

# Northesk News



## Join us for worship:

In person – Sundays at 11am

YouTube – @NortheskParishChurch

Over the telephone – 0131 546 4005

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NORTHESK CHURCH, MUSSELBURGH

## General Assembly Reflections

The Rev Hayley Cohen

'The church of Jesus Christ is never finished' were the words left ringing in my ears from this year's Moderator of the General Assembly, Very Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, at the end of a week of debate, discussion, and decision. We are a church that is reformed and always reforming, we were reminded throughout the week. Our task as a church is to listen to the will of God in conversation with scripture and the world in which we live, and move accordingly. But we are to never stand still.

There was a lot of standing still during General Assembly, or at least sitting still, as the days business went from 9:15 to 6:15 pretty much every day. However, the long days seemed to fly as important conversations and engaging speeches took place in the hall. Highlights for me included the speeches from the Lord High Commissioner, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Edward, who spoke with humour and grace and a surprise visit from The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Rev Justin Welby, who gave an impassioned speech about the church's responsibility to be a voice of peace and justice to the nations particularly highlighting the current war between Israel and Gaza. And, not to be forgotten, every address from the Moderator: full of wisdom, humour, and encouragement for ministers and congregations alike. I also enjoyed the opportunity to see familiar faces from my training, catching up with colleagues from across Scotland, and making new connections.

## General Assembly Reflections from the Minister continued

As it was my first in-person assembly, I had anticipated a different atmosphere to the one that greeted me. I expected General Assembly to be stuffy (although it was hot and humid), too technical for those not in the know, and, uptight with tense debating, but what I experienced could not have been more different. Although debates got heated, I felt the atmosphere overall was caring, compassionate, and open-minded. This was particularly so during questions and debates on two 'hot-button' issues: transgender identity and assisted-dying. While people shared different views, there was an overarching theme of how do we pastorally care for the people who come through our doors regardless of where they or we stand on these issues. No decisions were taken in these two areas as the Theological Forum was merely presenting research done but I suspect next year's General Assembly will see proposals for the church to clarify its stances.

Conversations got most heated during questions of Presbytery power versus national church power. Our Presbytery of Lothian and Borders brought forward an overture that was passed by the Assembly which reduces the national church's influence over Presbytery Plans by increasing the amount of time between reviews of plans from 1 year to 5. This will no doubt help our own context in Musselburgh and give us time to develop our plan rather than being under constant review.

As churches, we can often feel quite separated from our national body, seeing it as 'them' and not 'us'. But what came through for me during the Assembly was that we are the national church and they are us. The people who make up committees of the national church are ministers and elders and congregation members like you and me, who are committed to seeing the Church of Scotland live into its calling to share the Good News with Scotland and throughout the world.

Related to this is the financial situation in the Church of Scotland has a budget deficit for 2024 of £8.1 million. The reduction in membership, the increasing ministerial and staff costs, and the decline in giving across the Church of Scotland should be of concern to all of us. Only 29% of charges in the church currently meet the full cost of ministry they receive. The other 71% do not financial contribute enough to the centre to cover what their ministry costs actually are. We are being asked to live generously. It had me wondering, do we really appreciate how transformative our giving can be to our local church and the church as a whole? Without your generosity, the church simply cannot be sustained, locally or nationally. Talking about money can often be seen as gauche and can make folks uncomfortable, but you need to be aware of how important your donations are to the life of the church. Your contributions are valued and if you have the capacity to give a little bit more, then please can I encourage you that doing so would truly make a difference to the ministry and life of our church. If you can't, then can I thank you for what you already give out of your generosity.

Finally, as I started with words from Very Rev Dr Paterson, let me finish with them too 'keep moving forward'. The church of Jesus Christ is never finished, nor is Jesus ever finished with his church.

A full summary of this year's General Assembly is available through Life and Work Magazine and if you receive our newsletter by email, it will have been included in your email so please do give it a read. I'm more than happy to talk to folks about this year's topics and decisions in more detail. There was a lot to be covered and much more to be said!

## Presbytery Plan Update

Conversations continue with small groups from the churches in Musselburgh to work towards a future union. The mantra 'it's a question of HOW not IF' remains clear. The most recent talks have been around shared concerns and missional passions in the churches around: young families and schools, hospitality, and new housing. Peter Wood, Presbytery Mission Officer, made suggestions of ways in which the three churches could begin to work together in these areas and mixed small groups from the churches contributed their own ideas as well. Some of the ideas included: forming prayer groups around these areas, visiting one another's coffee mornings, sharing civic services, ministers meeting regularly, officer bearers meeting up to share good practice and learn from one another, training volunteers together, starting a shared mission project and applying for the Church of Scotland's Seeds for Growth Funding which has a variety of funding levels to support new mission initiatives. Minister's agreed to take these ideas to their Kirk Sessions for discussion. The Kirk Session of Northesk agreed that these three areas were ones to focus on but recognised our limited capacity to do more in the midst of what we currently do as a church. A discussion was had on how our priorities and energies may be required to shift in order to make progress in these areas. If one of these areas excites you and you would like to get involved in beginning to bring these churches together, please get in touch with Hayley - [hcohen@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:hcohen@churchofscotland.org.uk) or 0131 665 8688. The next meeting is the 5th of June after which we hope to provide another update on a Sunday morning.

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## Stamps for Charity

Thank you to everyone who donated stamps for charity. We managed to collect a lot! I have sent 600 stamps to each of these three charities: the RNIB, Age UK and Canine Partners.

As well as helping these charities, you have all helped me achieve my Charities badge from Brownies. Thank you! I will keep the tin at the back of the church for anyone who would like to keep donating.

Thank you,  
Celeste Claus



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## Taizé Service 9th June

The next Musselburgh Churches Together Taizé Service will be on Sunday 9th June at 4:30pm at St Andrew's High. Join Christians across Musselburgh for a service of meditative song, silence, prayer, and contemplation.

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## Bowling Competition 17th July

The annual Northesk Bowling Competition will be on Wednesday 17th July at the Fisherrow Green starting at 2pm. Colin Arthur is our 'Guest Organiser'. Entry fee for the competition is £5. The green fees are £4.70 for adults and £2.90 concessions for the over 60s. Green fees are payable on the day (cash only please).

## Knit and Knatter

We have had a busy few months knitting little blankets and teddies for SiMBA, Simpson's Memory Box Appeal, and hats and octopuses for the neo - natal unit at Simpson's Maternity.

On Wednesday, 15th May, Grace, Janet and Audrey handed over a box of blankets and teddies to the staff at SiMBA's office in Mayfield.

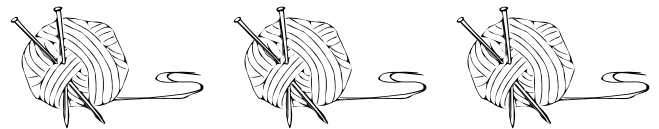
SiMBA is a charity that supports families who have lost their baby whether through miscarriage, stillbirth or neo-natal death. No parent can ever imagine having to be told that their baby has died at a stage where they are preparing for a life with their newborn.

Memory boxes help them create memories that will last forever and are donated to hospitals and hospices throughout Scotland.

Our donations of tiny blankets and small knitted teddies will go into the memory boxes along with other poignant reminders of a precious life lost. We are proud to have contributed in a small way to this important cause honouring baby loss.

From SiMBA's Facebook page:

"Not every garden blooms as we expected. Despite our care, not every child can thrive. Tears take the place of rain, and sunshine fails us. But the buds, however delicate, were perfect. They were real, and their fleeting scent will live forever on the air."




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## St John Church, Tindharia

Ruth sends greetings to all at Northesk on behalf of Mashi Prakash, his wife Martha, and all the members of the congregation at St John. They celebrated Twinning Sunday on 28 April, something that sadly we omitted to do here (note for my diary in 2025!). Ruth herself was away that weekend in Jabalpur to attend a conference of the Women's Fellowship. Jabalpur is some distance away, and Ruth was unable to get an air ticket there so travelled by train - perhaps the first part of it by the 'toy train' from Darjeeling?.

They are now in the monsoon season but because Tindharia is situated at a higher level, the heat is not so overbearing and the schools can continue to stay open (Ruth is a teacher). Summer holidays come in July.

Sunday 12th May was Mothering Sunday and Ruth sends best wishes to all mothers - 'May God continue to shower His abundant blessing to the church at Northesk. Do remember us in your prayers'.

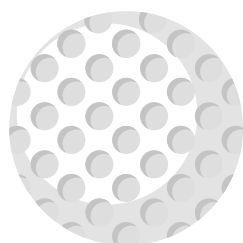
## St John Church, Tindharia continued

Finally, we were able to include St John in our Pentecost service as Ruth provided the words to part of the Lord's Prayer in Nepali - 'Haamro dinvariko roti aaja hami lai dinuhos' (Give us the day our daily bread). I sent a message to her that day to tell her how it went, and hopefully she has been able to watch the service on our website - I just hope my accent did her proud!




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## Pitch and Putt Competition



There will be a pitch and putt competition on Friday 16th August at Fisherrow Green at 5:30pm. Entry fee for the competition is £7. Green fees are £3.70 for adults without club hire and £4.70 with club hire. Concessions for over 60s are £2.40 without club hire and £2.90 with club hire. Green fees are payable on the day (cash only please).

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## The Boys' Brigade

### Anchor Boys and Junior Section

The two Sections are meeting together for the time being due to a shortage of adult staff and, for the current session, only three boys in the Junior Section. There are fourteen boys in the Anchor Boys, several of whom will move into the Junior Section next session, and there will be a need to recruit more staff to successfully run the appropriate age-related programmes.

The improvement in Anchor Boy numbers over the past two sessions has been recognised by the Brigade nationally, with the award of a "Celebrating Growth Certificate" by the Development and Engagement Team at Brigade Headquarters.

In addition to the usual programme of activities and events the Anchor Boys participated in a national challenge involving several competitive challenges to celebrate the BB 140th anniversary. The result is still to be announced. The Sections are looking forward to their "end of session" trip to Blair Drummond Safari Park in June. All three Sections attended Edinburgh castle in October when the Edinburgh Leith & District Battalion turned it blue in another celebration of BB 140.

### Company Section and Band

Despite having fewer numbers than previous years the staff run an attractive programme of activities, challenges and classes within the achievement programme of the Brigade and were pleased to present two boys with President's Badges at the recent parents evening. They will now go on to join Sgt Haden Morrison in pursuit of the highest award, the King's Badge.

## The Boys' Brigade continued

The 61st have a track record, second to none in their support of Battalion events and the current "crop" are maintaining this honourable tradition. Early in the year three boys attended a Battalion weekend camp at the Craggan Outdoor Centre on the banks of Loch Tay and a few more are looking forward to revisiting Alton Towers with the Battalion following a successful Company trip early in the Session. The Pipe Band are at the forefront of organising the annual Battalion Beating Retreat Ceremony on the Castle Esplanade and play a crucial role in mounting the Guard of Honour to the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Parliament Square before Sunday Worship in St Giles Cathedral, as do the boys in the Company. Particularly this year when the Company were asked to carry the King's Colour and provide the Colour Party.

In the wider community the band and the Company continue to support local organisations by providing marquees for various events including, amongst others, Musselburgh Rugby Club Sevens tournament, the Community Council Children's Gala Day and various events throughout the Musselburgh Festival Week,

The boys are looking forward to attending our own weekend camp at Craggan at the end of August as a prelude to kicking off the new winter session in September.

It was with great sadness that the staff and boys of the Company Section provided a Guard of Honour for a much loved and missed former Officer of the Company, the Rev. Dr Cameron Langlands who passed, suddenly and prematurely at the age of fifty-eight. Cameron made a huge contribution, serving all ranks to Lieutenant in his brief but significant time with the Company until his call to the ministry.

Alastair Knowles

On behalf of the Company Staff

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## Droneman Scotland

As some of you may be aware my father has a YouTube channel which both my mother, Linda, and I do voiceovers for. I also create some of the music for the channel. It is called Droneman Scotland and it covers areas of interest in and around East Lothian with a focus on the history of the area. We pride ourselves on providing some beautiful aerial shots of Musselburgh and the surrounding area. We recently achieved our goal of reaching 1000 subscribers on the channel. The reason I thought I would mention it here is that we have covered lots of churches and religious buildings, including lots from the Reformation Period which I thought may be of interest to many of you.. If you'd like to check it out search for 'Droneman Scotland' on YouTube or ask either myself or my Mum.

Thanks,

Mikey Dobosz



**THE BOYS'  
BRIGADE**  
> the adventure begins here



# 2023/24

## Celebrating Growth Certificate

This Certificate is Awarded to:

61st Edinburgh

As recognition that the Company has  
increased its membership within the  
**2023/24 session.**

Thank you for your continued hard work.  
BBHQ Development & Engagement Team

Northesk Scottish Country Dancers

# Family Ceilidh

To the music of  
Marian Anderson's band



Northesk Parish Church Hall  
Bridge Street  
Musselburgh  
EH21 6AG

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
7pm.

Tickets available from Ruby Wilkinson on 07504 977  
264 or [rubygwilk@gmail.com](mailto:rubygwilk@gmail.com).

Adult £6

Child £3

Includes refreshments.

Proceeds in aid of local charities.