

June/July 2026

Issue 2

PARISH NEWS



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

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Dear friends

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2026...

Alison McNaught and I were commissioners at this year's Assembly, and Jess Beveridge was our Youth Rep. There was so much business to discuss, that for 4 days it felt as if the rest of the world didn't exist anymore... But it wasn't all business. I was very fortunate to be able to attend a function at the West Lothian Foodbank with the Lord High



Commissioner, where I was reminded again how valuable the work of the Foodbank is, and what an important role local churches play in this. And on Sunday morning Henro and I attended the General Assembly Service at St Giles Cathedral. For me this was the highlight of the Assembly. St Giles is such a beautiful cathedral, and to worship with so many other people was very special. The Moderator had a touching sermon. The theme of the Assembly was: 'Walk in all his ways'; and the moderator concluded by saying: "Moses said: 'Walk in all his ways'. Jesus said: 'Follow me'. It's time to get up and walk." I'm sure that, like me, many people who got up after worship, walked back into the world with a renewed sense of purpose. The flowers in the church were stunning, the readings done by international delegates made everyone feel right at home, and the choir sang so beautifully. But it was the congregational singing that touched me most. All those voices singing together brought tears to my eyes. And when we sang the last line of the final hymn: "...that hereafter, heavenward soaring, we may sing with angels there", I felt as if I was singing with the angels already, and I couldn't help but wonder how amazing the angel voices in heaven will be one day... *So let us walk in faith and with purpose while we are here on earth – because God is not just waiting for us at our final destination, he is walking with us now too, every step of the way.*

May God bless you all.

Nanda

Reflection – Joshua 1:1-6 (NIV)

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ² "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ⁵ No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

Anyone who has ever been hill walking will know the experience of thinking you are nearly reaching the summit, only to find, as you get closer that there is another gulley and stretch to climb....and another...and another! Or if you are out a walk with family and your wee legs are starting to groan only to be told that where you are going...is just round the corner.....and that corner never materialises! However far we progress, there is always that little bit further to go.

So it proved, in a rather different sense, for Joshua and the people of Israel following the death of Moses. After years of wandering in the wilderness, they had finally arrived at the

border of the Promised Land, their long journey at last over. Or was it? A closer inspection revealed that others already occupied the land they thought was reserved for them. The task of making it their own had only just begun. No wonder Joshua, the newly chosen leader, felt overwhelmed by the sudden responsibility thrust upon him. His was the onerous challenges of rallying a people reeling from disappointment and inspiring them to new levels of enthusiasm and endeavour. Alone, he couldn't have done it, but he wasn't alone, for God had promised to be with him wherever he went. That's a promise God goes on making to us today – to anyone and everyone willing, to serve him, however great a challenge that service may involve. Whatever the challenges you face, and however many disappointments, keep faith, God will not let you down.

Prayer

Living God, help us to meet difficulties and disappointments with confidence knowing that you will equip us to respond to whatever may be asked of us. Whatever challenges we face, give us the faith and commitment to walk the pilgrim way, pressing on towards the prize you hold in store for us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Rev Alison Quilter

Gazing Forward: Embracing Our Ascension Mission

The Ascension: We often read about the disciples standing on the hillside, watching Jesus ascend into the clouds. It is easy to imagine them wanting to remain there, eyes fixed on the heavens. But the angels gently remind them—and us—that we cannot spend all our time looking upward.

The Ascension is not a story of Jesus leaving us behind; it is the breath-taking moment He entrusts His mission to us. The head of the body has gone before us, and now the Body (the Church) is called to follow in hope. We are the ones who are now tasked with bringing Christ's love, mercy, and justice into our homes, workplaces, and local neighbourhoods.

This mission doesn't require grand, earth-shattering gestures. It is lived out in the simple, everyday ways we embody Christ's love: a warm greeting to a neighbour, support for the local food bank, or offering comfort to those who are hurting.

As we celebrated the Ascension, let us not be passive onlookers staring at the clouds. Instead, let us step forward with renewed courage and purpose, recognizing that through the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to be Christ's living presence in West Calder and Polbeth and beyond.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You ascended in glory, leaving us with a holy mission. Do not let us stand looking up at the clouds. Instead, fill us with Your Holy Spirit to move forward. Make us Your hands and feet in our communities today. May we share Your love, speak Your truth, and serve those in need. Send us out with courage to be Your living presence in the world. Amen.

Rev Alison Quilter



The Quiet Service

The next quiet service in Polbeth Harwood will be held on **Wednesday 17th June at 3:30pm**, in the 'quiet room'. This will be our last service before the summer break. We will resume in September on **Wednesday 9th**.

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

WEST KIRK OF CALDER FUNDRAISING GROUP

A big thank you is extended to everyone who contributed to the success of our Summer Buffet.

Members of the group prepared and served roast ham, roast chicken, and salmon accompanied by a delicious selection of salads. This was followed by chocolate gateau, fresh fruit salad and ice cream, tea and coffee.

We also had our usual stalls: Craft, Tombola, Raffle and, of course, the ever-popular Home Baking and produce. To everyone who contributed to these stalls, a huge thank you too.

We hope you will continue to support us in our fund-raising efforts and dates for future events will be in the next edition of the Parish News.

Margaret Hogg

WEST CALDER AND POLBETH
PARISH CHURCH

ANNUAL
PICNIC

— to —

Silver Sands,
Aberdour



JOINT CHURCH SERVICE

10AM

IN POLBETH CHURCH

AFTER WHICH BUS
LEAVES FOR THE BEACH.



LEAVING
ABERDOUR
AT

5PM

TO RETURN HOME.

All
welcome —
come and
join us!



FAITH • FELLOWSHIP • FUN BY THE SEA

WEST KIRK SHOEBOX WRAPPING SESSION

If you would like to assist in wrapping empty shoeboxes in readiness for the annual Blythswood Shoebox Appeal then come along

Friday 5th June

6.30pm - 9pm

West Kirk Church Hall.

No previous experience required!

Boxes, Christmas paper and celloptape will be provided along with supportive wrapping tips and advice from Rhoda. A great chance to get together and have a blether whilst helping the project to get ready for the campaign starting in late August.

FOODBANK COLLECTION

A huge thank you to everyone who donated to our February Foodbank appeal in Polbeth Church.

An amazing 109.8kg which equates to 261 meals was collected. This will be able to help so many people in need.

Please remember that food can be donated any time to either of our churches.



Our Holiday Club runs from Monday 3rd to Friday 7th August.

Planning is well advanced for this fun, action packed week for children who are age to start school after the holidays up to those who are currently in P7.

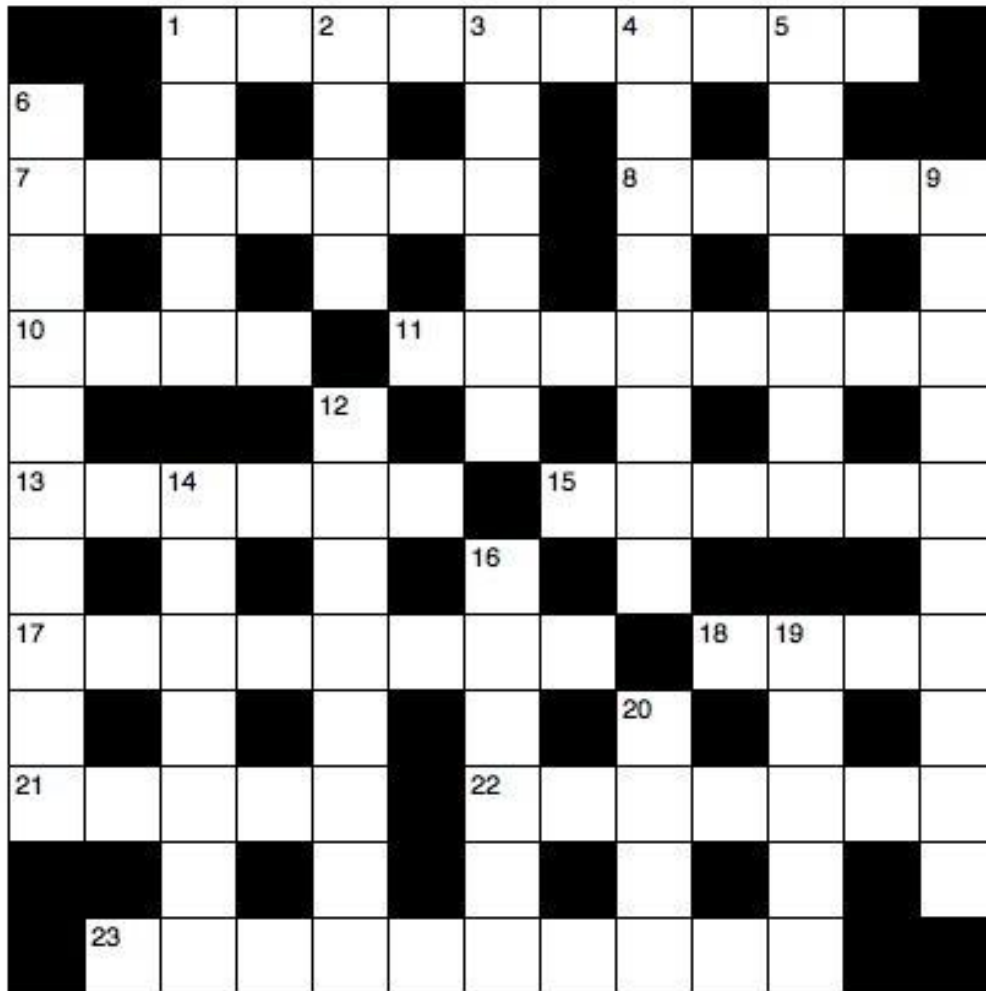
Registration forms will be available from 1st June.

For those 'young-at-heart' volunteers seeking a bit of the desert / ancient Egypt adventure, there will be a further meeting on **Thursday 25th June at 7pm at West Kirk** when more details will be to hand of the various activities planned for the youngsters, as well as the opportunity to provide answers to any questions you may have.

What did the camel say when he met his friend in the desert?



Long time no sea!



Across

- 1 Evil (Genesis 6:5) (10)
 7 Musician called for by Elisha when he met the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom (2 Kings 3:15) (7)
 8 The request that led to the institution of the Lord's Prayer: 'Lord, — us to pray' (Luke 11:1) (5)

10 'We are hard pressed on every—' (2Corinthians4:8)(4)

11 Fraud (2Corinthians6:8)(8)

13 'His troops advance in force; they build a siege ramp against me and — around my tent' (Job 19:12) (6)

15 Where Rachel hid Laban's household gods when he searched his daughter's tent (Genesis 31:34) (6)

17 'Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be—' (1 Corinthians 12:1) (8)

18 Nomadic dwelling (Genesis 26:25) (4)

21 'As for man, his days are like—, he flourishes like a flower of the field' (Psalm 103:15) (5)

22 Or I live (anag.) (7)

23 Those guilty of 1 Across (Romans 13:4) (10)

Down

- 1 'God so loved the — that he gave his one and only Son' (John 3:16) (5)
- 2 'Away in a manger, no — for a bed' (4)
- 3 Mob ten (anag.) (6)
- 4 'Each — group made its own gods in several towns where they settled' (2 Kings 17:29) (8)
- 5 Began (Luke 9:46) (7)
- 6 Speaking very softly (John 7:32) (10)
- 9 Workers Ruth joined when she arrived in Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi (Ruth 2:3) (10) 12 Put in jail(Acts22:19)(8)
- 14 Aceturn(anag.)(7)
- 16 Discharge(Acts21:3)(6)
- 19 'All these—come from inside and make a man "unclean"' (Mark 7:23) (5)
- 20 'Let us rejoice and be glad and — him glory!'(Revelation19:7)(4)

Answers from issue 1

ACROSS: 1, Cosmic. 4, Thomas. 8, In his. 9, Delaiah. 10, Falwell. 11, Water. 12, Recovered. 17, Sidon. 19, Radiant. 21, Centaur. 22, Broil. 23, Eleven. 24, Prison.

DOWN: 1, Cliffs. 2, Scholar. 3, Issue. 5, Holy war. 6, Moist. 7, Sphere. 9, Deliverer. 13, Candace. 14, Deacons. 15, Psyche. 16, Stolen. 18, Dance. 20, Debar.

WEST KIRK FLOWER MINISTRY

Thank you to all who generously donate money and or flowers to support this important area of ministry work.

Flowers from the arrangement seen in Church each Sunday are often perceived only to be distributed to those who are or have been hospitalised or ill at home or families mourning the loss of a loved one or close friend. This is not the case.

The Flower Ministry reaches out to let others know we are thinking of them when life has brought changes in circumstances - moving home or into long term care accommodation, a new baby, recently engaged or married couples. We remember those meeting the challenges of daily living - sitting exams, heading away to study at College or University, starting a new job etc, experiencing difficulties or personal burdens in life with unemployment, isolation, anxiety or loneliness.

Marking moments for those with a Special Birthday, Wedding Anniversary or Reflective Dates for those in our Church family who have walked the path of losing a loved one or special friend in years gone by. Expressing gratitude and thanks to those who help to support our Minister in leading our Church to function in our local community.

At times there are people who have no significant reason to be sent a bunch of flowers other than to say "Hello, we are thinking of you and thank you for being part of our fellowship."

Donations at any time towards the Flower Fund can be placed in an envelope marked for the Flower Ministry and put in the collection plate. Please consider selecting a date on the Flower Rota Calendar - on Vestibule Wall (Oct - Dec currently on display).

More hands make light work of sharing this ministry so if you would like to share in donating, arranging flowers or taking a turn at delivering the flowers periodically, please contact Rhoda Lawton who co-ordinates this area of work (contact details on Flower Rota notices).

Thank you.

The Hazards of being an Online Commissioner

This year our church had three Commissioners in attendance at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland – our minister, one elder and a youth representative. My domestic circumstances would not allow me to attend in person, so I became one of around one hundred online commissioners. Little did I know that the four-day Assembly (the first time it has been held over a long weekend) would result in quite so many unexpected situations.

Like many of you I first used Zoom during Covid 19 for family and other get togethers as well as virtual Session Meetings. Since then, I have not really used the tool, so I had to relearn how to use it only to discover that as with all things tech it has moved on somewhat. The Church of Scotland provided various online training sessions before the Assembly both for online commissioners and first-time attendees like me. So, by the start of the Assembly on Friday 15th May I felt I was well up to speed. I had set up my laptop on my desk near the front door so if the weather was nice, I could have the door open for the dog to wander in and out and to provide fresh air for what would turn out to be some long sessions.

I must admit I did feel a little silly singing along to the hymns during the various periods of worship but since only the dog could hear me, I guess it was OK. I had to remember that at any time during the Assembly when I was logged on, I could appear on the big screen in the Assembly Hall so making silly faces, yawning or otherwise appearing inattentive would not be acceptable.

Although online commissioners must remain muted unless they are actually participating in the debate it still made me jump when the landline rang, the dog barked at squirrels, rabbits or other

diversions. Unexpected parcels arrived and the usual selection of delivery drivers came looking for help when their satnavs directed them through my garden over an old bridge which to my knowledge has not taken any type of traffic for at least 40 years! They do get very cross about this.

One afternoon during a short break I was in the garden for some fresh air when I found two small boys in the burn. One had a nasty cut at the base of his thumb and was feeling sick due to the amount of blood, so time was spent administering first aid before sending them on their way. I also discovered that the dog's time clock is much more accurate than I had realised. No matter where we were in the agenda he would come and nudge my legs when he wanted fed or it was evening walk time.

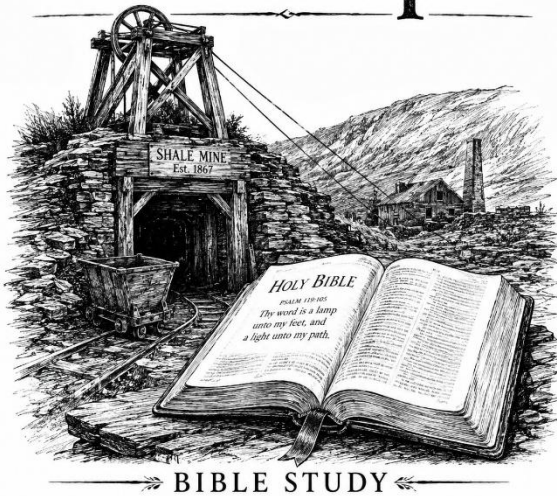
On Zoom the little picture showing me in the corner is quite small so it was not until two days in that I realised the background supplied for commissioners to use was in fact a mirror image, so the writing was back to front. I eventually managed to work out how to rectify this, but I have no idea if anyone in the Assembly Hall noticed or not.

I realise this light-hearted article tells you nothing about what actually happened at this year's Assembly but you can find all of the proceedings on the Church of Scotland website if you wish. Some of the agenda was moving, some very important for the future of the church and some very tedious.

I am sure attending in person would have been more fulfilling but the online option certainly had its moments!

Alison McNaught

Delve a little deeper



Our new Bible Study takes place every third Thursday of the month, at 7pm, at the Manse.

We will next meet on the 18th of June, after which we will take a break over the summer, to meet again in September.

Will be lovely if you can join us – all welcome!

Jonah and the whale

One day, a teacher was talking to her first grade class about whales when a little girl had a question.

Little Girl: “Do whales swallow people?”

Teacher: “No, even though they are much bigger than a person, they have throat pleats that filter their food of krill and plankton.

Little Girl: “But Mrs. Thurston says Jonah was swallowed by a whale.”

Teacher getting angry: “Blue whales cannot swallow people.”

Little Girl: “Well, when I get to heaven I’ll just ask Jonah if he was really swallowed by a whale.”

Teacher, still red with anger: “What if Jonah went to hell?”

Girl: “Well, then you can ask him.”

Hi all,

Jess here.

As some of you know, I attended the Church of Scotland's General Assembly this year as a Youth Representative. That was almost a week ago, and it's given me a lot of time to think about the experience. So what better way to commemorate the occasion than to write those thoughts down.

Going in, ashamed as I am to admit it, I wasn't very excited. The days were going to be long, and the reports were full of topics I had no understanding of. It didn't help I knew nobody.

If not for Carrie, the woman in charge of the Youth Reps, I probably wouldn't have been able to get through the first day. She introduced me to some people, and they became my anchors during the event. Once I found my footing and got talking, I couldn't stop - no surprise to anybody that knows me.

I went into the actual Assembly itself with some nerves, but overall, I was optimistic.

It was certainly far from perfect. There were many drawn out discussions on things that really didn't need to take so long, and too little discussion on things that needed longer. There was also a disappointing trend in that many of the questions were answered with big words that really didn't answer anything at all.

However, between the admin and procedural concerns, there were some genuinely fascinating discussions that really got me thinking.

One of my favourites was one raised during the discussion the Decline of the Church. The point was simple: don't bring people to the Church, bring them to Jesus.

I like this because it seems like an obvious idea, but it's something that can't and shouldn't be forgotten. The Church is a community, a beautiful community, but Jesus is what it's really all about. He's the one who gives us the strength, the one who gave everything to save us. We can talk to people all we want about the Church itself, but we shouldn't just be talking about why people should come to Church, we should be talking to people about why they should follow Jesus.

The discussion on slavery was similarly thought-provoking, if not harrowing. To think the Church was involved with slavery at all was a painful truth to consider. However, between all that, the main thing I took from it was simply, we need to do our bit. We can't be afraid to stand up and speak out when something is wrong, or when people are being prejudicial. It might be frightening, but Jesus gives us that courage when we don't have enough for ourselves. In this day and age, and with Juneteenth coming up next month, I think that's something we all need to remember.

If I had to sum it up, the Assembly was a bureaucratic process in many ways, but in many more ways, it was educational and enlightening.

That's life sometimes though, isn't it? Sometimes the most boring things can teach you the most interesting lessons.

Wednesday Blether Group

Polbeth Church 6.30pm – 9pm

Every Wednesday, we meet in Polbeth Church Café area for a blether and a cuppa.

It would be great to see some more new faces coming along to join us.

You can bring your crafts along to work on them and maybe share your skills with the rest of the group or just come for the chat.

Hope to see you there.





June 26

Wednesday	3 rd	Presbytery Deployment meeting	West Calder	13.00
Sunday	7 th	Holy Communion	West Calder Polbeth	09.30 11.15
Wednesday	10 th	Wednesday Warblers	West Calder	11.30
Thursday	11 th	Beyond Kirk Walls services	Dickson Court Burngrange Home	13.45 15.00
Sunday	14 th	United Worship Annual Outing	Polbeth Polbeth	10.00 11.15
Tuesday	16 th	Pastoral Care Outing to Falkirk Wheel	Leave West Calder	 11.00
Wednesday	17 th	Quiet Service Session Meeting	Polbeth Polbeth	15.30 19.30
Thursday	18 th	Bible Study	Manse	19.00
Sunday	21 st	Morning Worship	West Calder Polbeth	09.30 11.15
Thursday	25 th	Parkhead School Service	West Calder	09.30
		Holiday Club Meeting	West Calder	19.00
Friday	26 th	Youth Group		19.00
Sunday	28 th	Morning Worship	West Calder Polbeth	09.30 11.15

Note:

There will be no “Meet me @ The Manse” during June, July and August. This will be resumed in September.



July 26

Sunday	5 th	United Morning Worship	West Calder	09.30
Sunday	12 th	United Morning Worship	West Calder	09.30
Sunday	19 th	United Morning Worship	West Calder	09.30
Sunday	26 th	United Morning Worship	West Calder	09.30

August 26

Saturday	1 st	Holiday Club Set-up	Polbeth	10.00
Sunday	2 nd	United Morning Worship	Polbeth	11.15
Monday - Friday	3 rd - 7 th	Holiday Club Week	Polbeth	10.00
Friday	7 th	Holiday Club Evening	Polbeth	19.00
Sunday	9 th	United Morning Worship	Polbeth	11.15
Sunday	16 th	United Morning Worship	Polbeth	11.15
Sunday	23 rd	United Morning Worship	Polbeth	11.15
Friday	28 th	Youth Group	West Calder	19.00
Sunday	30 th	United Morning Worship	Polbeth	11.15

Parish Record

Congregational Roll – New Members

Profession of Faith – Jess Beveridge

Resolution of Kirk Session – Alastair McFarlane, Zoe McFarlane,
Franco Proccicchiani

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.

24th March – Cornelia McDonald, Westmuir Road, West Calder

15th April – Jill Murray, Kirk Lane Care Home, Livingston

29th April – Allison Scott, Livingston Care Home, Livingston

8th May – Marshall Jervis, Kings Crescent, West Calder

Loving Father,

In the days when I walk in the shadows
longing to feel the sunshine,
remind me of your presence as the shepherd
who cares for your sheep;
reassure me that whatever I go through,
you are there with me,
leading me through into greener pasture.
Amen.

A picture to colour

