

Church Diary for September

Wednesday 3 September	12.30pm Prayers for Peace
Thursday 4 September	11.30am Coffee Morning in the Small Hall
Sunday 7 September	11am Worship led by Rev Mary Taylor
Wednesday 10 September	12.30pm Prayers for Peace
Sunday 14 September	11am Worship led by Rev Sarah Moore
Monday 15 September	3 pm Kirk Session in Centre Vestibule
Wednesday 17 September	12.30pm Prayers for Peace
Thursday 18 September	11.30am Coffee Morning in the Small Hall
Sunday 21 September	11am Worship led by Rev Sarah Moore
Wednesday 24 September	12.30pm Prayers for Peace
Thursday 25 September	1.30pm Digital Sessions
Sunday 28 September	11am Worship -Rev Kirstina Herbold Ross
Sunday 28 September	1:30pm – 4:30pm MUC Doors Open

MUC members may also be interested to know about the induction to Grahamston United Church of Rev David Scott, our interim moderator during the vacancy.

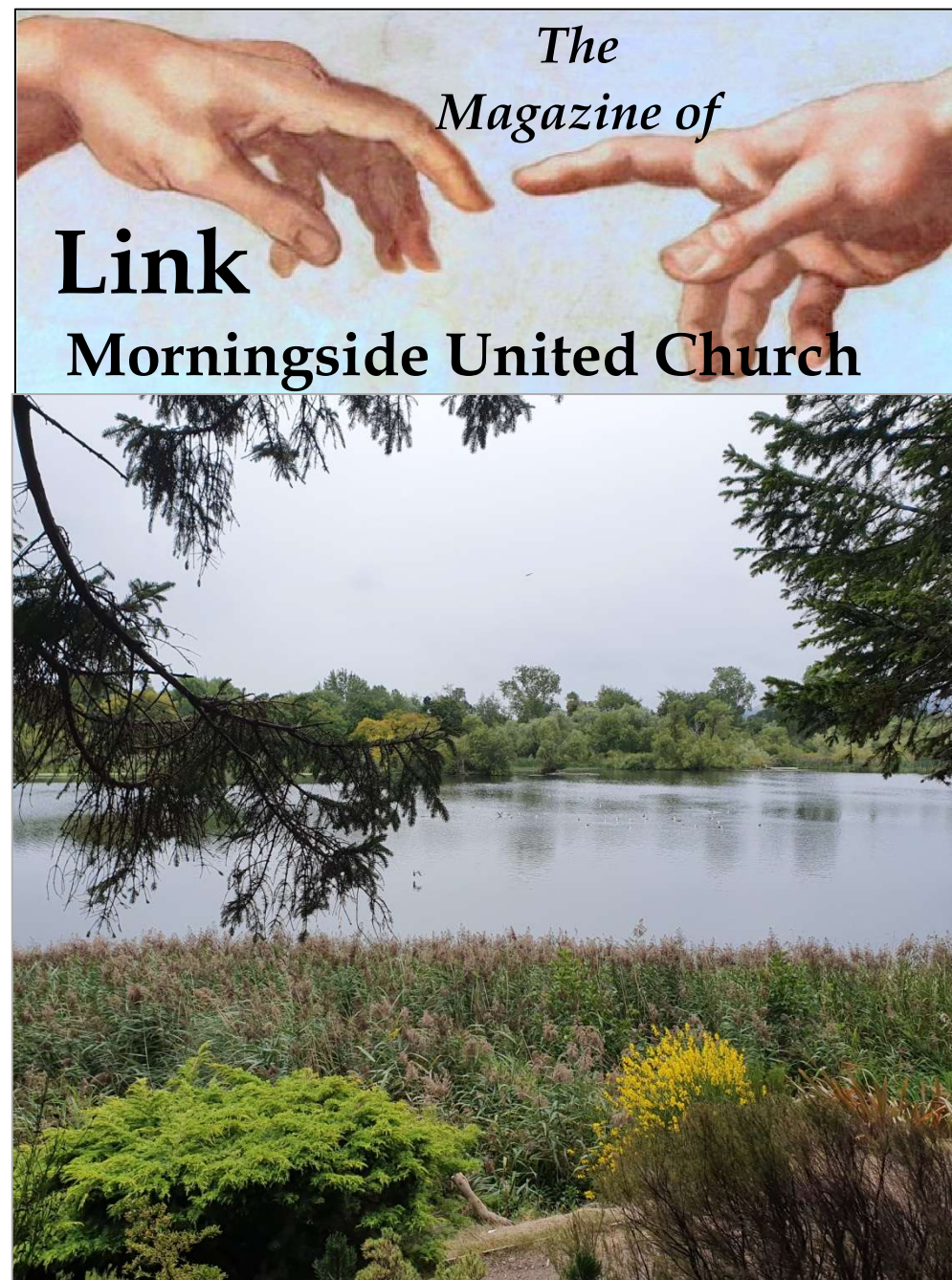
This takes place on Saturday 20th September at 3pm at
Grahamston United Church
10 Bute Street
Falkirk
FK2 7DH

cover photograph by Rev Mary Taylor

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September 2025

A message from Rev Sarah...

Dear friends,

In last month's *Link*, recognising that Christians around the world celebrate in 2025 the 1700th anniversary of the writing of the Nicene Creed at the Council of Nicaea in the year 325, we reflected together on the historical events and spiritual context that led to the creed being formulated.



This month, I invite you to reflect with me particularly upon the first section of the Nicene Creed, that articulates what the Church believes about God the Father or Creator.

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

What is perhaps most striking is not very much is said at all. We can clarify what we understand all the nouns used in this statement to mean but might recognise that doing so simply serves to produce more words without necessarily deepening our understanding.

Its important to remember that the Christian understanding of the Trinity - God as Father/Creator, Son, and Holy Spirit isn't a modalistic one. God didn't exist for a time as Father, then becoming the Son, and then the Holy Spirit. The Christian understanding is that God has always existed and always shall exist at the same time as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One God; three expressions all at once.

What can we say about this statement? We might say that the way that God creates is out of God-self. As biological reproduction in all living things is based on plants and animals recreating out of themselves, can we understand that somehow this is how God has created all that is.

Ecology Matters

MUC Kirk Session is looking at applying for an Eco – Congregation Scotland Bronze Award (we are basic members of the scheme). Awards are optional – the benefit is the focus and guidance they bring. If you are interested in matters ecological and would like to be part of a group looking at this, please speak to Lesley Donald.

On this topic, our Christian Aid booksale helpers from Greenbank have sent information on lectures that you might find interesting, arranged by Morningside, Fairmilehead and Greenbank Churches on 7, 14 and 21 September, in person or online. There are more details on their heavy-hitting speakers on the larger poster on the notice board.



Morningside Parish Church, Cluny Gardens

Sundays 7–8pm | **Refreshments from 6:30pm**

Join in person or livestream: morningsideparishchurch.org.uk

Free entry – donations welcome at the door



7 SEPT
**Ecology, The Climate
and The Need for
Action**

Dr Mike Robinson OBE



14 SEPT
**The Unstoppable
Power of Hope:
Christian Aid at 80**

Val Brown



21 SEPT
**Nature's Genius:
Evolution's Lessons
for a Changing Planet**

Professor David Farrier

Timetable for Ministers – September

7 September	Rev Mary Taylor
14 September	Rev Sarah Moore
21 September	Rev Sarah Moore
28 September	Rev Kristina Herbold Ross

Digital Advice Sessions at MUC

Another 10-week block of these popular sessions organized by South Side Faithcare starts at 1.30pm on Thursday 25 September in the vestibule. Please come along for as many sessions as you wish if you need help with using a tablet, computer or mobile phone. It is open to all.



The poster features a yellow background with a blue banner at the top containing the title 'Digital Advice & Support'. Below the banner, it lists 'FREE ADVICE & HELP WITH YOUR MOBILE PHONE, TABLET OR LAPTOP'. There are two columns of information for 'Where?' and 'When?' for two different locations. A 'Get in touch' box provides contact details. A photo shows two men looking at a mobile phone. Logos for Southside Faith Care and Tap into IT are at the bottom, along with a testimonial quote.

Digital Advice & Support
FREE ADVICE & HELP WITH YOUR MOBILE PHONE, TABLET OR LAPTOP

Where? Newington Trinity - Priestfield Dalkeith Road/ Marchhall Place EH16 5HW	Where? Morningside United Church 15 Chamberlain Road EH10 4DH
When? Tuesdays 2-4pm 23rd September for 10 weeks Final session: 25 th Nov	When? Thursdays 1.30-3.30pm 25th September for 10 weeks Final session: 27 th Nov

Get in touch
office@southsidefaithcare.org
07478 543 510

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connecting people, increasing community

"10 out of 10 from me! It will make such a huge difference to my life. I could never have done this myself!"

Scientific and technological progress has shifted our understanding of what constitutes heaven and earth. For much of human history earth was no more or less than the earth beneath our feet which gives sustenance for life whereas now we know that there is all of space around the earth that contains created bodies too. Once humans thought that space was heaven whereas for the last century and more we have recognised that there is a lot more created earth out there than we had hitherto thought. We understand too that the means of creation is what scientists have learned, grounded in astronomy and the development of life on earth.

I wonder what we mean when we say that God is the maker of heaven? Is this about where we 'go' when our mortal lives on earth are finished? Is this somehow a place where God is more present than God is here?

The Council Fathers who composed the Nicene Creed used a catch-all, *maker... of all that is, seen and unseen*. Perhaps here we are pointed to a God who created more than that we can see or sense. It is salutary and sobering perhaps to remember that there is more to creation than what we can see. I find my mind drawn here again to the discoveries of science, that every time something further is understood, scientists articulate how as they have understood the answer to one set of questions, they have found that there is more to investigate. I remember too the sense that scientific facts can figuratively only ever be written in pencil because as human knowledge develops inevitably what was once thought fact turns out to not quite be what earlier generations of scientists had thought.

The theology of the Church develops too. We hold on to what we have thought before and develop it. As Christians we are on an ongoing journey, personally and together, to deepen and broaden our understanding of God, of the earth and heaven in which we find ourselves. As we realise that there are realities that we can see that we couldn't see before, perhaps we wonder whether there is detail of earth and heaven that once we could see and now cannot?

With love and prayers
Sarah

Musings from Mary Taylor, pastoral assistant

As many of you already know I am preparing to sell my house in Galashiels to move to Edinburgh. This is a time for me of moving experiences. Many thanks for all the practical help especially re carrying books, much appreciated. Words from Ecclesiastes 3 run true - a time to keep and a time to throw away.

Chinese Global Television Network

Surprising and exciting visitors to Morningside United Church and the Eric Liddell peace garden this month were Jeff and John from the Chinese Global Television Network from London. They were filming in the Eric Liddell Community and John MacMillan kindly brought them across the road to see Morningside United Church. They filmed the Eric Liddell stained glass window donated by Jim Armstrong and also visited the Eric Liddell peace garden. Their film will be available to see in September. More details later

One of my favourite books about revitalising churches is

The Healthy Churches Handbook by Robert Warren.

Seven marks of a healthy church:

- 1 Energized by faith
2. Outward looking focus
3. Seeks to find out what God wants
4. Faces the cost of change and growth
- 5 Operates as a community
6. Makes room for all
- 7 Does a few things and does them well

Anniversary

The Eric Liddell Peace Garden at Morningside Unite Church became an international partner of Community of the Cross of Nails on 10 Aug 2024. There are now around 260 partners and friends in 45 countries across 5 continents.

More details can be found on www.coventrycathedral.org.uk

Edinburgh Spiders Anniversary

On 28 July it was the third anniversary of the Edinburgh Spiders — a remarkable milestone for all of us! Over the past three years, we have accomplished so much together.

During this period, we have woven a total of 547 nets sized 5 x 5 metres at various locations:

Morningside: 275 nets

Newhaven: 40 nets

St Cuthbert's Parish Church: 91 nets

Flassches Yard: 87 nets

Olena Volosnyk's "Stay Alive" location: 46 nets

Mash House: 7 nets

We hope these nets have protected many lives, vehicles, and pieces of equipment.

Beyond net-making, we have provided clothes, food, and 14 laptops to those in need. Our community celebrated both Christmas and Easter together, organised four Easter egg-painting workshops, and enjoyed 19 group walks. We are proud to have brought together people from over 20 nationalities, working across four different locations.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the Morningside United Church, Sofia Tekliuk, the founder of Edinburgh Spiders, and to everyone who has supported us - those who offer us space for net-making, our coordinators, volunteers, donors, the drivers delivering our nets to Ukraine, and every supporter along the way. Hanna Tekliuk

Reading and Flower Rotas for September

	Readers:	Flowers:
7 September	Maggie McKenzie	Daphne Paton
14 September	Keith Wilson	Elizabeth MacGregor
21 September	Eilidh Young	vacant
28 September	Pam Brindley	Pam Brindley

After a successful opening for the first time last year, MUC will be taking part again in Edinburgh Doors Open. We will be open for anyone to visit on Sunday 28 September from 1.30pm to 4.30pm.

Below is the link to our entry in the Doors Open website.

<https://www.doorsopendays.org.uk/regions/edinburgh/morningside-united-church>

Visitors can view the Sanctuary, halls and Peace Garden and listen to music by our organists. Please make this known as widely as you can – bring friend to see! And if you are happy to help greet visitors during the afternoon, please speak to David or Lesley Donald.

Doors Open Days usually have a theme – this year's shared theme for the 40th anniversary of European Heritage Days is **Architectural Heritage: Windows to the Past, Doors to the Future**

As last year, there will be an art exhibition by Edinburgh Urban Sketchers. Part of their contribution will be following the theme, as groups of sketchers visited us during July to sketch in and around the building. We will add some other building information – such as the original drawings for the building, and perhaps a little quiz to find some of the little building details that members might not know.

The art exhibition in the sanctuary and centre vestibule will be up from 20 September to 10 October. It includes the pictures in the small hall by Euan Cameron from our choir who is also an Urban Sketcher. The local group organiser gave some information on the group below.

Urban Sketchers is a global community of sketchers dedicated to the practice of on-location drawing, indoors or out, capturing what the sketcher sees from direct observation (not from photographs). We share how we see the world, one sketch at a time.

Edinburgh Urban Sketchers is an active group that offers three meet-up events every week. The events are free of charge due to the collaborative nature of the group and the philosophy of the international Urban Sketchers movement. We are a varied group of people, with all levels of experience, from "I haven't drawn since primary school" to professional artists. We share our work and give equal respect to everyone's sketches. The group has a supportive nature and a strong social aspect.

The Coventry Litany of Reconciliation

Reconciliation has been a mark of Coventry Cathedral's ministry since long before the medieval building was destroyed in November 1940. It was however, that tragedy and the community's response under the leadership of Provost Dick Howard which led to the Christian message of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation (both with God and with our human enemies). This is Coventry Cathedral's distinctive heartbeat.

Just six weeks after the bombing, Provost Howard said on national radio that, once the war was over; his vision was to work with those who had been enemies "to build a kinder, more Christ-Child-like world". He had the phrase *Father forgive* inscribed on the wall of the ruined Cathedral, where it still be seen today. These words echo the prayer of Jesus as he hung dying on the cross "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing".

The simple prayer *Father forgive* acknowledges our need to receive forgiveness from God for ourselves as well as to ask it for others. The great movement for peace and transformation in Coventry Cathedral continues. The international Community of the Cross of Nails expresses passion for reconciliation by having three priorities:

1. Healing the wounds of history
2. Learning to live with difference and celebrate diversity
3. Building a culture of justice and peace

The Coventry Litany of Reconciliation

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class.

Father, forgive

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own.

Father, forgive

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth .

Father, forgive

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others.

Father, forgive

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee.

Father, forgive

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children.

Father, forgive.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,

Father, forgive.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Robert (Bob) William Alexander

Bob Alexander died suddenly on July 30th 2025 at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. He was the beloved husband of Margaret and a dear friend to many. His funeral service was on Wednesday 20th August in Cornerstone Church where he was a member.

We send our deepest sympathy to Margie and to all the staff and residents at Chamberlain Road nursing home.

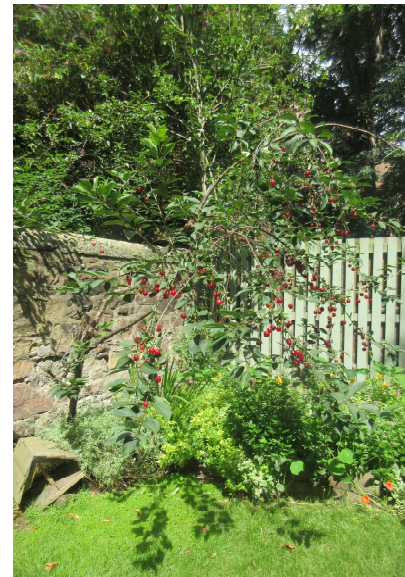
Bob was a faithful attender at Morningside United Church since November. He liked to know what the Bible passages were beforehand and enjoyed singing. We miss his cheerful presence.

‘Poetry, please!’

The “Spill the Beans” lectionary’s “Crossroads of Culture & Faith” theme covered topics including art, literature, and music over the summer, with Peter Ranscombe preaching about “Poetry” at Morningside United Church on Sunday 10 August 2025. Peter split his address into three reflections in order to explore three examples of poetry from the Bible: Song of Songs 2:8-17, which was one of the passages suggested by the “Spill the Beans” lectionary; and John 1:1-18 and Luke 1:46-55, which Peter chose as accessible and recognisable examples. His poems are reproduced here, along with the biblical references and notes.

Eric Liddell Peace Garden Trees

There are now two decorative fruit trees in the garden. Christian Aid is encouraging tree planting to mark 80 years since its founding. Pam Brindley selected and planted a crab apple tree for this purpose in the Eric Liddell peace garden on 6th August. The type is yellow-fruited *Golden Hornet* to follow the golden theme for the main flower bed. The cherry tree (sour cherries, variety unknown) already in the garden had a bumper crop this year - not good for eating but sour cherries are better for jam. The harvest was used for jam for cakes and scones for coffee mornings. Maybe we will have crab apple jelly in a few years!



Doors Open Days

Every September you can visit hundreds of interesting buildings in Scotland for free. Doors Open Days is coordinated nationally by the Scottish Civic Trust and is part of European Heritage Days.



A Prayer for September

Dear God, as we step into September, we ask for Your guidance and blessing over new beginnings. Help us embrace change with faith and optimism. May Your presence lead us through every transition and challenge. Grant us the strength to pursue our goals and the wisdom to make the right decisions. Bless our efforts and help us to honour You in everything we do. Amen.

We are moving into the season of Harvest. Let's pause and give a thought to all those who are trying to harvest crops after such a dry summer.

Gorgie Salvation Army Foodbank



Thank you to everyone who donates to this much needed foodbank. Having recently taken eight bags of food and toiletries to the foodbank, I was saddened to see the shelves so empty. It was interesting to speak to the volunteers who explained that many of the usual donors are now experiencing hard times themselves. Your donations are valuable and very much appreciated, please continue to support the Salvation Army Foodbank.

Yvonne Burnett

Chiasmus

John 1:1-18: *The writer of John's gospel structured the prologue as a "chiasmus", a pattern popular in Hebrew poetry, which follows a format of A-B-B-A. Jesus also used the technique in some of his parables.*

"In the beginning was the word":
If we read John in Ancient Greek
a Hebrew poem we can seek,
the finest type that could be heard.

For the writer of this Gospel
is penning his ode in a style
that hasn't been round for a while
but which our doubts will help
dispel.

This pattern is a chiasmus.
A chiasmus draws attention
to the point John wants to
mention.

That's why he's gone to all this
fuss.

The pattern is like an arrow
leading the reader to a point
then flowing back out to form a
joint
taking us from broad to narrow.

The pattern first mentions point A
and then it goes on to point B;
then B is repeated, you see,
then A is brought back into play.

When laid out like a chiasmus,
the point John is trying to make
is to link God for all our sake
with the Word, that is, with Jesus.

John is setting the scene for us -
here in the prologue of his tale

he's helping our ship to set sail -
this link between God and Jesus.

He's giving us clues about God,
he's pointing the way to the cross,
he's sharing God's love for all us,
he's showing the path that he trod.

So what can we learn here from
John?

John used Hebrew poetic form,
for us, it's a break from the norm,
when we choose to speak of the
son,

but for people back in John's day
he's getting creative with style
so his words will last for a while;
he's using techniques that would
stay.

That means we too must be ready
to share our faith with a passion.
Sometimes it means taking action,
sometimes we'll be slow and
steady.

When the spirit leads us to speak
it may not be "Poetry, Please!"
unless that sounds like a good
wheeze
and if we're not feeling too meek.

When it comes to sharing our faith,
God has given us all The Word
it's our job to make sure he's heard
there's no reason for us to wait.

Limerick

Song of Songs 2:8-17: *Depending on the preacher, the bawdy love poetry of Song of Songs is either a gift or a nightmare. Yet, looking at this gem from the Hebrew Bible through the lens of our New Testament, we can begin to see echoes of God's love for humanity, which we are called to share with our neighbours through our evangelism. Song of Songs reminds us that we can share our faith in creative ways, such as poetry, song, and art.*

When reading this verse from "The Book",
your preacher, he cried and he shook.
These lines are so saucy,
and really quite naughty –
but, for a sermon, they make a good hook.

Now, the Song of Songs is a puzzle,
an enigma, wrapped in a riddle.
But let's forget all our blushes,
or even hot flushes,
as with this scripture we wrestle.

For love is at life's very core,
and, of God's love, we can always be sure,
so don't feel embarrassed
or feel at all harassed,
as this vibrant text we explore.

For this great Song of Songs is a poem
about love betwixt a man and a woman.

What it teaches today
is for the Spirit to say
as she guides each of us towards knowledge.

What these lines from the Bible
can teach us,
is how God uses poems to reach us.
We shout: "Poetry, please!"
as we fall on our knees
and relax as God's love will enfold us.

And if God uses words that may rhyme
there's a lesson for us in our time.
Let our energy run
and let's have some fun
as we share this great faith in our prime.

With our neighbour or family or friend
we should share this great faith with no end.
So, let's great creative
as we share what our faith is
for it's us who God surely will send.

So, the lesson we take from this song
is the same that it's been all along:
if we want church to grow
then we all surely know
it's up to us to bring friends to this throng.

Haiku

Luke 1: 46-55: *"The Magnificat", during which Mary responds to the angel Gabriel's proclamation that she will give birth to Jesus, is one of the most famous passages from the New Testament. It's a mainstay of Roman Catholic and Episcopalian liturgies, and is captured so beautifully by hymnwriter Tim Dudley-Smith in "Tell Out My Soul" (CH4 #286). What's so striking about Mary's song is how she uses the scriptures she's learned since childhood to articulate God's love – a great example when we share our faith.*

We turn to haiku,
the poetry of Japan,
to ponder our text.

Mary's words have pow'r.
She is filled with the Spirit.
She preaches good news.

What can we learn from
this poetry she shares here,
as we listen hard?

We must learn to trust
in what God has planned for us
as we journey on

and we must learn what
Mary knew from the very start
About God's true words.

Mary knows scripture.
Mary knows God's promises.
Mary shares God's words.

She knows God is love.
She knows God loves God's children.
She knows God will save.

Her inspiration
comes from the scriptures she knows,
feeding her witness.

Her evangelism
is based on the knowledge
that God loves us all.

Her testimony
shouts loud for social justice,
fuelled by God's great love.

Her words should spur us
to share God's love with neighbours
both near and far away.

Mary teaches us
to learn from scripture so that
we can share God's love.