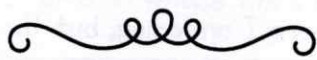


NEWSLETTER
SEPT - NOV 2024



**"YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET
AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH."**

PSALM 119:105





DEAR MEMBER/FRIEND OF THE WEST CHURCH,

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
(Ps 119:105) Implicit in this statement is an invitation, if not a serious recommendation, to use the word of God in the matter of assessing where one is ("feet") and where one is going ("path") in life. By publicly confessing this experience with the word of God as someone who seeks to understand aright the task of navigating life, he is like someone who having found a treasure on this way wants to share it with others.

Of course, the basic fact regarding the definition of one's position (where are we? how did we get here? what is a sure foundation and ground to stand and go on?) and the definition of the course of direction (what is the end-goal of our journey? and how do we not miss it?) is that their true account arises from God's word, for our lives are relative to God and His word is for our hearing (indeed, we live to hear!). I cannot truly know where and what I am and what's up and why and what it's all for, and I cannot truly and with certainty know where I am going, but through being attentive and responsive to the God I am relative to. This assumption is properly basic, before all reflection, and as such must prove itself to those who test it by doing accordingly (like the proverbial pudding the proof of which is in the eating).

The notions "lamp to my feet" and "light to my path" serve to indicate that to apply oneself to God's word (and apply this



word to oneself) is to be taken into a process whereby we are being changed by the strength of this word into its character. The word is light and what it touches that it orders. God's word is an event in the course of which what is dark is made light - it is a saving event.

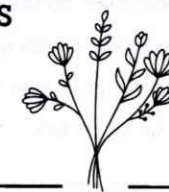
Where do we have this Word but in Christ Jesus, mediated through Scripture? "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:14) But if the Word so dwelt, what light is not found by dwelling in him and what darkness does not prevail where he remains unknown?

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col 3:16) - it will repay the effort with light even out of the midst of loss and darkness, the light of mercy and grace, forgiveness and restoration, truth and love, peace with God and life: for Christ is the light of the world.

I greet you all in his name, in whose word lies our strength.

**JESUS SAYS "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE;
WHOEVER COMES TO ME SHALL NOT
HUNGER, AND WHOEVER BELIEVES
IN ME SHALL NEVER THIRST."**

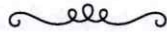
JOHN 6:35





GATHERINGS

- * **SUNDAY WORSHIP** - Sundays at 11am in the main space
- * **SPECIAL SERVICES** - Communion Service, 8th Sept (Pot lunch afterwards)
- Harvest Thanksgiving Service, 6th Oct at St Mary's
- Remembrance Sunday Service, 10th Nov at St Mary's
- * **PRAYER MEETING** - Tuesdays at 8.15am - 9am in the church hall



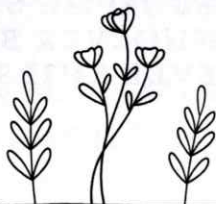
- * **MORNING BIBLE STUDY** - First and third Wednesday of the month, 10am - 11am in the church hall

We are studying the book of 'Revelation', which we find as rewarding as we find it challenging - joining possible at any point.

- * **EVENING BIBLE STUDY** - Second and fourth Wednesday of the month 7.30pm at the Manse.

Our theme: In conversation with God's Word - the Letter to the Romans, from chapter 8 - life in the Spirit, the wonder of God's faithfulness, a Christian ethic.

→ We would love to share in fellowship with you. Please contact John (01620 822213) if you would like to join a group.

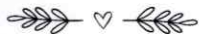


ALISTAIR SHIELDS, who passed away on July 9th aged 67

IN MEMORY OF ALISTAIR SHIELDS
JACQUELINE WAUGH

Dear friends, it is with sorrow that we bring to your attention the sad passing of Alistair. I have known Alistair since he was a little boy, he lived in the village of Gladsmuir as did I. I remember him growing up and going to Sunday School faithfully. And watching him grow into a very kind young man. Alistair was tall like his father, and he certainly chose the right career for himself. He joined the police and worked his way up the rank of Inspector, and he went on to be a tutor after he had served his time of 30 years but continued to learn and get a university degree, all while still attending college to teach the young police cadets the needful. Alistair did so much to help youngsters, he became a swimming coach, and also was a referee and starter for many swimming galas. And it appears he used his police whistle which was a lot louder than a normal whistle, it certainly made the young swimmers pay attention.

Alistair continued to go to church and when he married Sharon they joined the West Church. They brought the children up in the church and Jenna and Russell were well known in the church life. Alistair and Sharon became elders and were well liked in the church and by all who knew them and the family. Eventually Alistair became our treasurer, and kept the church funds in tip top order. When they moved to Musselburgh



Alistair continued to assist the West Church Finance committee with its work and was a great help to Ray our current treasurer. If you asked Alistair for help he would be there.

Alistair kept his faith to the very end, and at his funeral at Seafield it showed just how much he was liked and respected. The Police were there in great numbers high ranking officers as well as his friends from the swimming world, and the police gave lovely eulogies for Alistair. We know he has gone to his heavenly home and is no longer in pain, and for that we give thanks. We know that he has gone and we will miss him, but he has left many memories for us and all his work colleagues, to remember Alistair by, well done thy good and faithful servant.

We commend to God's comfort and to your prayers his wife Sharon and their children Jenna and Russel and their families.



JIM WILLIAMSON, married to Morag, died in June aged 80

IN MEMORY OF JIM WILLIAMSON
JOHN VISCHER

Jim and Morag, who had two children, came to the West Church from Musselburgh as a young couple, Jim working as a teacher at King's Meadow Primary. Both very popular they soon became involved in all aspects of church life and were called onto the session. The Bible class Jim took over thrived under his leadership.

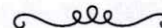
In the 80ies he decided to become a minister and went on to study divinity at Edinburgh Uni. After ordination into the Church of Scotland

he was inducted as minister to the congregation in Ruthven where they spent many happy years.



After retiring from that post Jim and Morag went to live in Dunfermline.

We commend Morag and their son Andrew to God's merciful keeping.



"JESUS SAID, 'FOR THE MOMENT YOU ARE SAD; BUT I SHALL SEE YOU AGAIN AND THEN YOU WILL BE JOYFUL AND NO ONE SHALL ROB YOU OF YOUR JOY.'"

JOHN 16:22

A MATTER OF GRATEFULNESS

We take the opportunity to say a big 'Thank you' to our organists, the door duty team and the catering group for their contributions to the Sunday worship; also for that of those on the rotas for the readings and the intercessory prayers; and for that of the people responsible for sound and projector. All are greatly appreciated!



"THEREFORE, MY BELOVED BROTHERS, BE STEADFAST, IMMOVABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD, KNOWING THAT IN THE LORD YOUR LABOUR IS NOT IN VAIN."

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58

A MATTER OF PRAYERFUL INTEREST

After carefully searching a call to chaplaincy Aaron Wright (who joined our church about two years ago with his wife Emily) has now started the qualification and training process. Our prayers are with them both. May God bless every stage of their journey and see His will fulfilled to their joy in the service they seek. Some of what was and is involved in his own words:



Hello Folks,

Thank you for allowing me a moment in the newsletter to introduce myself and share a bit about what's happening in my life over the next few months. For those who don't know me, my name is Aaron—though you may know me better as Emily's husband, or not Fraser! Emily and I have been attending the West for a couple of years now, and we've truly felt at home here. For that, I sincerely thank each of you.

In just a few short weeks, Emily and I are excited to welcome our first child. This is a joyful time for us, and we can't wait to meet our little one. But that's not all that's happening. I've also begun the discernment process for ministry in the Church of Scotland. Although discernment is just the first step in what could be a long journey toward ministry, it's a decision I've prayed about and reflected on for a long time.

I've felt a calling on my heart for many years, particularly toward Military Chaplaincy. For a while, I tried to ignore it, thinking I could satisfy that calling by studying Religious Studies at New College. But the feeling only grew stronger, and eventually, I knew I had to fully listen to and trust in God. Before completing my studies, I had conversations



and prayers with John about applying for discernment. I also sought guidance from my friends and professors, many of whom are Ministers or Candidates for Ministry. In some ways, I was looking for reassurance – could they see me as a Minister? Did they think I was suited for it? While I was seeking their validation, I've come to understand that there's no perfect candidate for Ministry. We all have our flaws and strengths, but God calls us despite our weaknesses because it is through Him that we can achieve.

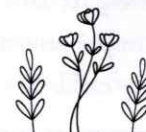
So, why Military Chaplaincy? I believe God has been guiding me toward this for a long time. I come from a military family—my father, grandfather, brother, and uncles have all served. I've been surrounded by this environment for most of my life, including attending a military boarding school in Dunblane. Despite this, I always said I had no interest in serving in the military. It seems God has different plans.

My period of discernment will last six months. During this time, I will work closely with my mentor, Rev. Dr. Suzie Fletcher, and be assessed by Rev. Dr. David Graham. This will be a time of deep prayer and reflection, along with plenty of reading, which I love. I will also participate in delivering elements of worship, ministry, and pastoral care. Part of this process requires attending another church a couple of times each month—in my case, the Parish of Dunglass. So, if you notice I'm around a bit less, please know it's only temporary.

As my church family, I would greatly appreciate it if you could keep Emily and I in your prayers over the next few months. If you'd like to know more about the discernment process, please feel free to ask.

Best wishes,

Aaron



MESSY CHURCH
JACQUELINE WAUGH



Good afternoon, as I sit here on this beautiful afternoon, taking the time to remember the great Sunday afternoon we had with the children, and their parents. We used the theme of God's Creation and all the animals we have in our world. It is very well named. MESSY CHURCH. I can assure you you it was very messy, but we had lots of fun together. There were seven children attending with their parents, and boy, did they enjoy their time with the crafts. If you come through for tea after the service on Sunday you will see the Ladybird that one of the adults worked on with her children. We had two mums from the Mother and Toddler group which was super. When I went over to speak to them, I nearly fainted when I saw one of the mums and her little boy. He had managed to grab the paints and his wee hands were just a mass of colour. He was very free with the paint, he managed to get it in his hair behind his ears and all over his clothes. He has lovely auburn hair. Well he did have!!!! his mummy was also covered in the paint on her t-shirt and her hair. We were in fits of giggles as he certainly made a good job of finger painting. We took him to the toilet to get it off but well he was not for that. So his mum says it can wait until he is in his bath. Well can I tell you it was still in his hair on the Thursday after at the club. But he and the others had a great time.

We went into the church for the Bible story. The children answered questions on the creation and who made everything in the world. I was told that one of the children was still talking about God and Jesus and all what we had through Jesus. We had the children running round the church to find all the animals I had hidden earlier. One or two of the children came up and told wee stories, which were interesting. It is a great way of getting the Word of God into the kids who might not know whose we are and that Our Lord Jesus Christ says Let the children

come to me . I can only pray that we can bring more into Messy church and to give them the message of God's love to us all. We went through to the hall for supper and another two children came with their parents and they enjoyed chatting over food. Tea, coffee and juice to finish off with. I asked the parents if they would come back for another Messy Church and they said they would. Can I just say a huge thank you to all my helpers on the day, it would not happen without their assistance. And a thank you to John for coming and the session for allowing us to open up the church and to pay for the essentials needed. Thank you all. Watch this space for the next time.

Thanks to all,
Jacqueline

UNION OF THE WEST CHURCH WITH ST MARY'S

For up-to-date information regarding the forthcoming union, I print below the statement as it appeared in St Mary's newsletter:

'The coordinating group meetings continue to be positive and friendly. At our June meeting the Presbytery Clerk outlined what will happen when our minister Alison retires at the end of April next year. At that point an Interim Moderator will be appointed to St Mary's by Presbytery. A Locum minister may also be employed. When John Vischer retires a different Interim Moderator will be appointed to Haddington West. The vote of the Kirk Sessions and Congregations can then be held and if agreed, the union can take place. This would be at the end of summer 2025 at the earliest. Once the union takes place the process for calling a new minister can begin. In the meantime, the coordinating group will work on the Draft Basis of Union.'

LINKAGE WITH GARVALD AND MORHAM

In line with the decisions reached in the General Assembly and by our Presbytery regarding the restructuring of the CofS the church of Garvald and Morham is to be de-linked from the West Church and to go into union with Yester (Bolton, Saltoun, Humbie), to form the Parish of Lammermuir. This is now fairly imminent, the process to formalise the union is underway.

the sales of the church buildings in Morham and Garvald have now been concluded. The latter of these is intended by the new owner to continue to be used hopefully as a place of worship (in fact, a wedding ceremony there is already in planning). A continuing physical presence of the CofS in Garvald is secured by the retention of the stables.

After a final service in Garvald was held back in May, the congregation is meeting for a 'wrap-up' party this September, to conclude what was and look forward to what is to be.

We wish both congregations, with whom the West Church was joined for a while, every blessing and much fruitful engagement in their new church community.



SILIGURI

There has been no new communication since time of our last newsletter, but we are encouraged and asked to pray for Siliguri C.N.I and their flourishing even as they pray for us.



PRAYER

CHARLOTTE

Thinking of those among us who are afflicted by illness, unable for various reason to participate in the life of the church at the moment or long-term or are otherwise experiencing hardship and difficulties, and for the church - a prayer

'Heavenly Father, we praise You that You are with us not simply when life is easy, but in those times when we feel lost and uncertain, though You never promised that life would be easy.

Sometimes we can experience times of disappointment, hurt or pain, but we are not on our own. Hope is vital for us. True hope only comes from You, hope for eternity and hope right now when we place our faith in You. Forgive us for our lack of appreciation and help us to be grateful always for our lives, for our abilities and circumstances and above all else your love for each one of us.

We know circumstances cannot always remain the same and change will soon come. We bring our prayers to You for the union and trust that the joint congregations of St Mary's and West Church will bond together under a new minister.

We pray for ourselves and Christians everywhere that we might have a clear vision of Your purpose for our lives and the life of our church. Help us to walk the journey to which You have called us, keeping faith in Your saving purpose. When we grow weary revive us; when we lose heart inspire us; keep us travelling ever onward, trusting in Your guidance and certain that You will be at our journey's end.



In Jesus' name, Amen



FOR THOUGHT

The Art of Showing Mercy: 'Mercy is the highest art and the shield of those who practice it. It is the friend of God, standing always next to him and freely blessing whatever he wishes. It must not be despised by us. For in its purity it grants great liberty to those who respond to it in kind. It must be shown to those who have quarrelled with us, as well as to those who have sinned against us, so great is its power. It breaks chains, dispels darkness, extinguishes fire, kills the worm and takes away the gnashing of teeth. By it the gates of heaven open with the greatest of ease. In short, mercy is a queen that makes men like God.'


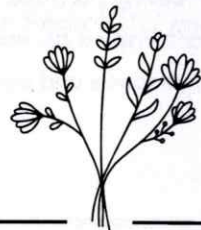
(Chrysostom, d. 407 AD)

'Those are best prepared for the greatest mercies that see themselves unworthy of the least.' (Thomas Watson)

'It will not bother me in the hour of death to reflect that I have been 'had for a sucker' by any number of impostors; but it would be a torment to know that one had refused even one person in need.' (C S Lewis)

**"GOD IS FAITHFUL, BY WHOM YOU WERE
CALLED INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SON,
JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."**

1 CORINTHIANS 1:9



**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.**