

GIFT DAY 2025 NEWSLETTER

Pencaitland Parish Church

It's a truism to say that you can tell what's important to a person by what they spend their money on. By the same token the generosity of congregation is often regarded as a good indicator of its spiritual health. Congregations that care about the witness and worship of their Church tend to be ones in which people invest in these priorities. They also tend to be congregations that have grasped something of the magnitude of what God has done for us in Jesus.

I've often 'put the wind up' Church treasurers by saying that I don't want people to give a penny to the work of the Church that they don't want to give. But I really want people to want to give to the work of the Church, because I want people to be passionate about worship and witness and to recognise how important it is and what a privilege it is, to meet with God Sunday by Sunday and encourage others to do this too.

But to maintain our wonderful, repurposed Carriage House and ancient Church building does cost money. The last thing I want to do is to lay a 'guilt trip' on anyone because as the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 9:7:

*'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a **cheerful giver**.'*

But I do hope and pray that yet again you will prove 'cheerful givers'.

May God bless you richly in every way.

Andrew

PASTORAL CARE

Kathryn Reid is our pastoral care co-ordinator and can be contacted on 07749 262040.

We wish everyone a happy, healthy and sunny summer.



www.pencaitlandparishchurch.org.uk

Diary dates

Sunday 25 May

Gift Day

Please see enclosed information

Sunday 1 June

Communion

11am

Café closed

Friday 4 & 11 July

We are now streaming the morning service to YouTube every week and it will also appear later as a recording. If you miss a service or can't get onto Zoom you should be able to access it at this link (or just search for Pencaitland Church on YouTube).

<https://youtube.com/@pencaitlandparishchurch?si=7U4B7EUX5rRtbgMh>

Please subscribe to the channel if you can or encourage others who may want to watch our services to do so. This will let you know when there is a new video.

Introducing Fred



I pray that you have had a good Easter. For me, whilst I love the sentimentality of the Christmas Story just like so many people all round the world, it is Easter that means the most for me. I know that some people find Easter difficult because of the brutality of the Crucifixion, but for me it just blows my mind that the King of Kings sent his son to give up his life for me, for us! Not only that but God has blessed me in that I am privileged to be a part of your ministry team now too.

So, who am I?

I am Fred Harrison, or Rev Fred, even just Fred which ever you prefer. I am an Ordained Local Minister (that simply means a fully qualified minister of Word and Sacrament but who isn't paid for the work they do which is voluntary). I have been an OLM for over 12 years now, recently serving as locum at Prestongrange and before that at Aberlady and Gullane.

I am married to Joyce (pictured with me above) who, because of a combination of childcare for our daughters and our shared care for my mother-in-law, is unlikely to be able to join me week by week. Equally, when she is in Dunbar with our grandchildren, I will need to be at home here in Gorebridge with mum, and because of that my ability to provide pastoral care can be impacted too. That said, I will try to always make time for pastoral visiting where there is a need, and obviously in emergencies I can always make arrangements to be available if I'm at home.

Some of you, from both congregations, may know me from Safeguarding as I am one of the Presbytery's Safeguarding Trainers.

When time permits and that isn't very often, Joyce and I like to get away with our motorhome for a day or two to just chill. I include a picture of it below. It is a true godsend as that is where our grandchildren have sleepovers, in our back garden!



We look forward to welcoming Fred to Pencaitland Parish Church
He will be assisting Rev Andrew Dick in leading worship

Thank you to John Hunter

John, we don't know what we would have done without you! During the last few years when our congregation has been through so many ups and downs you have been there to steady the ship. We loved having you leading worship. We loved your humour, your unfailing cheerfulness and your wise words. No-one knows just how many people you visited and cared for in their hour of need. You were always at the end of the phone with good advice and willing to get involved in our parish life. We hope you now enjoy retirement and worshipping with us on a Sunday morning.

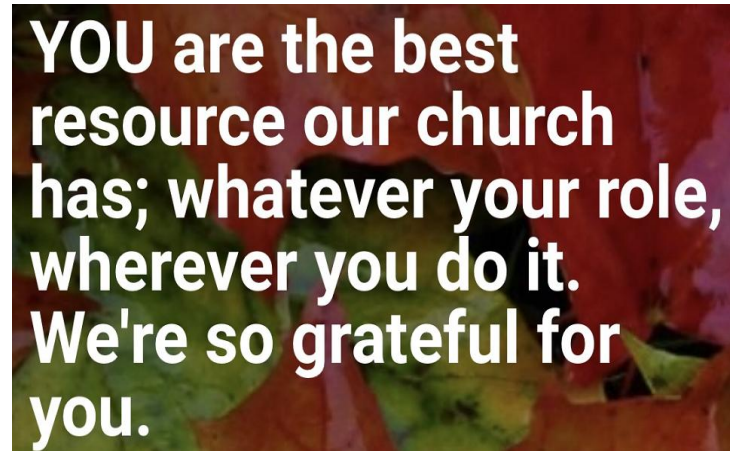
Thank You

Thank you to you all for your faithfulness in donating time, talents and money to Pencaitland Parish Church. It is no exaggeration to say that without your continuing generosity we would not be able to stay afloat. We are very aware that everyone has had to tighten their purse strings in recent months as the cost of living has risen astronomically. We are therefore even more grateful for every penny that has been donated.

Enclosed with this newsletter is information about our Gift Day on Sunday 25 May. Please give if you can.

Two well-known sayings spring to mind ...

'Ev'ry little helps' and 'Mony a mickle maks a muckle'
Thank you



**YOU are the best
resource our church
has; whatever your role,
wherever you do it.
We're so grateful for
you.**

In case you missed our Stated Annual Meeting here's a summary of our activities from the annual report. We're a busy little church moving forward in faith.

Achievements and Performance 2024

Rev Andrew Dick continues as Interim Moderator and the church has continued to be blessed by the ministry of the Rev John Hunter, who has been willing to take services and provide pastoral cover. This year Zoom services continued for those who were reluctant or unable to attend in person and services were also available for viewing on YouTube.

The Congregational Board and Kirk Session continued to meet throughout the year and the Interim Moderator has chaired Session meetings. One of our elders resigned as an active member of session but we were delighted to welcome one of our previous elders back to "active duty".

The Carriage House has continued to be available to rent for various activities and has been used weekly on Fridays by Connections Café. Various groups meet regularly and the premises are available for workshops, parties etc.

Connections Café is going from strength to strength. 2024 was another great year with customer numbers increasing, and we have added an extra table in the Grooms' Room to accommodate for this. We did manage to squeeze in an extra fundraising day with monies going to Residents' Account at the local care home, LoveOliver (a small Scottish charity helping children and their families affected by cancer), the 1st Pencaitland Guides, the PTA and the Playgroup. We have also brought on board a few more folk to swell our stalwart band of volunteers and will continue to be on the lookout for more.

Pencaitland Parish Church continues to be twinned with South West Sikkim Pastorate. Bandana Rai is our correspondent and although contact can be sporadic, it is always a joy to hear how their congregation is faring. The number of faithful Christians continues to grow in their parish, and they have many house groups, young mother meetings, prayer meetings, praise meetings. They are a great encouragement to us as to proclaim Jesus as Lord in their area is not always safe. We keep them in our prayers as they do us.

As a congregation we have continued to be faithful in our support of the Foodshare which is held in Dunbar Parish Church Hall. The donation bin at the foot of the altar is filled with items that are much needed by so many people. Unfortunately, the number of folks in need of accessing the foodbank is increasing rather than decreasing. Our donations are not only desperately needed, they are hugely appreciated by both the organisers and recipients. We are extremely grateful for the continuing support of the congregation.

Pastoral Care has continued to be vital throughout the year, overseen by the Pastoral Care coordinator and Rev John Hunter, to whom we are indebted. Links have also continued with the young families in our congregation.

A very successful Afternoon Tea was held in April and a Harvest lunch was held in October after the Harvest Thanksgiving service. A barbecue, also open to the community, was held in August and much appreciated by all who attended.

The Christmas Fair, which is our main fundraising event of the year, was a huge success, raising around £1500. A vast array of crafts, gifts, baking etc was donated and we were delighted to welcome so many people on the day. A Christmas newsletter and card were also delivered to all members.

There were two Gift Days during the year, one in Spring, the other in the Autumn, with an extremely generous and very welcome response to both.

There were some repairs or upgrades to our properties during 2024. All Carriage House doors and windows were stained inside and out during July. Also, both floors were sanded and primed early in July. The roofer replaced some tiles, repaired ridge tiles and cleaned out the gutters. The Dormer window cladding was replaced by the joiner and re-stained. At the Church, all outside windows and doors were repainted in July and August and the roofer replaced slipped tiles and cleaned out the gutters.

The church continues to benefit from a committed and hard-working core of people within the congregation. The Flower Committee ensures that worship is enhanced every week by the floral arrangements around the church and coordinates seasonal displays on the church gates. Volunteers regularly clean the church building, read the lessons, help with prayers and provide a welcoming face at the door each Sunday. The sound desk is manned by three dedicated technical volunteers and coffees and teas are provided after worship by a willing band of volunteers.

Five good things

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good: His love endures forever. (Psalm 107 : 1-9)

According to research, people who are intentionally grateful for what they have report better sleep, fewer symptoms of illness and more happiness. Those are impressive benefits. Psychologists even suggest keeping a 'thankfulness diary' to improve our wellbeing, writing down five things we're grateful for each week.

Do you have a notepad handy? Why not write down five good things you are grateful for now. It might be a meal you just enjoyed, special people in your life, or God's rescue or provision in your life today. Give thanks for the birds singing outside, the smells from your kitchen, the comfort of your chair, the murmurs of loved ones. Each is a gift and a sign of God's unfailing love.

Father God, I'm grateful for every good thing You've brought into my life. And most of all I'm grateful for you.

From Our Daily Bread, April 2024

