

# Crosstalk August 2025



East Calder Church





Services are held weekly in: East Calder Church @10.00 Ratho Church @11.30 In Focus - East Calder Church Hall @ 18.30

East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho Church of Scotland - Scottish Charity No: SC006973

## This month includes:

Interim Moderator's Letter
Vacancy Update
Church Structure
Working Groups

Property
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EnerJ
Boys' Brigade
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In Focus

# From our Interim Moderator



Rev Julia Wiley

Twenty-four years ago, I made a trip to Australia, where a friend of mine was living at the time. I had only been out of the United States once before, so this was a HUGE adventure for me. There were wonders to behold: koalas, kangaroos, seafood I had never seen, and the very rare Woolemi Pine.

One of my favourite discoveries, however, was the presence of the Uniting Church of Australia. Formed by three denominations in 1977, its name bears witness to the truth that coming together is an ongoing process. While it is always tempting to use the word United, that would suggest that it has been a "once and done" bit of work. The reality is that Uniting is a far more accurate word.

On 1 November 2024, the parishes of East Calder, Kirknewton, and Ratho came together formally in a union. Major steps have been made in creating this new congregation that happens to meet for worship in two places. United? In the legal sense, yes. Uniting? Most definitely so. With every Kirk Session meeting, with every joint service and communion, with every special event, one more step in coming together as one body is taken. The process of uniting will always be happening, in the same way that our personal spiritual growth does.

Perhaps Hebrews 12:1-2 give us the encouragement we need for such an endeavour: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance

the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God."

May we allow God's Spirit to make it so.

Peace, Julia

# News about the Vacancy - Nominating Committee

At the meeting of the Congregation, after the Church Service, on 29<sup>th</sup> June the Nominating Committee was elected to identify and recommend one person deemed to be suitable to be the minister of East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho.

The thirteen, chosen by the congregation, to serve on the Committee are:

David Gilchrist (Convenor), Margaret Bisset (Depute Convenor), Charlie Common, John Campbell, Marion Goodall, Mike Kydd, Robert Alexander, Tricia Fraser, Calum Pennykid, Dora Bennett, Janice Anderson, Lindsay Stevenson and Heather Barratt.

Elizabeth Pennykid, our Session Clerk, as an employee of the Church, was not eligible to be elected but we are pleased that she will serve as Clerk to the Committee.

The Committee has had an initial meeting and the process to seek a minister is underway. Please be aware that this process is confidential and that those on the Committee are not allowed to discuss what is happening. We would ask that you do not put people in an awkward position by asking any questions.

We assure you that, when there are things to share, we will do so, following the correct procedures. Please keep the Committee in your prayers and pray for God's appointing of the right minister to lead us forward. *May His Will be done*.

# **OUR CHURCH'S STRUCTURE**

Prior to the union both Kirknewton & East Calder and Ratho Churches operated under what was known as the Church's Model Deed of Constitution. Both Churches had a Congregational Board, looking after finance and property matters, and a Kirk Session considering the spiritual needs of the congregation.

Since 2017, the Church of Scotland only issues constitutions in a unitary form so from the date of our union we operate under a Unitary Constitution.

The Churches with the "Unitary Constitution", known as *quoad omnia* (for all purposes) allow the single body of the Kirk Session and its constituent groups to oversee both civil and ecclesiastical issues. These include everything from property to pastoral care and from finance to vision for the future.

After much deliberation the Kirk Session agreed to set up six working groups with members appointed from the Kirk Session, and others, either from the congregation or outwith the congregation. This gives an opportunity to involve people with special skills and also to spread involvement in the process of the Church's government. The Groups report to and make recommendations to the Kirk Session.

Updates from the Groups are included in this issue of Crosstalk:

Worship and Discipleship
Pastoral Care
Mission (in-reach and outreach)
Finance
Property
Administration, Communication and Management - (Admin)

#### **Property Group**

The Property Groups from Kirknewton & East Calder and Ratho have merged and the first 6 months or so has been a busy period. Preparations for the sale of

Manses at Manse Court, East Calder and Freelands Road, Ratho, have involved a great deal of work, as has the search for a new Manse. Happily, great progress has been made. The Ratho Manse sold very quickly, and Manse Court is now on the market. In addition, a fabulous 5-bedroom house has been bought within the Cala development at Mansefield Lea, which will serve as the new Manse for our next minister.



On maintenance and repairs, potentially serious issues with the Church heating system at East Calder are being investigated. It has also been agreed that the Church is in need of re-painting and estimates are being sought.

Despite the challenges faced, the transition from two property groups to one has been seamless and our shared experiences are being put to very effective use.

Members of the Group are: Dora Bennett, Sandy Bissett, Charlie Common, Robert Gardiner, George Hutchison, Raymond Kirk and Ewan Thomson.

#### Admin Group

The Group consists of Janice Anderson, Jenny Bain, Margaret Bissett, Charlie Common, Eilidh Common and Jean Gilchrist. Since the formation of the Group in November 2024 we have undertaken the following tasks:

Reviewing and updating all Policies which are now on the new website.

Setting up new email addresses.

Preparing a new Hall Let Agreement.

Bringing forward suggestions for a logo and a name for the magazine of the new Congregation, both of which you will have seen on the cover.

Assisting with the setting up of the new website as far as we as a group were able. Assisting with preparation of newsletters at Christmas and Easter and the publication of this magazine.

We look forward to the challenges we will face after the summer break!!

#### Finance Group

The group has been delegated by Session to be responsible for overseeing Congregational finance, managing the Congregation's budget, investments, promoting stewardship and reporting / making recommendations to Session.

#### Member of the Finance Group are:

Robert Alexander (Treasurer), Mike Kydd, Eileen Mercer, David Gilchrist, Andrew Coutts and Andrew Thomson.

Delegated powers by the Kirk Session include:

- Overseeing the Congregation's finance.
- Preparing an annual budget for the Kirk Session's consideration and approval.
- Monitoring income/expenditure in line with the budget and other authorised expenditure and presenting a financial report to the Kirk Session at each meeting.
- Preparing the annual Report and Accounts in accordance with the national Church's requirements.
- Mitigating the Congregation's financial risks by identifying and monitoring appropriate control measures.
- Liaising with the Property Group regarding matters of joint finance/property interest.
- Promoting stewardship by encouraging generous giving of time, talent, and money.

The Finance Group can authorise unbudgeted expenditure up to a maximum of £10,000 per transaction and report to Session at the next available meeting.

#### Mission Group

The group consists of 7 members:

Margaret Bisset, Marion Goodall, Margaret Bowtle, Tricia Fraser, Ann Dunlop, Audrey McCrorie and Elizabeth Pennykid.

The Group have been looking at all our groups and making sure each have adequate resources of people. We help identify where a boost in leadership numbers is required and identify gaps before taking proposals to the Kirk Session for a way forward.

We also look at in reach and outreach opportunities and how we, as a Church, can minister to all in our midst through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and pray for ways we can be church to our flock and to those who are not yet in our midst.

The group proposed the Mission Statement which the Kirk Session approved and is to - 'Be Church in the community by proclaiming the Good News of Christ and displaying love and faith in action'.

#### Worship & Discipleship

This group has been charged with promoting and supporting worship and discipleship throughout the villages of East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho. Worship and discipleship are linked components of Christian life, with worship often seen as the heart of discipleship. Discipleship is the process of learning to follow Jesus, is developed, supported and expressed through worship. Worship, in turn, is a practice that deepens discipleship.

Members of the group are:

Margaret Bisset, Jean Brown, Tricia Fraser, Lindsay Stevenson, Ewan Thomson, Penny Jackson and Robert Alexander.

The remit of the group is to consider worship and discipleship related matters and make recommendations to Session.

#### Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Group is made up of Colin Mackay, Tricia Fraser, Dora Bennett, Margaret Bisset and Elizabeth Pennykid.

The Group is very aware that a lot of pastoral care takes place within the Church Family and we are lucky to have such an active fellowship. We are keen to make sure no one falls through the net so if there are people needing a bit of support or extra visits then please let us know.

The Elders' Districts require to be adjusted but, in the meantime, we are happy to support each Elder with extra visits if they have someone in their district requiring extra support.

The Bereavement Service, which was held on Sunday 11th May, was very well received. There was a real sense of stillness, lots of tears and lots of chat. Around 60 people attended and there was a good mix of church and non-church people. This will, hopefully, be an annual service as a need was definitely met with it.

Pastoral Care is the responsibility of us all and God calls us to love our neighbour. Please speak to any of the Group if you have concerns or need anything in relation to caring for our flock. In the Gospel of John, Jesus states, "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another".



The Forget-me-not Café meets on the last Thursday of each month in East Calder Church Hall from 10am - 12noon. There are currently around 15 people attending who either have dementia or are carers.

We do a range of activities and have lots of chat. At our last meeting games proved very popular.

If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch.

Val Pennykid

# Church Life

We hope you are all starting to feel a wee bit safer and starting to look forward in the Union. We have so many opportunities ahead and although change is daunting - prayer and waiting in expectation to see God's guiding and equipping is stronger than fear.

We have been working closely together to try and make things as smooth as possible for the life and work of the Church as well as for the Kirk Session meetings. It feels like the Session are starting to get to know each other better and are mixing well. We do hope that through the joint services and extra opportunities that have been provided that you also feel like you are starting to make new friends and becoming a bigger Church family.

It has been special to have Ewan and Penny cover each other's holidays and form a good team across our two Church buildings. Thank you to both Penny and Ewan for being adaptable and willing to help.

Our working groups have had a lot to do especially in working out exactly what their remit is — this is not always straight forward and there is, will be and should be overlaps in different areas, but this is where communication and team working come in. Thank you to everyone who is on the working groups for your patience and perseverance as we learn and grow together. If you would like to be more involved in the life and work of the Church, please come and speak to one of us.

We would continue to encourage you to talk to us if things are troubling you surrounding Church life or if you have any questions. We can't help if we don't know or if we hear through others.

We hope you all had a lovely summer and had some quality time with family and friends. As Church activities start up again post the summer break, we would like to thank all the leaders and the people who attend to make the groups work. Please keep all the groups of the Church in your prayers and support as you are able.

**God Bless** 

Elizabeth Pennykid Session Clerk 07502 107477 Margaret Bisset
Depute Session Clerk



Although there has been no Church Magazine since the union of our Congregations, Prayer in all its forms has not stopped. At home, in twos and threes, at Housegroups, at all our meetings, during worship and on Mondays at 7.30-8.30 in the prayer room at the back of East Calder Church.

All are welcome to this, and age is not a barrier. At present we are 8-80 so you won't feel alone!

We play a worship song to start with followed by a Bible reading, then a brief update on new things for us to pray for on our own or at the meeting.

We don't have an agenda for the prayer time. It's a quiet space to worship God and be led by the Holy Spirit in what and whom to pray for.

We pray in confidence, names are not needed to pray for someone.

There is often laughter and sometimes tears. We have a poster on our wall of kitten and lions. We come to prayer meeting like kittens but leave like lions!

#### **Prayer Points**

The Nominating Committee and all its work
God's calling of the Shepherd for us
Prayer for that person
Unity as we grow together
Love and compassion to the stranger in our midst
For the work done over the summer in our buildings
For the children who worship with us safety over the school holidays

Father God, we pray in the name and blood of Jesus for ourselves that we might come openly and in truth before you. Show us where religion has got hold of us and help us to soften our heart to come in faith before You. Help us to see where our behaviour attitudes and beliefs don't follow You.

We know we are loved by You and You have plans, purposes and gifts for each of us. Attune our hearing to your word and our eyes to see You at work in this world. Glory to You in heaven

Amen

Dora Bennett

#### The Guild

It has been a very fast year at the Guild! Lots of interesting meetings, including:



- A visit from Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SC384396)
- A visit from Almondell Country Park Warden
- An interesting talk from Heather Coutts on how nursing has shaped her life
- A very insightful talk from Melanie Chan on her move from Hong Kong to Scotland



Afternoon Tea at Reconnect, Howden Park Centre

- •Our outing, a fun-filled Afternoon Tea at end of session. At our AGM, we said "thank you" to Janette McLaughlin for her years of service as Treasurer for the Guild and the hard work she put in to keep the accounts in order, Janette will step down as Treasurer and from the Committee. We are thankful to Ann Dunlop for taking on the Treasurer duties.
- •We also said thank you to Pat Pirrie and Margaret Bowtle as they step down from the Committee, having served a good period. Members' commitment and effort are always appreciated in the many roles that are fulfilled.

We welcome Margaret Bisset to the Committee.

#### **OUR COMMITTEE FOR 2025-26**

Elizabeth Pennykid, Ann Dunlop, Chris Graham, Linda Lee, Jinty Ramsay and Margaret Bisset.

The committee have now had their planning meeting and the programme is well under way for next year.

The Guild runs every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 2pm-3pm in East Calder Church Hall.

You would be very welcome to join us. There is always a warm welcome and great fellowship shared. Please speak to any of the Committee or Guild members for more information.



currently has three boys attending regularly. We would love for more to join. There are lots of challenges for these lads facing High School, exams, peer pressure, etc. Meeting on a Sunday

morning provides a safe space to discuss some of these issues - if they want - and we can pray about them together.

The song 'For everyone born, a place at the table' comes to mind. As a church, let's pray for this fragile age, and for 'church' to come alive and be a happy place for these youngsters.

For the time being, a rota of leaders and helpers allows the young people to get to know more of the adults in the church. Thank you to all who help on that rota. But we need to find the right Leader for our Youth Church. Please pray for that.

At the end of term, each young boy received this book: five-minute devotions for each day. Please pray these devotions bring the Bible alive for them. A snippet from the book

'But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy ...'\*

Dear God, help me to walk in love and **feel joyful in Your love**, even when life gets tough.

Let my joy come from knowing You and sharing Your love with others.

Amen.

Galatians 5:22\*

Please keep the boys and leaders in your prayers.

Elizabeth Pennykid



Our Sunday School, EnerJ, meets weekly to have fun and learn about God. Following various children's Bibles, we cover a new story as we move through the year. Our core leaders, Colin, Heather and Ray are well supported by the congregation and enjoy working with our young people to develop their understanding of God's love and the church around them.

Annual highlights are the Nativity and Summer Services that EnerJ lead. It is always fun bringing the informal fun of EnerJ to the wider congregation as the children demonstrate their knowledge and lead the service in song, prayer and readings. Craft is a great way to captivate the imagination of our children and trying to do this in the church with our congregation sharing 11 pairs of scissors makes for great entertainment.

We are gearing up for a new EnerJ term in August, thinking of exciting new ways to bring the Bible stories to life. We have an average of a dozen children on a weekly basis during school term time when EnerJ runs. As a congregation we are lucky to have young people in our Church and the leaders want to support them and encourage their faith.



The EnerJ Team



## 1st East Calder Company

With summer nearly over we start preparing and looking forward to starting our 2025 -2026 Boys' Brigade session. Our first night back will be a registration evening on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August.

As we plan the coming year, we hope to have around 35 returning BB members and we will be aiming to attract some new members in all age groups, particularly in our younger age groups. Looking at our Company Section it is clear to see that getting Boys in at younger ages is key to growing our BB company. A large percentage of our Company Section have progressed through the younger sections.

Likewise, Boys who go through the BB are also our potential leaders of the future and we are privileged as a company to have a leader's team with some experienced leaders and some youthful young leaders who have been Boys in the not-too-distant past.

Our Leadership team is Calum, Robert, Craig, Heather, Elizabeth, Colin, Arran, Aedan and Josh. Our leader's team is also assisted by our four senior Boys who are working towards their King's Badges. It is great having these Boys help in this way as the younger Boys really connect with them and look up to them as role models.

Some of our highlights from last year included, taking part in the Company Section Battalion Quiz where we came second and the Battalion Spiritual Competition where we were second for Anchors, fourth for Juniors and third for Company Section.



The highlight of the year was our first camp since covid. We took 21 of our Boys to Carronvale House (BB headquarters for Scotland). All our leaders took part in making it a fantastic, fun filled and successful weekend.

Over the summer, Aedan has returned to Carronvale to take part in the King George VI training course to become an Officer, the course is done in two parts with the second part in summer 2026. Aedan will be only our second leader to do his training in this way.

Thank you to all the Boys, parents and church family for the commitment and support shown throughout the year. Please pray for all the homes represented within the company and for each Boy with whom we have the privilege to share our Christian faith. Can we also pray for new Boys and their families who will be joining us.

May we also ask you to pray for our leaders – for God's guidance and wisdom in planning our weekly programme, for insight into each Boy as an individual and for the ability to share our faith in a way that will be meaningful and relevant for today and for years to come.

Thank you

The BB Leadership team

# Community Listening Project



The Project is continuing to go well. The Hub has continued through the summer without soup. People have brought their own sandwich and continued to enjoy company. Soup will return in September.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers. The team is an absolute treasure and could not be more supportive of the project, each other or me.

Thank you for all you do and always with a smile. Your time, hard work and commitment is not taken for granted. Without you, the project could not run.

Thank you also to the people who come along and offer a friendly face, chat, share a cuppa - again without you there would be no project.

Most of you will know that the Project was selected to be one of the Scotmid choice award charities. Being shortlisted means we will receive £1,000 which is a huge help. Thank you to all who voted for the Project over the last couple of months. Voting has now closed and we await the results.

Over summer we held games nights which were open to the community. These went extremely well seeing 80 people attend on the last night. The buzz in the hall was amazing and there were lots of positive comments and disappointment when the 4 weeks finished. This will be something we will do again.

We had another slime making day during the summer where we welcomed 72 people into the hall. This was well received and the children loved making their slime (I'm not so sure about the adults!) We welcomed people who had just moved to the area and were looking to meet people which was great.

I had a very positive meeting with Ailsa who is the new Community Development Officer with the Kirknewton Community Development Trust. We look forward to keeping communication lines open and exploring different things together.

We had a visit from West Lothian News which is always good publicity. This was at one of our sing along days at the Hub which was great fun and good for lifting everyone's spirits.

As always please keep the Project, volunteers, all who attend and myself in your prayers as we seek to allow the Project to grow in accordance with God's Will and always for His glory.

Thank you

Elizabeth

## **Hall Lets**



Ratho Church Hall

The Church Hall in Ratho is busier than it has ever been. The congregation has its weekly gathering after the Sunday service and takes great pride in organising old folks' teas and charity coffee mornings. Uniform groups making regular use of the Hall include Guides, Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and, most recently, Squirrels.

Keep Fit classes are also prominent, with sessions involving Zumba, Hip Hop and post-natal workouts for local Mums. Occasional lets include ceilidhs, birthday parties and other family celebrations. Looking to the future, an after-school club is also being planned.

The Church Halls at East Calder are used by a variety of Groups as well as our own Church Organisations. There are Rainbows, Brownies, Mums and Toddlers and Baby Massage Classes meeting regularly and for the more energetic Boogie Bounce, Zumba, Dance Classes and Table Tennis are all held on a regular basis.

Busy Halls most days!



East Calder Church Hall



meet weekly in the comfort of a family home, providing an informal and safe environment for bible study, fellowship, prayer and encouragement as God's word is studied and discussed. Bible study provides the opportunity for

discussion on the selected bible passage as the groups share and reflect on similarities with what is happening in the world today - providing plenty food for discussion.

Groups will re-start in September after the summer break - watch out for more details.



If you would like to join a group or host / lead a group, please contact Robert Alexander.

# in FOCUS

A time of informal praise, worship, prayer and fellowship, on a Sunday evening at 6:30pm in East Calder Church Hall (downstairs) and starts with a cuppa! Evenings vary with reflection on a Bible passage or a hymn, presentations from (our own folk or an external) speakers about the work of charities or other interested topics and Songs of Praise evenings (which are a real favourite for many).

The warmth in the room is evident as people share with each other, care for each other and give thanks for God's kindness and love towards his people. In Focus will re-start on Sunday September 14<sup>th</sup> – All Welcome.



# Macmillan Cancer Support (SC039907)

A Coffee Morning will be held in Ratho Church Hall on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September from 10.00am until 12.00 noon in support of this worthwhile cause. Please put this date in your diary - we would love to see you there!

#### **Fresh Start**

Scottish Charity No. SCO29184

For many years the Congregation at Ratho has supported the work of Fresh Start. One way we offer help is collecting essential items such as bed linen, towels, crockery, cutlery, kitchen utensils, cleaning materials to name a few. In turn Fresh Start is able to provide these essential items to people moving from homelessness into an empty property they can then turn into a home.

Love in Action.





Scottish Charity No.SC048112

On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June we were prepared to serve our usual teas, coffees and home-baking etc at East Calder Gala. Unfortunately, the weather caused the Gala to be cancelled but we were still able to use the Partnership Centre for refreshments. Despite the dreadful weather we raised an amazing £1,551! Thank you to all the local businesses, members of the congregation and friends who donated provisions, baking, money and their time to make this such a successful event.

#### Dignity Boxes Charity No. SC048930



This is a charity that provides freely donated toiletries to people in need.

Dignity Boxes are filled with a selection of basic toiletries, before being openly placed in areas, that are experiencing deprivation or a high level of poverty. The aim of the boxes is ultimately to promote self-worth and dignity by allowing those in need to take what they cannot afford, or get access to, from a Dignity Box without having to ask or thank anyone. Consequently, we hope to promote in a small way, self-worth and dignity. The purpose, as well as practical, is to make people feel a little better about themselves even for a short time.

There is a collection box in East Calder Church for any new toiletries that you are able to donate.

Thank you

# Church Hall Bookings

Requests should come to the Hall Convenors by the end of the first week of each month and they will be referred to the Kirk Session.

Please email eckr.church@gmail.com and you will be directed to the appropriate person.



If you would like to receive the magazine by email please send a request to: eckr.church@gmail.com

Copies are also on the website eckrchurch.org.uk have a look!



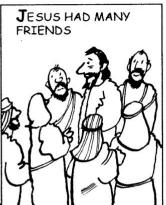
# **Church Roll**

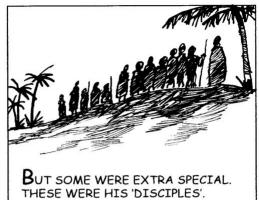
If you are moving, or any change is necessary to the entry regarding you on the Church Roll, please give the relevant information to either your Elder or the Session Clerk.

For further details of any Church Group please email eckr.church@gmail.com

The Doctor and the Patient

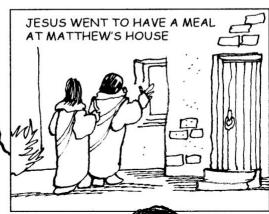


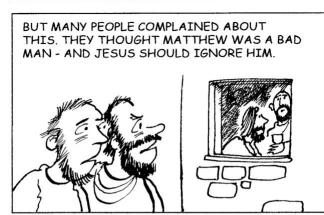


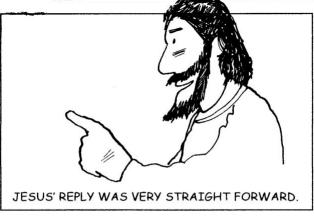


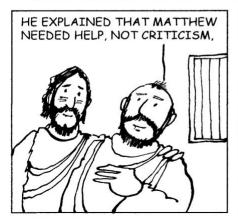














### JESUS CALLS MATTHEW WORD SEARCH

S E X R E E H W R N M Z М А D S K G K E R K P D E P X R E E E 0 В N Q E P Ν А S S P 5 N N 0 Н M E E R E E X T 0 W Т A U P R В R W A U R O 0 G P В K M В Н S Т A A K R J F Н Q L D Y X Z M A F P H P E Т E 0 M R C E F C Q E S F A K Y R Н Т K Α В E В Т S C X Q Q

APOSTLE	FOLLOW	REPENTANCE
CALL	JESUS	SINNERS
COLLECTOR	LEVI	TABLE
DISCIPLE	MATTHEW	TAX
FEAST	MERCY	TEACHER