

Soundings

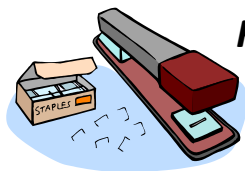
Portobello & Joppa Parish
Church Magazine

September 2019



Portobello and Joppa Parish Church

**Worship takes place each Sunday at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church with
two services – one at 9.30am and one at 11am
(10.30am in July and August)**



From the editor

As is often the case in September, this is a BIG magazine – apologies to the stapling group. (Did you know there *was* a stapling group? They collate and staple together the print version of *Soundings* – and well done to them, especially this month.)

One reason for the thickness of this edition is that various people have given interesting talks in church recently and, for the benefit of those who missed these or would like to be reminded of them, they're reprinted here. Thanks to all who allowed me to wrest their notes from their hands – and indeed all those who volunteered contributions of other sorts. The layout is not ideal this month, but we've tried to include everything we were offered.

So you can read about the Holiday Club, Messy Church (10 years old in our church now), our Outreach Group (and ways to reach out) – and many other activities and opportunities besides. And Stewart asks questions – which are not easy to answer.

We've had a lot of family staying this month, including, for a lovely week, our London-based daughter and granddaughter. The granddaughter (still currently here) is 22 months old and, while delightful, is also a *tremendous* nuisance: running very fast, climbing, being determined to access all sorts of things that we don't want her to: phones, knives, pieces of art glass, her cousins' carefully-built Lego constructions, her granny's reading glasses - and so on. We shall have to spend the next week trying to remember where we've suddenly had to hide things. Meanwhile this magazine has been collated by exhausted grandparents – so, many apologies for any mistakes you find, but do enjoy reading about the multifarious activities within PJPC.

Pam

From the minister



Dear Friends and Neighbours,

Now what?

Questions are such an important part of learning, discovery and curiosity.

Jesus' first words in the Gospel of John (as I've repeated too many times) are formulated as a question: 'What are you looking for?' Thus begins an account of Jesus' life that is challenging, powerful, elusive and inspirational.

We all know about the Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher who used his sometimes naive and sometimes penetrating questions in his search for knowledge, truth and wisdom. Along the way, many of his conversation partners learned about beauty, the good life, the soul.

'Why poppa?' One of the questions often posed by my first History lecturer at university (I think I've mentioned this one too....). That, he suggested, is the driver for studying history. Why?

There is a strand of management thinking too that is built upon the consistent and insistent use of the question 'Why?' If something occurs, ask 'why?' five times in a row and the essence of a challenge, problem or opportunity begins to reveal itself.

The Church of Scotland. Now what?

Portobello and Joppa Parish Church. Now what?

In the last magazine I wrote about the Special Commission (focus the church and get the house in order) and the Radical Action Plan (go on! give it a try! and use the resources available!).

Ideas are not in short supply. I have many ideas, and I'm sure you have many. I've heard many from other congregations, in Presbytery and in the national church.

What, actually, are we trying to do as a church?

What is God calling us to do? A question posed by our Discernment Team some time ago.

Recently I read a book about vision. It offered a picture of a mountain with a star above it and paths leading up the mountain.

The star is the mission of the organisation: what is the ultimate purpose?

The mountain is the vision: what are you aiming to become? what is the one idea amongst so many that allows you to draw close to the star?

The paths are the strategy: what are the best paths to enable the vision to be achieved?

In the months ahead there will be meetings, discussions and decisions.

In all of this, two questions. What is God calling us to do and be here in Portobello? What is the ultimate purpose of our church and what is the ultimate purpose of Christ's Church?

As we reach for the stars, we discover that the daystar who has come to earth walks amongst us already. If only we are able to see him, hear him and follow him.

Stewart

Ten Years of Messy Church (1)



This August marks the tenth year that Messy Church has been happening in Portobello and Joppa. Our Messy Church is the second oldest MC in Scotland. In those ten years many more Messy Churches have begun in Scotland and some have closed, but our Messy Church is going from strength to strength. We are continually blessed with a dedicated team of volunteers, most of whom have been with us from the very beginning! We have welcomed in families of all ages – infants to grandparents. In the ten years, we have grown a Messy Church allotment, made an “ark” for Stewart to float on in the Firth of Forth, helped a Shepherd find his lost sheep in Portobello twice, made contact with other Messy Churches in Oregon and South Africa, held crafts and games at the Big Beach Busk for many summers, been Christmas Carolling at Spring Gardens Care Home each year, sent out the knitivity around the houses for Christmas for many years, shared 120 full Messy Church sessions, welcomed visitors to Open Doors Weekend, held many BBQs on the lawn, said our Messy Church grace together nearly 100 times and enjoyed fantastic meals cooked by Jamie Clabby and guest cooks.

In our ten years of being messy, we have discovered all the joy and connection to be found in church community through all age worship. We have welcomed in families for whom this worship time is their only time in worship each month – it is their church! It is part of our church here at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church and we are thrilled to celebrate 10 years of Messy Church with you all on 1 September at PJPC.

Never been to Messy Church? Not sure what to expect? That’s okay – come along anyway! In celebration of Messy Church and of 5 years of being Portobello and Joppa Parish Church, our congregation will worship all together as one congregation. There will only be one service on 1 September – at 10:30am. This

service will bring together the congregations from the 9:30 worship service, the 11 worship service and Messy Church. We will unite to celebrate the union of the three churches and to celebrate Messy Church.

We will start in the church with a celebration time (gathering and worship), then go to the halls for activities (crafts, prayer, gardening, games, and even a sermon), and then we will all gather again in the main hall for lunch. Looking forward to celebrating with you!

Michelle

10 years of Messy Church (2)



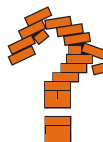
10 years ago I was having some really interesting but often hurried conversations with other parents at the Towerbank school gate. I started to think about ways to create a space to have these conversations a bit more deliberately. Stewart Weaver's children were not much older than my own – and for one term shared the same swimming class. It was on the poolside that we together hatched a plan for Messy Church. I did some surveys amongst my son's friends to find a time and favourite activities for our first Messy Church. Saturday afternoon didn't clash with ballet or rugby – and so the time was set. There was also a lot of interest in construction and energetic games. We planned our first session (which I think was David and Goliath), gave out invites and put up posters.

The first few Messy Churches were mainly my lively 7 year old son and many of his equally lively friends. We "built the plane as we flew it", changing the format and learning what worked. Our main innovations were to find more space to talk, and to get other families more involved in organising crafts (including, memorably, a group of dads teaching drumming). We also got more confident about including everyone in our prayer activities – whatever their background. Many families started to see Messy Church as their church.

There came a point when two of our key families moved out of the area. The much reduced Messy Church didn't really feel the same and we hit our first slump in numbers. Numbers ebbed and flowed until Michelle Joined us in 2010. She formed a whole new network and brought in many new families – including more families from the church and more with younger children. The Messy Church became a lot more balanced – it was no longer just a gang of boys but children of all ages being just as much involved in the crafts as their parents. It was particularly lovely to see grandparents coming with their grandchildren – and then mums not being able to stay away because they heard so many exciting things about what went on.

So looking forward - we would love to get more people involved – especially those who are good at showing interest and listening to people. We'd also love you to bring your friends – whatever their age, ability or background. If we all get involved, I wonder what amazing stories we'll be able to tell of the *next* 10 years.

Reuben



TIC Club at Towerbank

On Tuesdays after school from 3:20pm to 4:30pm, a group of P6 and P7 students at Towerbank meet in the middle dining hall with Michelle Brown, Lourens de Jager, and Tracey Wilson for a Scripture Union club called TIC Club (Towerbank Investigates Christianity). At TIC club we have a craft, a Bible story, discussion, snack and a game. Every P6/P6 student is invited to the club at the start of the school year. Those who bring in a permission slip are then welcome to attend.

The club is a chance to ask questions and learn more about the Christian faith in a relaxed space. We have a laugh and there is always great chat as the young people come up with excellent questions each time we meet. If you know someone at Towerbank going into P6 or P7, please let them know to look for us. For more information, contact Michelle.

Boys' Brigade



BBs are back for another session and here is a summary of some things that will be happening over the coming year.

Anchor Boys

Jill and her staff hope to welcome new boys to the section as most were promoted to Junior Section! We have decided to run a little pilot this year. In the past, Anchor Boys were only open to boys in P2 & 3. Other companies have recently opened up to P1 boys as well so we plan to welcome P1 boys this year. If there are any younger brothers or friends who are in P1, bring them along. Tuesday nights will be filled with the normal fun and activities as well as celebrating special occasions and the occasional visit.

Junior Section

Jamie and his staff would like to welcome back all our JS boys and also the boys who have been promoted from Anchor Boys and look forward to another fun filled year with our normal Thursday evening activities (although we do have a new programme) as well as the many Battalion events we take part in. We're also booked up for Innerwick for our weekend camp in November and our annual visit to Craggan in the Easter holidays.

Company Section

Company Section start back with a new face at the helm. Boab/Rob/Robert (delete as applicable but the boys call him Boab) Dransfield has taken over as Officer-in Charge for the coming session and has a few new ideas which are always welcome. I'm sure everyone will join me in welcoming him to the role. I'm not convinced he knows what he's let himself in for!

Company section also have some activities planned including a weekend camp early in the new year at a place TBD and also we have invited the FDF from Denmark in the summer and plan a large camp at Craggan with a lot more too.

Company Section numbers will be bolstered by the boys promoted from the Junior Section and we look forward to seeing them, but if any boys wish to bring along a friend or two, they are always welcome.

Gordon, Captain

Thank you

My family and I would like to thank Stewart for the support he gave to us all.



Stewart conducted the service at Seafield, which was first class, and he gave us a very good account of Rita's long and happy life both within her family and in the community.

My family and I wish to thank all who attended the service and afterwards at the hotel, also for all the cards and telephone calls received.

Thank you, Stewart.

Whitson and family

Baby Food Pouches Recycling



It's time to do our bit for the environment and give back to the community while we're at it! We have joined a recycling programme where we can collect and send in empty baby food pouches and their lids in to be recycled. They go to a firm called TerraCycle to get melted down and remoulded to make new recycled products! What we need from you is to drop off your empty food pouches, cleaned out of any excess food residue, to Portobello and Joppa Parish Church at

our drop off point in the hallway outside the main hall. This can be done Monday to Friday between 7am and midday.

Baby food pouches and lids of any brand are accepted and Ella's Kitchen snack wrappers are also accepted. The more pouches we send in, the more points we can collect. These points will get converted to cash which can then be donated to The Yard – a charity dedicated to the provision of care and support for disabled children and their families.

The coordinator for this collection is Angela from the Friday Toddlers Group. If you have any questions, you can reach her via our Family Worker, Michelle, or catch Angela at Toddlers on a Friday.

Michelle

Part 3 of the Poppy Project

A very big thank-you to all who knitted and crocheted poppies for our truly wonderful and memorable displays of remembrance for those who gave their lives in the Great War. Thanks to the Art Group, the children, the historians and all who helped to make such a moving tribute, appreciated by the whole community. It was a very worthwhile congregational project and I so enjoyed being a part of it.



I know I asked you to take away some poppies and turn them into useful, decorative or creative masterpieces that could be sold, with the proceeds going to charities supporting our armed forces. In September I would like to gather in all your handiwork, and during October we can sell your crafts and have donations ready for November.

I already have some fabulously wonderful and useful poppy crafts gathered in, but there have to be lots more to come.

Let's make Part 3 as successful as Parts 1 and 2. Thanks.

Elize



Drama Group

As part of their 50th Anniversary celebrations, the Drama Group will be presenting a concert of Musical Theatre songs on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th October at 7pm in The Sanctuary. There will be lots of old favourites as well as some lesser known numbers and the chance for the audience to join in with the singing!

Shona

Portobello Holiday Club 2019 – Mega Makers

This July we held our fifth Portobello Holiday Club jointly organised and run by six area churches: Portobello Baptist Church, Portobello and Joppa Parish Church (Church of Scotland), St. John the Evangelist Catholic Parish, St. Mary Magdalene's Catholic Parish, Central's Portobello House Group and St Mark's Scottish Episcopal Church. From 22 July to 26 July, 104 children and 13 youth helpers filled the halls at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church and the church and garden of St Mark's.

At Holiday Club, 54 volunteers took on various roles on the team at different points of the week. We were also supported by 17 additional volunteers who contributed baking, helped with training, managed our PVGs and safeguarding,

made decorations or helped with set up and clean up. We had an amazing team! We were also blessed with arts and crafts and gardening donations from the churches involved too.

During the week, the children participated in worship, games, breathing space (reflective prayer space), arts and crafts, Bible study, fun with food, table games, gardening and science. Our club ran from 9am to 12:30pm and we used the holiday club Bible study material from the Scripture Union curriculum called *Mega Makers*. Through five Bible stories from the Gospel of Matthew, the children encountered stories that helped to demonstrate how vast God's love is – wider and longer and higher and deeper than we can ever imagine.

As the week closed, the Holiday Club Garden at St Mark's was fully updated for this year's theme with beautiful plants and a rainbow assortment of upcycled rubbish decorated and spread throughout the garden on the theme of God's love being too big to contain in one space.

The big art project the groups helped to create throughout the week is hanging up in the window of Portobello Baptist Church Café. The children created a Portobello scene to match up with the Feeding of the 5,000 story. God's love is so big, there is enough to share with everyone.

For our fundraiser this summer at holiday club, we asked the children to bring in food for the local basics food bank at Wilson Memorial and nappies for NappiRunz. We began with a tin of beans and by the end of the week, we saw how God's love grows bigger and bigger than we can possibly imagine as the front steps of the church were filling up with food donations and nappies. It was a wonderful way for the Holiday Club participants to see how we all play a part in sharing out God's love by sharing what we have with others.

We are already thinking ahead to Holiday Club 2020 as the children and volunteers have all had such a wonderful time and we are looking forward to doing this again next year.

The planning team would like to thank you so much for helping us provide an ecumenical holiday club in Portobello. This week would not have been possible without your support! Thank you!



My faith

Stewart has been asking members of the congregation to share their faith stories; this is Reuben's.

I was listening to the testimony of Steph Macleod recently. He was an alcoholic who found Jesus while sheltering with Bethany Trust. My testimony is not going to be like that. Jesus has been at work in my life too - but in a quiet and gradual way. Perhaps the best way to tell my story is to start at the beginning.

Some of you will have known my parents. They became Christians through a Billy Graham rally and I was brought up surrounded by Bible stories and tales of missionaries in China and Africa. When I was a young child, my church emphasised teaching the Bible over community or other Christian practice. However, it still felt like family to me - and those Bible stories and testimonies are the building blocks that still help me think about God.

I was an odd child and spent a lot of time living in my own imagination. I was slow to learn to read and write - didn't really fit in at school. During play time you might find me with friends, but you might also find me on my own doing something strange - like climbing on the school roof to look at squirrels.

When I was about 10 or 11, I was on holiday with my family in the Highlands and had a sudden very strong sense of God's presence and a desire to live my life for him. I started to read the Bible for myself and to pray. As a family we then moved to a church plant in a local housing estate - and I remember several more really tangible experiences of God, sometimes when I was by myself, but also on

several occasions at church. For example, staying up late for some of the watch-night service - and knowing Christ was present as people shared bread and wine. At high school, it seemed really normal to meet and pray with my friends during the lunch hour, and to tell my classmates about Jesus.

At 18 I went to university and it will be no surprise that I was very active in both the Christian Union and in the ecumenical chapel - but despite my enthusiasm, my sense of God became less tangible. I also started to develop some very significant intellectual doubts about my faith. Were my experiences of God just an emotional response driven by my own psychological needs? How can we speak together about God if our experiences aren't in any sense empirical? How does praying to a personal God make any moral sense? The only time I felt at peace was when we stood in a circle in chapel and broke bread together. Lots of reading, especially of Francis Schaffer, and the discovery of contemplative prayer helped me to find a way forward. Gradually my faith was put back together again and by the end of university I was seriously considering ordination, but eventually discerned a call to serve the poor and marginalised by being a social worker.

I married at 23 and together we wanted to be a family that connected to those around us. I discovered that as I shared my life and faith with others it became more alive and vibrant for me. When we had children, I loved sharing my faith and "wasting time" with them, and also connecting with families at Parents and Toddlers or on the school gate. I still loved to tell Bible stories and so I helped with the TIC club at Towerbank, led Sunday school and helped set up Messy Church. As my children are leaving home, that old sense of call to ordination has again resurfaced. It doesn't feel as if it is a call to a dramatic change - but a quiet sense of me working out something that has been part of my life for a long time.

Reuben

Outreach Group

This is the text of a talk given in church by Morag, who is the convenor of the outreach group.



In a sense, the entirety of the outward-facing work of the church is outreach. Whether it is categorised as mission, or service or just doing things, the church is involved in reaching out. Being the church in the world involves engagement and responsiveness.

Being a complex organisation, we need a structure and in this congregation that means that there is an outreach group, accountable to the Session, which takes responsibility for co-ordinating, promoting and sometimes actually doing the practical engagement of this church in the world around us. First, the structure. We are a group of about 10 people, but it's important to emphasise that this is not 10 people who do all the work. Far from it. Countless people in this congregation, and friends of the congregation, are involved.

What are the main areas of work?

1. **Christian Aid.** Christian Aid was part of the life of each of the three former congregations and it continues to be a central part of our work. Our commitment to Christian Aid is important. For one thing, the Church of Scotland as a whole is committed to the support of Christian Aid and that is a longstanding and vital relationship. At the local level, it is visible, especially in Christian Aid Week in May, through the house to house collection and through other events. In Christian Aid Week 2019, thanks to the house to house collection, the soup lunch and the Sunday Stars' cupcakes, we raised over £4,400, and with gift aid added in the total was almost £4,900. And that followed another very successful Burns Supper earlier in the year. Fundraising is important but our relationship with Christian Aid goes deeper and enables us to learn about lives and work and development across the world.

2. **Bethany.** Conscious of the needs of those in our own city, we also have an important and longstanding commitment to Bethany and the work done to support those who experience homelessness. Principally, this is done through volunteers who assist with the care van and the night shelter. These are real and practical commitments with people giving up their time to contribute in a variety of ways, including preparing food, driving and talking to people. It also involves working with people from other churches.
3. **The Food Bank.** We organise, on a continuing basis, the collection of food and other supplies for the local food bank, based at Wilson Memorial and involving Portobello Churches Together.
4. **Fresh Start.** This is another important initiative which has been part of our outreach work for a number of years. Donations of household items which can be used to help people who have been homeless make a new home for themselves are always welcome.
5. **Safe Families for Children.** This is an organisation which provides resources for parents who are under stress to get back on their feet. Stabilising families through, for example, befriending, mentoring and support, is a way of showing care and depends on the contributions made by volunteers.
6. **Fair trade stall.** Our interest in fair trade, worldwide, finds a practical expression each month in the fair trade stall. We work in cooperation with the Just World shop in Portobello.
7. **Support for refugees.** More recently, we have begun to explore ways in which we can show practical support for refugees living in Edinburgh. Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees is a multi-faith partnership hosted by the Church of Scotland which co-ordinates and promotes action in

support of asylum seekers and refugees. We have worked with them in hosting lunches.

These are some of the features of our work, but it's certainly not an exhaustive list and, of course, we don't claim to have a monopoly. Outreach work takes a wide variety of forms. The children in our congregation are also excellent in engaging and in thinking about helping others. The Sunday Stars, for example, have shown great commitment to Mary's Meals. And we know too that many people in their own ways support other work through giving time and or money.

Lots of the ideas that we have come from individuals. It's good to keep thinking about where we focus our resources. Are there more things that we could do? If there is a new idea, we have to ask ourselves whether it is something we can commit to. Taking on a project need not mean an open-ended commitment. We want to be flexible and responsive to suggestions. If there is something that fits in with the overall scheme of what we do as a church, we want to know. So if there are suggestions, tell us. But please think before you come and say "**you** could do this". "**We** could do this ..." – that is a much more exciting proposition.

We are open to ideas and we are open to people. As an outreach group, we meet regularly, if not frequently, and fairly informally. We like to keep an overview of all of the aspects of outreach that are ongoing, and we would love to welcome others to contribute to that. And please do bring ideas.

Back to the beginning. Reaching out. Doing stuff. Making soup. Knocking on doors. Driving a van. Picking up supplies. Talking to people. In our small ways, these are the outreached hands of Christ. We could do that.

Morag

Time passing

How quickly the time goes and it has been very quick this year – at least, I think so. I have been thinking a lot about Lauder as it's the Common Ridings and all towns take part. I never rode but always attended and my daughter and granddaughters rode a few times and had a great time. I find it very sad that most of my friends in the Borders have gone to another land. Never mind – memories are a great thing. And I also hope that all you readers have had a nice summer. **Mary**

A wide range of options to support financially the work of PJPC

We rely on the generosity of all those connected with Portobello and Joppa Parish Church to support our church community. Many of you make regular financial contributions by standing order or through the weekly freewill offering.

We are delighted to make some new options available to individuals who wish to make one off, regular or ad hoc donations. These include a new on-line payment facility on the PJPC website. In addition, from 1 September, we will be trialling the use of a new contactless / chip and pin reader which will allow cashless donations to be made in an easy and secure manner. This option will be available after the service each week in the Centenary Hall.

For more information about these options and the other ways in which you can support our church, please check out our website at:

<https://www.portyjoppachurch.org/give> or speak to Anne, David or myself.

Michael

Finance Convenor

Congregational Accounts

For the Period To 31 July 2019

	<u>2019(£)</u>	<u>2018(£)</u>
Congregational Fund		
Income	114,551	104,563
Expenditure	<u>(132,476)</u>	<u>(116,129)</u>
Deficit	(17,925)	(11,566)
Drawdown From General Trustees	<u>16,190</u>	<u>15,853</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus after drawdown	<u>(1,735)</u>	<u>4,287</u>
Legacies Received	<u>3,000</u>	<u>0</u>

All Legacies are invested with the Church of Scotland Investors Trust.

Fabric Fund

Income	18,108	17,874
Expenditure	<u>(17,143)</u>	<u>(11,785)</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus	965	6,089
Drawdown From General Trustees	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus	<u>965</u>	<u>6,089</u>

Ministry & Mission

Ministry & Mission Allocation	146,482	141,962
Stipend Fund Pre-payment	<u>(27,475)</u>	<u>(8,042)</u>
Net payable by Congregational Fund	<u>119,007</u>	<u>133,920</u>

David Stocks

Treasurer

If you have any questions please email David at
office@portyjoppachurch.org

What I love about volunteering with Sunday Stars

What do I love about volunteering with the Sunday Stars? Well – everything, really.

I love being with the children and having fun and laughing with them.

I love listening to what the young children have to say and listening to their views.

I love how they question my views and help open my eyes to different things and ideas.

I also love supporting them with their journey with their faith.



That's what I love about volunteering with the Sunday Stars.

I am so thankful that I get the chance to work with young people, whether it is through my own work as a Early Years Practitioner, Sunday Stars, Breakfast Club, Messy Church or Junior Drama, as I get to do something I really love every single day and not a lot of people get the chance to do that.

So What Makes A Sunday Star Child A Star?

Well, they make us laugh. They tell good jokes, sometimes bad jokes.

They listen, but sometimes they are chatty. They ask lots of sensible questions, but sometimes silly questions. They are full of life and energy and have great imaginations. They are very creative and love doing the drama for the nativity at Christmas.

They are polite, well-mannered and well-behaved. They look out for each other and think about others less fortunate than themselves. Some are tall, some are small. Some have blue eyes, some have brown eyes.

They are all very different with different talents, interests and personalities.

They are their own people. They are themselves. They are all individuals.

To me that is what makes them **STARS!**

Jamie

PJPC through the seasons

At Promotion Sunday in June, some members of the congregation reminded us of the wide range of activities that go on in our church throughout the year.

Spring



Michelle asked me to tell you about what went on in our church community in the spring of this year, but I just can't because the list is far too long for this slot. So much happens every single week in this place all through the year.

So I'm just going to pick the PJPC events that jumped out at me when I glanced back at the spring months of my own calendar. You can probably guess what most of them are. There will be many more events that I don't cover, which will have been just as important in the ongoing life of our church community. It's quite wonderful that there's too much going on to mention!

There's always one outstandingly gloriously sunny Sunday afternoon in early March when the Drama Group is rehearsing and showtime is approaching. The sun irresistibly brings ideas of new growth and regeneration to mind and every year I experience the same feeling: that frankly, I'd rather be in the garden than conjuring up costumes for the latest production. But if we all gave in to impulses like that nothing would ever be achieved on time. The activities of our community here rely on teams of folk working together. The teams, large and small, representing all our different interests, form a framework that can be pieced together, sometimes with corners overlapping, and that framework is the structure that supports what we understand as Portobello and Joppa Parish Church.

The large team that is the Drama Group revived *Brodie! The Musical* again this year to celebrate the 50th year since the group was born from within this church community. The show's cast, of 35 or so, ranged from 8 years old to 80 something. We understand that many drama societies are failing around the UK,

so we are especially proud of the energy we harness here to move onwards and *outwards* beyond our first 50 years.

After the Drama Group show, Easter approaches. When my children were at Towerbank, the whole school went to an Easter service in one of the Portobello churches. Now the pupils all come here, as they did this Easter and they will do so again this week to mark the end of a school year and the new lives the P7s in particular will be embarking on as they move onwards and upwards to High School.

As teenagers, my children and their peers in the Breakfast Club took part in the Easter Vigil here in this building and as you know, the club is still flourishing and staying up all night at Easter. This year, they had already collected 140 backpacks for Mary's Meals and at the vigil, among many other activities, they completed the Easter Art Project, decorating these pillars with the beautiful New Life images that lifted our spirits throughout the Easter season.

The 2019 vigil attracted 33 young people. It concluded on Easter Sunday at the ecumenical sunrise service on the beach, followed as always, by a celebratory breakfast in the hall. While that was taking place, I was involved with a musical team who later sang joyously for the congregation at the 11 o'clock service – as they often do throughout the year.

Rather soon after Easter came Christian Aid week, which included a soup lunch, door-to-door collection, Cupcake Sunday and a concert. This massive team effort raised an amazing £4,500.

In the same week, the Junior Drama team offered their annual production, this year, a revival of *The Dracula Rock Show*. Again, impressive amounts of energy were harnessed both from within the church and the community around it and the year of hard work and rehearsals culminated in a lot of fun, in *here*, on two sunny evenings in May.

I have to confess that after the Junior Drama Show I'm usually looking for a wee bit of regeneration myself, but the PJPC work continues, not least behind the scenes by the teams led by convenors, and by the ministerial team and the Session. All these people, and many more, contribute to the continual regeneration of our church life, but it doesn't happen easily. It can be hard work, but work that is always easier when it's tackled by a team. Each one of us can and should belong to or support one of the many and varied teams that keep us all going, as we have gone this year, from strength to strength.

Sandra



Summer

You may think that life in the church virtually stops in the summer, with Sunday Stars taking a break and organisations taking a break. I'm here to tell you, as someone involved in many events that continue into the summer, that you might be surprised at how busy the church actually is.

BBs

Starting with the Boys' Brigade, which I have been a member of for 8 years now – although our end-of-term display night was several weeks ago, we volunteered at the Royal Highland Show (not just for the free lunches), we will be holding camps throughout the summer and we will have a summer barbecue and other events.

Holiday Club

I also volunteer at the Holiday Club run by all the Portobello churches and there will be close to 100 children attending, so that week will definitely be far from quiet. I expect all the children will enjoy the games, singing, drama, music, garden, food and art as much as I did when I attended as a P7.

Messy Church

The week after Holiday Club is Messy Church. I was at the first Messy Church ten years ago. I have many great memories of Messy Church, like the Big Beach Busk and sailing in the Forth on a raft built by Stewart and me. My mother was not so happy about that one.

Family Ministry

During the holidays the family ministry never stops, with Godly Play on Sundays, Twins Group on Mondays and Coffee Break every Tuesday.

Breakfast Club

I enjoy catching up with all the BCers at our summer social event (involving pizza).

Guides

The Guides spent nine days in Switzerland last year and are camping in Fife this year.

So altogether - you can see that, while the day-to-day routine of the church changes in summer, it's almost as busy as the rest of the year.

Tom

Autumn

Last year brought some very special and exciting moments and events to our church and community.



It seemed fitting that we in Portobello and Joppa should mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the 1st World War in some way. In conversation with Ann Moar as we waited for a bus to take us to the Big Sing at the Mound (that would be in May during the General Assembly) Ann told me that she was knitting poppies for Liberton Kirk as they were hoping to have a big display in November.

We both looked at our church and without any hesitation said we should have something visual and stunning outside the building which would be a focal point and a fitting tribute that the whole community and beyond could enjoy and reflect upon.

You know what happened next – you knitted and crocheted and bought quizzes to finance the wool and other materials – and as this church community always does, you surpassed yourselves.

Thousands of poppies were knitted and so many of you were willing to help with the putting together (most of you with no idea of what it was you were doing – but putting your trust and belief in a project that was so worthwhile). So many of you made new friends with people you had not previously spoken to. This was a project for everyone and everyone was happy to be involved: the tinies in the Sunday Stars, the Breakfast Clubbers, the Brownies, the Art Group, individual members of the congregation with amazing family histories and memorabilia.

It was a chance for us to open our doors and welcome people from the parish and beyond, youngsters from the schools and those who were glad of the chance to say their own thank-yous for those no longer with us, whom we must never forget. It was indeed a most happy and memorable experience and a truly wonderful Remembrance Sunday.

Soon after this, the Pastoral Care Team held their autumn tea party. It was well attended, with a buzz of conversation and excellent entertainment.

Our youth group, the Breakfast Club, helped with putting together the poppy crosses for the front lawn of the church. The rest of the autumn was spent with planning and leading the Harvest All-Age Worship service, and watching and discussing the NUA films and discussions to give a fresh perspective on faith, through exploring big questions and doubts. The films kept the Breakfast Clubbers engaged in big discussions each week.

23 young people from the Breakfast Club and 6 leaders also went on a retreat in October to Ardeonaig on Loch Tay. It was a fantastic weekend of outdoor adventures, faith discussions and retreat into God's beautiful creation.

Messy Church continued meeting and worked alongside the Social Team in September to have a BBQ dinner to celebrate Open Doors Day. The church was visited by various interested people throughout the weekend. The vivid stained glass was a highlight, as always, to visitors, but walking into a lively Messy Church experience also showed off the life of our church in a different, vibrant way.

Autumn is when we return to routines and the days grow colder. However, from these activities, there was a great warmth of welcome spilling out of our church and drawing people in.

Elize



Winter

This winter marked the formation of the young adults' group.

We meet on a Sunday night at Stewart's house and take part in Alpha sessions over pizza (pizza being the highlight of the evening!). Alpha is a series of interactive sessions with video clips and talking points that explore the basics of the Christian faith. The young adults' group is a safe space for us to discuss Christianity in a group of peers and meetings are always enjoyable. Whilst some of us are moving on to new places next year and won't be able to make the group, we look forward to welcoming our new members after the summer.

The senior retreat to Craggan is always one of the highlights of winter for me. We take part in group discussions about Christianity, do team tasks and play games. One of the best bits of the weekend is the nature prayer activity, where we go outside and sit alone and, if we want to, pray by the loch. It is a lovely

experience that is really helpful in the busy season of winter (even if it can be a little chilly).

Recently I received an envelope in the post and although I initially didn't know what it was, I opened it. Inside were several pieces of coloured paper with positive messages written on them. It was only after reading them that I remembered that we had written these notes about our fellow Senior Breakfast Clubbers and leaders on the senior retreat. Michelle was now posting them to us months later as a reminder. These notes reminded me of the family that the senior group have created.

Our Sundays in December were filled with Nativity preparations. At Breakfast Club, we made Christmas baubles with Gillian McNeill and Ian Warwick to decorate the main hall for Advent, and some of us acted in the filmed Nativity with the Moonbeams and Constellations. This year, the children shared an original Nativity play written and directed by Jamie Clabby that showed behind the scenes of a traditional Nativity play. It was great fun to put it all together.

We also helped at the Guild Christmas Fair. The Sunday Stars held their Christmas parties – with a visit from a special Christmas visitor, and we had our big snowball fight.

Throughout Advent, the knitivity set travelled around the houses of Messy Church and Sunday Stars families. Our Messy Church went up to Spring Gardens to sing Christmas carols. Carols were also sung by the Feast Of Life Choir in December in a concert and in the community.

The Christmas story was shared in our communities as well. Michelle Brown brought the Advent Wreath Godly Play story up to Towerbank Scripture Union after-school club and to Musselburgh Primary School for a P2/3 class and the nursery classes.

Advent was very busy, but the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services helped us to pause and remember the reason why we celebrate this season again and

again. The Christmas Eve family service never fails to leave a smile on my face. My brothers, Ross and Todd, are members of Junior Drama and were a part of the candle-lit procession at the start which, although a little nerve-wracking, was a beautiful sight. The carol-singing at the end is the perfect way to get everyone in high spirits before the end of a wonderful evening.

January was full of celebration as the Outreach Team hosted a fantastic Burns Supper for Christian Aid, and our congregation welcomed in Sunday Stars children to receive Communion in January. There were many fundraisers in the winter time – including Baked Potato Sunday, run by the Breakfast Club and Sunday Stars. This year, we raised money for Richmond's Hope and ASHA. Meanwhile, Hannah Telford and the Portobello Guides took part in Bethany's Big Sleep Out.

So after the rush of excitement of Christmas, we started the New Year with renewed focus on welcome and inclusion.

Jane

Coffee Club



The Coffee Club commences again on Monday 2nd September at 10am in the Session Room.

A warm welcome is extended to everyone and particularly any one who would like to come for the first time.

Coffee, tea and lots of home baking will be served with chat and laughs added in for good measure.

See you all then. **Pat and Joan**



A Call to Prayer

Let God use what you've got

We read, "Then the Lord said, 'What is that in your hand?' 'A staff,' Moses replied. The Lord said, 'Throw it on the ground.' Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake."

Throwing down your staff, the thing that you lean on, is frightening and counter-intuitive to all of us who are control freaks. But as long as you hold on to it and try to control it, God can't use it. Moses' staff represented his identity and security: it was the way he made his living as a shepherd and the way he protected himself and his herd. So he was being asked to let go of who he was and what he had.

What are you not willing to let go of? If you have the courage to surrender to God, it can be the lightning rod of his miraculous power. Today, let God use what you've got.

Harry,
Prayer Promoter

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Brain teaser

This month I was thinking about Bob Gass, who was the founder of *Word for Today*, the free daily devotional published around the world (and featured in this magazine). He was born in Belfast, moved to the States as a young man and died in June of this year. He worked with United Christian Broadcasters. Can you find the words below, which start with the letters of his name and U, C and B, in this word search? The words go horizontally or vertically.

D	G	P	B	A	P	T	I	S	E
S	G	O	S	P	E	L	B	E	Z
N	H	F	F	U	F	N	A	R	B
C	C	F	W	Z	M	V	U	M	K
Y	B	E	L	F	A	S	T	O	U
R	C	R	N	F	J	F	H	N	N
C	B	I	B	L	E	H	O	K	I
Y	Z	N	B	S	P	I	R	I	T
J	K	G	C	Y	Q	V	L	H	Y
X	C	H	R	I	S	T	A	I	N

**BELFAST, OFFERING, BIBLE, GOSPEL, AUTHOR, SPIRIT, SERMON, UNITY,
CHRISTIAN, BAPTISE**

Alison



Getting to know you – Mary. Mary was born in 1921 (though no one would think this, to meet her) in Korea and came back to Britain (via Vancouver and various places in America) when she was three. She was brought up by her grandparents. When the war broke out, they were living in Felixstowe. She joined the WRENS and - they were just allocated jobs - started in Coastal Forces as an engineer's and shipwright's writer. Later, she was commissioned as a cipher officer.

Towards the end of the war, she was sent to Washington DC to work for the Combined Chiefs of Staff, under Admiral Somerville. She met her husband on the boat across – he too was working in Washington, in charge of army supplies to the UK during the war. He was the youngest major in the British Army. They were in Washington, where they married, for a year and then returned via Southampton (again in mid-winter rain). Their married life was spent mainly in Edinburgh. Mary joined St Philip's when she moved to Joppa, twenty years ago.

(Mary makes no claims for the benefits of drinking black coffee, but judging by her replies and her amazing youthfulness, I think we all need to start drinking it immediately.)

Q. What is a favourite hymn, and why?

A. *Maybe "Keep me travelling along with you". It's cheerful and understandable.*

Q. What is an early church memory?

A. *A Quaker meeting with my grandparents. The Quakers were lovely people. I always remember its being sunny at the meetings.*

Q. What's your earliest *childhood* memory?

A. *Arriving in Southampton in the rain, in mid-winter, from Korea when I was three. I didn't take a very good view of Britain at that point.*

Q. What would be your ideal holiday?

A. I'd like to travel on a leisurely holiday round India. We went there once – it's a wonderful country.

Q. What is your most prized possession?

A. A wooden frog made from a bamboo root. My grandmother bought him in China, probably in the late 1890s. I fell in love with him when I was three and eventually inherited him.



Q. What luxury would you take to a desert island?

A. An endless supply of coffee.

Q. What do you do to relax?

A. I used to read but I can't see too well now. Now I listen to Smooth Classics on Classic FM.

Q. What is a favourite quotation?

A. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Q. How would you like to be remembered?

A. Kindly!

Q. What gets you up in the morning (apart from your alarm clock)?

A. Black coffee.

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