



Annual Report

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF NEWHAVEN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

2024

POINTS OF INTEREST

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A Word from the Minister

Dear Friends

A Reflection.

Firstly, thank you to all those who have not only written reports for the activities of our church in the last year, but have also been involved in them. I am grateful for the dedication people have to God and our community in this place, in so many different ways. It's a great blessing to witness. Thank you, too, to the members of our Session. It is great, firstly, to see the love and respect that the members of the Session have for one another and for the members of our congregation, but also to see the dedication and passion the members have for the things of God and God's kingdom. There's a palpable "buying in" from our Session, which is greatly encouraging. John Hodge, our Session Clerk, has once again done a wonderful job in serving us, in a number of different ways, as have so many people who give of their time and effort, their gifts and talents, for the sake of God's kingdom. Thank you, too, to those who enjoy fellowship at Newhaven and to all those who so kindly support its work. It gives me tremendous joy to lead you in worship each Sunday and to serve you as your minister.

Two things that have struck me over and over again in my time as a minister. Firstly, the importance of gratitude to God in our lives as followers of Jesus, through both the joyful times and the times when we might feel we are wandering in the wilderness, and, secondly, the importance of good relationships built on the foundation of love that God has given us to share.



I believe very firmly that good things only happen when our relationships are healthy, when we encourage the love of God in Jesus to be at the forefront of who we are and what we are about.

Paul tells us as much in 1 Corinthians 13, when he writes about what love looks like, and emphasises the point that without love, we can do nothing. Paul doesn't leave it there, however. He tells us that without love we are nothing. Something, I believe,

which is often overlooked when we let other things get in the way. Of course, it doesn't mean that we are always going to be of one mind, but just because we might not always be of one mind, it doesn't mean our love for each other should be diminished or threatened.

Having said this, I believe we are a loving and caring part of Christ's body, and my prayer is always that we will continue to grow in his love day by day and week by week.

Often, it seems, people believe that good things come about when grandiose schemes and plans are drawn up to achieve certain goals, but I don't believe this is necessarily true. I believe the love of Jesus is expressed and experienced in the small things that happen between people - in simple acts of kindness or a word of encouragement to someone who simply needs to know they are loved. And all these small acts add up. All we need are eyes to see and ears to hear, to keep our hearts and minds and souls focused firmly on our Lord and the things he has taught us about how we might live.

continued overleaf...

Something I would like to mention, and something I have been a part of, is our Re-Belonging course that Colin MacNeill and I have been leading. It's always been an ambition of mine to be able to create a space where people can study the Bible together and ask the difficult questions that they might have concerning issues that we find in scripture. I wanted it to be something original, something that we had spent time writing. In a discussion with Colin about my thoughts, he said, "Why don't we do it!" And, so, we did. What we have produced is a twelve-week, fortnightly course covering the vast span of the Bible. For all involved, I believe, it has been nourishing, and both Colin and I have thoroughly enjoyed leading it and dealing with challenging questions that people have asked. We are considering what we do next, but I'm sure we will be running another course in the not too distant future and would encourage you to join us.

One of the issues we have sought to deal with is the question of "Where is God today?" It's a question, I believe, everyone asks at various times in their lives, especially in challenging times.

As one of Job's friends put it, "Man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward." [Job 5:7].

The Psalmist asked God, "Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?" [Psalm 10:1].

And though we might ask "why" the truth is that "why", more often than not, remains a mystery. As Christians we believe that we live in a fallen world, one in which things often go dreadfully wrong, and one in which bad choices might also lead to bad outcomes, but the fact is - in the Bible we rarely get an answer to the question "why?".

What people in the Bible did get, instead, was an encounter. They got an encounter with the living God who brought his strength and encouragement in the midst of their troubles so that they could walk through the darkest valleys and emerge on the other side. The calling on their lives was to put all their trust in God, to confess to God that they didn't necessarily understand what they were going through, and perhaps didn't like what they were going through, but through it all, they were going to put their trust in God, who would never leave them nor forsake them.

"The eternal God is your refuge," we read in the Book of Deuteronomy 33:27, "and underneath are the everlasting arms."

I believe, through thick and thin, as individuals, and as a congregation, that is what we are also called to do. To put our complete trust in God, as challenging as that might sometimes be, using the often mysterious gift of faith that God has blessed us with.

Much like the people of Israel wandering in the wilderness, we don't know exactly what lies ahead, but one thing we do know is that we can trust in God, for God's presence, for God's love, and for God's guidance. So let us put our trust in God and seek God's face as we journey together in this life.

Let us also give thanks to God that nothing can separate us from God's love, in Christ Jesus.

Much love

Peter

Rev. Peter Bluett



Roll Keeper's Report

A Statistical Return is required to be sent to the Church of Scotland at the end of each calendar year. It is a sort of annual census and it helps to provide a national overview of the make-up of the Church of Scotland.

"Joining the Church" has become a more flexible term in recent years and many people no longer see the need to make such a public commitment. However, it is not so much a commitment to the Church as making a commitment to Christ - professing faith in Christ and being part of the life and work of His Church at Newhaven.

If you would like more information on what 'membership' means and involves, please speak to the Minister or the Session Clerk.

Statistical Return as at 31st December 2024

Opening Roll:	124	
Added by Profession:	0	Removed by Death: 5
Added by Resolution:	3	Removed by Certificate: 2
Added by Certificate:	10	Removed by Resolution: 4
Closing Roll:	126	

Elaine Greig
Roll Keeper

Report from the Kirk Session

This year was quite eventful. At the end of 2023 the Kirk Session had decided that it wanted to meet with the presbytery to consider the way forward in the discussions with North and South Leith churches. The union between North Leith and South Leith Churches went ahead and the united congregation is now making plans to call a minister. At the same time, we wanted to meet with representatives of the presbytery to discuss the situation. This meeting was held in April and we were given a very fair hearing by them. They initially met with Peter and then with the rest of the Session. During the year they have indicated that they would get back to us about the way forward but it might take some time as they had other more pressing issues to deal with. As a result, the Kirk Session were encouraged to spend time waiting upon God to discern what our calling was going forward. It was also decided to have various extra session meetings in the year when we did not deal with routine business but spent time to try and discern what God wanted from us. These times have been varied, times of sharing, times of silent prayer, times of reflecting on what we had learnt.

At the same time, the usual congregational business also needed to be attended to. There are separate reports on fabric and finance matters. The Scottish Government had introduced a new Register of Controlling Interests in Property and we had to register the Manse in this new register. We also review our risk register annually. We have also spent a lot of time trying to clarify and simplify the insurance arrangements with the factors of the flats in the old church building. We have struck up very cordial relations with the flat owners.

Arrangements were made for Peter's Sunday message to be available once again on the website and we are glad that his message can now have a wider circulation. In addition, we continue to deliver written copies of the Thought for the Week to those without internet connection.

We also receive a regular report from Brian Souness on events at the Presbytery. Safeguarding is also an item that is always on the agenda. New regulations mean that we have to remove people from the register if they are no longer involved in regulated work.

We have had quite a few changes in our employees (see also the café report). Lee Hoy was concerned that his benefits might be adversely affected so reluctantly gave up his post as caretaker. We are grateful for his time with us.



Kitty Murray, who worships with us, has taken on the duties with help from her husband, Chris, from Monday to Wednesday including dealing with setting out Toddlers and the Haven. David Weir took on the weekend parties until he obtained other employment and we are looking for someone to take that on.

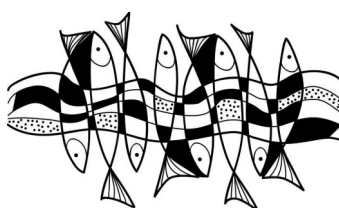
It was also agreed that we would employ an Administrator for the church. We applied for Church of Scotland funding but were not successful. However private funding has been obtained and we are now advertising the post. It was agreed that we need to have a clear sickness absence policy and this has been worked on.

We also started to investigate if we might assist the Mission to Seamen in their ministry to cruise liner crew members. This is ongoing and we hope that a representative of the Mission will come to explain to the congregation what is involved.

We also began to consider how we might improve the church's website. The problem is that we do not have anyone with the relevant experience, and will need help.

As can be seen, the business of the Session is varied and extensive. I know that I am speaking for many when I say that we look forward to meeting together and the spirit of love and kindness which we find in the meetings gives us much encouragement for our congregation going forward. We are indebted to Peter for fostering this among us. We are united in the desire to be used by God and to fulfil His calling of us. We do not know what this will entail or what the future holds but we trust God in this.

John Hodge
Session Clerk



Finance and Stewardship

The past year has been challenging financially for our Church. Over the past twelve months our cash outflow was (£24,800).

Our Offerings, and related Gift Aid, dropped by £2,979 to £61,616. This is still a significantly positive amount, but with increasing costs facing our Church we pray that it can be increased. Use of our Premises also showed lower income at £6,238 and Bequests were significantly down on last year's figure which benefited from Georgie Orme's generous amount.

Repairs and Maintenance costs to our buildings were again significant, at £17,394 which included a new boiler for the Church costing £6,700. Other operating costs were similar to 2023, allowing for inflation.

Our Cafe, which had such a successful 2023, struggled last year. Two changes of manager didn't help, with the associated added cost, and sales were 11% lower. Overall the deficit was £13,054, and this included the purchase of a new coffee making machine costing £3,882. We pray that the new team of Liesanne (Manager) and Rosanne (Assistant) can both improve the financial performance, but do so whilst increasing the popularity of this our biggest Outreach activity.

On a more positive note our Youth Worker donations benefitted from two major donations to help us fund this activity into 2025.

The placing of Georgie Orme's bequest, and other funds, into a Church of Scotland deposit account has helped to increase our income from Interest and Dividends by £4,023 to £6,422 for the year.

Gift Aid remains a vital element within our overall Church income. Alister is our H.M.R.C. Gift Aid expert and his timeous submission of claims has already ensured January 2025 has benefitted with £15,278 banked.

Our closing bank balances at the year end dropped to £133,876, but our Church of Scotland Growth and Income Fund investments increased in value to £102,928. Overall then our reserve strength of £236,804 is comforting, but we need to be mindful of annual erosion of this position.

Once again I would like to most sincerely thank our Treasurer, Alister Greig, for the considerable time which he diligently spends keeping all aspects of our finances accurately up to date.

There will be an Annual Stated Meeting of the congregation on Monday the 26th May, when there will be an opportunity to ask questions about the 2024 Congregational Accounts.

However, either Alister or I would be happy to take any points which you have either in person or by email :-

Graeme Taylor - Finance Convenor
graemetaylor00@hotmail.com

Alister Greig - Treasurer
bowtow@btinternet.com

In conclusion, I would once again thank all members of the congregation for their support, and look forward positively to a year in which we can all continue to worship God together, and do his work.

Graeme Taylor
Finance Convenor



Fabric Report

The fabric of the church and manse is inspected regularly, and any issues are dealt with promptly.

Church: during 2024, the gas boiler was replaced, and light bulbs were replaced as required for those spotlights not already replaced by LED fittings. A faulty switch in the Little Lights Room was repaired, and the strip light in a storage cupboard in same room was replaced with an LED strip light at the same time. We have had to find a new contractor to undertake the bi-annual PAT testing of electrical appliances. The fire extinguishers were tested and meet current safety standards, and routine servicing of the fire and intruder alarms has been conducted through the year in accordance with existing contractual agreements. A repair was carried out on the Chancel platform.

We replaced the coffee machine in the kitchen/café and a new fly screen was fitted to one of the kitchen windows.

The Session Clerk was nominated as Health & Safety Administrator.

Our grateful thanks to Jeanette's husband Billy for undertaking regular maintenance issues such as changing lightbulbs and ensuring the safety of the café chairs.

After much negotiation we have persuaded the new factors of the flats above part of the church building that the title insurance provisions for a common policy should be adhered to. Hopefully this will be achieved soon.

There is a substantial willow tree at the east side of the church which overhangs neighbouring properties and is becoming difficult to maintain. When last approached, the Local Authority refused permission to fell it or effect significant alterations. It is intended to re-submit the case for removal in 2025.

Manse: in 2024, the internal redecoration and fitting of new blinds in the manse conservatory was undertaken.

All in all, 2024 was a busy but relatively uneventful year and, happily, our pest control measures have ensured no visitations from the local mice population.

Robert Weir
Jeanette Meek
Brian Souness



Mission and Outreach Group

To enable the people of God to be the people of God.

We have not been as active this year as we might have hoped. I am finding it difficult with my Session Clerk responsibilities to give the proper time and attention to this group.

We have continued to look at Messy Church and we are keen that it should be a time of worship for both adults and children. It is easy to view it just as a children's event. This is not what is intended. We are considering whether we might explore other new forms of worship such as café church with a view to creating a form of worship for those for whom the traditional Sunday service is not appropriate. This is still at a very early stage.

We held the usual carol singing at Christmas and this year it was very well attended due in no little part to some enthusiastic organisers in the community who drummed up support. It was great to see so many taking part.

It would be good to get some new blood on the group and anyone interest in exploring mission and outreach in all its forms should contact me.

John Hodge

Communications Group

Probably one of the most significant events has been having to let Lesley-Anne Weir go as our convenor. She has served in that post for as far back as I can remember and has pulled together the various strands with her usual efficiency. She has been on top of the IT side of the work as well as being able to bring her skills as an advocate to the work and produce clear and simple messages for the congregation. Her shoes will be difficult to fill but I would be glad to hear from anyone who is prepared to give it a shot. Our expectations will be more modest!

Our thanks must also go to Elaine Greig for editing and producing Harbour Lights, the church magazine, quarterly. She also is responsible for collating and publishing the Annual Report. Quite apart from her editorial skills, she also has a bit of chasing to get in all the contributions. New material is always welcome.

Peter, our minister, as well as delivering his Sunday sermon, also produces a shortened version as Thought for the Week which goes out with the weekly update. A

hard copy can also be delivered to those who do not have the internet. The hard copy also includes relevant extracts from the weekly update. The weekly update goes out by email to over 100 people with news of events in the church and also more widely. I would welcome contributions from anyone in the congregation. This year we introduced a new section 'Where the wind blows' to share situations where we have seen God at work. This is a chance to encourage others by sharing where you have seen God Working.

The Prayer App continues to be of help and support to many in the congregation and lets those facing challenges know that they have the support, prayers and love of the congregation surrounding them.

If you do not receive any of these items and wish to be involved, please contact me or Elaine Greig and we will do our best to ensure that you are included.

John Hodge



www.n-c.org.uk



Pastoral Care

Last year once again brought great loss to our church family with the passing of loved ones and friends. We pray for God's comfort to all who are grieving at this time and extend our love and support to those who suffered ill health, underwent surgery, were hospitalised and all who continue to live with debilitating pain and discomfort.



We remember those who are housebound, in residential care and no longer able to come to church. We were grateful to our elders, youth worker and members of our congregation who kept us informed of anyone who needed support and assistance during the year, responding with sensitivity and confidentiality. Our thanks go to everyone who offered care and support to those in need.

Thank you to everyone who bought flowers or donated to the flower fund during the year. The flowers are appreciated during our church services and are gratefully received by those who are unwell and facing challenging circumstances. The flowers also convey our congratulations to those who celebrated special occasions.

We thank Lesley-Anne for her hand-made soap, given as Christmas gifts to those in our congregation who were ill, housebound or facing difficulties throughout the year, conveying our love to them. Many thanks to our elders who distributed the gifts.

Our group continues to meet several times in the year and feel it a privilege to provide pastoral care to our church

family and community. Please keep all those in need in your prayers.

Should anyone wish to contact any member of the team, our details are:

Peter Bluett:	0131 476 5212
Heather Robertson:	0131 552 2047
Linda Brunton-Bruce:	0131 467 2199
Lesley-Anne Weir:	07486 440234
Liz Thomson:	07484 769312

**Peter, Heather, Linda,
Lesley-Anne and Liz**

20th Leith Boys' Brigade

Over the course of 2024, the 20th Leith Boys Brigade unit had an Anchors section (5-8 yrs), a Junior section (8-11 yrs), a Company section (11-14 yrs) and a Senior section (14-18 yrs). In the Anchors and Juniors there have been nine Boys attending, and in the Company and Seniors there have been ten Boys attending this year, with good regular attendance that makes planning activities easier.

All Boys' Brigade sections follow a programme which seeks to have a balanced approach to activities that cover the following themes.

- ◆ Get Active
- ◆ Get Adventurous
- ◆ Get Creative
- ◆ Get into the Bible
- ◆ Get Involved
- ◆ Get Learning

For the Anchors and Juniors the weekly session starts with inspection followed by the a physically active warm up game - usually Dodgeball. After that there will be an activity which is based around one of the six themes above, perhaps using something like a craft or quiz to help the Boys learn about a particular topic, some of which have included healthy hearts, fitness and the parable of the mustard seed. The session finishes with Rev Bluett meeting the boys for a short Bible story, chat and prayer.

Particular highlights through the year was a visit from Cool Creatures, where the boys had the opportunity to meet and to handle some weird and wonderful creatures, including an armadillo, a blue tongued skink and a Burmese python!

For the Company and Senior section, the programme has covered a diverse range of topics, including Healthy Habits, Invictus Games, Youth Culture, Difficult Journeys, Fake News and a South African Theme Night (which unfortunately Rev Bluett was not able to attend).

Games also form a popular part of the Company and Senior sections' sessions, from the perennially favourite Dodgeball and Unihoc to the newly introduced "4-Square", which became very competitive. However, the favourite activity was when we joined with over 90 Boys from across the Edinburgh Battalion area for a Christmas night at Cosmo World Buffet.

We are delighted that we have two Boys currently working towards our BB Advanced Awards, one for the President's Badge and one for the newly re-named King's Badge, which we hope to be able to award next year.

While we are delivering a good programme that keeps the Boys coming weekly, additional adult help would always be welcomed to ensure that there is sufficient Leaders each week.

Alan Summers and Colin MacNeill



Some of the Junior Boys holding the Burmese Python!

Re-belonging

It was over a coffee at the tail end of 2023 that Peter, our minister, and I got to talking about the importance of nurturing faith through small group discussions. It was soon evident that we both shared a vision of a course for Newhaven Church that would serve as an introduction to the Bible and the Christian faith, and also an opportunity for us to share the faith journey we were on. And so it was that God planted the seed.

Over the next several months, God watered that seed and it grew into the course that we launched in August 2024 – Re-belonging: the Story of the Christian Faith.

The timing was providential and evidence of God's involvement. There had been a clear sense of God's presence at previous Sunday morning services and this prompted several folk in our congregation to respond to the invitation we put out - Do you want more of God in your life? Do you want to engage more with the Bible? Or are you perhaps just curious to explore the Christian faith, even just a little bit.

Re-belonging: the Story of the Christian Faith is a series of 12 sessions that tell the story of the Christian faith as we discover it in the Bible. It covers the key points in that story but also encourages exploration of the themes of the Christian faith. These themes will help to join the different dots of that story from thousands of years ago. And it is hoped that these themes would help reveal God in the present, and the connection between God and each of us, right now, wherever we are.

The course was called Re-belonging because we believe that each and every person, without any exceptions, belongs in God's story. In fact, we believe that each and every person has always belonged in God's story, whether they know it or not, whether they have a faith or none.

There were two groups who met fortnightly, with 11 people in total, in addition to Peter and me. Although everyone knew each other beforehand, at least by sight from Sunday morning services, over the course of the meetings people got to know each other more. It was wonderful to see relationships being built as we shared stories, asked questions and explored the one relationship that transcends everything – the relationship God longs to have with each of us.

Amongst the groups there is some interest in continuing to meet on a regular basis, and so we are giving thought to how that might be done.

The 12 sessions of Re-belonging are set out below. If reading this stirs the heart of anyone who wasn't on the course then please let me know – I would hope we might run the Re-belonging course again in 2025.

Session 1	In the beginning: it was good
Session 2	In the beginning: abundance prevailed
Session 3	In the beginning: I AM
Session 4	The human condition
Session 5	Abraham: God's covenant
Session 6	Israel's story: Exodus
Session 7	Israel's story: King David
Session 8	Jesus the Christ: the second incarnation
Session 9	Jesus the Christ: announcing the Kingdom
Session 10	Jesus the Christ: a love supreme
Session 11	Jesus the Christ: the body of Christ
Session 12	Where is God now?

Colin MacNeill



RE-BELONGING

THE STORY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

A small group course at
Newhaven Church, from
September 2024

contact
colin@themacneills.com

Youth Worker

2024 was a year filled with blessings from the Lord. We were able to carry out a number of events which conveyed the Good News.

Messy Church

Our first Messy Church of the year was held on 2nd February. We celebrated the fact that we are all different and unique. We are God's masterpieces. Singing the song 'Build it up' from Fischy music emphasised the importance of us building one another up even if we are different. The crafts included the dove of peace, decorating people cutouts and making drums. The drums were then used to accompany our singing of our worship songs.



Our Easter Messy church took place on 29th March. The format was different as everyone was involved in the journey of Easter. The Easter journey covered Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. This involved everyone moving around the church building and actively participating in the different parts of the story. Each family constructed their own resurrection garden which they then took home. The egg and spoon race was again enjoyed by children and adults.



Bruce Lockhart from SU arrived on 19th April with all sorts of circus equipment providing us with an interesting afternoon where we were able to learn and hone in on circus skills. We all had the opportunity to use stilts, ride a unicycle, spin plates, juggle balls and or hats. The juggling, parachute and ball games were also great fun.

The pre-schoolers' Messy Church on 19th May was based on the creation. The children started by doing a scavenger hunt outside. The children and families then spent time listening to Scruffy talk about the creation, which involved taking things out of his bag and helping him find the hidden animals in the room. Christine and Scruffy chatted about all the wonderful things that God has created for us. The little ones each made a booklet, which they took home, to remember all the beautiful things in creation. At snack time

after making faces with their pancakes and fruit, the children enjoyed eating them.

We looked at the story of Jesus walking on the water at the Messy Church on 21st June. We discussed how important it is to keep our eyes focused on Jesus and to have faith that He will be with us during our difficult times. The children enjoyed making goo bags, decorating biscuits, making horses from craft sticks and working out the optic illusion message.

The number of people attending Messy church varies. There have been times where approximately 50 people have attended.

Holiday club

At the start of the summer holiday we partnered up with Leith Baptist and City on the Hill churches and held our annual holiday club from 1st to 5th July. This year we had a fantastic response of 58 children registering.

The focus of the holiday club was on Jesus the restorer. We explored, through drama and video clips, bible stories looking at how Jesus restores us emotionally, spiritually and physically. During group time the children discussed the stories, there was time for questions and reflective prayer.

Every day a guest speaker explained to the children how they restore things/ people in everyday situations. On the second day the children were



shown some basic first aid steps by Alister. The children then had fun seeing how many bandages they could use to bandage their group leader resulting in some interesting looking mummies.

The children's creativity was really shown during craft time. A firm favourite activity during the holiday club was archery. The children also enjoyed the various games and messy challenges.



At the end of everyday the families with their children and the team enjoyed a picnic style lunch.

Other activities

At the start of the year Christine and I with Heather from SU had the privilege of presenting **Bible Alive** to the P6 children at Wardie Primary. The response from the children and teachers was positive.

Our annual **Inflatables Day** was held on 23rd March. This event provides an opportunity for us to build relationships with the community. We had a fantastic turn out and all the children enjoyed the day.

Our first **Holiday Club Afternoon Tea fundraiser** was held on Sunday 28th April. A lovely afternoon of socialising and eating tasty treats. We collected an amazing amount of £834 which went towards the family lunches during the holiday club.

It is encouraging to see more people participating in the All age services. These intergenerational services are a blessing.

Back to School with God service held on Sunday 1st September. There were 18 different educational places represented at the service.. The focus was to spot the difference that Jesus makes on our lives. It was great to get some new people involved with leading up front.



Brian and I are running our Youth Group (P7-S3) meetings on Sundays. We meet during the church service. This is a time where teens are free to ask questions and explore their faith and the Bible in a safe and relaxing environment.

We have continued with our partnership with Victoria Primary School. At the start of the year I carried on working with the P7, after the summer holidays I began working with the P6 children, helping the pupils who find mathematics and or reading a challenge. Christine and Susan also help out at the school.

In December the P6 pupils at Victoria Primary enjoyed the **Christmas programme** that I did with them. The pupils had some interesting and profound questions. There was a positive response from the pupils and teachers. It's a blessing to be able to share the true story of Christmas with the pupils.

I have worked with some of our children from the congregation who needed assistance with their Maths.

Our **Christmas Extravaganza** which took place on Saturday 14th December was once again a huge success. The children enjoyed the crafts, games and party food.

Using the tardis, the children were able to be actively involved in the Christmas story. 'Time traveling' gave the children an opportunity to hear how the different people in the Christmas story must have felt and what they experienced.



Everyone got to take home their beautifully made Christmas decorations. There was a feeling of love, peace and joy throughout the day.

Most of the events mentioned would not be possible if we didn't have the valuable assistance of our church volunteers. A big thank you to all those who helped.

Sandy Edwards
Youth Worker



Lighthouse Group

Lighthouse is our Sunday morning group for children in Primary 1 to Primary 6. We meet on Sundays during worship except for the first Sunday of each month when everyone is together for our church All Age Service.

We have had a busy year learning more about Jesus, getting to know each other and exploring stories from the Bible about God and being part of His amazing creation.

Each leader will have a slightly different approach to how the lesson goes, but every Bible story will have some elements of games, crafts, drawing, questioning and there is always time to pray.

The team is made up of a small group of leaders who prepare lessons from the Bible and share these over the course of each term with any children who come along. They are supported by another PVG'd adult (whose duty is nothing more than to be a friendly and welcoming presence). We are particularly reliant on this support which is vital to our church being able to continue this children's ministry. Special thanks to Eilidh, Colin and John who have filled in recently. We would be delighted to hear from anyone else willing to take a turn with this easy but essential role!

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We would like to thank Richie Biggars and Kate Aitchison, who have had to step back from teaching this term. Their wonderful lessons for the children and participation in team meetings have been missed. We are grateful for their continued prayers and interest in the group and we pray for God's blessing upon them too.

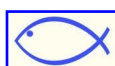
We want to thank the great team of volunteers who step in to help over the summer holidays.

It's been wonderful seeing the children grow in their individual walks with Jesus and learning about how God is speaking into their young lives. It's a very happy group and there have been highlights such as the spontaneous dancing around the room when we were exploring the fruit of the spirit, 'Joy'. Another special moment was during a time of open prayer when some children chose to speak out loud to our Father in heaven.

There is also an opportunity for kids to go to Scripture Union camp. Five children went to the SU Lendrickmuir weekend in February 2024 and that provides more opportunities for fun, chat, questions and growing in faith.

Please invite any families you know to come along to try church. Spread the news that at Newhaven, they'll find a welcome place for their children, they'll meet a great bunch of kids, hear about wider opportunities - **and hear the good news about Jesus!**

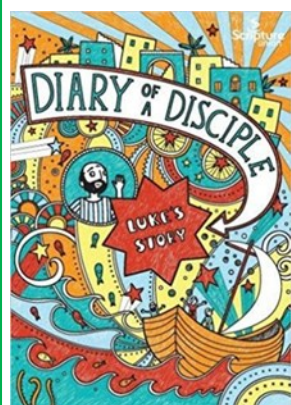
Lynn, Christine and Liz



Chatterboxes

Chatterboxes is our SU group that meets in the church for P5-P7s from Trinity and Victoria Primaries. Last year we said goodbye to three P7 girls who had been with

us for 3 years but we were glad to welcomed more P5 and P6 girls and boys in September, so we now have 12 children who are extremely regular. We have been listening to the audio book of a Diary of a Disciple and



following it in our books. This diary is written by Luke and is in the style of the Diary of a Wimpy Kid. So very engaging for this age group.

We asked the group, 'why do you come to Chatterboxes?' They said,

- "It's amazing, especially the snacks"
- "I like Luke's diary so much that I read ahead, it's very interesting"

- "We're learning about Jesus, I know some of the stories but a lot are new"

- "You can come to Chatterboxes whether you believe in God or not"

- "We go on fun trips"

Lynn and I join the children on the Edinburgh SU weekend at Lendrick Muir at the end of February with some of the



church children. Everyone has a great time with Bible teaching, worship, games, crafts and outdoor activities and it's lovely for the children to experience living in a Christian community - "At Chatterboxes we play games and make crafts too".

We made little bead bees over a few weeks to remind us that Jesus said to be "Bee" different

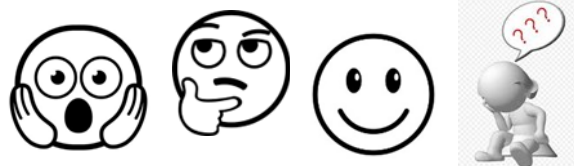
 loving

 forgiving

 praying



We often use emojis with the children and they pick ones which they think apply to the story or themselves which stimulates great discussion and questions.



It is a real privilege to have these children and we constantly thank God for that. We want to thank the church for permission to hold the group in the halls and also to Evelyn who faithfully prepares snacks and helps tidy up too.

Christine Hodge and Lynn MacNeill

Toddlers

What makes a Toddler Group? This is what our parents and grandparents say -

- "A welcoming place that is warm, a good selection and great variety of clean toys with plenty of different activities to do with the children. You have the best playdoh with lots of different shapes and tools to have fun with. It's good to have healthy snacks for the children. We love the singing, and I love it when my little one sings the songs round the house. The volunteers are fantastic, friendly, helpful and kind."

- "Toddlers is fab! We've been coming since she was little. It's nice to see the same people each week and form friendships."

- "It has such a warm welcoming atmosphere and I'm so grateful for it, I feel part of the little community there."

- "At toddlers there is a relaxed space for mums and dads to chat in the baby area."

- "I appreciate that it's ok to come at any time even if we're very late. I always feel better having come along even if it's hard to make it out of the house."

- "I feel so supported here - people really care."

- "I don't have any immediate family in the entire country, so Toddlers has been a huge support to us. Thank you for being there for our son's growing up years."



The Toddler group is a fun place to be. We meet each Tuesday during term time. We have about 40 families on the register with about 22-26 families each week. At the moment we have about 16 babies on the register, who fortunately don't all come every week!

At toddlers we have free play, then our snack time and more play before tidying up for singing. At Christmas we have party food for everyone, and we give a little Christmas Bible story book to each baby and

toddler. We also have the Christmas story over two weeks with Ben the puppet, and this is repeated at Easter too with an age-appropriate story.



I want to say an enormous thank you to our volunteers – we have 3 teams of 3 who are amazing. We said goodbye to Phoebe our youngest volunteer who got a full-time job, and welcomed Mairi, Karmen (who helped us for two terms), Liz Ford (one of our grannies whose granddaughter is now at nursery), and Liz Wells. It has been wonderful to have such committed teams.



Thursday Warm Space

- "The church has very kindly opened the hall as a warm play space over the winter. It has been a godsend - sometimes for older kids to run around, but more often for mothers of babies under one year to meet and chat. Both of my children have benefitted from it instead of being indoors alone on some of the coldest/wettest afternoons."

- "It's somewhere to meet others on cold days and is a great idea, and much appreciated, as winter can be quite lonely. It's child/baby friendly and a lovely friendly space - the coffee and cake from the café is a bonus."

Thursday Warm Space is for mums and little ones. This has been a new venture at the request of one of the mums who has committed to coming each week and welcoming all those who come. It meets in the big hall which is empty then, from 1:15-3:15 each Thursday.

**Christine Hodge
and the Team**

Newhaven Connections Café

The last year at the cafe has seen changes in the manager and the cafe assistant. Sandra left to retire, Amy moved on to work in London, Tamsin has found work nearer her student accommodation, as it was taking her two buses to get to the cafe at Newhaven, and Rosanne started as cafe assistant. I have stepped down to enable myself to focus better on my final year of my counselling diploma, and Liesanne has taken over as new cafe manager. So a lot of change, but most importantly, the core group of volunteers and cafe users has remained the same throughout these changes.

Many people say the church isn't a bricks and mortar building, it's the people who gather together to worship. I heard an extraordinary story of a church congregation who decided to sell their building and be a church without a building.

Regardless of the multitude of views on church buildings and their purpose, Newhaven church building is providing a haven for many people through the cafe and the many groups which meet in the hall for various activities. It's fulfilling its purpose. So for this last year it has been fantastic to see the groups continuing to attend activities and then use the cafe, and recently on Thursday afternoons the hall has been opened up for mother and toddlers to find some free space to go to out of the home.

While the Church of Scotland has been going through turbulent waters of late, Newhaven Connections Cafe continues to provide a sense of community to many people, volunteers and clients. Looking to the future, I hope it will continue to flourish and bring new people in to enjoy the drink and food, the friendly faces, and on a cold winter's day, warmth.

Bea Green
Former Café Manager



2024 was a difficult year for the café. Sandra Lindsay retired at the end of March and we had a small celebration to thank her for all that she had put into the café over her 5 years in post. Sandra always had a great passion for the concept of a community café and all that it gives to the community. It is a place where people can feel at home, others can gain work experience through volunteering and this can lead to paid employment. At that time, we had two young café assistants, Tamsin and

Amy. They worked on different days because of University and other commitments and so were not in a position to take on the manager's role. We advertised and Bea Green came along. As she herself said, she had no catering experience but was willing to give it a go. This proved to be a valuable but short time solution as it provided the bridge between Sandra and the current manager Liesanne Craib. During the summer both Tamsin and Amy moved on. Tamsin moved further away from the church and wanted to avoid travelling long distances and Amy wanted to pursue her career in archaeology and film. We are grateful to both of them for all they gave to the café and their dedication. At this point Rosanne Lau came on the scene and became the café assistant. It has been a joy to see her grow into the job and I am amazed at all the work she gets through.



During the year various problems emerged and there was difficulty getting volunteers to serve drinks. However, this and also the increasing unreliability of the old coffee machine led to us purchasing a new model which is not only easier for volunteers to operate but is also much quicker and helps us avoid queues at busy times. We are grateful to Georgie Orme's bequest for providing the funding.

Towards the end of the year, and due to other commitments, Bea resigned as café manager. While her tenure was short, it was also vital for the café in enabling us to continue to operate during 2024 which otherwise would not have been possible. We are most grateful to her for her courage in taking on a role with which she was not familiar and also for enabling us to continue to serve the community. Bea was someone who always had time to talk to the customers which is an essential part of the duties of Café Manager.

During November Liesanne started and took over as manager in mid December. In her first week on her own she had a funeral tea to cater for and she restarted the outside and special catering service that we had previously offered.

We are glad now to have a stable team in place and we look forward to Liesanne and Rosanne taking the ministry forward in 2025.

John Hodge
Session Clerk

The Haven

The Haven continues to serve a group of mainly local and predominantly Senior Citizens, but it is an open door to anyone seeking a friendly and informal meeting place on Wednesday mornings. At present we have around 35 regular attendees and could accommodate more.



Word of mouth is the usual means of advertising the haven and has increased our numbers of Dominoes players.

Our Art group is an enthusiastic group of keen painters whose works provide a popular exhibition space on the walls of our Church Café.



Some visitors simply enjoy sitting together with a cup of tea or coffee chatting about family and life in general.

Recently we set up our collection point for Haveners who wish to donate items of toiletries and small items of clothing for adults and children to a local charity, Edinburgh Direct Aid. These regular and much needed donations have been welcomed. Our 'Water Bottle' continues to collect our loose change for clean water around the world, although it takes a while longer to fill up due to bank cards being more common in our pockets these days than loose coins. Nevertheless the Haven continues to support Clean Water charities.

Notable calendar dates are regularly celebrated at the Haven with traditional fare being ordered from our own Church Café, an occasional Quiz keeps our brains active, and Haveners' birthdays do not go unnoticed. A short, informal Worship Service continues to be offered at 11am on the first Wednesday of each month in the Lighthouse Room. We are fortunate to have our friends Raymond Bain, Kate Aitchison and George Banks as guest speakers at these gatherings when we welcome everyone interested in hearing a Christian message relating to everyday life, remember friends in prayer and enjoy a favourite hymn.

The Haven would not be possible without the faithful dedication and good humour of our volunteers who welcome every visitor with a friendly smile, hot drinks and biscuits (and the occasional chocolate!). We appreciate and value everything they do and take this opportunity to say a big Thank You to them all.

Please mention the welcome awaiting at the Haven to anyone who may be looking for a brighter Wednesday morning.

Louisa McKenzie

Timothy

Newhaven Church sponsors Timothy Masasi, a student at Blessed Generation Children's Centre in Nyamira, Kenya.

Ave Teresinha Norton, the Child Sponsorship Secretary to Siloam Christian Ministries, sent a letter from Timothy, sending Christmas and New Year greetings and thanking us for supporting him.



Timothy's school report stated that he 'meets expectations' in English, Maths, Kiswahili, Religious Education, Agriculture, Social Studies and Integrated science.

The school year in Kenya runs from January to December and Timothy was looking forward to joining Grade 9 in the new year.

Every penny or small change helps to support Timothy and give him the best chance in life. We were able to send £270 in December 2024.

Jackie Souness



Kampi Child Care Centre

Throughout 2024 Newhaven Church maintained its longstanding connection with the Child Care Centre at Kampi Ya Samaki in rural Kenya, through the church's support of Kampi Disabled Children's Trust.

Kampi Disabled Children's Trust is a UK based trust which was established by our late friend and Newhaven member Georgie Orme, shortly after she retired from working in Kampi. The Trust provides financial support to the Child Care Centre but has no involvement in the day-to-day operation of the Centre.

The Child Care Centre has a new manager, Stephen Loktari (known as Panga), who himself was a child at the Centre. Rosemary Gilmore, one of the Trustees of Kampi Disabled Children's Trust and who herself worked with Georgie Orme at the Centre, remembers him well as 'one of her boys'. She visited Kampi late in 2023, spending time with Panga, and was thrilled to see his strong faith and clear desire to help and to be an advocate for disabled young people.

There are 15 children at the Child Care Centre where they live during school term, are treated with medication and supplied with equipment and from where they go to the school that is very close by. There are three teachers

at the Centre who specialise in working with children with disabilities and this helps to ensure that each child receives personalised attention and can learn effectively.

The Centre has a Bible club for the children where they can grow spiritually and deepen their understanding of God's word as they actively participate in the club's activities. There is also a devotional programme for the staff, which fosters an atmosphere of faith and encouragement among the dedicated team.

The Trustees of Kampi Disabled Children's Trust decided in 2024 not to seek funds from its two principal donors, one of which is Newhaven Church.



Some of the children at the Kampi Child Care Centre

The funds held by the Trust are currently sufficient to cover several years' support to the Child Care Centre and the Trustees felt that it would not be wise to continue to seek the same level of support from the principal donors. This was the principal reason for not holding the usual Newhaven Church ceilidh at the end of November.

Please keep the Child Care Centre in your prayers, as well as Panga and the local church committee who have oversight responsibility for running the Centre.

Colin MacNeill



Men's Group (aka Dad's Army)

The group has continued to meet on a monthly basis. There are normally about 6 or 7 of us and numbers fluctuate as folk have things on. Men are free to come and go as they please and the meetings are totally informal. Some come for lunch in the café beforehand and we all normally have coffee and sample some of the excellent café baking. The time is just an opportunity to meet, share company and put the world to rights. Topics of discussion range from sport, national and local politics, holidays, how things used to be, etc. etc. The meetings are usually on the first Thursday of each month at 2pm and any men are welcome to attend.

I would encourage all men to do their civic duty at this time of national emergency and join the platoon!

G Mainwaring (Capt)



Presbytery Report

2024 was my second full year as Edinburgh and West Lothian Presbytery Elder on behalf of Newhaven Church, and my role followed a similar pattern to the previous year of attending the meetings of Presbytery at Palmerston Place Church and reporting back to the Kirk Session anything that impacted our congregation or was of general interest in the workings of the wider Church. There were six meetings in total throughout the year. Whilst Presbytery Elders have the opportunity to serve on the various groups and/or committees of Presbytery I am unfortunately unable to give the time to these and have therefore given the appropriate apologies and been excused.

As was the case during 2023, few of the items of business that arose during the year affected Newhaven directly, nevertheless the meetings let one see the considerable amount of work undertaken in the background on behalf of congregations within the Presbytery area by Ministers and Elders who do serve on the various Committee Groups. These Groups submit reports as applicable to each member of Presbytery and comprise Faith Nurture; Faith Impact; Resources; Deployment (which deals with the Presbytery Plan and Unions); Finance; Property and the Nominations Committee. Thankfully, all the relevant papers and reports from each is circulated in advance of each meeting thus shortening the length of time going over each of these, normally during the evenings being a case of "taken as read" and approved by those present.

There is always an opportunity for comments/questions to be raised on the floor, although this is rarely taken up and questions tend to be few. Quite often, there is a speaker slot, most often on behalf of the Faith or Resources committees which

can be the highlight of many a meeting! One of the most interesting discussions I heard was taken as a separate meeting in itself, that of the topic "Assisted Dying" which has been very much in the news during 2024 and before. I found this a very interesting discussion which help shape (confirm) my own views on the matter but it must be stated all sides of the argument were aired.

Over the course of the year, the number of Church Unions and Parish Linkages was down over the previous year, at six and three respectively, including the Union of North and South Leith with whom we at Newhaven held discussions and shared Sunday services over a period of time.

There is much information that I have on file from our meetings, so should anyone have any questions about Presbytery please feel free to ask me and I'll do my best to answer.



[The Church of Scotland](https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/)
Presbytery of Edinburgh & West Lothian

Brian Souness
Presbytery Elder

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**We hope you have enjoyed reading
the Annual Report for 2024**

**The Annual Congregational Meeting
will be held on**

Monday 26th May

when we will be able to meet to celebrate
the work of Newhaven Church over the last year.

The Accounts will be presented and
there will be an opportunity
for questions and discussion.

Do join us then!

*Serving Christ, each other,
and the community.*



www.n-c.org.uk