

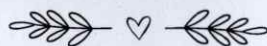
NEWSLETTER  
AUGUST 2025



**"FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR  
YOU," DECLARES THE LORD, "PLANS TO  
PROSPER YOU AND NOT TO HARM YOU,  
PLANS TO GIVE YOU HOPE AND A  
FUTURE."**

**JEREMIAH 29:11**





"JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER."  
HEBREWS 13:8

DEAR MEMBER/FRIEND OF THE WEST CHURCH,

It is not true what they say - some things DO stay the same. What does is disclosed only to faith, however, in the word of this confession.

Indeed, faith derives exceedingly much from this disclosure. It gives the believer that 'solid rock' on which to stand in the flow of time and in the changing scenes of life. It sustains the heart with a firmness that equips it to navigate the turbulences ahead (which, as experience tells, are as assured as the fact that sparks fly upwards) in ways that build towards the good. Perhaps I can highlight three aspects of this.

Disclosing itself to faith by way of this confession is, firstly, the truthfulness of God and the faithfulness of God - that God is truthful and that He is faithful. Because this is what the name Jesus Christ stands for. His person and work reveal in the world, and to it, who God is towards it, namely the source of faith, hope and love through the fulfilment of all His promises, whose word (i.e. Jesus Christ) is utterly dependable and trustworthy. "Heaven and earth will pass away," says Jesus, "but my words will never pass away." Nor shall any who trust in him.

Disclosing itself to faith by way of this confession is, secondly, the fact that our ends are in him but new beginnings. His name spells in



bright and concrete letters the all-suffering and ever-enduring love of God which does not let go, and also His judgment on all that subjects His creation to corruption, death and decay, seeking forever to wrest it away from His glorious purpose. Through Jesus Christ we know that God's good purpose was never foiled, isn't so now and never shall be - but that indeed we all shall see this purpose gloriously fulfilled (such as in him it already is!).

Disclosing itself to faith by way of this confession is, thirdly, a wonderful relief, which opens the heart like little else does to trust and the ways of truth and love. The relief is from the need to assert our own self and from the compulsion to secure life's fulfilment in our own strength.

The same yesterday, today and forever, Jesus Christ is Lord also of our time - Lord of our yesterday, of our today and of our tomorrow. Under grace, the forgiveness of sins, we're learning to be free from the worry and the fear which arise from having to own our past and our present and our future against all that would condemn it. The fullness of life is not of our making nor of our loss, it is in his gift. "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (Jn 10:10)

"JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY AND TODAY AND FOR EVER."

Don't you belong to him? And don't all who confess him belong to one another?

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2 Cor 13:14)





## GATHERINGS

AUGUST 2025 TO UNION WITH ST MARY'S

- \* SUNDAY WORSHIP - Sundays at 11am in the main space
- \* JOINT SERVICES - St Mary's Church, Sun 31<sup>st</sup> Aug at 11am  
- West Church, Sun 28<sup>th</sup> Sept at 11am
- \* COMMUNION SERVICE - Sun 7<sup>th</sup> Sept
- \* J VISCHER LAST SERVICE - Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Sept - all are warmly invited to lunch in the hall afterwards
- \* DATE OF DEMISSION - End of September
- \* SERVICE OF UNION - Service of Union to take place around October the 19th in St Mary's (more details nearer the time). It will be on the Sunday after this event that the united congregations of St Mary's and the West Church will gather in St Mary's for worship as Haddington Parish Church
- \* PRAYER MEETING - Tuesdays at 8.15am - 9am in the lower hall  
RESUMES 19<sup>th</sup> AUG
- \* MORNING BIBLE STUDY - First and third Wednesday of the month, 10am - 11am in the lower hall  
RESUMES 20<sup>th</sup> AUG
- \* EVENING BIBLE STUDY - Second and fourth Wednesday of the month, 7.30pm at the Manse  
RESUMES 27<sup>th</sup> AUG

## COMMUNION

SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER

"DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

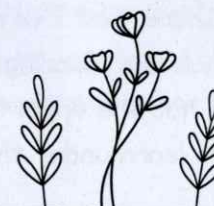
LUKE 22:19

As this is the last time we will take communion as the family of the West Church let us remember where it all started: In the 'upper room' where Jesus sat his disciples down to this meal and said, 'Do this in remembrance of me', and in the further qualification by Paul in 1 Cor. 11:26, "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Standing, as it does, under the sign of a parting of ways and of doing things 'one last time' this celebration of communion is the occasion to remember the Lord Jesus Christ and that He does not part way with His church and that no death of any sort can separate us from the love of God that is in Him. His invitation is to us all who by faith are members of his body, which unites in it all believers everywhere - to know by His Word and by receiving the forgiveness of our sins (grace) that we are His and remain it.

"TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD. HAPPY ARE THEY WHO FIND REFUGE IN HIM!"

PSALM 34:8





## BAPTISM

ALFRED AKYEDIE-TURKSON

On a day of joy, Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, Angela Ama Amedeka (Ghana) brought her son Alfred Akyedie-Turkson to be baptised in accordance with the will of our Lord. We wish the family every blessing and that Alfred may in time come to know and own the treasure he's been given.

JESUS SAID: 'I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. WHOEVER FOLLOWS ME WILL NEVER WALK IN DARKNESS, BUT WILL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE.'

JOHN 8:12

## HELLO

AARON WRIGHT

Since I last wrote, Emily and I have welcomed our beautiful son, Moses Joshua, into the world. He's a very happy baby—and quite the vocal churchgoer! Many of you will have heard his enthusiastic "amens" during John's sermons. We're so thankful for the love and welcome he's already received.

When I last updated you, I had just begun my six-month discernment process. I'm pleased to share that I've now completed that period, and it has truly been a rich and meaningful time of prayer, reflection, and growth. I had the opportunity to spend time in different parishes and to learn under the guidance of Rev. Dr. Suzie

Fletcher and Rev. Dr. David Graham, both of whom offered incredible wisdom and support throughout the journey.

One of the most rewarding parts of this experience has been discovering more about myself and deepening my relationship with Christ. The process concluded with two assessments—one at the local presbytery level, and a national assessment held over two days. I'm humbled and deeply honoured to have had my call to ministry affirmed by the Church.

I want to take a moment to sincerely thank John and Jacqueline for their encouragement, insight, and guidance over these past months. Their support has meant a great deal to me. I'm also incredibly grateful to all of you at the West for your continued encouragement and care throughout this journey so far. Being part of such a loving and supportive congregation has made a real difference, and I don't take that for granted.

Looking ahead, I'll begin training for ministry this September. My academic work will take place at New College, where I'll be studying for an MDiv (Hons). Alongside that, I'll undertake three placements, with the first beginning in October and lasting 25 weeks. I don't yet know where that placement will be, but I expect to find out by August.

This is just the beginning of what I know will be a long and challenging journey. I'm far from a finished product—and if you've heard me preach (or struggled to!), you probably already know that. But I'm incredibly grateful for the encouragement and grace I've received so far.



Please do keep Emily, Moses, and I in your prayers as we take these next steps. And as always, if you're curious about the process or just want to chat more about it, I'd be more than happy to talk.

Every blessing,  
AARON

#### BABY & TODDLER GROUP STELLA ROSS

By the time you read this, we sadly will have had our last ever baby and toddler group run by the West Church and its volunteers. The group started almost two years ago, as I felt there was a need for something in Haddington where parents/carers could come and feel welcome and meet other people and chat over coffee while their children played. I did several visits around East Lothian groups to get a general idea of what was already on offer, and with the help of my daughters Elena and Fiona and daughter in law Lauren and one or two other donations we amassed an amazing selection of toys.

The group started on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in the church hall 9.30-11.30 and continued every Thursday during term time until our last session on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025. In that time we have had around 200 children visit us, fortunately not all on the same day! I think the central situation of the church, its proximity to nurseries, schools, shops and ease of parking made it an ideal venue. The children enjoyed a wide selection of snacks and for the adults there was always tea/coffee and home baking. It was lovely watching the



children have fun and being able to chat and get to know all those who came along, we will miss them all.

A huge thank you to Helen Gray, Anne and Paul Wilcox, Jacqueline Waugh, Andrea Herkes, Mary and Bill Johnston, Margaret Neill, Anne Ross, Kit Harling, Neil Ross, and Helen Hinnigan for all the help they gave in running the group. As some of the mums said it was the helpers who made the group so special, friendly and welcoming. We hope that if the Community Church get the church then they may consider offering this much appreciated service. I will happily leave them all the toys.

Here are some of the comments we received on Facebook when people heard we were closing:

"It's sad to see this group come to an end, for many parents it's been a lifeline after having a baby. Having a FREE, well organised group, kindly staffed by volunteers who have created a safe place to take your child to meet other parents and kids has been great. There is nothing else like this locally. I am sure it has helped many parents/grandparents out over the last two years. Thank you for your hard work."

"Thank you so much to all the wonderful volunteers who made this the most friendly, welcoming and well catered for Baby & Toddler Group I've ever experienced. It was hugely appreciated and will be sadly missed. X."

"Thank you so much for organising such a great group. I know Maisie loves coming along with granny! I am sure the group will be missed by many."



"Aww thank you for such a lovely group, My little one Oscar and I loved it."

"It's been the only group I've felt comfortable chatting with other mums in, will definitely miss it. "Thanks for organising this play group. We loved coming along every week! It was wonderful! Sad to hear it is closing it will be missed"

"An amazing play group. Fingers crossed the new owners will keep it going as it is a very popular group for our families. Thank you for your dedication."

Here's to the next chapter in the life of the West Church. For so many of us we have wonderful memories of our time and the things we have done at the church and are indeed sorry to be leaving it.

STELLA

LOVE FROM ORKNEY  
HANNAH CHEYNE

To our dear friends,

Fraser and I just want to say that we are thinking of you and sending our love during this time of great change. We thank God for each of you and we pray for His guidance throughout the next few months. We are feeling very settled in Stromness. Thank you for the lovely welcome we received when visiting last month - our hearts were full!

With best wishes,  
FRASER & HANNAH

#### ON CHURCH MEETING FOR PRAYER

THOUGHTS & MEMORIES FROM MEMBERS OF THE WEST CHURCH PRAYER GROUP - CHARLOTTE CRAWFORD, JANET COUSINS, FRANCES WILSON

'Approximately 30 years ago a pastor who was invited by our minister (Cameron McKenzie) to speak at an evening meeting at our church about the importance of prayer in the congregation concluded his talk by saying he would be there the following morning at 6am and expected us to be there also. A good number attended and prayer meetings were held twice weekly from then on. The times changed over the years and now we meet at 8:15am one morning a week.'

'Prayer is the vital link between us and God. We need to listen and be guided by the Holy Spirit in our time of prayer. Prayer was central to Jesus' life. "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." (Mk 1:35) He was also known on occasions to spend the whole night praying to God. If this was necessary for our Lord, how much more is it essential for us? The Gospel writers note that before every important event in Jesus' life, he took time to go off by himself and pray.'

West Church has always placed great emphasis on the importance of prayer. The torch of faith has been steadfastly passed on through the generations and we pray that the West Church building will continue to be a house of prayer when we move to join with our Christian brothers and sisters as Haddington Parish Church. May this union be blessed with the Holy Spirit's guidance that together we might build upon the foundations of Christ as we seek to be His church at work in the world.'

'It is interesting to note that the only thing the disciples ever asked Jesus to teach them to do was to pray.'



The hymn writer James Montgomery sums it up beautifully in these verses:

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
the Christian's native air,  
his watchword at the gates of death;  
he enters heaven with prayer.  
No prayer is made on earth alone,  
the Holy Spirit pleads;  
and Jesus on the eternal throne,  
for sinners intercedes.  
O Thou by whom we come to God,  
the life, the truth, the way,  
the path of prayer Thyself hast trod;  
Lord, teach us how to pray."



## FOR REFLECTION

### VARIOUS TOPICS

#### GOD'S PURPOSES

'If we had to sum up in a single brief sentence what life is all about, why Jesus Christ came into this world to live and die and rise, and what God is up to in the long-drawn-out historical process both BC and AD, it would be difficult to find a more succinct explanation than this: God is making human beings more human by making them more like Christ.'

J STOTT

#### ON KNOWLEDGE, KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

'God is less interested in answering our questions than in other things: securing our allegiance, establishing our faith, nurturing a desire for holiness.'

D A CARSON

'Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.'

J CALVIN

'When you come to knowing God, the initiative lies on His side. If He does not show Himself, nothing you can do will enable you to find Him.'

C S LEWIS

#### ON PRAYER

'Prayer is not some mystic reasoning after the unknown; it is response to the God who speaks in Scripture, the God who personally acts in the lives of His people.'

I H MURRAY

#### ON REVELATION

'God takes us into His confidence and shares His secrets with us; God finds us ignorant, and gives us knowledge. That is what revelation means.'

J I PACKER



'Instead of complaining that God had hidden Himself,  
you will give Him thanks for having revealed so much of Himself.'

B PASCAL

'There is enough light for those whose only desire is to see,  
and enough darkness for those of the opposite disposition.'

B PASCAL

#### ON REPENTANCE

'Repentance is no fun at all. It is something harder than merely  
eating humble pie. It means unlearning the self-conceit and self-will  
that we have been training ourselves into for thousands of years.'

C S LEWIS

#### ON PRAISE

'In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him.'

C S LEWIS

'God does not need praise by men, but He knows that when men  
cease to praise Him they begin to praise one another excessively.'

I B SINGER

#### ON WORSHIP

'Worship is to Christian living what the mainspring is to the watch.'

(L R AXELSON)

'Worship is the submission of all our nature to God.  
It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness,  
the nourishment of the mind with His truth,  
the purifying of the imagination by His beauty,  
the opening of the heart to His love,  
the surrender of the will to His purpose.'

W TEMPLE

'Worship, then, is not part of the Christian life;  
it is the Christian life.'

G VANN



## THE JOURNEY TOWARDS UNION

JOHN WEIERTER  
EDITOR OF ST MARY'S NEWSLETTER

### JOINT ACTIVITIES, JOINT VISION, JOINT JOURNEY

#### JOYOUS FELLOWSHIP

We exchange articles for each other's newsletters, as one of the joint  
activities of our two churches on our journey towards Union.

When I think of the various joint activities that I have been involved in,  
from the Christian Aid events to our recent programme of joint services  
in both churches, I take great heart from the buzz of fellowship which



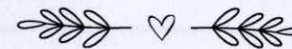
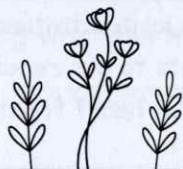
has followed each event. The joyous chatter in the West Church Hall after the recent July service was almost deafening.

So, the two churches are getting to know each other better and we at St Mary's recognise what those at the West Church are giving up - particularly their building. Some may have spent a lifetime caring for it and being cared for within it. Like us, they are also going to give up the name of their congregation and we will both come together as, "The Parish of Haddington at St Mary's". We embrace this as a fresh opportunity - to move on and grow together under the leadership of a new minister.

We are looking forward to welcoming members from The West Church to the St Mary's building. Remember that after the Union, when we have become one new congregation, St Mary's will be your building just as much as ours and we will enter it together, welcoming and supporting each other in our new church life together.

#### SALE OF HADDINGTON WEST PARISH CHURCH BUILDING JOHN & BRENDA

We are sorry that we are not in a position to tell you that the church has been sold yet or to whom, but we can say that good progress is being made and that the lawyer at the Church of Scotland is now putting the appropriate paperwork in place along with the potential new buyer. We believe that the outcome is going to be a positive one.



#### THANK YOU BRENDA SESSION CLERK

Dear All,

As a church family we show our love for God and each other in many different ways as we come together to worship, praise the Lord, enjoy fellowship and invite the community into our premises, especially children, young people and the elderly for activities. Additionally, we show our love for God and others in the community by sharing our space with groups, some of which are Christian organisations and some of which have no specific connection.

None of this would happen without the many folk who are prepared to give up their time by contributing to and supporting the above. Some of us have specific tasks that we fulfil while others see a need and quietly deal with it. Everyone's contribution matters and is valued.

As this is our last newsletter, on behalf of the Kirk Session I would like to thank everyone in our church family for all that you do and have done for us in the past.

As I prepare to sign off, I would like to say that it has been a privilege and an honour to serve you as your session clerk. Thank you for giving me that opportunity.

With God's blessings,  
BRENDA



"MY PRAYER IS NOT FOR THEM ALONE. I PRAY ALSO FOR THOSE WHO WILL BELIEVE IN ME THROUGH THEIR MESSAGE, THAT ALL OF THEM MAY BE ONE, FATHER, JUST AS YOU ARE IN ME AND I AM IN YOU. MAY THEY ALSO BE IN US SO THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE SENT ME. I HAVE GIVEN THEM THE GLORY THAT YOU GAVE ME, THAT THEY MAY BE ONE AS WE ARE ONE - I IN THEM AND YOU IN ME - SO THAT THEY MAY BE BROUGHT TO COMPLETE UNITY. THEN THE WORLD WILL KNOW THAT YOU SENT ME AND HAVE LOVED THEM EVEN AS YOU HAVE LOVED ME."

JOHN 17:20-23



Perhaps the very fact that we are leaving soon and that the church as we know it is approaching huge change has brought in to sharp focus the huge richness of fellowship we enjoy as Christian brothers and sisters. I'll miss you all dearly but feel so hopeful that the work that God has been doing in us as the West Church Family will not cease to be but instead be a wonderful blessing to take forward in to all the places we go from here... The Church as a whole.

It won't make it any less sad to say goodbye and I just want to thank each and every one of you for making our time here so precious. We take with us a wealth of memories and friendships that will last a lifetime. And we will keep in touch.

May God bless you all!  
ELIZABETH



#### A FOND FAREWELL ELIZABETH

I'm so glad to have the chance to say a few words to you all before we head off to pastures new. These are strange days... full of excitement, trepidation, quite a lot of stress and no small measure of sadness... but the overriding feeling is one of intense thankfulness.

I feel gratitude for the amazing richness we have had in our lives since coming to Haddington and all the opportunities that have come our way as a family. I'd be lying to say it's all been easy... it took a wee while for us (and perhaps me more than the rest of the family) to feel entirely settled and to establish our place in this community. But these last few years have brought so many wonderful friendships our way and I feel truly blessed by all the dear people I have got to know and especially those who I can call my church family.

#### A PERSONAL FAREWELL JOHN

Things are moving on, for the church as much as for us, the manse family. As time is about to be called on existing circumstances, in order that new ones may arise which contain in them what was good in renewed form, I want to take the opportunity to say thank you all at the West Church for enabling us over the last 14 years to have our home among you.

It has been a rich time and we are leaving with sacks full of precious memories which no doubt will supply many an hour of cheerful and

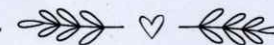
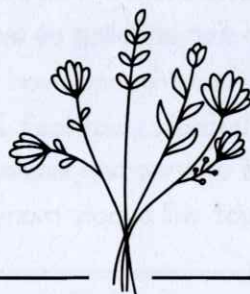


fond reminiscing in future years. Names and faces have come to be etched on our hearts which speak to us of what we have received - welcome and support, generosity and care, concern and friendship, forbearance and patience. You have given much and graciously - we are grateful for all that we have received.

In the centre stood always the worship of our Lord and God. The building in which this happened will now change hands. The building for which it happened, however, is the spiritual fellowship of believers which rests firmly and unchangingly on the confession and witness of Jesus Christ. Where He calls, there we must want to be. Into His hands and to His faithful keeping I commend us all.

“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.” (Titus 2:11-14)

With God's blessings,  
THE MANSE FAMILY



THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU;  
THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE TO SHINE  
UPON YOU AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU;  
THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTENANCE  
UPON YOU AND GIVE YOU PEACE.