



# Magazine

No. 94 September 2013

*Dear Friends*

Over the summer I made a discovery: James Runcie's books *The Grantchester Mysteries*, with their hero Sidney Chambers. He is a fictional Vicar with a difference: he is also a reluctant detective. In the course of several stories set in the 1950s he stumbles across a series of baffling cases: the suspect suicide of a Cambridge solicitor; a scandalous jewellery theft at a New Year's Eve dinner party; the unexplained death of a jazz promoter's daughter; and a shocking art forgery that puts a friend in danger. The vicar discovers that being a detective, like being a clergyman, means that you are never off duty.

James Runcie, the son of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, clearly has an understanding of the work of the clergy, having seen it at close hand in his father's ministry. There are lots of nice touches. "Singing is the sound of the soul", the vicar observes; "...my involvement is not so much on the pages of people's lives, but in the margins." In an observation about how people come to work out the meaning of life he quotes the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard: "There are many people who reach their conclusions about life like schoolboys: they cheat their master by copying the answer out of a book without having worked out the sum for themselves."

For the detective, for the clergyman, and indeed for anyone life is never that easy. There is no book (not even the Bible) that

we can look up, turn to the back, and find all the answers. Life is simply not like that. Kierkegaard also tells us that life is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced; and he also said, "Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards." That's enough Danish philosophy for one pastoral letter.

As we stand at the beginning of a new Church session, with things beginning to start up again after the summer, we learn from the experience of the past, but we dare not let that experience dictate our every move. We may have our feet planted on the ground of experience, but our arms reach



upwards and outwards to an as yet untested future. I think that is for me one of the ways of thinking about what faith is. There are certainties, things that can be counted on, but the purpose of real faith, lived out faith, is to reach out and stride out and move forwards. Faith protects and nurtures, but only in order to send us out into a world where hope and love are

needed. Faith encourages us to discover faith and experience, to be bold and to be courageous.

We launch into a new session, filled with trials and adventures. We may choose to crest the waves, or allow ourselves to paddle in the shallows. Jesus calls us out into the deep places of faith. Are we ready to strike out, and to follow His call and His example?

Revd Dr Derek Browning

## **A THANK YOU FROM LESLEY FRASER.....**

Lesley asks that her heart-felt thanks are passed on to the congregation for their very generous gifts to her. It was an honour and a privilege to serve the Lord at Morningside and to make so many good friends along the way. She has started her new post at Craigsbank and has begun the process of getting to know the families she will be working with over the next 3 years. She says" May God richly bless the congregation as you work to build God's Kingdom at Morningside."

## **.....AND FROM NORMA RONALD**

This is not an article, really just a note to say thank you for all your kindness to me during the years I spent at Morningside Parish Church. I thought when I started I might stay two years, and the two years turned into seven!

Many people do not realise the privileged position those who serve the church are in. Not only do we share in worship together but we are invited into people's homes and share in their joys and sorrows, and that is a two-way thing. In the seven years you have supported me as much as I supported you. I will never forget the people who gave me lifts when I was unable to drive; the people who offered me hospitality when I was convalescing; the people who brought sunshine on a cold, dark day.

The Ladies Group, the Men's Club, the coffee mornings and Messy Church too have enriched me over the years and the re-establishment of the Monday Baby and Toddler group gave me great joy. It was a joy seeing the baby of nine months at the play group grow into a Primary three child before I left (and many thanks to her mother who was a prime mover in the setting up of the group!)

Many thanks too to the Revd Dr Derek Browning. It could not have been easy to accept a colleague, not male, minister or even of the same age. However he accepted me and my foibles graciously and we both more than survived. Thank you so much for the many individual letters and cards I received on leaving, and thank you as a congregation for your most generous gift.

One last word, as they say in sermons. Welcome my successor as warmly as you welcomed me and she might stay seven years too.

Yours, Norma

### **ROLL CHANGES**

Since our last magazine, a number of our members have died. Please include their family and friends in your prayers.

Walter Fairbairn, of 2 Craighouse Park, who died on 28<sup>th</sup> May

Mrs Kathleen Souter, of Old Mauricewood Mains, Penicuik, who died on 25<sup>th</sup> June

William Swanston, of 11 Riselaw Terrace, who died on 26<sup>th</sup> June

Miss Marion Mack, of 19 Balcarres Street, who died on 1<sup>st</sup> July

Mrs Isobel Durie, of 9 Fox Spring Rise, who died on 25<sup>th</sup> July.

## **INTRODUCING OUR NEW ASSOCIATE FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND PASTORAL CARE – NICOLA WHYTE**

My name is Nicola Whyte, and I am thrilled to be your new Associate for Christian Education and Pastoral Care. I will look forward to meeting you soon, but here I want to offer a few words of introduction.

Although I have west of Scotland roots, I consider myself an Edinburgh native. I spent much of my life in Colinton, as an active member of Colinton Parish Church and student at Firrhill High School. Upon leaving school, I completed an MA (Hons) in Divinity at New College at the University of Edinburgh, during which time I also served as President of the Edinburgh Revelation Rock-Gospel Choir. Thereafter, I was awarded a scholarship to study a Masters in Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey, from which I graduated in 2012. I have focussed my attention on Reformed theology, especially the work of Barth and Schleiermacher, and am passionate about building stronger relationships between Church and Academy.



In terms of church involvement, I have had extensive experience in working with children and young people at local and national levels, including through iMPACT summer mission. I have for a decade been very involved in the National Youth Assembly, and currently serve on the Panel on Review and Reform. I enjoy the opportunity to engage with diverse people from across the theological and geographical breadth of the Kirk, and to think, talk and dream together about where we might go.

Outside of church and study, I enjoy volunteering with Girlguiding UK as a Brownie guider, making and listening to music, reading, travelling and enjoying good food with friends.

I am really looking forward to taking up the post of Associate at Morningside, and to getting to know you. This is an incredibly exciting opportunity for me, and I look forward to working with you.

## **THE GUILD**



The new Guild session begins on Tuesday, 1st October when we look forward to welcoming back members, refreshed after the summer break, and also, hopefully, some new members.

Dr Browning opens the session with a talk on our theme for this year “A Fellowship to Build”. Fellowship plays an important part in the Guild and we hope to learn how we can nurture and build on it.

The Guild meets every second Tuesday at 2.15pm in the church hall. Our meetings are open to all – men and women. An interesting programme of speakers has been arranged, details of which are given in the intimations. Anyone joining us for one or all of our meetings will be made most welcome. Please come along and join in the fellowship of the Guild.

## KIRK SESSION

At the June meeting of the Kirk Session:

- **Stewardship & Finance: Financial Update** - Chris McNeil, Hon Treasurer, reported that income in year to date was £49,797 compared to budget of £47,687. There was a noticeable increase in Standing Orders and the use of Gift Aid envelopes since the stewardship campaign. Rental and investment income was also ahead of budget. Likewise Expenditure at £84,007 was below budget of £90,456 and last year of £92,512. Although a deficit still existed, these results were welcomed as they indicate inroads are being made. There was still some way to go.
- **Stewardship Plan** - Robert Armour, Convenor, reminded Session of the agreed Stewardship plan. The first year's focus had been on finance and, of the 225 members who had reviewed their giving, there had been an **overall increase of 25%** mainly by Standing Order. This compared favourably with statistics for the whole church. Of the 503 churches which had made returns, 23% had focused on money, 37% on time and 40% on talents. Of those who focused on money, the average increase was 6%; of those who did not focus on money the increase was only 0.7% but if consultants were used the increase was 15%.
- **The Church of Scotland's guidance** was that congregations should ring the changes in promoting stewardship. In the light of the congregational consultation and the review of the role of elders he proposed, and Session agreed, that the **focus for the coming session should be on time and talents**. We should stress the link between stewardship and the spiritual dimension which motivates people to make a difference. We should focus on greater involvement and remind people of the difference we make. We should tackle apathy head on. We must recognise that one size does not fit all and should identify talents, revive the talent register and publicise our activities. **The theme would be "What can I do."** We want to create a volunteer culture, not one where people wait to be asked. We should be trying to put together people + talents + need. We should look at having another pledge Sunday as we had for fundraising. Session agreed that the matter must proceed early in the new session but in the meantime there were immediate needs for volunteers which could be filled e.g. coffee, flower delivery, crèche and car rotas
- **Report from Health & Safety committee** – Moira Clark reported that some progress had been made but it had been identified that routine testing of emergency lighting had not been taking place. The storage of larger items remained a problem which was being investigated. The Fire Officer had recently visited and was generally sympathetic to our use of the premises. He accepted, for example, that all external doors did not open outwards. However he was insistent that no combustible material should be left in escape routes, hence the need to remove the table with books for sale. He was persuaded that the pigeon holes could remain as they were part of the approved design of the new build. It has been pointed out that we needed to look at emergency lighting in the church which because of the size of the building could be a problem. She assured Session however that they would try to achieve an aesthetically sensitive solution. We require to implement an emergency evacuation at least once per annum and ensure that

users of our building are familiar with the fire drill. The Committee were working on this. She encouraged all elders to advise her of any Health and Safety concerns they might identify.

- **Report from Group re Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG)** – Paul Cackette updated Session on our current position. PVG compliance applied to both paid staff and volunteers. Following the recent PVG training of Session, the safeguarding panel had reviewed our compliance and were pleased to note that we were currently 80/90% compliant but some work was needed to reach full compliance. We had not followed best practice of displaying our safeguarding policies in all rooms but we now do; our conditions of let have been reviewed to ensure that they comply with current requirements re PVG; all tenants have now been issued with a pocket guide to PVG. Our arrangements regarding children and young people were reasonably satisfactory. Session agreed that a PVG report would be a standard item on its agenda, included in the reports from Groups.

## CHRISTIANS FOR LIFE

The Christians for Life course is open to a wide range of people. Perhaps you are thinking about becoming a member of the church; perhaps you have been a member of the church for some time but have some basic questions that you always wanted to ask but never got around to asking; perhaps you have more doubts than faith; perhaps you know other people – in your family, amongst your friends, at work – who might like to ask the same kinds of questions.

The Christians for Life course is designed as an easy-entry level for people who may have a general idea about what the Christian faith is about but would like to learn more. It is a relaxed, informative format that encourages people to reflect on some of the fundamental questions of life and faith.

The six week course starts on Wednesday 4<sup>h</sup> September at 7.30pm in the Cluny Centre and runs until Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October.

4 <sup>th</sup> September	Who is Jesus?
11 <sup>th</sup> September	The Bible Story in 1 hour!
18 <sup>th</sup> September	Learning to Pray
25 <sup>th</sup> September	But what about...? The problem of suffering.
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Learning to Love
9 <sup>th</sup> October	Belonging to God's Church

Got some questions? Come along - all are welcome!

## AUTUMN WORSHIP

September sees the start of our busy Church year, including the worship programme. On 1<sup>st</sup> September (remember communion has been moved from the first Sunday of September to the first Sunday of October), we will re-institute the Covenant service, where there will be an opportunity to renew our membership vows as we dedicate ourselves to the work of the new Church session. Also on 1<sup>st</sup> September our 9.30am services resume in the Church hall. The choir also resumes on this day.

Harvest Thanksgiving will be on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September. This will be a Family service and there will only be one morning service at 10.30am so the whole church family can worship together. The children will be in church for the whole service.

On 6<sup>th</sup> October we share the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The 9.30am and 10.30am services will be held in the Church as usual for Communion. Our normal evening service pattern continues with services in the church at 6.30pm. We will be looking at themes raised from a book written by the late Harvard professor, Peter J Gomes: "The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus: what's so good about the good news?" Over a few weeks we will look at the challenges and the comfort that the teaching of the Bible offers.



## 55<sup>th</sup> BOYS BRIGADE

Anchor Boys and Juniors (that's Boys aged from 5 to 11 and in Primaries 1 to 6) restart on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August at 6.30pm in The Church Hall, Cluny Gardens. Mums and Dads, tell your Sons, Grandparents, tell your Grandsons. Anyone new to your neighbourhood, let them know as well.

There is no waiting list - we're waiting for **YOU**.

There's lots of Fun, New Activities and New Friends for you to meet in a safe environment. Hurry along.

If you want more details, do contact: [ronamclaren@btinternet.com](mailto:ronamclaren@btinternet.com)

## WEDNESDAY CLUB FOR THE DISABLED

On 25<sup>th</sup> July, we were again guests of the Ladies Section of the Biggar Bowling Club. Adhering to the well tried formula, we were invited for lunch, afternoon tea and a few ends of bowls. Leaving a very gloomy Edinburgh, we hoped that the weather would improve once we “crossed” the Pentlands and, sure enough, as we passed Silverburn the sun started to shine and the weather improved steadily as we made our way to Biggar. First stop was the Gillespie Centre for a scone and morning coffee, followed by a leisurely stroll – for the ambulant disabled and those in wheelchairs – up the High Street to the Bowling Club while the less ambulant went for a drive to Coulter and back via some of the back roads. After lunch, we managed to fit in 10 ends of bowls before a short, sharp shower forced us to adjourn to the Clubhouse for a blether and afternoon tea with home baking. We left around 5:00 pm and headed home via Broughton, Drumelzier, Stobo, Peebles and Penicuik.

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August was our day of culture when we visited Floors Castle, near Kelso, the ancestral home of the Dukes of Roxburghe since 1721. After lunch, we toured the castle and learned that the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke commissioned William Adam to make additions to an existing tower house to create a symmetrical Georgian town house and that the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke



commissioned William Playfair, the leading Scottish architect of the time, to remodel the castle between 1837 and 1847, based on Heriot’s hospital in Edinburgh, resulting in the building you see today. During the tour we saw numerous exquisite tapestries, antique furniture and artwork, fine porcelain and a tremendous display of silver-gilt from some of Britain’s greatest silversmiths as well as the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke’s amazing collection of stuffed birds, including the now extinct American Passenger Pigeon. Outside, we saw the holly tree that marks the spot where King James II was killed in 1460 by the explosion of one his own cannon during a siege. Touring castles is thirsty work, especially for our group, so we retired to the Courtyard restaurant for coffee and cakes before heading home.

10<sup>th</sup> August found us en route to Loch Katrine for an afternoon sail on the Sir Walter Scott. The journey there proved to be more eventful than normal when, due to on-coming traffic, the lead vehicle was unable to entirely avoid a boulder on the road which took out the near-side front tyre. Fortunately, no-one was injured and the incident took place only 10km from the loch, so the second vehicle was able to drop its passengers and return to the scene, transfer the passengers and take them to the Brenachoile Cafe, where everyone had lunch before embarking on the cruise while the driver waited for the mechanic. The Scottish weather lived up to expectations and a haar descended on the loch within minutes of sailing. However, it lifted about half way through the cruise and the sun came out to play on the hills and lift our



spirits. Back ashore, some of the men went shopping while others devoured ice-cream before we all returned to the cafe for coffee and cake. We had an unexpected stop on the M9, about 20 miles short of Edinburgh, when the lead vehicle's inside near-side rear tyre shredded – unknown to us, the rim of the wheel had been damaged in the previous incident – and we had to wait for the same mechanic to arrive to change the wheel. The driver is still trying to live this down back at the garage – two callouts in one day! We eventually got back to Edinburgh after 7:00pm. All in all, a good day out with a bit of added excitement.

For our final outing on 17<sup>th</sup> August, we visited Blair Drummond Safari & Adventure Park. Unfortunately, the forecast was for torrential rain and strong winds but, undaunted, we headed off. Sure enough we had some heavy downpours and winds on the way there but not as bad as predicted. We first drove round the Wild Animal Enclosure to see what was stirring and were delighted to find that most of the animals were “up and about”. Lunch was



served to us in a Yurt, the traditional dwelling house of the nomads of Central Asia, after which we visited the Pet Farm and fed, amongst others, llamas, goats, ponies and a Clydesdale horse. We then viewed the brown bears, watched the meerkats scampering about, a solitary Humboldt penguin swimming in his pool (had he or she been ostracised?) and observed the tigers from the aerial viewing platform. Baillie the sea lion mesmerised us with her intelligence and agility during her 15 minute display and then it was off to see the Birds of Prey in their aviaries, followed by an aerial display. The latter was cut short by a torrential downpour which dampened the bird's spirit and drowned us, with Irene winning the



wet t-shirt competition hands down after generously giving her jacket to one of the men to keep him dry. After a reviving cup of tea, we took another tour of the Wild Animal enclosure to get ‘up close and personal’ with the lions, bison, water buffalo, ostriches, camels, elephants et al. The tigers were stalking one of the buses from inside their enclosure, obviously wondering if this was their “Meals on Wheels”, and allowing the men a real close up of these magnificent animals.

Around 12 members of the Wednesday Club attended each of the outings which, going by the feed-back on the return journeys, they enjoyed. As usual they appreciated the help and company provided by members of the Congregation on each outing. I would also like to add my appreciation of the support given by the dedicated band of loyal volunteers and this year's new recruits. Without your help, I just could not run these outings.

The dates for the 2013/14 session for the Club are 2<sup>nd</sup> October to 18<sup>th</sup> December and 15<sup>th</sup> January to 18<sup>th</sup> April. We are always looking for individuals/groups to provide an evening of musical entertainment or for individuals to mount a slide show. If anyone would be willing to provide us with entertainment one Wednesday evening, or knows of someone who might be able to do so, please contact Ian Hastie (447 4533) who coordinates our entertainment.

**Charles S Wilson MBE, Club Leader**

## AUTUMN LECTURES

The successful joint lecture series with Greenbank will be held again on each Sunday night in September. The lecture series has become a popular event in the church's calendar and you are strongly encouraged to support these nights.

There will be refreshments in the new hall from 6.30pm and the lecture starts at 7pm. After the lecture there will be time for questions. We aim to be finished around 8pm.

The theme for this year's lecture series is: Christianity and...

1<sup>st</sup> September: Christianity and Assisted Dying  
The Revd Scott McKenna, Minister, Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church, Edinburgh

8<sup>th</sup> September: Christianity and Islam  
Professor Mona Siddiqui, Professor of Islamic and Inter-religion Studies, University of Edinburgh

15<sup>th</sup> September: Christianity and Atheism  
The Revd Professor David Fergusson, Principal of New College and Professor of Divinity, University of Edinburgh

22<sup>nd</sup> September: Christianity and Conflict Resolution  
Dr Cecelia Clegg, Senior Lecturer in Practical Theology, University of Edinburgh

29<sup>th</sup> September: Christianity and Animals  
The Revd Dr Russel Moffat, Minister, St Martin's Parish Church, Edinburgh



## CHRISTIAN AID

Thanks to those who helped in the Christian Aid Week Events and Spring Fair in May. The sum of £4,262.44 was raised from the House to House collection with the Spring Fair raising £1,954.80. A truly splendid effort.

It is hoped to have a Coffee Morning on 21<sup>st</sup> September (more of that anon) in our Church.

A special event is being organised by Morningside/Fairmilehead Committee on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30pm when the Forth Valley Chorus will be performing a cappella music in Greenbank Church. Tickets will be available nearer the date.

Bill Reid

**IMAGINING SCOTLAND**  
**24<sup>th</sup> September 7.30pm, new Church halls**

The purpose of the “Imagining Scotland’s Future” series is to create a politically neutral space in which people can explore the values and aspirations they have for the future of Scotland ahead of the Referendum on Scottish Independence in 2014. Events will be supported until the end of 2013. The event uses a guided and structured discussion to explore what participants feel is important for the future of Scotland by focussing on three questions:

1. What values are most important to you for the Future of Scotland?
2. How can we make Scotland a better place to be?
3. How do we put our aspirations into action?

The event will be led by a team from the Church and Society Council and the outcomes of the discussion will be gathered, along with outcomes from similar events in communities across Scotland in 2013, and published in 2014.

The Church and Society Council of the Church of Scotland has made a commitment to making theological, ethical and spiritual contributions to public policy and decision-making with a bias to the poor, speaking for the Church of Scotland on these issues, speaking truth to power and bringing to that voice the authenticity of congregational experience.

The Church of Scotland will remain impartial on the question of Scottish Independence. We want to take the conversation beyond politicians and activists and hear what people in communities have to contribute. We hope that churches will host events that are open to the community as a whole and are not limited to church attendees.

If you would like to attend, please contact the Minister as places will be limited to around fifteen or so people. The event is free.

Telephone: 0131 447 1617 or email: [minister@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:minister@morningsideparishchurch.org.uk)

**FLOWER LIST**

	Provided by	Arranged by
Sept 1	Mrs Fiona Watt	Eleanor Watt
8	Miss L Gunn	Caroline Reid
15	Mr Gordon Kinloch	Isobel Paterson
22	WEDDING	WEDDING
29	HARVEST	Flower Committee
Oct 6	Mrs Diane Gaskin Ruddock	Anne Armour



## **A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND**

**11<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

A meeting will be announced in the near future about plans for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land jointly organised by ourselves, Greenbank and Mayfield Salisbury. A brochure is being prepared and will be made available at the meeting. Attending the meeting will not commit you to a final decision about going, but we will be looking for a commitment before the end of the year.

This will be an eleven day trip, departing from Edinburgh via Istanbul to Tel Aviv and then on to Jerusalem. The November weather will be warm but not too hot for touring and away from the large crowds of peak season. Visits will include the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Nazareth, Jericho, Jerusalem and Bethlehem. We will walk along the Via Dolorosa, sail on the Sea of Galilee, have the opportunity to float on the Dead Sea and ascend Mount Masada by cable car. Please be aware that the tour will involve some steep walks and steps, although taken at a gentle pace!

For the first part of the trip we will stay in the three-star Golden Walls Hotel overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem and within easy walking distance of the Holy Sepulchre. In Tiberias we stay at the recently renovated five-star Church of Scotland-owned Scots Hotel. The tour is full board, and touring will be on air-conditioned coaches and accompanied by a local guide.

The cost of the tour is £1,895, based on sharing a twin bedded room with private facilities. Single rooms are available for a supplement. A deposit of £200 will be required initially and the balance payable eight weeks prior to departure.

Further information will be found in the brochure.

## **SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING**

Dancing starts up for its winter programme on Wednesday 25th September at 7.30pm in the new Church Hall. It's meant to be one of the best forms of exercise so please come and join us whether you are a newcomer or have been doing dancing for many years.

We are a very sociable group of dancers that have a "reely" good time.

Catriona Reid (466 3111)

### **MAGAZINE BY EMAIL**

As you should be well aware from articles elsewhere in this magazine and previous issues, we are making every effort to reduce costs in all aspects of our church's life and activities in order to tackle our deficit. One way in which you can contribute to this is by taking the magazine by email rather than in printed form. If you are able and willing to do this, please email the church office at the address at the foot of the back page.

## A LETTER FROM SCOTTISH LOVE IN ACTION



Thank you for the very generous cheque for £1,702.99 which was presented to SLA in June. We are so grateful to all your parishioners for your continuing support for SLA. Your contributions are helping to maintain standards of care and education which the children need in order to progress.

We have received the 2012/2013 class exam results, the critical set of exams for each child. All 37 children who sat their exams passed, 21 gaining A or A+ grades. This means that for the second year running the pupils have achieved a 100% pass rate and will now be eligible to enter Intermediate College for two years, the gateway to higher education or a good job.

On behalf of these resilient children and their teachers we thank you for your loving concern, interest and support, which helps us to ensure that we can continue to give them the best care, and thus hope for the future.

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Presentation of our cheque to **THE EDINBURGH HEADWAY GROUP** at the Astley Ainslie Hospital. They too were very grateful for our hard work in fundraising for them and stressed the difference it makes, especially in the current economic climate.

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A similar presentation was also made to the **EDINBURGH CLOTHING STORE**.

## REORGANISATION OF ELDERS' DISTRICTS

As you may be aware, a small task force has been busy for some time considering the reorganisation of elders' districts. Demographic changes over the years since this was last looked at have resulted in some districts having many more visits than others. We also know that some people prefer being visited during the day while those working during the day are only at home in the evenings. Our Roll Keeper, Moira Clark, in particular has put in a great deal of work trying to even up the sizes of districts and the final version is almost ready to be rolled out, subject to the approval of the new districts by the Kirk Session at their meeting in October.

The task force has also had to take into account the fact that some of our elders have indicated a wish to retire from visiting, often after many years of faithful service. This does not necessarily mean that they will not continue to serve the church in other ways but they will no longer be visiting elders.

The result of this is that we plan to reduce the number of elders' districts from 64 to 20. The districts will generally be larger than before but most will be looked after by two or three elders, who can share the visits as suits them best. Perhaps one will do daytime visits while the other does evenings, or some other arrangement may be reached. You may or may not have a new elder, as some were keen to keep visiting members they had come to know well.

From the congregational surveys carried out around 18 months ago, we know that some members would like to continue to have their elder visit four times a year as at present while others prefer an annual visit or to maintain contact by telephone or email. The intention is for every member to have at least an annual visit but your elder will confirm the frequency of visits to you on their first contact after the new arrangements for the districts are put in place.

As the proposals have yet to be approved by the Session, the districts and the elders visiting them will continue as they are until after the October communion. It is hoped however that the new scheme can be put in place shortly after that so that visits can be made in good time for the December communion.

## LADIES GROUP

Welcome to another session of interesting and stimulating talks.

We welcome returning members and hope we will have the pleasure of meeting new members. The Ladies Group meets in the new hall at Morningside Parish church at 7.45pm on a Monday. The following are the dates and topics for our starting meetings.

23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept.	Edinburgh High Constables	Allan Irvine
7 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	Scottish Tapestry      Edinburgh	Tenners
21 <sup>st</sup> Oct.	History of The Royal Edinburgh Hospital	Laura Gould

Anna Cunningham, Secretary

## OCTOBER MAGAZINE

Material for the October issue of the magazine should be with the editor, Alison Riddell, by **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013** and it will be available for **distribution on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October**. Contributions may be put in her pigeonhole at church, sent by post to 1 Swanston Road, Edinburgh, EH10 7BB, or sent by email to [alison@riddell2.plus.com](mailto:alison@riddell2.plus.com).

From **ODE TO AUTUMN** by John Keats

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun,  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;  
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd and plump the hazel shells  
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
Until they think warm days will never cease,  
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells...

...Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?  
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too –  
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
And touch the stubble plains with rosy hue;  
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
Among the river shallows, born aloft  
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;  
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft  
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;  
And gather swallows twitter in the skies.



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