

April/May 2026

Issue 1

PARISH NEWS



The magazine for West Calder and Polbeth Parish
Church of Scotland.

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Letter from the minister

Dear friends

If we look around us, we can see new growth everywhere. And that is so exciting! This makes me think of the fact that as people, we are growing all the time too...



When I was a child, my least favourite colour was yellow. I always felt that it was such a neutral colour. When my granny knitted wee cardigans for expecting mums in our family, the girls would get pink ones and the boys blue ones, and a pale yellow was reserved for the mums who didn't want to know the gender of their baby before birth. Yellow was such a 'nothing-to-be-excited-about' colour for this wee girl who secretly celebrated the pink cardies, because they meant new girl cousins to play with!

But I grew up, and now yellow is my favourite colour. A deep sunflower yellow. Because now it reminds me of everything that brings me joy – warmth, kindness, friendship. So, as you can imagine, this time of year I feel as if I am showered in joy, with the yellow daffodils lining the streets and the yellow sun making an appearance for a few more minutes every day.

On the 15th of March we had a special service to celebrate Spring – a reminder that God is always busy with us. In the Winter, even though we can't see it, the seeds and the bulbs are forming roots, which means that the abundant colours of the Spring flowers can break through the ground when Spring arrives. I love that here in Scotland we are surrounded by colours all the time, and the fact that the landscape is so bare in winter, make us notice the appearance of the white snowdrops straight away. And then we move from white to yellow, to pink to purple, to green, with all the others colours of the rainbow in-between.

Please remember that just like God is busy in nature all year round, every single year, he is busy with us all the time too. When we can see it, and when we can't. Just like the seeds grow into flowers, let us grow in our faith too, because despite the fact that the world can be a messy place sometimes, the beauty is bigger.

May God bless you all.

Nanda

Reflection – Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV)

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Some of you will have read Bill Bryson books. He is a travel writer and in his book, *The Lost Continent*, he gives a memorable account of his visit to the Grand Canyon. He arrived there to find the whole area shrouded in freezing fog, so thick and dense that he could barely make out his hand in front of him, let alone the celebrated panorama he had come to see. Gutted, he was on the verge of leaving, having waited for a long time, when suddenly, just for a moment, the fog cleared and there before him stretched a view which left him lost for words. The view was spectacular. The view took his breath away.

That type of experience takes us to the heart of what the Ascension is all about. Those who had followed Jesus during the course of his ministry, thinking they knew and understood who he was, came to realise at that moment, in reality, they'd barely understood anything. Even after his resurrection had broken through the dense fog of doubt and despair, they still saw but a fraction of the full vista rather than the whole. For them, his significance lay in terms of then and there, their own place and time, their own lives and needs.

Yet, in the event of the Ascension they came to realise that he was far more than that; the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, not just for then but for always, not just for them but for everyone, his love, purpose and significance, for all time and beyond. It was as though the fog suddenly lifted, as though for the first time they saw clearly, recognising that Jesus was greater than they'd ever begun to imagine. Have we grasped that in turn?

Rev Alison Quilter

Reflection – Isaiah 55:8, 9 (NIV)

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

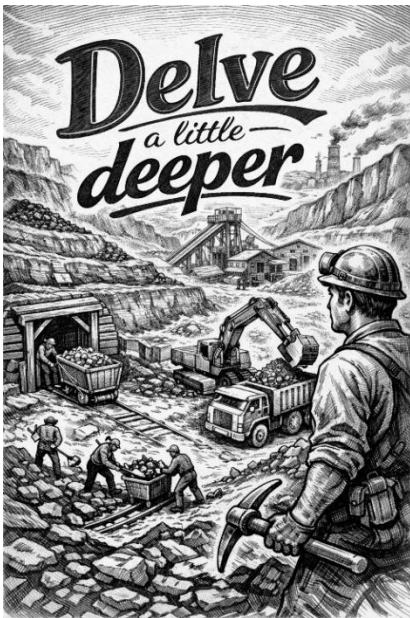
When did you last feel a sense of awe in the presence of God? How long is it since you caught your breath in wonder as you offered God your worship? It may be that such moments are still frequent or you may find they have grown fewer and farther between. Partly that happens because we simply don't find time to worship as often as we should; partly because over-familiarity dulls our senses. See anything breathtakingly beautiful once and we gaze in amazement. See it several times and the chances are we'll pass it by without a second look.

Whether we're talking of a panoramic view or a sense of God's majesty, it can take a fresh pair of eyes to stir our imaginations once more and help us recapture that first-time sense of wonderment. For me, that fresh pair of eyes is given in the wonderful words above of the prophet Isaiah. They are a constant reminder of the sheer 'otherness' of God whose greatness is beyond words, whose awesomeness defies expression, who is more powerful, more caring, more gracious, better than the human mind can ever comprehend. Glimpse that, and once more we find ourselves catching our breath in sheer amazement and kneeling in joyful worship.

Rev Alison Quilter

Prayer:

Amazing, wonderful God, open my eyes afresh to your greatness, your power, your sovereignty over all. Give me again a glimpse of your glory, not just here but everywhere, not just today but every day, so that my heart may be overwhelmed by your splendour and my soul may soar in exultation, in joyful and reverent praise. **Amen.**



On Thursday 16 April, at 7pm, at the manse, we will have the first of our new Bible Study Series: Delve a little deeper.

This will be a monthly get-together to look at Bible texts or discuss theological issues in more depth than is possible on a Sunday.

Just like the people in our villages used to work in the mines and had to delve deep to find what they were looking for, we are going to do the same with the Word of God.

It will be an informal discussion – so whether you would like to actively participate, or just come along to listen, you will be most welcome. The plan is to meet for an hour and enjoy a cuppa while we are chatting too.

As Gillian will only be with us until the end of April, she will be leading our first Bible Study.

Please come along, it will be lovely to see you there!

Nanda

On the fourth Sunday of every month, Nanda hosts an Afrikaans service for our South African friends in the West Kirk Hall.

At the end of January they were delighted to be able to share in our Scottish themed service, very much enjoying our traditional haggis, neeps and tatties.



Slainte mhath! Goeie gezondheid!

Hello everyone.

Gosh, well, here we are four months after my last article for The Link just after I started my placement in October, and we are hurtling fast towards the end! I'll be with West Calder and Polbeth Parish Church under Nanda's supervision until the end of April.



What have I done so far...? Nanda and others have created opportunities for me to engage in so many things. I've been to primary schools, the secondary school (a few times!), two residential homes, local charities (shout out to Jak's Den!), and joined in various community events at both churches and in the community. Being on the tombola at Polbeth Christmas Fair and puzzling out the Bible question at the West Kirk Quiz are two favourite moments! And of course, I've been participating in worship leadership, and joined in JAM/Sunday clubs and Bible Class too (learning to play "draw swords"! Don't ask...! Ok, it's about finding Bible passages quickly, no swords, but sweets were involved – yum!). I've had lots of thought-provoking conversations, friendly chats, and proper chuckles along the way. It's been a great experience and I've learned so much.

BUT... I'm not gone yet, and I'm really looking forward to celebrating Easter with you all. A further favourite moment *might* be the sketch on Palm Sunday (in which you might hear me or Nanda utter "ee-aw"). And there are some special moments planned for Holy week and the big day. So, you'll have to put up with me for another few weeks. But I will miss you all when I go. Thank you to everyone for making this such a great placement, being so encouraging, and helping me on my way...

Gillian, Candidate for Ministry

WEST KIRK FUNDRAISING GROUP.

A big thank you is extended to everyone who came along to our quiz night which was a lot of fun.

There were lots of "I knew that " etc when the answers were revealed. Thank you to Dave Hodges who was in charge of the teas and coffees and a special thanks to Mhairi Graham who compiled the questions for the various rounds.

We have two events coming up. On Saturday 16th May there will be a Buffet Lunch and on Monday 1st June, an evening sponsored walk. Look out for further details of these which will be advertised as soon as possible.

Margaret Hogg

POLBETH HARWOOD CHURCH BEETLE DRIVE

Thank you so much to everyone who attended the beetle drive last month. This was a great night and a lot of fun was had by all.



TOCCATA

LADIES CHOIR

Spring Concert

Saturday 9th May, 7.30pm

West Kirk of Calder

West Calder

Tickets:

Adults £12

Under 16's £6

AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR
(CASH ONLY)
OR FROM CHOIR MEMBERS



www.toccatoladieschoir.co.uk



THANK YOU

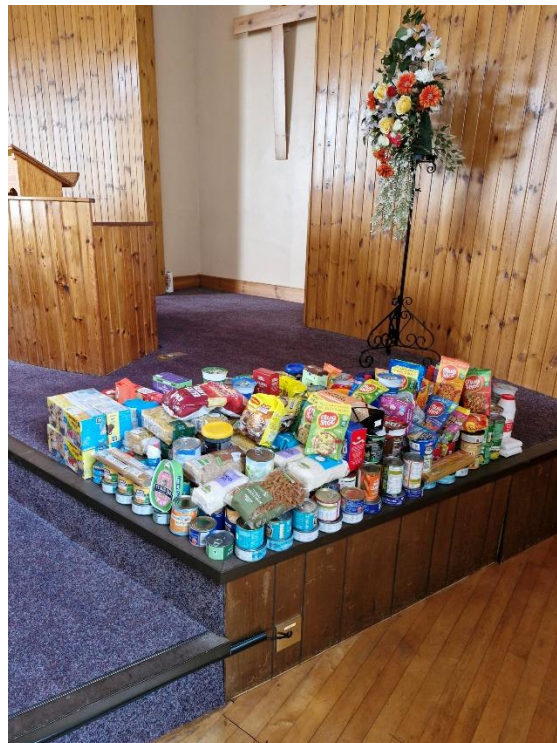
I would like to say a big thank you to everyone for the kind expressions of sympathy, flowers and cards following the sad loss of Alan. Special thanks to Nanda for her comforting and uplifting service. Thanks also to everyone who attended the service at West Lothian Crematorium and the tea at West Kirk Church Hall

Olive Gibson

FOODBANK COLLECTION

Thank you to everyone who brought food along for the local foodbank to Polbeth Church in February.

We had a fantastic response and this will go a long way helping those in the community who need that bit of extra help.



GIVE US TIME

*This is a dialogue between the human race and God based on
2 Corinthians 6:v2 from The Electric Gospel*

by Peter Dainty

Human Race

Lord, give us the time and we'll do something great;
We'll banish all evil and violence and hate;
We'll march on to freedom, bring justice and peace;
We'll feed all the hungry and warfare shall cease.
Give us time, give us time.

God

I've given you time and what have you done?
You've marched into battle with bomb and with gun;
You've built up empires and revelled in war;
You've trampled on freedom, forgotten the poor –
All the time, all the time.

Human Race

Just give us the time and we'll do and we'll dare;
We'll transform this earth to a paradise fair;
We'll tame all the deserts and farm all the seas;
Given time, given time.

God

But I give you the time, and what do you do?
You scar what is beautiful, twist what is true;
You build concrete deserts and chop down the trees;
You poison the earth and the air and the seas.
Waste of time, waste of time.

Human Race

Only give us the time and we'll do all we can
To conquer the world for the glory of man.
Technology's servants will spend every breath
In reaching the stars and in mastering death,
With more time, with more time.

God

I'll give you the time, but you'll need something more,
If you're going to end poverty, famine and war;
You'll need hands that are willing and hearts that are good,
And eyes that are fixed on the Kingdom of God.
Now's the time, now's the time.



Our very own young person, Martha Bird will be performing in Star Harmonies production of The Little Mermaid on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th June.

The performances from this very talented group of young people is always a great watch.

If anyone would like to support Martha and the rest of the young people, please contact Pauline Bird on 07932994514 or paulinefionabird@gmail.com



Pastoral Care Group

We are planning two outings for anyone wishing to join us.

Wednesday 29th April

Leaving West Kirk car park at 11am we will visit "Inn on the Loch," Lanark for lunch. We will then return home through The Clyde Valley.

Tuesday 10th June

Leaving Church car park at 11am we will head to the Falkirk Wheel for lunch. There is the option of a boat trip which will require booking nearer the time.

Price for this is: Concession £16.50. Adult £17.95.

We are able to collect people from home if required and we have a wheelchair available for anyone who might benefit from this.

If you are interested in joining us on either or both trips, please give your name to anyone on the Pastoral Care Group or phone Beryl Henderson on 01506379230 or 07500277201.



The Bridge



'16 to 25+ year olds'

'The Bridge' for young folk aged 16 to 25+ years old is held quarterly. A get together and a blether, sharing a meal or light snack and exploring our faith and discussing things that matter to you as young folk in 21stC. If you are interested, please get in touch with me or Nanda and bring a friend along too!

We meet in Polbeth Harwood Church Café Area on a **Wednesday at 7pm**. A date to be arranged for June.

The Bridge let's stay connected! Look forward to seeing you there!

Nanda, Sandra and Alison



The Quiet Service

The next quiet service in Polbeth Harwood will be held on **Wednesday 15th April at 3:30pm**, followed by **Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 3:30pm** in the 'quiet room'.

All are welcome to this short service followed by tea, coffee, biscuits and a 'blether'. The short service of worship includes a couple of hymns, scripture reading, prayers and a short reflection. Entry via the Ramp Door of the Polbeth Church building.

Anyone who would like to come and needs assistance with transport should call Sandra Dixon on 07855861223.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Sandra and Alison



Our holiday club runs from Monday 3rd – Friday 7th August.

This action-packed week is for children who are age to start school in August 2026 up to children who are currently in P7.

Being a volunteer at this event is so rewarding, and huge in the life of our church within the community.

Would you like to join us this summer?

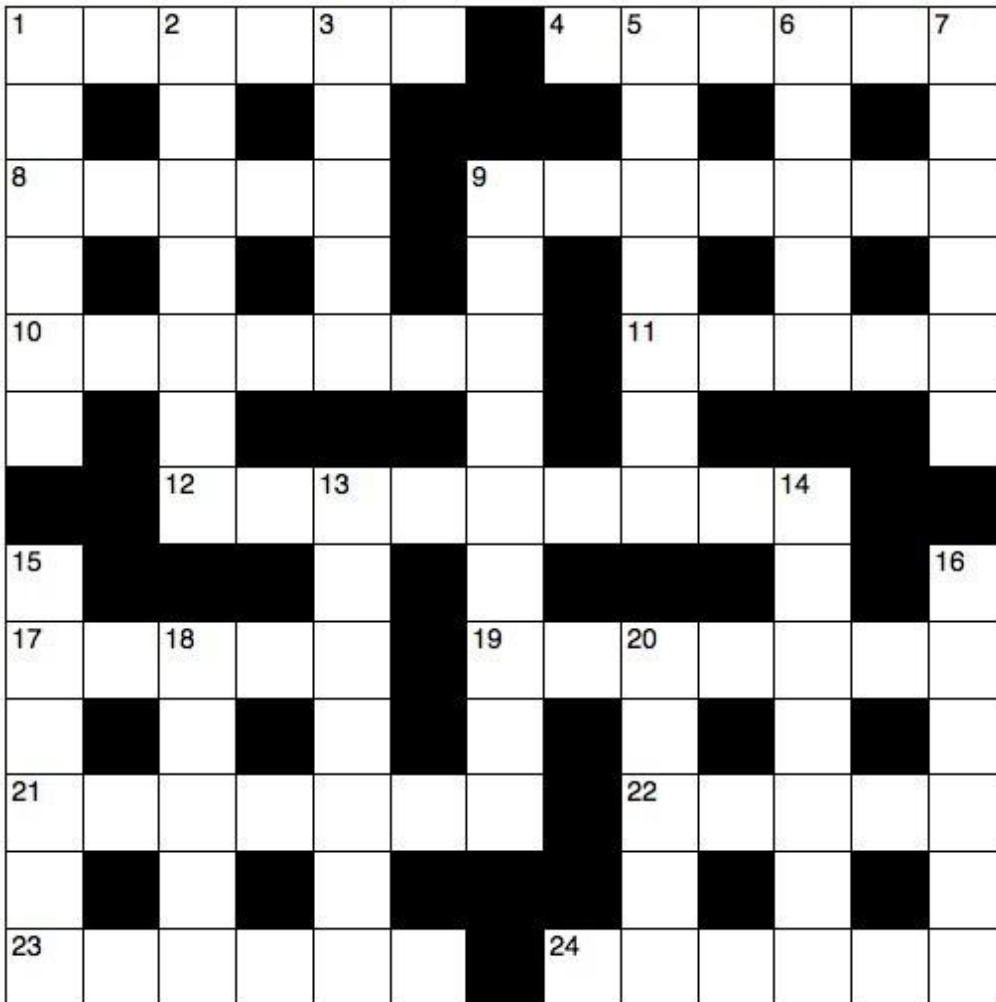
Do you need to know a little more about what we do?

Then please come along to our first meeting on May 6th at 7pm in the West Kirk, where a warm welcome awaits and we will introduce you to Pyramid Rock and answer all your questions.

What is a mummy's favourite kind of music?

Wrap music!!





Across

1 Relating to the whole universe (6)

4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6)

8 'Unless I see the nail marks — — hands, I will not believe it' (John 20:25) (2,3)

9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message

(Jeremiah 36:25) (7)

10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)

11 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36) (5)

12 Repossessed (Genesis 14:16) (9)

17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3-4) (5)

19 'Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord'

(Exodus 34:29) (7)

21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7)

22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)

23 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles'
(Acts 1:26) (6)

24 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came
to visit me' (Matthew
25:36) (6)

Down

1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)

2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)

3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)

5 For example, the Crusades (4,3)

6 11 Across is certainly this (5)

7 He reps (anag.) (6)

9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)

13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all
her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)

14 They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much
wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)

15 The human mind or soul (6)

16 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war
increase; their bread is — ' (Graham Kendrick) (6)

18 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — ' (Matthew
11:17) (5)

20 Bared (anag.) (5)

Answers from final edition of the Link

ACROSS: 1, Credit. 4, Tackle. 7, Cain. 8, Kenaniah. 9, Strength. 13, Beg. 16, Salvation Army.
17, ARC. 19, Every day. 24, Admonish. 25, Dire. 26, Sneeze. 27, Bronze.

DOWN: 1, Cock. 2, Epistolic. 3, Taken. 4, Tenet. 5, Cane. 6, Leave. 10, Erase. 11, Guide. 12,
Honey. 13, Barbarian. 14, Guys. 15, Asia. 18, Rod in. 20, Voice. 21, Rahab. 22, Hope. 23,
Mene.

SPRING FAYRE

Polbeth Harwood Church

Saturday 30th May

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Join us for a fun-filled afternoon!

 Craft Stalls

 Teas & Refreshments

 Home Baking

 Raffle

 Tombola



Kids' Lucky Dip
Prize Every Time!

FREE ENTRY – ALL WELCOME!

Bring your friends, family, and neighbours
along for a lovely spring afternoon!

Parish Record

Baptism

“Let the little children come to me, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as them”

22nd February – Marnie Elizabeth Brown, infant daughter of Brian Brown and Lisa Stewart

Deaths

Jesus said “I am the resurrection and the life.”

To all who have lost a loved one we extend our sincere sympathies and prayers.

22nd January – Scott Mushet, Burnsknowe, Deans, Livingston

2nd February – Gordon Tait, The Glebe, West Calder

7th February – Agnes Pryde, Burnside Lane, Polbeth

12th February – Alan Gibson, Harburn Road, West Calder

18th February – Helen Sneddon, Livingston Care Home, Livingston

21st February – Rena Simpson, Mossend, West Calder

7th March – James Gillies, Limecroft Care Home, Livingston

15th March – Isabella Hilson, Woodlands Care Home, Livingston

God of all time,

You have travelled with your people through the years:

You have shared moments of joy and times of despair.

Be with those who grieve, those who mourn loved ones.

Show them a light at the end of the tunnel

and cradle them in your everlasting arms.



April 26

Thursday	2 nd	Maundy Service	Polbeth	19.00
Friday	3 rd	Cross Walk	Starting West Kirk	12.00
		Good Friday Service	West Calder	19.00
Sunday	5 th	Early Ecumenical Service	West Calder	07.00
		United Easter Worship	West Calder	09.30
Wednesday	8 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Kirk hall	11.30
Thursday	9 th	Beyond Kirk Walls services	Dickson Court	13.45
			Burngrange Home	15.00
Sunday	12 th	Morning Worship	West Calder	09.30
			Polbeth	11.15
Wednesday	15 th	Quiet Service	Polbeth	15.30
Sunday	19 th	Morning Worship	West Calder	09.30
			Polbeth	11.15
Tuesday	21 st	Meet me @ The Manse	Manse	14.00 – 15.00
Friday	24 th	Youth Group		19.00
Sunday	26 th	Morning Worship	West Calder	09.30
			Polbeth	11.15
Wednesday	29 th	Pastoral Care Outing	Leaving West Kirk	11.00



May 26

Sunday	3 rd	Morning Worship Bible Class	West Calder Polbeth West Calder	09.30 11.15 09.30
Wednesday	6 th	Holiday Club Meeting	West Calder	19.00
Sunday	10 th	Morning Worship	West Calder Polbeth	09.30 11.15
Tuesday	12 th	Meet me @ The Manse	Manse	14.00- 15.00
Wednesday	13 th	Wednesday Warblers Session meeting	West Calder Polbeth	11.30 19.30
Thursday	14 th	Beyond Kirk Walls services	Dickson Court Burngrange Home	13.45 15.00
Friday - Monday	15 th 18 th	General Assembly Church of Scotland	Edinburgh	
Saturday	16 th	Buffet Lunch Event	West Calder	12.00
Sunday	17 th	Morning Worship	West Calder Polbeth	09.30 11.15
Wednesday	20 th	Quiet Service	Polbeth	15.30
Sunday	24 th	Morning Worship	West Calder Polbeth	09.30 11.15
Tuesday	26 th	Meet me @ The Manse	Manse	14.00 - 15.00
Friday	29 th	Youth Group		19.00
Saturday	30 th	Spring Fayre	Polbeth	14.00
Sunday	31 st	Morning Worship	West Calder Polbeth	09.30 11.15



An Easter picture to colour