson as my supervisor. This congregation united around the same time as Edinburgh Pentlands Parish, except that the St David's Broomhouse Church was about to close. Both congregations therefore came together and now worship in the former Carrick Knowe Church building.

Like Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church, there are not many young people who attend, but the first Sunday of the month focusses on youngsters, which helps parents to balance the competing demands of sporting activities with church activities.

There is a Youth and Families Worker who does weekly Friday afternoon activities with the kids. As part of her role, she also goes into local primary schools to introduce the children to cooking and, once a month, she cooks a community meal which is open to anyone. I've not been along yet, but it is a lovely idea and helps put the Church at the heart of the community.



There were also quite a few young people at the moving Remembrance Service, including members of the local Scout troop, a teenager singing with her grandfather at the time of reflection, and two young girls, along with their grandmother, laying a wreath at the front of the Church.

During the year, as well as my time with St David's Carrick Knowe, I need to attend various Probationer conferences. The first of these was at the end of September, when we met in Stirling. Due to the disruption to the candidate assessment process because of Covid, there are only

four probationers this year, of whom three are OLM probationers and the fourth is on his final stage towards fulltime ministry of word and sacrament. It was great to get together. Our time included learning from two of last year's probationers; a session on self-care amongst the challenges of ministry; exploration of the Church of Scotland's Learn website, which offers resources for all of us to learn (see below).

We also had a fun session engaging with some of the music in *God Welcomes All*, the new supplement to the Church Hymnary fourth edition.

As with every Church, our thoughts are now turning towards Advent and Christmas, with the first activity being some carol singing on 7<sup>th</sup> December at the Saughton Park Bandstand. Hopefully it will stay dry and not be too perishing!

As we look forward with anticipation to Christmas and the coming of Christ into the world, we also look forward to the appointment of a new Minister to lead Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church.

*Exciting times lie ahead.  
Many blessings to you all,  
Janet*

[www.churchofscotland.org.uk/  
resources/church-of-scotland-  
learning](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/church-of-scotland-learning)

## Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church Guild of Friendship



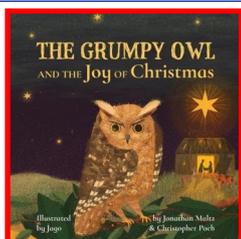
We meet fortnightly, on Thursday afternoons, in Juniper Green Church Hall, for an afternoon of Friendship, Fellowship and Fun. Our recent meetings have seen us transported, with Brian Salvona, to Japan and its beautiful flowers and colours. He added music to his slide show and we enjoyed an excellent afternoon.

Hugh McCreadie shared his knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, jewellery with his excellent talk entitled *History of Jewellery*. We then all enjoyed finding out more about the history of Bletchley Park

with Derek Douglas who shared his knowledge during his illustrated talk.

On 11<sup>th</sup> December we will **Celebrate Christmas**, with carols and readings as well as enjoying festive nibbles along with a cup of tea. Guild then resumes on 8<sup>th</sup> January with a **Games Afternoon**. Please come along and join us - you will be made very welcome.

*Wishing you all a very Merry  
Christmas and a happy,  
healthy New Year.  
Margaret Woodrow*



### Joy: Messy Church is a joy

As we come towards the end of our third year of Messy Church in the Dreghorn Loan hall, we have settled into a rhythm.

We have a great team of volunteers who help with our activities, we have a super group of families who come along, and we have had the chance to see children grow and develop - and we adults have made friends too.

There was an average of 24 children at each session in 2024 and this year has been similar. You are very welcome to join us as we continue into next year. We meet at 2:30pm on the first Saturday of the month, but in January it will be the second Saturday, to avoid the school holidays.

**Joy:** The dictionary says this means great happiness, pleasure or delight. It is a word often used at Christmas. *Joy to the world, the Lord is come* is the very well-known first line of a carol. This year **Joy** will be the theme of our Christmas Messy Church taking place at 2:30pm on 6<sup>th</sup> December, and also at the family Christmas

Eve Services, at 6:30pm in both Colinton and Juniper Green Churches.

With the help of a very grumpy owl, we shall explore the nativity story and find out why the arrival of God's son Jesus, in a stable in Bethlehem, brought joy to the whole world. As this world becomes more uncertain, it is easy to forget the meaning of this.

As we learn about the very first Christmas, we will also consider what people, places or things give us joy, as we thank God for them. If you can, do come and join us at any of the Christmas Services in Edinburgh Pentlands Parish.

*Alison Downie*

## UPDATE FROM THE COLINTON GARDEN CLUB

The Club's programme of events is in full swing. We have welcomed back existing members and new folk, from Colinton and beyond, and our Talks have been very well attended.

The annual **Plant Sale** took place on 11<sup>th</sup> October at St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, where lots of bulbs, plants, books and garden-related articles were for sale. But they were not on sale for long as folks quickly snapped up everything on offer! An incredible 1,155 spring bulbs were sold (thanks to Margo Gilchrist for preparing and bagging them), so we are looking forward to a very colourful Colinton in Spring next year.

Gardening can be a very hazardous business so, at the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> October, in her talk **Common Garden Injuries**, Alison Downie, who is a physiotherapist (pictured below) helped gardeners in the room understand how to prevent injuries when they are gardening.



At the 24<sup>th</sup> November meeting we held a **Gardener's Q&A Session** for the first time, and the committee is now preparing for the Garden Club's **Christmas Party** which will be held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December. In the New Year, on 26<sup>th</sup> January, we will have a talk by Janice Edwards on the art of growing bonsai trees. This will be followed on 23<sup>rd</sup> February by the always popular **Members' Evening**.

Do consider joining us - new members are always welcome. Have a look at our website where you find details of the club and our events: [www.colintongardens.org.uk](http://www.colintongardens.org.uk)

Happy gardening and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from Colinton Garden Club.

*Mary Davey*



*Images: Kath Hay*





**Christmas on the (different) Corner returns!** As the days grow shorter and the air feels crisp, Colinton Village Enterprise invites you to join them for a joyful community celebration:

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December  
5pm to 7pm

St Cuthbert's Church Hall,  
Westgarth Avenue, Colinton



Come together with neighbours, friends, and families for Santa's Grotto, mulled wine, mince pies, tombola, crafts and fun activities for all ages. This is a time to celebrate caring, connection and the small joys of the season. It's also a moment to share the excitement of The Shed/Community Hub project in Spylaw Park. The building is slowly transforming into a welcoming space for everyone: internal walls and the mezzanine have been removed and the mural created by Firrhill High School in 2017 has been carefully recorded to be brought back to life, preserving a colourful piece of our local story.

Our Trustees have worked tirelessly to make this vision a reality. But the true strength of the project is the community around it. If you have a little time, a few ideas or skills to share - whether for fundraising, events, or volunteering - your support can help bring the community hub to life. Donations, big or small, will always be appreciated.

This Christmas, let's celebrate what we can achieve together: the friendships we nurture, the kindness we share, and the joy of creating a space for everyone to enjoy.

Keep up with progress and upcoming events at Colinton Village Enterprise SCIO on Facebook. We welcome any ideas you may have, so please email us at [colintonvillage@gmail.com](mailto:colintonvillage@gmail.com)

Wishing you a Christmas full of warmth, friendship and hope, and a New Year bright with possibilities.

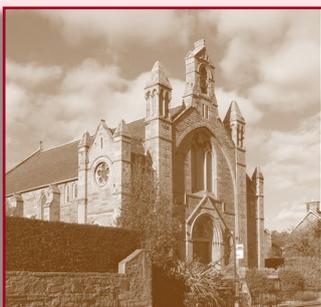
## The Leprosy Mission



Once again I am amazed at being able to send £84.00 to the Leprosy Mission. This was made up from money added into the Blue Boxes on the table at Juniper Green Church and the collection from the Guild, plus we received a lovely donation from a member of the congregation.

There are also a few magazines on the shelf, at the right hand side in the vestibule, telling of the work that is done through the Leprosy Mission. Thanks go to everyone who has contributed.

*Rita Brownlie*



## FANCY A BIT OF TOE-TAPPING?

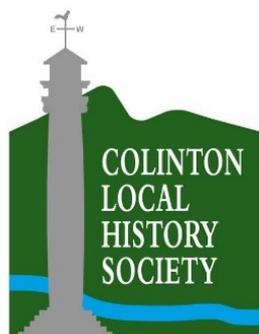
Not only a long-time member of the Colinton Church Choir, but also a stalwart accordion player with the

**Auld Spice Ceilidh Band,**

Allan Gray is pictured, in the back row, with his fellow musicians.

The Auld Spice band play at many events in and around Edinburgh and rehearse in the Redford Room, below the Swing Café, each Wednesday from 1:45pm - 3:45pm.

If you would like to know more and get a bit of toe-tapping going, just get in touch with Alan on 0131 441 4216



## COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our season has got off to a cracking start, with the range of topics and quality of guest speakers contributing to record attendances at our Monday evening meetings.

Our talks have been wide-ranging and have covered topics such as:

- ◆ The Mystery of the Stone of Destiny
- ◆ The History & Future of Edinburgh's Water Supply
- ◆ Roman Arm Armour
- ◆ Edinburgh's Medieval Churches

All the talks have been extremely interesting and well presented. Looking ahead to our New Year talks, we continue with a superb variety of speakers:

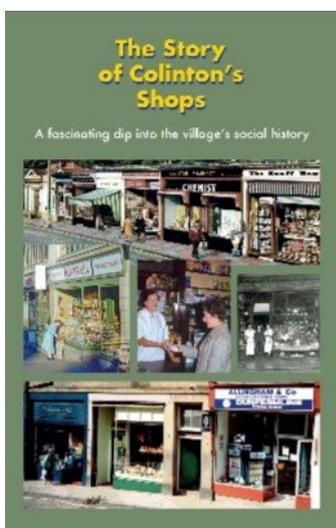
- ◆ 05<sup>th</sup> Jan: **Pioneering Scottish Women Doctors** presented by Roger Jeffrey
- ◆ 19<sup>th</sup> Jan: **Rum, Sodomy and the Lash** presented by Jim Tildesley
- ◆ 02<sup>nd</sup> Feb: **PC Carries KPM, WW1 Soldier to WW2 Police Hero** presented by Gerard McEwan
- ◆ 16<sup>th</sup> Feb: **80 years of the Edinburgh Festival** presented by Mike Lewis

If you become a member of our Society, it means far more than just attending our fortnightly meetings. Several members have found that out by being involved in some research which has interested them.

Although I have mentioned our archives before, not many people realise just how much we have stored in Colinton Library by way of both material and photos. Although our members can access these archives by arrangement, in order to give both them and all local residents the opportunity to see them, we are holding...

**Open Days at the Library every Saturday morning in January. So why not come along on 10<sup>th</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup> between 10am and 2pm**

On the question of research, I did mention in October's church magazine that I would let you know when our new book *The Story of Colinton's Shops* will arrive. Well, the good news is that it *has* arrived...just in time for Christmas! You can purchase it, or any of our other three local history books, at Colinton Post Office or, as a member of the Society, at our meetings - and that will be at a reduced rate.



If you wish to find out more about our Society, just have a look at our interesting and newly developed website [www.colintonhistory.org.uk](http://www.colintonhistory.org.uk) or contact us on [info@colintonhistory.org.uk](mailto:info@colintonhistory.org.uk)

**Derek Douglas**  
Archivist  
Colinton Local History Society

## PARISH REGISTER

FUNERALS HAVE TAKEN PLACE FOR THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE

Elizabeth (Elma) Cameron  
Robin King  
Elizabeth Lamb  
Gail Young

NEW MEMBER

Rev. Nicola Frail



## Festive Break

Please note that **The Swing Café** will be closed from **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December to Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026**. The Café will then re-open on **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January at 10am**.



## LADIES BADMINTON GROUP

After a busy session, the Group will finish for the Christmas Break on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025, and re-start on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026. We meet at 10am each Wednesday in Juniper Green Church Hall.

We play for fun and have a short break for coffee and chat. New players will be made very welcome.



