

CONNECT

**Church services held weekly.
See back page for details.
All are welcome!**



May 2026

Interim Moderator's Letter

I am pleased to write to you all as your Interim Moderator, following the departure of Rev Lis Stenhouse, who previously provided these updates.

By way of introduction, I am a retired medical doctor (not a retired minister) and I have the privilege of serving in this position through being a Presbytery Elder at Fogo Parish Church, near Duns.

Thank you all for the welcome given to Kirsten, my wife, and I when attending both Gullane and Aberlady to date. We will be attending on further dates.

You are in a blessed position to be able to call a full-time minister - someone who can help you carry forward the many exciting and engaging plans already in place to further God's work in Aberlady and Gullane. During this period, you continue to be well served by the worship group and by a strong Kirk Session, which Lis described as the best she had worked with during her time in ministry.

These plans include a "play café" in Gullane, once the planned physical improvements have been completed, to strengthen connection and interaction with the local community. At Aberlady, toilet facilities will be added to the kirk building, and there will be further opportunities to engage with primary school children and their families—something that is already beginning to happen.

Many of you will have heard Jim Donaldson's round-up of the past year. Jim served as your Session Clerk until the end of April, when Michael Black took over. Much has happened over the last year, and there is good momentum to keep these plans moving as soon as practicable. The congregation's finances remain sound, thanks to the work of your treasurer, Kaye Macaskill.

With Lis's agreement, I have been involved in Kirk Session and PaMPP meetings since before her retirement, so I am well placed to support the Kirk Session and the other groups progressing this work. I am also overseeing the Nominating Committee, which is working hard to attract a suitable candidate for your full-time ministerial post. While the committee's discussions are confidential, the process should lead to the recommendation of a single candidate, who will be heard and voted on by you all at a joint service.

Alongside this, I am responsible for ensuring continued worship cover and pastoral care, both of which are already well in place. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or requests until your new minister is elected. My contact details are available in the Parish Profile on your website. Blessings to you all.

Dr John Arthur.

May 2026

Renovation Plans and Work

As reported in church over the last months, the renovation work at Gullane and the installation of a toilet at Aberlady have been approved by both Presbytery and the General Trustees for the Church of Scotland. With our own funds and the money gifted by the General Trustees we have been left with a current anticipated fund raising goal of £18,000. A committee is now in place to organise fund raising activities.

Going forward the plan is for work to be undertaken first at Gullane and once this is completed to start the work at Aberlady. This will ensure there is always a place of worship available for our congregation.

Final plans for the renovation work at Gullane are currently being completed by the architect before being submitted to the Planning Department for approval before going out to tender. Dates for the work commencing will be dependent on the speed of this process and will be publicised as soon as they are available.

Aberlady has had a new audio visual system installed at the end of the April.

Should you have any queries, please contact me by email via the Church Secretary on agpcsecretary@outlook.com

Fran Goodman.

Fundraising and Social Committee

This new committee met for the first time in March. Its members are Allie Frostwick (Chair), Morag Black, Val Morrison and Rachel Wallace.

Whilst the main aim of the Committee is to raise funds for the Building Restoration Project of Aberlady and Gullane Parish Church, another important function is the organisation of social events throughout the year.

Our first event will be a coffee morning, to be held in Gullane Village Hall on Saturday 15th August 2026. There will be the usual teas, coffees and scones, as well as a cake and candy stall and a raffle. Donations of home baking, preserves and raffle prizes will be very gratefully received – watch out for details nearer the time in the weekly intimations, on the Church website and Facebook page.

We look forward to seeing you there – put the date in your diary now!!

May 2026

Treasurer's Update

The last three months have been busy for me with the completion of the Annual Accounts, now audited and approved by the trustees i.e. the Kirk Session and submitted to Presbytery and 121. The Annual Stated Meeting took place at our last joint April service to provide you with information about our Finances. I am happy to say that our financial position is very healthy both in our general account and in our investments. We had a large deficit for the year due to a large increase in our contribution to Giving to Grow and an architect bill for preparatory work at Aberlady.

I continue to be grateful for your support in your giving through your offerings. Please continue to maintain this. You can do so by cash, cheque or preferably by Standing Order via the bank. For further information, please speak to Morag Black at Gullane or me at church or by phone. Morag will be in touch shortly by letter to Gift Aid donors about their 2025-26 donations. I am pleased that donations in the plate at the rear of both churches, either Free Will or Open Plate are helping with our regular income. The amount donated over the first three months has increased, resulting in a larger refund earlier in April from Gift Aid. The heating costs remained high during the winter months but have reduced this year, helped by our joint services. We hope the current warm weather continues and we all enjoy a sunny warm summer.

It is likely that there will be some events later in the year as we need to start some fund raising for the proposed work to improve all our buildings. We have most of the funding but we need to raise £18,000 to cover the cost of all the proposed work.

There is some availability for the Kirk Stables and Gullane Church Centre for regular or occasional lets. I am pleased to say that there are more lets at both sites. These lets help defray the cost of running these buildings. Please contact our Secretary, Morag Black, for information or availability either by email agpcsecretary@outlook.com or by leaving a message on the office answering machine (01875 870777).

Kaye Macaskill.

Pastoral Care

Our Pastoral Care team has four members who have been trained within the Church of Scotland to provide a listening ear to anyone who is in need of some support.

We make contact by phone, but can also visit, to be alongside people who may be struggling and would like to connect with the Church. All referrals are treated in confidence, and we work strictly within Church of Scotland guidelines for pastoral care.

If you would like to refer yourself, or someone you know - or would just like to know more about us, **please contact Carol Murray on 07809 232 538.**

Volunteers wanted to 'drive' our new audio-visual equipment in Aberlady. Training provided! Please speak to an elder if interested.

Aberlady Primary School – P6 & 7 End of Term Show! All invited! Aberlady Community Hall 1800hrs, Thursday 18 June 2026!

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR GLASSES?



Then please take a look at the back of Gullane Church.



There are several spare spectacles sitting on a shelf

in the sanctuary.



May 2026

Safeguarding Update

After many years of hard work, Win Wright has now retired as a joint Safeguarding Coordinator. Win was previously the Safeguarding Coordinator at Gullane Parish Church but following the Union, she took responsibility for the Safeguarding Register and for processing PVG applications for Volunteers in the newly United Church. Win's commitment to the role was acknowledged by Kirk Session in January and she was warmly thanked for all the work she has done.

Following the Church of Scotland's Safe Recruitment Process Rachel Wallace has now taken over from Win and will follow a similar remit. Meanwhile, I will continue to administer Safeguarding training courses for our Volunteers and for our Elders – who require to be trained in Safeguarding for their role as Trustees of the Church. I will also continue to complete the annual Safeguarding audit which we submit to Presbytery as part of our Annual Inspection of Records. This audit is our checklist, ensuring that we are following the Church of Scotland's best practice.

Rachel and I, along with Elspeth Walker and Win Wright, form the Safeguarding Panel. This Panel is appointed by the Kirk Session to manage Safeguarding matters on its behalf. All Panel members have completed Advanced Safeguarding Training and are members of the PVG Scheme. The Panel would assist the coordinators in managing any Safeguarding situation which might arise in our congregation, with support from the Safeguarding Service of the Church of Scotland.

Harm or abuse of both children and adults at risk can happen anywhere, even in a church community. We have a duty to **ensure a safe church for all**. Therefore, if any harm or abuse is suspected or witnessed, or is reported to you, you must immediately report it to any member of the Safeguarding Panel. We have a dedicated email address for any concerns agpcsafeguarding@outlook.com .

Val Morrison.

May 2026

Third Time Lucky

Some of you may recall an article I wrote for the Church magazine during Lockdown. I shared the story of being caught up in the Iran Revolution in 1979 and then again in 1983 in Sri Lanka with the Tamil Riots. Never did we think it would happen again in Dubai!

Our son Colin is working in Dubai at present, living in a serviced apartment in the Marriot Hotel down by the Creek. Our daughter-in-law and grandchildren are in UK for schooling and have been visiting Dubai as many times as they can. Ken and I decided to visit Colin to keep him company over the weekends.

We flew overnight to Dubai from Edinburgh on 26th February arriving the morning of Friday 27th February. We unpacked and chilled for the rest of the day. On Saturday 28th February, Colin took us to Jebal Ali beach resort for the day. The company he is working for own the resort so we signed in and made our way to the beach. We had a lovely swim in the sea and settled on the sun beds after lathering on the suncream.

Peace was shattered when an almighty explosion was heard somewhere behind the resort followed by three more. People were standing up looking at the sky, looking at their mobiles in complete confusion. What on earth has just happened!

There was an exodus of people, gathering everything up including children and babies and making a quick exit for the car park. We decided to stay put for the meantime as the roads would have been chaotic. We had a bite of lunch and left and the roads were still chaotic. We got back to the apartment only to hear missiles flying through the sky and the odd explosion in the distance.

At 1.30 am our three mobiles screeched out in unison with a government warning alert. The instructions were chillingly clear: to stay indoors, in a basement if possible, be vigilant and to only go outdoors if it was absolutely necessary. We stayed around the hotel complex for the next few days, watching groups of people being herded onto buses to go to the airport. The UAE government funded all the hotels who were accommodating transit passengers who had been stranded at the airports. We used to sit in the hotel foyer with a cup of coffee and just people watch - very interesting.

Most nights we were awoken with the sound of explosions and missiles never quite knowing how close they were. We didn't panic - it was more anxiety than anything else. One day we did manage a visit to a friend and her husband who have moved out to Dubai for 9 months of the year and back to North Berwick

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for the summer months to avoid the extreme heat of Dubai. It was lovely seeing their newly renovated house in Arabian Ranches, just around the corner from their daughter and family. We had a lovely lunch with them and a jolly good catch up providing a much needed moment of normality amidst the tension.

The famous Shopping Malls are usually heaving with people every day of the week. This time they were almost deserted. Most expats having fled to their home country.

We checked in with the British Embassy as advised, and as a precaution. Our return flight was booked for 10th March and we had no idea if this was going to go ahead. You could check-in online 48 hours before but this proved rather difficult. We held on for 53 minutes before eventually someone answered and we were still confirmed on the flight on the 10th. Hallelujah!

The flight home was not without excitement and felt like a scene from an action movie!! An Emirates Fighter jet escorted our plane to a height when the pilot of the jet deemed it was safe. We couldn't take the usual route and had to fly south through Saudi and then across Egypt zigzagging all the way to avoid the missiles. It was a longer than normal flight, just over 9 hours but it was Oh! so good to be home and safe once more.

So I reckon this was our "third time lucky" and I might pick somewhere a little less historical!!

Win Wright.





Some April 2026 facts.

Holiday Hunger provision helps families cope with the additional costs that occur during the holidays, whether that's making extra meals or budgeting for snacks. In the wider East Lothian area, the Foodbank supplied 16 families with £500 worth of vouchers. At Easter they supplied families with supermarket vouchers and additional snacks to ease the pressure of the cost of school holidays. The Foodbank helped 22 families in Musselburgh with £840 of supermarket vouchers. This was generously supported by Musselburgh Area Partnership and Musselburgh connected communities.

Here's some stand out facts & figures, from last year.

These numbers highlight the impact the Foodbank service can have. ❤️ Behind every number is someone who deserves a listening ear, support and dignity.

Last year East Lothian Foodbank helped 13,217 people and provided 18,953 emergency meals. 46% of people supported only needed the Foodbank once while they got back on their feet.

Aberlady and Gullane Parish Church continues to support East Lothian Foodbank through donations of food and money.

Non perishable food items can be donated at church on Sunday, in Gullane Co-op and Library, and at Tesco in North Berwick.

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Letters from a century ago

Tidying out a desk drawer recently, I came across some notes that I had made as part of a small sub-committee of the Kirk Session in Oban which had been tasked with cataloging a number of letters found in the attic of a house in Chicago and returned to Oban as they had been written by the Minister of Kilmore, some five miles south of Oban, which was now part of a united church.

These had been written to his son in Chicago over a period from 1917 onward and had all been written on the reverse of various communications mostly dealing with Church matters.

One was from the Temperance Society asking him to preach on behalf of Prohibition and another from Sir Harry Lauder asking for the Church to donate to the memorial fund for his son and we were pleased to be able to donate that to the Harry Lauder archive.

The Minister writes of rowing up Loch Nell to visit parishioners, of walking the five miles to Oban to attend a Presbytery meeting and of his concern that two of the local lairds had not paid their contribution to his stipend - then £640 per annum less 25% income tax! He speaks of enjoying his time in the Borders, enabled by a pulpit exchange, where he developed a liking for Sir Walter Scott's novels.

He appears to have enjoyed his annual visit to Edinburgh for the General Assembly, where he once recommended someone for the vacancy in the Parish of Inch, and managed some socialising as well as attending a production of the Mikado in the Lyceum Theatre and resolving not to go back unless it was Shakespeare, and confesses to being ashamed of reading such trash as the Pickwick Papers. He speaks of the resignation of a minister in Glasgow and the congregation being at loggerheads over his successor. On a more mundane level he tells of a 35 gallon flask of whisky being washed up on Kerrera.

He writes of his concern that so many young men had been called up, he wondered how the harvest would be gathered and urged his son to come back and fight with a Scottish Regiment, hoping he was not a conscientious objector.

A fascinating glimpse of the life of a parish minister of that era, and I am pleased that these letters are all safely in the archive in Lochgilphead thanks to the then archivist who came to check them complete with white gloves which we had not thought of wearing!

June Campbell.



**MAY
3**

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**MAY
10**

BERWICK BRASS QUINTET

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**MAY
17**

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**MAY
24**

STUART HARMONIE

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**MAY
31**

END OF THE PIER

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**JUN
7**

SONOS ARAON DUO

Catherine Baker on piano & Lynn Fraser on flute

**JUN
14**

ELINOR EVANS

East Lothian Clarsach player

**JUN
21**

SINFONIA CHAMBER PLAYERS

Wind ensemble

**JUN
28**

ANDANTE CHAMBER CHOIR

from the Borders

**JUL
5**

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**JUL
12**

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**JUL
19**

HADDINGTON FIDDLES

Traditional music

**JUL
26**

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**AUG
2**

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**AUG
9**

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**AUG
16**

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23**

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31**

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Children's Church

JAM Club has been meeting weekly again during the Sunday morning service at Gullane. Children have been learning, crafting, planting seeds and singing, amongst other things. We now have a small rota of helpers, which is what has enabled us to hold JAM Club weekly again. We would like to recruit more helpers onto the rota, so please do think about whether this could be you! Please talk to **Lauren** if you'd like to help.



The **Easter Craft Afternoon** on Palm Sunday in the Kirk Stables was a roaring success. We welcomed 42 children and their parents who enjoyed an hour of crafting, a half-hour Easter story from the minister and a mini-feast of sandwiches, cakes and fruit. Big thanks to our very hard-working helpers who made it happen (and cleared up afterwards!).

Douglas McMillan.



Congregational Roll
Aberlady and Gullane Parish Church



Weddings

David Matheson and Ronald Ross

Funeral Services

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Norman Yarrow
Agnes Anderson
Robert Foggo
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Milne Brodie

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Jim Donaldson stepped down as Session Clerk at the end of April, and Michael Black stepped back into the role. We thank Jim for his hard work and warmly welcome Michael back.



SUNDAY SERVICES 2026

17th May 9.45am in Gullane and 11.15am in Aberlady led by Barry White.

24th May 9.45 am Gullane and 11.15am at Aberlady led by Rev B Hilsley.

31st May 11.15am in Aberlady **Joint Service of Holy Communion** led by Rev Bob Glover.

7th June 9.45am at Gullane **Joint Service** with Worship Team.

14th June 9.45am in Gullane led by Dr John and Kirsten Arthur and 11.15am in Aberlady (Kirkin' Sunday) led by the Worship Team.

21st June 9.45am in Gullane and 11.15am in Aberlady led by Barry White.

28th June 9.45am at Gullane **Joint Service** .

5th July 11.15am at Aberlady **Joint service** with Worship Team.

12th July 9.45am in Gullane and 11.15am in Aberlady led by Rev B Hilsley.

19th July 9.45am in Gullane and 11.15am in Aberlady led by Barry White.

26th July 11.15am in Aberlady **Joint service** led by Rev B Hilsley.

2nd August 9.45am at Gullane **Joint Service** with Worship Team.

9th August 9.45am in Gullane and 11.15am in Aberlady led by Barry White..

16th August 9.45am in Gullane and 11.15am in Aberlady led by Rev B Hilsley

23rd August 9.45am in Gullane and 11.15am in Aberlady.

30th August 9.45am in Gullane **Joint Service of Holy Communion** led by Rev B Hilsley.