

From the Minister.

Dear Friends,

I hope you are all enjoying the beautiful summer weather and have found some time to rest and relax and have some time out from all the busyness of life?

In between holidays and visitors some folks in our church have still been busy during these last weeks. We had a very fruitful Kirk Session meeting on 16th July and chose the architectural firms we will be working with in the coming months as we seek to renovate our church buildings. The architects chosen were Emma Berry from LDN Architects for Aberlady Church and Julian Frostwick from Architectureif for Gullane Church. The choices were made based on some sketch plans and ideas that all three architectural firms we consulted had submitted but we are not sharing those plans at the moment, because now we start a feasibility study and will be working with the architects to produce our final plans. In the meantime, we have engaged the services of Andy Whittet from Inform Research to carry out an asset-based Community Audit of Aberlady and Gullane from a spiritual and missional perspective to help us with our plans for mission. When we apply to Presbytery and the General Trustees to get permission to carry out the building works, we will also have to give details about our missional activities that warrant such large amounts of money being spent on these renovations. My thanks go to all the members of our PaMPP (Property and Mission Priority Planning) and Mission groups for the tremendous amount of work they have carried out on our behalf to get us to this point and also all the members of the Kirk Session for all, they do on behalf of our church. Two members in particular need to be thanked, our two Session Clerks: Elspeth Walker and Michael Black who will be stepping back from their duties on 1st September this year. We thank them for all that they have done to promote the wellbeing and advancement of our church and members. They have been dedicated and tireless workers for our church. I also want to thank Barry White for agreeing to be our Acting Session Clerk until we can find somebody to take on this role.

During these beautiful summer months with the glory of God's wonderful creation surrounding and filling our lives with colour and perfume I pray that you find time to, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him" (Psalm 37:7).

It was Augustine that said, ""Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee." (Augustine of Hippo, Confessions.)

These two sayings also remind me of hymn 540 sung to the beautiful tune of 'The Rowan tree'.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Come unto me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast':
I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting- place, and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Behold I freely give
the living water; thirsty one, stoop down and drink, and live':
I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was guenched, my soul revived, and now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise, and all thy day be bright':
I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my Star, my Sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk, till travelling days are done.

May rest and peace and blessings be yours this summertime.

From Rev Lis

From the Presbytery office.

Dear Friends

Summer is the time for fruit. Spanish peaches are fabulous, fresh pineapple can be wonderfully refreshing and Scottish raspberries are so full of flavour. Which is your favourite fruit? When in Africa we had the joy of growing Cape Gooseberries & mangos amongst other things. If you grow fruit yourself then you will know the delight of a tiny plant growing and producing fruit. It's an amazing process. No matter how small our tomatoes or wonky our strawberries!

In Paul's writing in Galatians he talks about the Holy Spirit working in us (our dark soil!) as Christians to produce love, joy, goodness, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, faithfulness and self-control -the fruits of the spirit. What fantastic qualities to exude ...and this is not an exhaustive list. I don't know about you but I look at this list and long to see more of these qualities in my life.

God through the Holy Spirit is the gardener of our lives but may you & I know what we can do -preparing the ground, watering, feeding where needed, building a trellis etc to enable us to flourish.

May in this season of abundance we find that Living water for our thirsty souls and be filled with joy.

Worship in the Autumn > Season of Creation in September

https://seasonofcreation.org/

Presbytery Mission Clusters

We currently have two clusters running > Roxburgh & Blindwells.

These gatherings offer space to find out what is going on with churches in your own locality and to pray and support one another. With Presbytery now covering such a large geographical area it is important to offer these smaller spaces for closer relationships with folks nearby. It is always good to pray together! Curious or interested in a cluster in your area?

Do get in touch.

I pray that you have a hilarious/peaceful/restorative and blessed holiday at home or abroad.

Best wishes

Rev. Peter J. Wood

Mission Officer for Lothian & Borders Presbytery.

ABERLADY AND GULLANE PARISH CHURCH

31 AUGUST 2025

Session Clerk's Report.

Our two joint services per month started at the beginning of June and, so far, this has worked

well and they have been well supported.

Kirk Session met in June to discuss and choose which architects to use for the proposed

developments at Aberlady and Gullane Churches. Although the architects have now been

chosen, at the time of writing there is still much to discuss and decisions to be made before

we proceed.

Nicky and I had the joy of hosting the JAM Club Summer party in our garden. In true Scottish

fashion we had sunshine, rain and then more sunshine. Rachel organised everything

including indoor games perfectly and she will be a big miss. Thank you, Rachel.

This is Douglas' first edition of Connect since the retirement of Val so I would also like to

thank you again Douglas for taking on this important role in the life of our Church.

Finally, Elspeth retires as joint Session Clerk at the beginning of September. Elspeth has

done an amazing job and we are very grateful for all the hard work she has put in over the

last three years. Thank you from all of us Elspeth.

Michael Black

Session Clerk.

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Church Finances - Treasurer's update.

I am happy to report a healthy balance in our finances. I am very grateful to everyone for their generosity in continued donations. I am grateful for your continued support in your giving through your offerings and for the increases in donations. The current balance in our account is very good. We are enjoying a break from the high utility bills we have all endured during

the winter and spring and this is helping to keep the bank balance healthy.

I have been able to add to our investments in recent months from a generous legacy recently received from a former member. This will help with the expenditure we may face with future projects in both churches. We recently gave a donation to another church in the Presbytery facing difficulties with approval from Kirk Session, and the Presbytery Clerk wrote to me to

express their gratitude.

Our 2024 accounts have passed all the hurdles within the Church of Scotland and are about be submitted to OSCR, our regulatory body for their scrutiny and approval. In addition, the names and personal details of all trustees i.e. elders now must be submitted and held till they

retire but only their names are displayed on the website.

Please continue to support our church. You can do so by cheque or by Standing Order via the bank. You are also able to put your donations in the plate as you enter the church, preferably in your offering envelope in cash. Should you wish to donate using Gift Aid you should contact me for Aberlady or Morag Black for Gullane and we can supply the appropriate

form.

For further information, please speak to me by phone.

All the finances are held in accounts in our joint name with one treasurer. I am grateful to the Finance Committee for their help and acting as signatories.

I hope you are all enjoying the recent excellent weather of summer and feel refreshed from a holiday. The children will soon be back in school and return to their activities.

Kaye Macaskill.

Treasurer.

Strawberry Tea. 💗 🧁 🍅





My 'dream team' of helpers helped host our fourth Strawberry Tea for past Members of Gullane Guild and friends at Templecroft, Gullane. This year twenty one ladies came and enjoyed catching up on all the news and tasting the delicious scones, cakes and sandwiches. The weather was kind to us and some ladies sat outside while others preferred the coolness of inside. Not bad for a Scottish summer's day! We were delighted to welcome our Minister Lis, Kaye, Nancy, Molly and Cathy from Aberlady.

A big thank you to everyone that baked and helped on the day, it was a real team effort.









Elspeth.

Did you know?

The 122 bus now runs between North Berwick and Haddington, through Gullane and Aberlady. It is a request route, so you can wave and it will stop for you anywhere on the route. www.prenticeofhaddington.info



Sula boat trips run **a passenger ferry** a few days each month in the summer between North Berwick and Anstruther. You typically get 8 hours ashore to explore the East Neuk of Fife (or stay over and come back the next day). This is one of the routes used by pilgrims going to St Andrews in days gone by.



HcL Dial-a-Ride on 0131 447 9949 and <u>www.hcltransport.org.uk</u> provide an excellent **transport service to Edinburgh hospitals** for older people and those with mobility issues who have difficulty in arranging transport.



There is some availability during the week in **Aberlady Kirk Stables and Gullane Church Centre** during the day and in the evening. It is also possible to hire either venue for family events e.g children's parties. There are two small rooms available for groups to meet. Please spread the word. Further information and booking forms are available from our secretary, Morag Black at acpcsecretary@outlook.com or 01875 870777.



The **visiting Post Office service** is open on Thursdays 1000-1230 in Gullane Village Hall and 1315-1530 in Aberlady Village Hall.

The **RBS mobile banking van** comes to Gullane, outside the Old Clubhouse, every Friday 1045-1115. It comes to Aberlady, near the Leddie, every Friday 1130-1200.

JAM Club.



We welcome all ages from babies through primary school and we aim to structure the sessions to allow every age to get something out of it. If you are looking to come along for the first time and have any questions/allergies/dietary requirements please feel free to get in touch.

We ended a busy spring session with presentations to all the children and a wonderful picnic complete with a water slide and ice cream. Thanks to Nicky and Michael for hosting!



We hope all the children and carers have had a lovely summer, getting some well-earned rest and time to recharge. It's been lovely to get some sunshine and warm weather as it makes such a difference to the school holidays.

We are really looking forward to catching up with you all when the school term starts.

For the upcoming term we will be running one JAM club a month with the dates as below:

Sunday 17th August 2025

Sunday 14th September 2025

Sunday 5th October 2025

Sunday 9th November 2025

Sunday 14th December 2025



Conversations over the garden wall.

For the past few months I have been "pottering" in the south garden at Gullane. As I no longer have a garden of my own, I have enjoyed being able to pull the weeds (I did inadvertently pull out something I thought were weeds, it's a learning curve), dead head the roses, water the sunflowers & speak to people over the wall & others who were enjoying our garden benches to have a picnic or just enjoy the beautiful views. The conversations were varied with people from other countries & some who were more local.



I have taken a few of these visitors into church, where the Murray Windows are much admired, the "cosiness" of the church itself, the atmosphere, the ancient font and the other stained glass windows, memorial plaques and the banner. One of the families I met were Alice Jackson's family from America, who were visiting. I found one of the gentlemen peering in the vestibule window. I opened the church up and they were enthralled. The young girl with them took so many photos.

One Wednesday morning as we were winding up the coffee morning a young American gentleman came in to the centre and asked if he could go into the church

and pray. Of course, I said yes! He was praying for his wife and unborn child as his wife was poorly, he was working here on a contract and couldn't get home. He was really grateful, as was I, that I could let him use our sanctuary.

The South Garden is taking shape thanks to Joy, Ruth & Rachel. The planting is coming on, the grass is looking good and the little crab apple tree which was covered in blossom now has an abundance of tiny apples.

God works in mysterious ways. By chatting with people over the wall you get to hear their stories. I never thought that by helping in the garden I would meet so many people. One lady asked if she could have a lavender cutting to remember the lovely day she'd had in Gullane, I was happy to oblige.

Muriel.

Faith, Hope and Love.

The Island Games in Orkney have been much in the news recently and reminded me of the happy years we spent there.

If you have never visited: go.

Always on the itinerary for visiting family and friends was a visit to the Italian Chapel built by Italian Prisoners of War during the Second World War.

Not so well known is a similar chapel on the outskirts of Lockerbie also built in a Nissen Hut by Italian PoWs.

At the end of the war the Italian and German PoWs were repatriated from the Lockerbie site and their place was taken by a group of Ukrainian prisoners. These men had served with the Waffen SS and if they had returned to Ukraine, would have been shot. They took over the chapel, redecorating in their own Orthodox style.

Unable to return to their homeland, they integrated into the local community, marrying local girls and worshipping in the chapel. This fell into disrepair for a while but has recently been refurbished and is again a centre for that Ukrainian community.

This reminded me of visiting the various Scottish Diaspora Embroidered panels when they were on tour in East Lothian some months ago and noting that, wherever Scots went in the world, one of the first things they did was to build a place of worship.

The Lockerbie plane disaster and Ukraine: just two instances of Man's Inhumanity to Man, which is still so prevalent in our world today. However there is still that core of Faith, Hope and Love demonstrated by so many in our troubled world. Surely that must prevail.

June Campbell.

Local issues.



Some Summer Facts from East Lothian Foodbank - in June 2025

433 households were supported.

73% of households need monthly support, 9% of households referred for the first time.

1,013 people were fed, 674 adults, 339 children.

88% of households referred were on benefits and not earning.

29 households came from the North Berwick area.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Foodbank needs volunteer drivers to deliver food parcels to clients. Shifts are often for only an hour or so in the early afternoon, taking only as many parcels as fit in your car. You can volunteer as little or as often as you like, usually weekly or fortnightly.

We also need volunteers to help at our allotment; we are growing fresh vegetables for our food parcels.

See the link 'volunteer with us' on the Foodbank website.

Aberlady and Gullane Parish Church are proud to support East Lothian Foodbank.

Volunteers uplift donations for the Foodbank from Gullane and Aberlady Churches, Aberlady Community Hall, Gullane Library and Gullane COOP during opening hours. There is also a collection point at North Berwick Tesco. All donations are taken to the warehouse in Tranent where they are sorted and made into 3-day emergency food parcels. Parcels are delivered throughout East Lothian.

For more information see the website www.eastlothianfoodbank.org.uk

SCARECROW COMPETITION



AS PART OF GULLANE CHURCH OPEN DAY ON OCTOBER 4TH 2025

FAMILIES, INDIVIDUALS, LOCAL BUSINESSES OR ORGANISATIONS CAN ENTER BRING FOR JUDGING FROM 1PM WINNERS ANNOUNCED DURING SUNDAY SERVICE ON 5TH OCTOBER







Scottish Charity number SC005237

World issues.

Choose Fair Tax – Support Justice with Every Pound

During Christian Aid Week, we were reminded that poverty is not God's plan – but justice is. One powerful way to act for justice is by choosing to support **Fair Tax Mark-accredited companies** – businesses that commit to paying their fair share to society.

Every year, billions are lost globally through tax avoidance – money that could be spent on schools, hospitals, and vital public services. Companies like **Amazon**, **Starbucks**, **and Meta** (**Facebook**) have faced widespread boycotts due to aggressive tax practices that shift profits away from the communities where they operate.

Instead, support responsible companies such as **Lush**, **Co-op**, **Timpson**, **SSE**, **and Richer Sounds** – all proudly accredited by the Fair Tax Foundation. These businesses show that ethical success is possible. See the full list at:

Katie McM.

Global conflicts

The human suffering caused by human brutality in the Holy Land today is utterly horrifying. The situation sometimes feels confusing and the amount of information and misinformation is overwhelming. It's hard to know how to think and pray about it. I found this prayer, written by poet and author Jan Sutch Pritchard, when I visited Iona in May. **Douglas McM.**

God of justice and mercy - God who sees the sparrow fall -

Where were you when pitiless men broke down the doors of safe rooms that were no longer safe?

Where were you, God?

Now, as Rachel weeps for her children, where are you?

As those in power exact terrible revenge, where are you?

When brutalised generations grew up as angry children in an unsafe world - while power games played out - where were we?

When whole peoples were moved about like chess pieces on a board, where were our governments?

When huge profits are made from arms sales, where are our protests?

When our communities are divided, how do we work for unity?

Now, when students and exiles near us watch the news in fear, wait for the calls that don't come, and ask 'Where is God?' Well, where are we?

When families are crushed in the rubble of their homes, where are you, God?

With drones and rockets overhead, is there pity in the skies?

As the tanks roll onward, stopping only to fire, what are they defending?

How can we watch from afar without asking - where are you, God?

God help us, we cannot bear to see these scenes of devastation...

we cannot bear to hear raw stories of loss...

we cannot imagine smelling death on the desert air...

we cannot taste such huge despair...

we cannot reach out to touch these fellow human beings who suffer so much.

Where are we, in this crisis, in all its complexity?

Yet you are there - so we cannot shut our eyes or our minds but must find ways to be present, to keep watch, to listen, to share your vigil - just, compassionate and still suffering God.

Give us grace and courage, words and actions to bear witness, here and now.

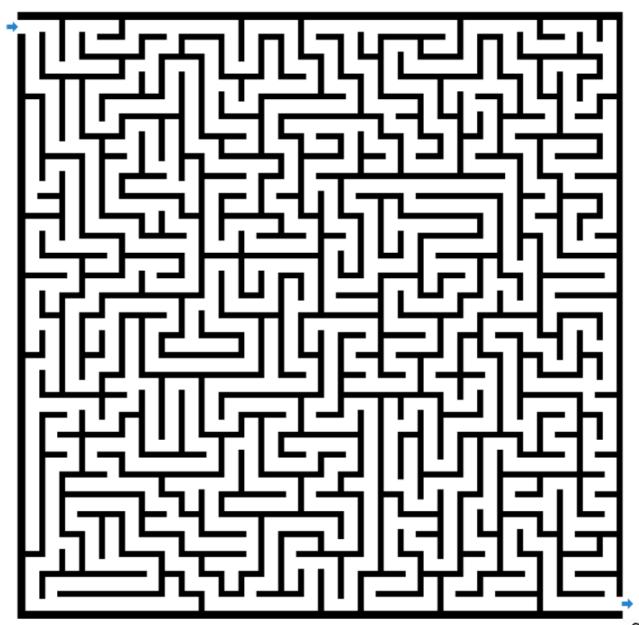
We are here.

Amen.

Fun.



HELP THE SHEPHERD FIND HIS LOST SHEEP.



Aberlady Community Flock - sheep grazing for biodiversity:

In 2025, a new flock of sheep arrived in Aberlady to take up residence in the Coo Park (behind The Gardens). This new community initiative is bringing sheep to the village. They'll be improving the biodiversity of the Coo Park by grazing and providing a resource for the whole community and the school. Throughout the year there will be news about meat and wool at www.aberlady-flock.org



Congregational Roll Aberlady and Gullane Parish Church





Weddings Mhairi Templeton and Steven Walker at Aberlady Church on 25 July

20th Wedding Anniversary Blessing of Vows Jacqui and Brian Mckendrick at Aberlady Church on 27 July

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Editor's note: this is my first edition of CONNECT. I have taken over from an immensely thorough and capable predecessor. I have changed only a few things. I have used Arial 12 font throughout, as this is supposed to be the best typeface for legibility. I have added a puzzle for you or your friends and family. What do you think? What else would you like to see in the magazine next time? How about recommendations of books, places or music? Or some poetry? Please tell me! The deadline for the next edition is Sunday 26 October. Thanks.

Douglas McM.

Sunday	DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
31 August 2025	9.45am Joint celebration of Holy Communion at Gullane Church conducted by Lis. This will be a child friendly celebration of communion and afterwards we will have a planning meeting for the Intergenerational Harvest Thanksgiving on 5 October.
7 September	11.15am Joint worship service at Aberlady Church conducted by the Worship team.
14 September	9.45am Sunday worship at Gullane Church & JAM Club. 11.15am Sunday worship at Aberlady Church.
28 September	11.15am Joint Harvest Thanksgiving service at Aberlady Church conducted by Lis.
Saturday 4 October	Scarecrow competition! Gullane Church.
5 October	9.45am Joint All Age Harvest Thanksgiving service at Gullane Church conducted by the Worship Team. Winning scarecrow announced.
12 October	9.45am Sunday worship at Gullane Church & JAM Club. 11.15am Sunday worship at Aberlady Church.
26 October	9.45am Joint celebration of Holy Communion at Gullane Church conducted by Lis.
26 October	Deadline for submission of articles for CONNECT Magazine.
2 November	11.15am Joint worship service at Aberlady Church conducted by the Worship team.
9 November	Remembrance Sunday. Jock Stein conducting worship at Aberlady Church and Lis at Gullane Church.
30 November	11.15am Joint worship service at Aberlady Church for St Andrew's Day with the Ceilidh Band and Ruthanne accompanying, conducted by Lis.
7 December	9.45am Joint worship service at Gullane Church conducted by the Worship team.
14 December	9.45am Joint Christmas Nativity service at Gullane Church.
24 December	6.30pm Family Christmas Eve service at Aberlady Church conducted by the Worship team.
24 December	11.30pm Christmas Eve Watchnight Service at Gullane Church conducted by Lis.
24 December	11.30pm Christmas Eve Watchnight Service at Aberlady Church conducted by Barry White.
25 December	10.30am Joint Christmas Day service at Gullane Church.
28 December	9.45am Joint worship service at Gullane Church