

Connected



BATHGATE

Parish Church



SEPTEMBER 2025

From the Editor

Welcome to the September 2025 edition of *Connected*, our quarterly parish magazine!

At the time of writing we are on the cusp of autumn, my very favourite time of year. After the intense heat of the summer months, the air is becoming cooler and fresher and the leaves on the trees are just about to begin their seamless annual transition from summer green to rich, autumnal shades.

Many of our church groups and organisations have started up again after the summer break. You will find more details inside, in addition to important updates and news items.

Alison



Scottish Charity No. SC00741

The Minister and Home & Hospital Visiting

Alex is happy to visit those of our members that are unable to attend church. However, due to the size of the congregational roll, it is not practical to routinely visit everybody. With that in mind, it is essential that if we know of a member who is stuck at home or in hospital, and who would appreciate a visit from the minister, that we let Alex know. Ministers do not have access to in-patient lists at hospitals, nor are they advised of members who have been admitted.



Minister's Letter

Dear friends,

Where shall we go from here?

Summer holidays are drawing close to an end. Schools and some colleges have returned; soon it will be the turn of universities. Many will ask as to where all the time has gone. Yet, as new terms have started and new ones soon commence, it is also time to ask, '*where do we go from here?*'

Where shall we go? What activities shall we undertake? What resources do we need and have available? What will be our priorities? In an everchanging world where former certainties are no longer those may be difficult questions to answer. As the people of God, though, we are tasked with answering them for each generation and place. Where we shall go will be answered by our view and vision for mission and ministry. In some ways, as minister, it could be easier to sit back and attend only to the spiritual and pastoral needs of the congregation. But that would fulfil neither my call nor that of this congregation. So, what shall we do?

As a congregation, we need to share with each other both our hopes and fears for ourselves and the wider Christian faith. We need to reflect prayerfully on where, and how, God may be speaking to us. We need to consider His calling upon our individual lives and respond to that. Together we will discern where, and to what, God is calling us. There will be time and opportunity made to do this.

In spite of the challenges we have hope. Ultimately, we are headed toward Christ.

Continued...

Minister's Letter Continued

He, alone, is our destination. In John's Gospel, it reads:

'You do not want to leave too, do you?' Jesus asked the Twelve.

Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. (NIVUK)

May He richly bless you,

Alex.

St. John's Buildings

On Tuesday August 12th the long and difficult process of disposing of St. John's Church was completed. While we may be relieved that we are no longer responsible for the upkeep of the buildings, it also presents to us a time of sorrow and grief. These are responses that are both natural and right.

Church buildings are more than the structures we attend for worship on a Sunday. They are places where memories are formed, where relationships are built. They are places where generations of families came to be. Church buildings are places where love may be found, marriages blessed, and children baptised. They are places where we may say a final farewell to a loved one too. Our buildings are places that support community and offer sanctuary. In other words, place of worship, church buildings, are formative building blocks of community. They offer a sense of place. It is these important issues that underpin our grief when these places are lost to us.

We must bear this in mind when we talk about it.

Who, what, and how much?

Although intimated to the Sunday congregation, our minister and elders believe that the full details of the sale should be made available.

St. John's Church

Bought by IPS Real Estate Limited for £265,500 for use as a letting venue.

St. John's Manse

Bought by Priya Rasul as a family home for £430,000

Continued...

St. John's Buildings Continued

Who was involved?

The legal documents enabling the sale and transfer of the manse and church were signed by representatives of both the congregation and the Presbytery. Those signing were holders of defined offices within the church. The deeds determined that the minister and elders signed on behalf of the congregation, alongside the Moderator and Clerk to Presbytery. The Kirk Session nominated three representatives to sign on their behalf.

Those signing on behalf of the congregation were Rev. Alex McAspurren, Crawford Morgan, Anne Noble and John Armstrong. Representing the Presbytery were Rev. Dr Alexander Forsyth, Moderator, and Dr Hazel Hastie, Clerk.

What next?

In due course 15% of the purchase price will be deducted by the Church of Scotland for wider church property purposes, along with a deduction for conveyancing. The balance of the funds will then be transferred to Bathgate Parish Church.

Questions?

Should you have any questions in respect of the above then please feel free to ask Alex or Crawford, and they will endeavour to answer.

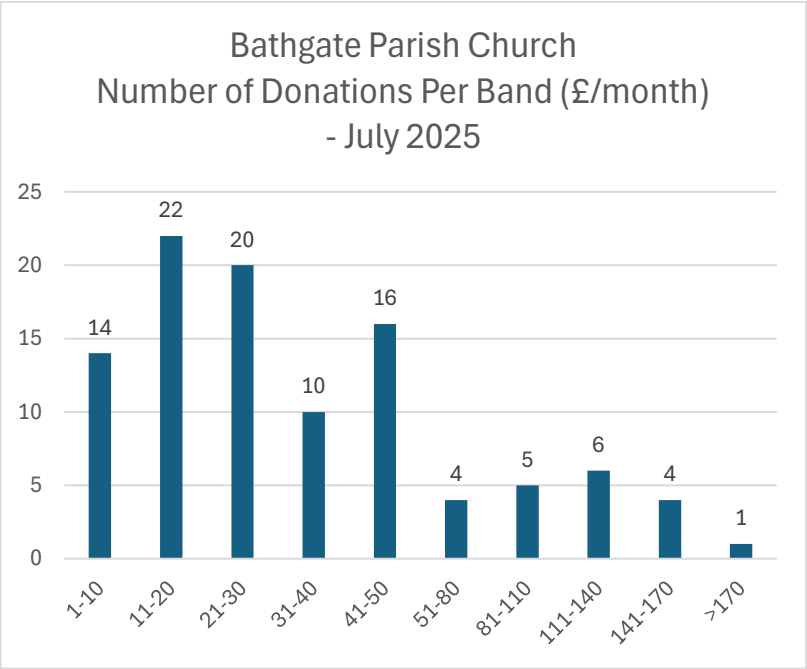
For now, though, let us remember our grieving brothers and sisters of St. John's church, wherever they may be. Let us uphold them in prayer. Let us also give thanks for the good memories and blessings experienced by that congregation across its history. Let us not forget but let us also together forge a new history together as we seek to serve Christ and the Kingdom in the years to come.

Alex.

Finance and Property Report

The St John’s Church and hall, and the manse and Tryst Hall, were advertised for sale as one or two lots. The St. John’s church was valued at £265,000 (and sold for £260,500) and the manse and Tryst Hall was valued at £430,000 (and sold for £430,000). There was significant interest in the buildings and many viewings and they were sold on 12 August 2025. The details of the sale are contained in a separate article elsewhere in this newsletter.

At present our regular donations do not cover our day-to-day spending, which is not sustainable in the long-term. A donation analysis was carried out in July 2025. The number and value of donations per member of the congregation in each giving band is as follows (excludes gift aid - the HMRC refund in 2024/25 was £14,273):



Continued...

Finance and Property Report Continued

Although there has been a significant addition to the church funds following the sale of the St John's buildings, these funds can only be used for major fabric works.

Maintenance and repair work is required for the church and large hall roofs and gutters. Donald Forbes, Edinburgh and West Lothian Presbytery Buildings Officer, provided an opinion on the works required following a drone survey. Invitations have been issued to three contractors to provide quotations for the specified works. The quotations will be examined shortly, with input from the Presbytery Buildings Officer. It is expected that the works will be carried out in the autumn. Please follow any signage providing instructions for your safety while the work is being carried out.

If you are a taxpayer and eligible to claim gift aid, then HMRC will boost your offerings by 25p for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid Declaration forms are available in the church vestibule. Completed forms can be returned to the church office or left in a sealed envelope in the offering plate on a Sunday morning.

Additional volunteers are needed to help with the weekly count after the Sunday service and especially in the church office (which is currently open Monday to Friday from 10.00 AM to 12.00 noon). If you can help, or would like more information, then please speak with Ian McLean. If there are an insufficient number of volunteers, then this could lead to the office having to be closed on some days.

Crawford, Ian, Jean and Dave
Finance Team and Property Convenor

Foodbank 20.08.25

Having decided to stay open over the summer we didn't know how busy we would be, but the foodbank volunteers were not kept idle. Our usual customers were glad to see us still open and we also had a few new ones.

What was unexpected, were donations from new sources—individuals from both outside our community as well as inside it. All donations, of course, are gratefully received and acknowledged.

Thank you to those who came to help on the weeks we were short-staffed. It was appreciated. Thanks as well to those who are willing to have their name on the 'reserve' list. This will be used when unexpected situations or illness happens in the future. There is still room for names if you are interested.

Thank you to all of you who support the foodbank with donations of groceries or money—both are very welcome.

Your continuing prayers and donations are appreciated.

Christine Robertson

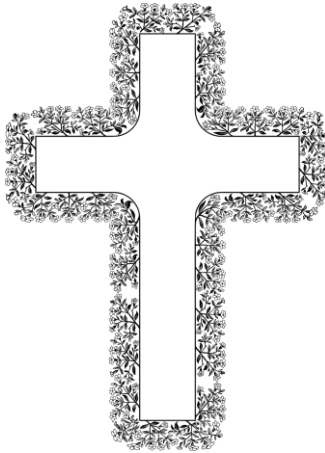
The Flower Committee

The Flower Committee have faced a very challenging time over the summer months due to an accumulation of circumstances. Each year, at this time, we seem to lose touch with so many of our church family.

The priority at the moment is for elders and congregation to let the Flower Committee know of members ill, in hospital or moved into care who would perhaps benefit from church flowers or perhaps a visit from the Minister.

Hopefully, with your help, matters will soon improve.

Beth Anderson





GB Buzz Night

'Games & Buffet Fun Night'

2nd Bathgate Girls' Brigade are looking forward to welcoming you back for a fun 2025-2026 session.

Come along to our fun night to meet the team and join in some fun activities.

All girls from P1-S6 are welcome.

If you are already a member, why don't you bring along a friend?



Wednesday 3rd September 2025
6.30-8.00pm

**@ Bathgate Parish Church Hall,
Gideon Street, Bathgate EH48 4HB**

For more details, please message our facebook page
Search: 2nd Bathgate Girls' Brigade

Continued...

Girls' Brigade Continued



2nd Bathgate Girls' Brigade

Girls' Brigade is a fantastic way to learn, make new friends, try new challenges and most of all; have FUN!
It really is the place to bee!

New session 'Games & Buffet Fun Night'
Wednesday 3rd September 2025, 6.30-8.00pm

From Wednesday 10th September 2025:

♥		Explorers	P1-P3	6.15-7.15pm
♥		Juniors	P4-P7	7.00-8.30pm
♥		Brigaders	S1-S6	7.00-8.30pm

@ Bathgate Parish Church Hall,
Gideon Street,
Bathgate EH48 4HB



Scan me! 

For more information, please check out our Facebook page by scanning the QR Code

Hazel Gallacher

The Boys' Brigade

Both Anchor Boys and Junior Sections will resume on Tuesday 2nd September at 6.30pm for an enrolling and games night.

All boys will be made most welcome, so come and join in the fun! Even if you've never been before, come and try it.

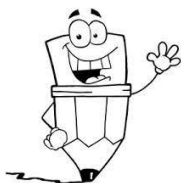
Graeme Robertson

Captain



Bessie's Quote

Always and ***never*** are two words you should ***always*** remember ***never*** to use!



Bathgate Parish Church Guild



The Guild will resume on **Wednesday 10th September** with our Dedication, followed by Duncan McCaig telling us about his trip to Malawi.

We will lead the **Church Sunday Service on 14th September** at the start of Guild Week.

On **Wednesday 17th September** we will hear from Linlithgow Fairtrade Partnership before Fairtrade Fortnight. They will have a stall and goods for sale, so come along and support them.

On **Wednesday 24th September** we will have some chair yoga.

On **Wednesday 1st October** we have a speaker from Scottish Bible Society, Bibles for Bairns, our Guild Project.

On **Wednesday 8th October** Ruth MacNamarra will tell us how John Mills won the war.

On **Wednesday 22nd October** Victoria Dunnett MBE from Boghall Drop-in Centre will tell us about her charity.

On **Wednesday 29th October** we will hear about Fighting Napoleon to the Scottish Military Academy – The Life of Captain John Orr.

Continued...

Bathgate Parish Church Guild Continued

For further Guild meetings, a syllabus will be available in the vestibule.

Meetings are held on Wednesday afternoons at 1:30pm.

All welcome, come along and join us if any of our talks interest you.

Liz Samuel (New contact)



Thrift Shop

Our Autumn Thrift Shop will be held in the Large Hall during October Monday 20th – Saturday 25th during our normal opening hours:

Monday – Friday: 10.00 am – 3.00 pm

Saturday: 10.00 am – 12.00 noon

We will have our normal selection of stalls, books, toys, clothes, bric a-brac and homeware and the opportunity to have tea or a coffee and fresh scones and pancakes.

We intend to set up on **Sunday 19th October from 1:30 pm** and clear up following the close of business on Saturday 25th October.

We would greatly benefit from assistance in setting up and clearing up and for members to staff the shop throughout the week.

Jean Logie



Bathgate Churches Together

The group met at St. Columba's Episcopal Church on Tuesday 5th August.

We had a report on the funeral of Keith Stirling, (our representative from Torphichen Kirk, who had sadly passed away). We gave thanks for all Keith did to help and promote BCT.

Kathleen Grant [EU, URC], has stepped down from the group and we gave thanks for her commitment and help over the years.

After a time of devotion and approving the minutes, we went on to business matters.

[1] **The Carmelite Monastery.** Margaret Hardy and Rev. Rosie Addis had a very enjoyable visit to the new Carmelite Monastery at Balmuir Road. All six nuns were there and had been given a special dispensation to talk. Most of their time is spent in prayer and meditation, and it may be possible to arrange meditation sessions with them. They also have some business activities including pottery and printing. They are still settling in and adapting to the building which is very large.

[2] **Christian Aid coffee morning in St. Mary's on 13th September from 10-12.** We discussed the arrangements for setting up the day before, the various tasks to be covered on the day itself and the clearing up. There will be tables for a bottle tombola, jewellery and children's books. Gifts of baking will be much appreciated and if anyone would like to donate towards the Tombola, that would be very acceptable. (bottles worth £2) Any donations can be handed in to the church hall (St. Mary's) on Friday 12th between 2-4pm or on the Saturday morning. Posters, banners etc. are/ have been organised to advertise the event. Liz Orr has tickets for sale.

Continued...

Bathgate Churches Together Continued

[3]. **Our Treasurers Account** will be closed on 13th Nov. 2025, and our account will be changed to a Community Account. We will need to get into internet banking, and our treasurer has begun this process. Current balance in account is £640.29

[4] **Repair of the 1624 Latin Bible on display in the Partnership Centre.** A quote of £700 has been given by RDW in Falkirk for this urgent repair needed. Donations have been offered from BCT, Harry Cartmill and a grant from the Councilors' Disbursement Fund, with the hope of other support. To receive any Grants, **BCT need to draw up a constitution and this is in hand.**

[5] **Planter in the precinct**, maintained by BCT, is looking good.

[6] **Fairtrade Fortnight 22nd Sep. - 5th Oct.** West Lothian Council asked whether BCT were participating in Fairtrade. Bathgate Parish Church Guild are having speakers from Linlithgow Fairtrade Partnership coming to our meeting on Wed. 17th Sept. This will be in the large hall, and an invitation will be extended to all the churches. There will be a stall with Fairtrade goods for sale.

[7] **The Asylum seekers in the Cairn Hotel.** Hopefully we will receive an updated report on the development of the Cairn Hotel community inclusion group (CHCIG) at our next meeting.

[8] **The Chosen.** The Chosen is described as a groundbreaking historical drama based on the life of Jesus Christ (Jonathan Roumie), seen through the eyes of those who knew him. St. Columba's and Boghall parish churches are arranging a joint programme beginning on Monday 1st September with discussion on the 1st and 3rd Monday in Boghall Parish Church and screening on the 2nd and 4th Monday in St. Columba's Episcopal Church.

Continued...

Bathgate Churches Together Continued

Meetings will start at 7-15pm and all are invited.

[9] **BCT are marking the retirement of Rev. Jan Adamson** at the end of October, as Interim Moderator at the EU. URC by taking her out for lunch. Jan is moving to Southampton to be with family, and we will miss her very much and the blessing of her ministry.

We concluded by saying the Grace together and meet again on Tues, October 14th in St. Columba's at 2pm.



Children's Corner

Hi there!

Here we are! September already and a new school year is well underway. We hope your holidays have been fun and you are feeling good and happy to see all your old friends again - and make new friends as well, now you are back at school or nursery.



Just think all over Scotland thousands and thousands of children will be settling into their classes and ready to learn new and interesting things. You will be like an army on the march as you go back to school.

This month we are going to think about something else that could be described as an army on the march and it's when these tiny creatures decide to move together. I mean grasshoppers!



Did you know grasshoppers are mentioned in the Bible 41 times?

Grasshopper verse from Isaiah 40, verse 22

'God sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers'.

Wow! Can you imagine that God is such a big presence that people seem like little grasshoppers - maybe 2 or 3 centimetres long?

Continued...

Children's Corner Continued

Facts



If you go for a walk in the countryside on a warm summer's day you might find a little grasshopper in amongst some grasses.

Probably you would hear it before you saw it. It is very tiny and well camouflaged in the grass as it is almost all green or brown. The male grasshoppers are said to 'sing' for their mates but they are actually rubbing their back legs against their



wings to try to attract a mate. There are 10,000 different types of grasshopper in the world, with 24 different types living in Britain. Although famous for their 'singing', they are even more famous for their jumping!

A grasshopper in Britain probably measures about 2 or 3 centimetres but it can jump up to about 70 centimetres - not at all bad for a little insect! Maybe there should be an 'Insect Olympics'. I think they could teach us a thing or two!

If you are lucky enough to see one there is no need to feel scared as they only eat plants and won't hurt you.

Our Bible
big God is.



because we don't really know what he looks like - is he sitting on a throne and looking at us?

verse gives us a picture of how
Maybe you can imagine him -

Continued...

Children's Corner Continued

We would be like tiny grasshoppers jumping all over the place and so often achieving very little. The exciting thing is that God cares for even the smallest of his creations - like the tiny grasshopper BUT the Bible tells us he created US in his own image! Just think how much more his love for us is. He hears all our prayers and answers them too.

Things to do:

- Measure your height and then leap up in the air. How high can you jump?
- Ask if you can get some fondant icing and green food colouring next time at the Supermarket. Turn your icing green by adding a few drops of colouring and model a grasshopper. Find ways to make the legs and wings. Send me a photo if you can (elansimpson@aol.com)
- See how many insects you can think of that are even smaller than a grasshopper.
- Do a garden search to see how many insects you can find in a set time. Remember please leave them where you find them - this is home for them.



HAVE FUN

Bathgate EU United Reformed Church – Autumn Show 2025



Rehearsals are in full swing once more for the Autumn Show on Wednesday 24th, Thursday 25th and Friday 26th September commencing at 7:30pm. This is an evening of songs and a one act play. To commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day, all of our community singing will pay tribute with a selection of well-loved war songs. So come along, relax and enjoy the show!

Tickets are £5 and will be on sale at the next monthly Coffee Morning on Saturday 20th September. Alternatively, please pay at the hall door on the night of the show. Also, Alison has tickets for each evening – please catch her at the end of any Sunday service.

Many thanks, the EU Songsters.



Thank You Letters

Neil and I had the pleasure of visiting Dr. Barbara (Bara) Sibbald at Linlithgow Care Home with flowers from the Church. She was delighted with the flowers and asked kindly about the Church and old friends. We pass on her thanks.

We also recently delivered flowers to Mary Thomson who was delighted with her flowers and although frail, she asked about the Church and friends. It was a pleasure to visit her. She sent her thanks with love and good wishes to all.

We also visited Mary Clarkson with Church flowers. She was very thankful for the kind thoughts and lovely flowers.

It was so good to see the three ladies and all were interested in what was happening in the Church.

Liz Samuel



Church Flowers – Note of Thanks

I would like to say a huge thank you to the Church Flower Committee for remembering me and sending a beautiful floral arrangement which cheered me up immensely. Thanks also to Janet who delivered the flowers and also for our chat.

Kind Regards

Alison Kerr



I would like to thank the Church and Flower Committee for the lovely flowers I received recently. It is good to know that, although I can no longer attend church, I am still in your thoughts and prayers.

Jean Corbett



Autumn Mindfulness Colouring Page



CONTACT INFORMATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Minister:- Rev. Alex McAspurren ((01506) 525974)

Church email: amcaspurren@churchofscotland.org.uk

Session Clerks: - Mrs Anne Noble

Church Officer: - Mrs Jean Logie, Mobile

All other office bearers/ head of groups contact via Church Office

Phone 01506 650517 Email: - info@bathgateparish.com

Treasurer: - Mr Crawford Morgan

Property Convenor: - Mr Dave Robertson

Sunday School and Creche: - Mrs Carolyn McCusker

Safeguarding Officer: - Mrs Carolyn McCusker

Boys Brigade: - Mr Graeme Robertson

Girls Brigade :-Hazel Gallacher

Guild:- Mrs Liz Samuel

Data Protection Officer:- Isobel Hutton

Roll Convener:- Mrs Janette Peel

WFO Convener:-

Musical Director:- Ms Alison Paul

Pre-School:- Mrs Karen Redmond

Flower Convener:- Miss Beth Anderson

Pastoral Care Team:- Miss Bessie Stein

Country Dancing:- Mrs Agnes Ferris

Food Bank:- Mrs Christine Robertson

The Church Office is open Monday to Friday 10am-12noon