



**Link**

*The  
Magazine of*

**Morningside United Church**

**July/August 2023**



## ***Dear Friends,***

Unusually I find myself writing this on the eve of the Link deadline however on this occasion, I have had two very full weeks. Following the 'Circus Stars' Holiday Club in Saughtonhall URC, I spent last week at Carronvale House, Scottish Boys' Brigade HQ as chaplain to the King George VI Youth Leadership Training Course. Although different in many ways, both were great experiences and wonderful reminders of what ministry should be about.

I am pleased to report that the response from Synod to our strategy document is very positive and I am confident that Morningside United will be granted medium term part time transitional ministry.

If all goes to plan the Revd Sarah Moore should be appointed in the autumn however, we are not quite there yet. On 5 July I met with Sarah to discuss the priorities in our strategy document, consider many practicalities and formulate a job description. This is now with Synod and will be presented to our Kirk Session meeting in August, which I have invited Sarah to attend. As this process progresses, I will keep everyone informed.

On Monday 26 June I was joined by five members of Morningside United at the second meeting of our Church of Scotland grouping alongside members from Marchmont St Giles and St Catherine's Argyle. As a URC minister holding the position of interim moderator, I do find myself slightly detached from these conversations. Although some interesting discussion was exchanged and I think some commonalities identified, I did express two concerns. Firstly, that to move things on and maintain momentum, there requires to be someone appointed that will lead this and secondly, that priority should be given to communicating the outcomes of these discussions with members. It was agreed to meet again but no date was set. In the meantime, anyone that may be interested in being part of these three-way discussions or any specific area of work that is either already going on or potentially could be done together, should contact me.

It can be easy to get frustrated and even overwhelmed when we see where we are and reflect on the options before us. In these situations, my former Boys' Brigade captain who is still an Elder in Oakshaw Trinity Paisley, frequently spoke these words: 'The task ahead is never as great as the power behind us'. There are wise words for us all.

*When you go through deep waters, I will be with you.*

*When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown.*

*When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.*

*For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.*

Isaiah 43:2-3b (NLT)

Grace and Peace,

The Revd David M Scott, BSc BD(Min)

**Musings from Mary Taylor**, Pastoral Assistant, MUC

### **Sharing a "first class journey"**

As Tommy, my brother, says I could not be pastoral assistant in Morningside United Church in the way I am enjoying and developing without the benefit of experiencing both city and rural life along the Borders railway line. The railway takes you through beautiful countryside passing Stow and Heriot. First class travel from Tweedbank at off-peak times is usually a joy. Let me tell you a secret, you don't have to pay anything extra for carriages labelled first class on this line! I also have the chance of 2 hours reading or doing Duolingo a day.

Recently an Indian family, laden with cases, peeked into these carriages and were delighted when I said "All are welcome" in this part of the train.

Perhaps this summer you may be thinking about a day out. Please consider an off-peak day return to the Borders. There is also bus travel on to Melrose Abbey to see Melrose Abbey and the National Trust gardens. Please speak to me if you would like further information about places to visit.

Who pops into Thursday fortnightly coffee mornings in Morningside United Church? The other week we had the pleasure of being joined by “Johann Sebastian Bach” who delighted the Thursday coffee morning attendees when he “popped in” with Brigitte Harris, our organist. He was recording organ music in Morningside United Church for a wedding in Germany. Please ask Brigitte for further details.



### **Plant gardens**

“Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons and give daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will welfare”.

*Jeremiah 29: 5-7*

Jeremiah writes to the exiles from Jerusalem who find themselves transplanted into Babylon. They have been uprooted and they are told to do simple things. One is to plant a garden. Garden planting starts with that simple act of hope which is to plant a seed. Thanks to all from Morningside United Church who are planting seeds of hope.

One of the hopes is that this summer the Eric Liddell peace garden will be ready to have some plants added. Many thanks to all the Wednesday afternoon garden helpers and those who have contributed in any way towards this peace garden. We especially appreciate the expertise of Fi Brown from the Eric Liddell Community.

There will be an update on Eric Liddell 100 in the September edition of the Link.

Grateful thanks are expressed to Yvonne Burnett for organizing the lovely fortnightly coffee mornings. She makes delicious scones for them too. Residents and staff from Chamberlain Road nursing home, yoga attendees and folk from Morningside United Church enjoy popping in for coffee and a chat.

The next Thursday coffee morning will be on 3 August between 10.30am and 12noon. All are welcome. Donations go to the Gorgie food bank.



Mary Taylor  
(Pastoral Assistant)

## Maxwell Allan (1947-2023)



### Memories of Max

It is with great sadness that we note in this edition of the Link the recent death of Max Allan. Folk in the former Morningside Congregational Church, and now in Morningside United Church, remember his devoted witness and service to this church throughout his life.

Memories of Max, who was greatly respected, include his voice speaking out clearly in the Bible Class nativity plays and when he read the Scripture passages for the day or played the organ. Using his skills as a geography teacher and photographer, Max gave illustrated talks to the Youth Fellowship several years

ago. His talks, for example the one about Brasilia, had fantastic photography. Max also enjoyed going on our church trips. He was the editor of this publication for many years.

Perhaps you, like me, may remember Max sitting quietly in the corner recording services for the housebound. He gave such excellent pastoral care, seeing when something needed doing and quietly doing it. Max went the extra mile including giving the parents of Mary and Tommy Taylor, particularly Margaret Taylor, a lift home from church. This was not just down the road – 7 miles to Dalkeith and then Max had to drive home afterwards!

Max was able to speak with authority and enthusiasm about the ministry and mission of this church.

We will miss his faithful and deeply caring presence and continue to talk about his life and witness.

Grateful thanks to Yvonne Burnett for her constant pastoral care of Max during his recent final illness. This included phone calls and visiting with gifts and a card from Morningside United Church for Max and Sandra.

To quote the notice of Max's death in The Scotsman:

*"Peacefully at home on June 26 2023 Max, beloved husband of Sandra, much loved dad to Max, father-in-law to Pippa and grandad to Fraser, James and Fiona. A private family funeral will be held."*

Please remember Max's family at this time with deep sympathy and in your prayers.

## Reading and Flower Rota for July/August

### Readers:

July 23th	Elizabeth MacGregor
July 30th	Pam Brindley
August 6th	Martin Wagner
August 13th	Pam Brindley
August 20th	David Donald
August 27th	Hamish McKenzie

### Flowers:

July 23th	Fiona Purves
July 30th	Maggie McKenzie

**We will be starting a new Flower Rota in Sept and volunteers to do flowers would be welcome.**

*Maggie McKenzie*  
261 4908

## Music for Reflection

On 2 July, Rev Mary Taylor and Brigitte Harris (our organist) put together a service which celebrated both prayer and music. A lot of thought and effort was put into the service, and it was enjoyed by all who attended. Afterwards a number of people asked about Brigitte's talk on music, and she kindly agreed to have it included in the Link Magazine. So here it is.

## Reflection on Singing

We have just sung my chosen hymn, *How shall I sing that majesty, which angels do admire*. The words were fashioned by the 17<sup>th</sup> century writer John Mason and are set to the tune *COE FEN*. This tune was written in 1958 by Kenneth Nicholson Naylor, a music teacher, who is now mainly known for writing this tune. Coe Fen is a piece of open land on the edge of Cambridge and forms part of a nature reserve.

## **Hymns are rooted in our lives.**

Music is important to us, it is personal. Hymns can stir emotions immediately; they are able to touch us deeply. We all have favourite pieces of music, and we love listening to them again and again. Music can conjure up memories in an instant, give us a feeling of nostalgia.

## **But: Hymns play an important role in history.**

Just after the Reformation instigated by Martin Luther in Germany, the reformer's first hymn book was printed in 1523/24, and was called the *Achtliederbuch* (Book of eight songs). Luther chose eight hymns, (of which four were written by Luther). They were concise, so that they could be memorised, as not many would have been able to read. And they were in the vernacular German, as the new Protestant Church which came out of the Reformation needed hymns to be sung by all.

In this country hymn singing was also mainly driven by non-conformist churches. Members of the Wesley family created an immense wealth of hymns for their Methodist movement. Up until the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century congregational singing in Britain in the established churches was essentially restricted to metrical psalms, even in England. There were several church court cases in the 1820s when the singing of hymns was contested.

The power of hymn singing which the Wesleyan movement demonstrated was noticed by 19<sup>th</sup> century Anglican reformers such as the Oxford Movement, the High Church movement responsible for the appearance of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

Singing hymns is a community activity, for all to join in together. And here music has the power to connect people. Its sum is much greater than its parts.

Let me expand further:

When singing, time takes on a different dimension, it is almost suspended. We experience several things at once: there is the poetry from the hymn writer, who has written a text which might rhyme, carefully fashioned with often very condensed grammar. The words are set to music, which elevates the text. You could say that the music serves as a vehicle for the text, both with its melody and its harmony.

It is also possible to sing several parts at once, sometimes even different words or languages at once. A good example here is the round. You cannot do this with the spoken word.



The music also helps us to remember the words, often illustrating the text. We remember songs or poetry from decades ago, mainly because of the rhyming texts and the melody, which carries the words. Singing familiar hymns or songs can be a little like meeting an old friend again.

I would like to also mention **Spirituals**, another example of music rooted in daily life and **an integral part of a culture**.

This is the music which mirrors the personal circumstances of the slaves, with the singing helping to give them inner strength to continue. They sang, and their song helped them to keep going; their song was the dream of a better life.

In their song they sing the bible stories; they sing and compare these stories with their personal life. And in singing about these stories the singers become part of it. The story becomes their life story.

Just for a moment I would like you to think of the word **Spiritual** and let your mind conjure up the following picture:

Imagine that in singing of **or** listening to a song the **spirit** of this song can **fly** on a kind of musical wave.

The song has now got **wings**, which help to carry the song up and up, keeping it going.

There is a spiritual called *Come Sunday* by jazz musician Duke Ellington, which superficially sounds like a slow show song. The words however are essentially part of the **creed**, very simple and heartfelt.

***Come Sunday, that's the day.***

***I believe that God put sun and moon up in the sky,***

***I don't mind the grey skies***

***'cause they just clouds passing by.***

***Lord, dear Lord above, God Almighty,***

***God of love, please look down and see my people through.***

***I believe God is now, was then, and always will be.***

***With God's blessing we can make it through eternity.***

Brigitte Harris, MUC organist and Music Lecturer, Edinburgh Napier University

## A Blessing

May you walk with God this summer  
In whatever you do wherever you go

Walking with God means...

Walking with honesty  
And with courage, walking with love  
And respect  
And concern for the feelings of others

May you talk to God  
This summer and every day and  
In every situation

Talking with God means...

Praying words of praise  
For the beauty of creation  
Saying prayers of thanks  
For friends and good times,  
Asking God's help in all your decisions  
Expressing sorrow  
When you have failed

May you talk with God  
Every day. Amen.

## **Church Life at MUC – An Update**

**Coffee Mornings** – There will be no fortnightly coffee mornings in July. But we will be back after a summer break on Thursday 3 August from 10.30am to 12 noon in the Small Hall. All are welcome to join us to enjoy some chat, some tea or coffee and maybe even some wonderful home baking.

**Afternoon Communion Service** – On Monday 14 August we will be holding an afternoon communion service at 2.30pm, after which, refreshments will be served.

Although this service is intended for those members who find it difficult to attend morning worship, all are welcome. We hope some residents from Chamberlain Care Home and Morlich House will join us.

### **Timetable for Ministers during July/August**

2 July – Mary Taylor and Brigitte Harris – Songs of Praise

9 July – William Gibson

16 July – Rev Jack Dyce

23 July – Rev David Coleman

30 July – Rev Nick Brindley and Professor Scott Spurlock

6 August – Mark Evans

13 August – Rev Nick Brindley and Professor Scott Spurlock

20 August – Layperson Peter Ranscombe

27 August – Rev Dr George Whyte

### **Concert – Moments of Musical Elegance**

There will be a concert here at Morningside United Church on Friday 18 August. Tickets will be available to pay by cash at the door. £12 per adult and £5 for children.

# Moments of Musical Elegance

Beatrix Milán (Soprano) Louise Hutchon (Piano) Ruairi Mckenzie (Guitar)



Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August 7:30-8:30

The Link Magazine is available on our website to view, and in Church. If you would prefer to have it emailed to you, please email [churchoffice.muc@gmail.com](mailto:churchoffice.muc@gmail.com).

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