

# Tranent Parish Church

# Contact



Photo: Laurie Brett

## Summer 2023

[www.tranentparishchurch.co.uk](http://www.tranentparishchurch.co.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/tranentparishchurch](https://www.facebook.com/tranentparishchurch)



## Church Services

In Tranent Parish Church

The Sunday Morning Service is in the Church at 11am. Children are very welcome. They join in at the start of the service before leaving for their own activities in the J- Club. We also have a crèche for younger children.

Services are held regularly in Tranent Care Home and Crookston Care Home.

## Prayer Groups

There is a weekly prayer group meeting in the Gathering Area of the church at 8.00 am on Saturday mornings. We share a cup of tea or coffee, and it is a great way to start the weekend. All are welcome.

Our monthly online prayer group meets on the last Wednesday evening of each month.

The next edition of Contact will be out in September. Notices about contributions will be in the church intimations and emailed to regular contributors, but anyone is welcome to send us articles at any time.

Robin and Sheila

## From our Minister

Dear Friends,

Have you heard of **No Mow May**? It is a campaign which encourages gardeners not to mow their lawn during the month of May. The idea is that the "no mow" allows wild flowers to bloom and bees and butterflies to have plenty to eat.



There is a human benefit for folk too. Time spent mowing in May can be spent relaxing with friends and family instead. This May, it looked as though the campaign was working well. The grass and weeds were growing long and luxuriantly in the churchyard all through May, before they were cut back by the Council in June. On the other hand, the grass has been kept short and well-trimmed in the Church Hall Open Garden with its two new benches, placed so that folk can enjoy a well-cared for and tended space.

These two different approaches could be called a two-toned approach when present in the same garden. In the manse garden, I am trying out both. There is a large section of mowed grass and a smaller section at the back, left to grow wild, to encourage insects and wild flowers- as well as weeds- to bloom. So, there will be more daisies, and yes, dandelions, and creeping buttercup. My hope is that eventually there will be greener grass which needs less water, and more wild flowers and wild life to appreciate and enjoy.

As a congregation, we have enjoyed good times together outside already this year. We went to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne on a cool, dry Saturday in April and celebrated Holy Communion by the beach, surrounded by the lovely flowers and smells and views in this special place.



At Spring Outdoor church in Polson Park, we explored the new Dementia Garden by the bandstand. We celebrated the opening of the Open Garden at the Church Hall and had an

Eco Action stall at the Tranent Gala on a busy sunny day, where we had the chance to chat to lots of folk and give away cloth bags to replace plastic ones. As I write, we are looking forward to the congregational picnic to Vogrie Park at the end of June.

In summer, I remember that so many of the stories about Jesus place him spending time with folk outside - on a beach, in a boat, in the streets, on a plain or a mountain and in a garden too. He went out and about and stopped to connect with people and to heal them where he found them. He also took time by himself to rest. With a wild section of grass as an example, I think that, at times, we can achieve more by doing less. We can just let God work and then watch unexpected things grow. May you live life to the full this summer, enjoying both rest and activity, with Jesus by your side as your guide and companion.

Every blessing

Katherine

## Church Family

**Infant Baptism** "The Lord bless you and keep you."

Thomas Bale

**Deaths** "Nothing can separate us from the Love of God."

Mrs Marion McNeill 5 January 2023

Mrs Molly McNeill 2 April 2023

Miss Jane Pow 8 April 2023

Mrs Georgina (Jean) Henderson 19 May 2023

---

## Important dates for your diary

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July

Worship led by Rev. Ann Allison

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> July

Worship led by Dr. Murdo Macdonald

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July

Outdoor Church 3pm at Polson Park

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August

J Club returns

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August

Manse Congregational Afternoon Tea  
from 3pm to 6pm. All welcome.

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September

Holy Communion

# Tranent Parish Church Guild



At this time there is good news and some sad news for our Guild.

The sad news is that we have recently lost three of our long serving members. Molly Mc Neill, Jane Pow and Jean Henderson had ninety-five years' service to our Guild between them. Each contributed in their own way so much to our Guild and shall be greatly missed by all.

The good news is that our session of meetings ended on a really high note with the musical evening provided by "Glenkinchie Music". The feedback has been so positive and we managed to raise £370 for our funds.

On the 30th May we were able to resume our annual trip with members and friends. We toured the Borders. Firstly, we stopped at St Boswells then went to Melrose and on to Peebles where we had time to wander about and have a meal in the Green Tree restaurant. The weather was really good and added to the enjoyment we experienced.

We have started to think of some ideas for our new session starting in October and are we are hoping to welcome more new members to the Guild. So please consider joining us when we resume our meetings on the 10th of October.

Kathleen Gilmer  
Convenor, Tranent Parish Church Guild

## Molly McNeil



Molly was born in Tranent in 1925 and was an integral part of our church family as well as the local community. She enjoyed tennis and amateur dramatics but for two weeks of the year Wimbledon was her not to be missed pleasure.

After retiring from work as the Personal Assistant to the council Chief Executive, she kept busy by volunteering with meals on wheels, library book deliveries and was a member of Edenhall Hospital League of Friends.

Molly had a beautiful singing voice and as well as being in the choir we once had in the church, she was an active member of Haddington Operatic shows for some time. She played the piano at the Guild, care homes and sheltered housing.

Molly was a church elder for many years and enjoyed visiting people at home and she was a member of the Guild for thirty-eight years.

She remained independent well into her nineties and her son Stuart and his family were such a blessing and comfort to Molly especially, laterally when her health deteriorated so much after her fall in April 2022.

As Molly's elder and as a friend as the years passed, I got to know this lovely warm individual who, although unable to attend church, was interested to hear all about people she knew and how the church itself was progressing.

She will be remembered with affection by many.

Kathleen Gilmer

## Jean Pow

Jane Pow - Jean - was a loved and valued member of our church family. Jean was born in Tranent and her dad, Jimmy, was a miner. She went to Tranent Primary School and then Ross High. Going to Sunday School began her involvement in church life.



She was an elder and a member of the Pastoral Care group. She visited those who found it hard to get out and those who lived alone as well as members who were ill. Jane didn't just visit, she made lifelong friends. People appreciated her gentleness and her kindness and she was a gifted listener too. She was a founder member of the Prayer Group which has been meeting in the Church early on a Saturday morning for fourteen years.

She was a faithful supporter of the Open House café on a Tuesday morning and a long-time member of the Guild, receiving her twenty-year service award last year. She fully enjoyed all the trips and outings. Jean was interested in history and attended the Tranent Local History Society. She liked spending time with family and friends and she loved walking the local paths around Tranent. She liked to get out and about. Jean was a quiet and thoughtful person who cared for others above herself. She was a strong person too and her faith was an inspiration to others.

She was lovingly cared for by her brother Ian and his wife Moira in her last weeks. She died peacefully on 8<sup>th</sup> April and she is much missed.

## Jean Henderson

Georgina Henderson, nee McKenzie, known as Jean, was born on 21 September 1935 the eldest child in a family of seven. She was baptised in the Wishart St Andrews Church, now our Church Hall.

Fast forward 21 years to the 15 December 1956 when the Rev Alex Miller married Jean and Walter Henderson in the newly renovated Tranent Parish Church, with their reception in the Henderson Hall, which was the Church hall at that time. They were blessed by the birth of their daughter Heather in 1970.



Jean had many nieces, nephews, great and great-great nieces and nephews who she loved having them visit and talk to them about her and her family's life.

Jean was a faithful member of the Church and willingly gave of her time to support Church events. She supported all the youth organisations in particular the Girl Guides. She would speak to everyone, especially if someone new came to the Church. She was part of the Church team who visited Tranent Care Home and Crookston, bringing the Church to those no longer able to attend Sunday services. Jean loved flowers and for many years was part of the team who did the flowers in the Church. Jean became a member of the Young Wife's Group and then moved on to the Guild. She was a member of the Guild for thirty-seven years and was presented with her long service certificate by Kathleen and Dorothy on her last visit to Scotland earlier in the year.

As her health declined Jean moved to Leeds to stay with her daughter. When she was able, she attended St Andrews United Reform Church and the members there would visit and pray with her. She kept in touch with our services online and the many phone calls from friends and family. She loved to hear from them and know what was going on.

Jean passed away peacefully on Saturday 20 May 2023. Her final journey will be to the Church that she loved before being laid to rest in Tranent Cemetery.

# Tranent Church Eco Action Group



## ***Litterpicking***

Since the last issue, the litterpicking initiative with Windygoul Primary School has gained momentum with monthly picks. Our relationship as a congregation has been strengthened through this. Our own litterpicking initiative around the church environs continues also and we took part in a joint initiative with Tranent Wombles around Ross High School.

## ***Communication***

You will no doubt have noticed that we have an Eco Group dedicated noticeboard in the church gathering area and also a section on the church website. Items are also posted to our Facebook page. Sunday mornings feature a monthly pictorial on the power point, with a different focus each month.

## ***Recycling***

Sadly, after an enthusiastic start, we have had to stop collecting blister packs. These are considered medical waste and can only be collected at dedicated pharmacies, this is currently Superdrug pharmacies. Unfortunately, between Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall, there is only one, in **Largs!!!** We have just discovered that Terracycle have now produced a bag which you can order from their website. It's a Zero waste bag. It is around £25 and I'm not sure how much it will hold. At the moment it is the only alternative to general waste. Just go onto the website and you will find all the details.

We continue to collect milk bottle tops, and no other tops, for the moment. Blue, green, red, white and clear.

## ***Eco alternatives***

If you are happy buying from the internet, there are a number of eco oriented household products ranging from laundry products, dishwasher tablets, bathroom products and toilet paper. you should look out for names such as Naked Sprout, Ocean Saver, Bazoo, Smol etc. Just Google "Eco products". Some of these are being trialled in our supermarkets. It should be noted also that some of our supermarkets have produced their own range of eg refills for counter cleaning products. **REFILLING** is a great way of **REUSING** and **REDUCING** the amount of plastic we discard.

## ***Fair Trade***

Last, but by no means least, we are starting a monthly Fair Trade stall. We ask you to support this and you will be notified in the weekly intimations when it will be on.

Ann Allison

---

---

## **Church Finance**

If anyone would like to receive a copy of the accounts, please see Pamela McGowan, who can also be contacted on [tpchurch2021@gmail.com](mailto:tpchurch2021@gmail.com). If you are a taxpayer and have not registered for Gift Aid, please see Linda Ingham.

Thanks to the generosity of our Congregation, we ended 2022 in a strong financial position. We have received £58.63 in respect of shopping via [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) so if anyone has not registered, it's worth considering. Pamela or Linda would be happy to help if needed.

# The Online Church

Elsewhere in this Contact you will have read about the new gardens at the Church Hall and in Polson Park. Outdoor church is becoming a regular part of parish life and by the time you read this, the Annual Picnic will have taken place in Vogrie Country Park.

In the virtual world there have also been developments.

The website: [www.tranentparishchurch.co.uk](http://www.tranentparishchurch.co.uk)

The Church website has been redesigned by Laurie and has a much fresher and less cluttered look. Scanning the QR code on the front cover will take you to the website and one thing you can find there is a full [colour version of "Contact"](#).

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/@tranentparishchurchofscot17386](http://www.youtube.com/@tranentparishchurchofscot17386)

Every week you can join in the church service, even if you are unable to get to the building in person.

FaceBook: [www.facebook.com/tranentparishchurch](http://www.facebook.com/tranentparishchurch)

Our Facebook page is updated frequently with news and pictures of past and future events. Recent posts have included litter picking, the Gala, the opening of the Open Garden and the beautiful lantern from Sunshine Scotland now catching the sunlight on the window ledge in the church.



# Tranent Church

Pretty, picturesque with stories to tell  
of those who come **and came** to pray, to stay  
To sit and feel close, content and  
be near You

Headstones, graves all muddled together  
Like us, need tending, protecting, remembering.  
There's a path to the door  
Where feelings begin....explore.  
Two tall trees, so old, so splendid and fine;  
They provide a line, a chance  
to cross through on Sunday, any day, every day  
To listen  
To pray to You

In the distance - battlefields, memories  
The sparkling firth comes Forth with joy  
She sparkles and gleams  
And Fife is there  
To share  
Like life  
And You

Oh dear church, you bring me comfort and peace  
And another home  
Nestled in amongst those bygone folks  
Daffodils, snowdrops and bluebells entertain you  
Forget Me Not  
The souls of time are safe....  
....beside The Heugh and You.

*Val Henry*

## Report from the General Assembly



General Assembly 2023 was dominated by the challenges facing the Church of Scotland. Foremost being declining membership, from a peak of 1.3 million in the late 1950s is now below 284,000 with only 430 professions of faith last year. The number of Elders has more than halved since 1977. Most Ministers are over 50 and anywhere between a third to a half of Ministers may retire in the next decade. To meet these challenges a radical action plan has been developed. In 2019 the most radical reforming assembly in modern times began a process of major restructuring. Every Assembly since have been "fine-tuning" this. Presbyteries are merging (the largest now covers most of the Northeast and the

Islands), they in turn are expected to draft plans for "down-sizing" the number of charges in their areas over time (and close buildings). The Assembly was also sensitive to the human costs with talk about "ministerial burnout" and concerns over the habitability of some Manses.

Unsurprisingly there was much debate and a record number of amendments to deliverances. "I think we should sing" said the Moderator pausing an already lengthy debate. During the week each Session began by singing "The Journey is Long" to focus thoughts. By Wednesday night the Church had taken a lot more steps on the road to change. "We have discerned and decided together not rock, paper,

scissors', hope we got it right, but wrestling and reflecting and praying together to determine the direction we will walk in together", she was able to say.

Thankfully the pitfall of letting matters of business crowd out the spiritual dimension was mostly avoided. There were a number of memorable moments and inspiring speeches.

This year's Moderator is Rev. Sally Foster-Fulton, on a sabbatical from Christian Aid in Scotland, who preached powerfully on the environmental and social justice. "God's created world that needs all the love we can muster, and we can muster so much love" The High Lord High Commissioner Lord Hodge (Supreme Court Judge) said the church is vital in a post-truth world. The Lord Lyon (Royal Herald) talked of the importance of signs and symbols. The First Sea Lord told everyone how much the work of Chaplains matters in the armed forces, touching on his own experience of being helped with his mental health. The Chief Rabbi spoke of his pleasure at improving inter-faith relations. The previous Moderator Rev. Ian Greenshields expressed his pleasure in signing the ground-

breaking St Margaret's agreement with Archbishop Leo Cushley of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland for us both to work closer together. The archbishop was present to hear this. Later he gave an address appealing for better pay and conditions for workers in the care sector. The Assembly later passed a deliverance calling for £12 a hour to be paid to them. CrossReach was commended for setting a good example. The most moving address was from the Bible Society's Director; telling of Christians in lands where persecution is common and the courage they show in staying true to their faith in the face of threats. There was an uplifting moment too when the longest serving female minister, Rev. Jean Montgomerie, was honoured 54 years after the ordination of women was approved.

The biggest debate of the week was on the subject of assisted dying and whether the Church of Scotland's official position of opposing these be modified to one stating there are differing views within the faith community. One of our Elders, Dr Murdo MacDonald, drafted the church's official stance.

This sparked much thought-provoking discussion and impassioned pleas from all sides (including personal testimonies). It was agreed to conduct a review of church policy and to present the findings to next year's Assembly.

Others from our congregation were also involved during the week. Katherine, our Minister, serves on the legal questions committee. She was present to hear her findings being presented on the question of readers also being allowed to solemnize marriages, namely that there is nothing in Church Law to prevent this. Robyn Knight researched and drafted a detailed report on the impact of the transatlantic slave trade and the church's historic involvement in this, the Assembly approved the reports recommendations on combatting

racial inequality. Our Youth and Family Worker, Shirley Billes, was presented to the Moderator with other new appointees. Rev. William Watt, formerly our parish assistant, was also presented during the welcome to recently ordained ministers.

On the opening day, an address by the Rev. Lydia Neshangwe from Zimbabwe on behalf of the overseas presbyteries electrified the Assembly with its enthusiasm and clarity. In opened with her reminding all present "the reason we are here (this week) is because we love Jesus". It set the tone for the week, which although sometimes getting engrossed in procedural debates still managed to stay focused on the theme of the week "Remember Who You Are". That is; people made in the image of God here to serve him and our fellow men and women.

John Greig (Commissioner 076).

*Full details and all the reports can be found on the Church of Scotland website.*

<https://churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/general-assembly/2023>



# Your Contacts

Minister            Rev Katherine Taylor  
[KTaylor@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:KTaylor@churchofscotland.org.uk)

880011 (manse)  
07467 129365

Session Clerk    Mr John Greig  
[john@tranentparishchurch.co.uk](mailto:john@tranentparishchurch.co.uk)

Treasurer        Pamela McGowan

Unitary Team Convenors

Worship & Education Team	Rev Katherine Taylor
Fabric and Finance Team	David Menzies
Outreach and Wider World Team	Douglas Roberts
Pastoral Team	

Roll Keeper      Dr Linda Ingham

Freewill Offering and Gift Aid Convener Dr Linda Ingham  
Family & Youth Development Worker

Mrs Shirley Billes  
[Sbilles@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:Sbilles@churchofscotland.org.uk)

Church officer team - contact Wilma Hannah

Hall Lets Convenor - Cath Brett  
[lets@tranentparishchurch.co.uk](mailto:lets@tranentparishchurch.co.uk)

Editors of Contact    Robin and Sheila Strain  
[robinstrain@gmail.com](mailto:robinstrain@gmail.com)

Your elder \_\_\_\_\_



**Tranent Parish Church**  
**Church of Scotland**

Scottish Charity Number SC017423