Diocese of Edinburgh

Scottish Episcopal Church



St James the Less, Leith

The Communicant

News & Notices for the Diocese of Edinburgh

20 August 2026

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Bishop's Letter for August



Dear Friends

As we begin a new school year and the year turns to late summer, there is something in the air about beginnings, endings and the possibilities that lie before us.



Last Wednesday evening I was up on Wester Craiglockhart Hill where I have often been taking the dog for a walk in the summer, it's usually pretty quiet. But that evening hundreds had gathered, with similar numbers on Easter Craiglockhart Hill, too. People had come out to watch the Eclipse – as it coincided in Edinburgh with a great big cloud moving in front of the sun, so we experienced a different kind of eclipse!

Perhaps some of you, like me, had Bonnie Tyler's *Total Eclipse of the Heart* going through your head, following her death earlier in the summer. It is a beautiful song, though a rather sad one. And there has certainly been something of that mixture of joy and sadness in recent weeks as young people have received their exam results.

For many, results have been a cause for celebration, opening doors to the next stage of life. But there will also have been disappointment, anxiety and heartache for those whose results have not taken them where they had hoped to go.

So, at this beginning of a new academic year, I want to encourage us to remember in our prayers all those young people who stand at the threshold of a new chapter: those who are excited about what lies ahead, and those who are anxious and wondering where they go from here.

Many of us who are now part of the Church began our own journey of faith when we were young. So perhaps there is something practical each of us can do this month:

Have a conversation with a child, teenager or young adult. Listen to them. Encourage them. Whether or not they have faith, and whether or not their exam results turned out as they had hoped, help them to know that they are precious; that beyond all the marks, achievements, successes and disappointments is an enduring identity as a person created and loved by God; and that their life has meaning, purpose and possibility.

And encourage them to explore faith, and to discover how their gifts might be shared with the Church and the wider community, what we might learn from them. You never know: you might be just the person who sows a seed which, in time, opens a heart to God's call.

Continued ...

Bishop's Letter for August



Picture: Revd Andi Hofbauer

I have now enjoyed touching base with more than half of our charges and clergy, and I look forward to meeting all the others in due course. The walks through the city and in the Borders at the beginning of this month were wonderful, and I am immensely grateful to all those who walked with me, welcomed us and provided hospitality along the way.

I hope to go on similar walks on the East Coast and in the West during this, my first year as Bishop here. I have found these walks a particularly lovely way of getting to know our Diocese, its neighbourhoods and landscapes: meeting people where they are, sharing conversation, hearing stories and discovering something of the places and communities in which our churches are called to serve.

It has been a joy, too, to pray a blessing for each of the churches I have visited:

May the God of Mission,
who alone enlivens the Church,
grace your worship,
give you the vision of the kingdom among you,
wisdom for your plans and actions,
and power for your prophetic witness.
So may you grow
in depth of discipleship,
in number,
and in service to your local community.
And the blessing of God the Eternal One,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you and remain with you always.



It is my prayer for every charge in our Diocese as we enter this new season. Please do continue to pray for your clergy and their loved ones, and for all who minister in your church. They work hard, often sacrificially, and much of what they do is unseen. And clergy, please pray for one another, too. We are all called to encourage and sustain one another in the work God has entrusted to us.

There is much that we cannot know about what lies ahead. Our churches face challenges; our communities are changing; and the wider world feels uncertain and unsettled. At the end of the Borders walk in Galashiels, we reflected on Jesus' words from John 10:10, that he has come that we may life and have it abundantly. This life in Christ we must seek.

I recently came across these words from Thomas Merton: "*What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.*"

Every blessing for the beginning of a new school year and the new round of activities and events in our churches.

+ Jeremy

News and Notices

Evensong for the Festival

On 19 August, a special Edinburgh Festival Evensong was broadcast from St Mary's Cathedral. If you didn't listen live, you can catch up with it on the BBC Sounds website.





On 8 August, Bishop Dagmar joined a group of ecumenical and interfaith guests to experience the Edinburgh Tattoo.



Baptisms at Galashiels



On 9 August, three men were baptised at St Peter's, Galashiels. The St Peter's Facebook page said: "It was a joyful morning. Thank you to our friends at Hope Church Galashiels for lending us their pool. A very special day indeed!"

The **Tormain Project** explored a site near St Mary's Dalmahoy in mid-August, with two open days for anyone who wanted to learn about the dig and try their hand at the work. You can see more on the Tormain Project Facebook page.







News and Notices

Thank you so much!



This year's Bishop's Lent Appeal raised **£7041.99** for Aberlour Children's Charity. Thank you so much to everyone who donated.

On receiving our donation, Abby Parkhouse, Aberlour's Community Fundraiser, said:

"On behalf of everyone at Aberlour Children's Charity, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for the wonderful support received from the Diocese of Edinburgh through your Lent Appeal.

"We are deeply grateful for the generosity shown by congregations across the Diocese. Your collective donation will make a meaningful difference to the children, young people and families we support throughout Scotland. Please convey our sincere thanks to everyone involved.

"We are also particularly grateful for the longstanding relationship between Aberlour Children's Charity and the Scottish Episcopal Church. For many, many years, your support, partnership and shared commitment to caring for families facing adversity have helped us to continue our work.

"Thank you once again for your generosity and for standing alongside Aberlour in helping children and families across Scotland. We are honoured by your support and look forward to continuing our relationship in the years ahead."



Hire a Space – now with added maps!

We've added maps to our Hire a Space page! If you already have a listing on the page, do check your entry is still up to date. If not, do email through any amends. If you want us to add your space, get in touch! Email communications@dioceseofedinburgh.org



Catch up on Yeek



This year's Yeek took place from 26 July to 1 August with the theme 'On the Way'. You can get day-by-day reports on the SEC Facebook page, or browse the excellent photobook if you want to catch up on happenings!

CHORAL SINGING TASTER DAY!

Sat 5th Sept 2026

ST JOHN'S
Scottish Episcopal Church

Join us for a taste of choral singing in the beautiful *St John's, Princes Street.* We are starting new youth and children's choirs and would love you to be part of it. No experience required!



Children's Choir (ages 5-12): 10.30-12.30pm

Youth Choir (ages 12-18): 2-4pm

followed by Evensong 4.30pm

Register your interest:
bit.ly/choristerday
or
music@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk

St John's, Princes Street

Contact: music@stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk

stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk

News and Notices

New Term, New Service Times?

UPDATE

If so, please let us know so we can update your entry in the Church Directory on the diocesan website! Even if your service times are the same, do check your page to make sure all the information is current – and if you have a more up-to-date picture of your charge we'd be happy to replace the old one for you. Email Cathy at communications@dioceseofedinburgh.org

BUILDINGS COMMITTEE – NEW DEADLINES



The committee has recently been receiving more applications for Canon 35 consent, Provincial Buildings Grants and Net Zero Grants, which leads to a significantly large amount of paperwork for itself and the office to deal with. Some applications and submissions arrive only a day or so before meetings, which makes it difficult for members to assimilate in time. Going forward, **the committee can only deal with submissions 10 working days before these meetings dates**:

- 7 September* (deadline for papers: 24 August)
- 5 October (deadline 22 September)
- 9 November* (deadline 26 October)
- 30 November (deadline 16 November)

**Provincial Grants deadline too*

This will make sure the office has time to prepare the papers and make sure photos/quotes are included etc. before sending them to the members.

Area Council Meetings

You will have seen that the next meeting will take place at the Cathedral's Walpole Hall on the evening of 22 October. As you **plan your Area Council meetings**, note that the Synod Business will be published a day or so after the Standing Committee meeting on 24 September.



The diocese has produced a new safeguarding poster for display on your church noticeboards. It outlines the Scottish Episcopal Church and Diocese of Edinburgh's safeguarding commitments, together with key contact information and useful helplines for members of your congregation, all of which has been reviewed and approved by our Provincial Safeguarding Team.

The poster has been sent out by email to safeguarding coordinators throughout the diocese. If you haven't received a poster, or you have any questions, please contact Hannah Harcus on hharcus@dioceseofedinburgh.org

Sunny Barbeque at St David's







On 15 August, St David's, Pilton held its summer barbeque, generating lots of happy faces!

Mission & Ministry

Community Pioneer Wanted



Blindwells in East Lothian is looking for a full-time **Community Pioneer** to develop and coordinate the church's role in this growing new settlement. Although sponsored by the Church of Scotland, this position is open to applicants from all Christian denominations. Its ecumenical advisory group includes representation from the Diocese of Edinburgh. Visit our Vacancies page for more.



Here I Stand Autumn Lectures 2026



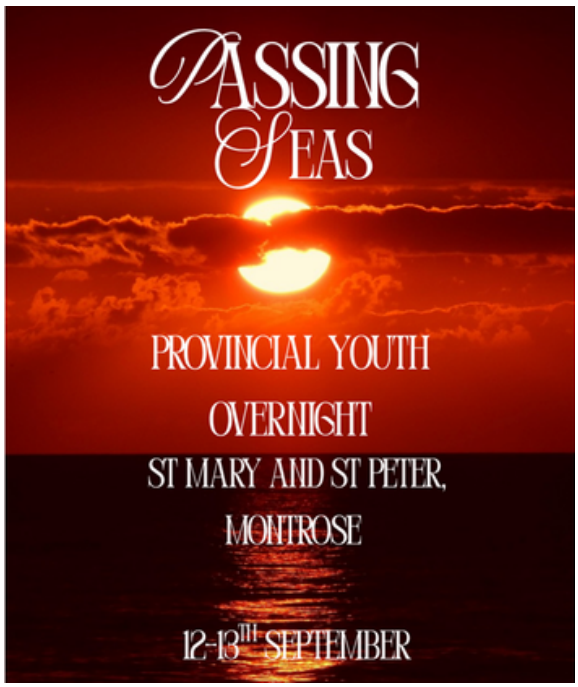
St Martin-in-the-Fields' Autumn Lecture Series, Here I Stand, is returning from 1 September. You can access these lectures online for a donation of £10 each. Get the full schedule and book on the St Martin-in-the-Fields website.

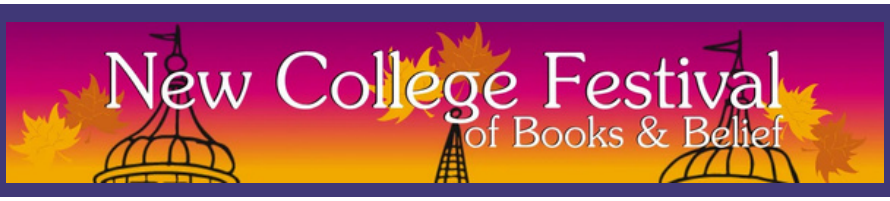
Creationtide starts on 1 September

We've updated our Creationtide web page to include a message from Bishop Dagmar and details about the newly instated Festival of Creation in Christ on 6 September. All this, plus a variety of resources to support you as you celebrate God as Creator and earth as our common home, and explore this year's theme of Living Water.

From special events (such as the Creation Sunday event at St Peter's, Musselburgh, below) to animal-blessing services, we'd love to know what you're planning for this season. Email the details to dmmcadmin@dioceseofedinburgh.org.







Booking is now open for the New College Festival of Books & Belief, taking place in Edinburgh from 6–7 November. Get more information here.

Events

Diocesan Diary

Monday 7 September: Buildings Committee meeting

Tuesday 8 September: DMMC meeting

Tuesday 15 September: Staff Development Day

SAVE THE DATE: Thursday 22 October Diocesan Synod (evening)

Bishop's Diary

Bishop Dagmar is on annual leave. If you have a query while she is away, contact Hannah Harcus: hharcus@dioceseofedinburgh.org

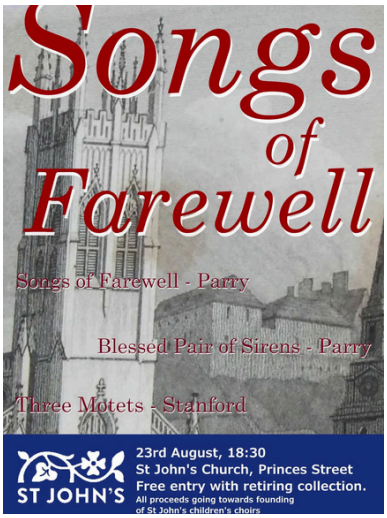


Events

Submit your own event details here. It's easy to do!

- **Saturday 22 August:** Festival Closing Service (Edinburgh Festival of the Sacred Arts), Old Saint Paul's, Edinburgh
- **Sunday 23 August:** Historical and Family History Summer Saunter, Douglas Hall, Dalmahoy
- **Sunday 23 August:** Songs of Farewell, St Johns, Princes Street
- **Saturday 29 August:** Songs of Unity, Stockbridge Parish Church
- **Saturday 29 August:** No Borders Trio, St Peter's Church, Peebles
- **Sunday 30 August:** You are Invited to God's Meal, St Mark's, Portobello
- **Tuesday 1 September:** A Vigil for Peace, St John's, Jedburgh
- **Tuesday 1 September:** People's Community Briefing: Community Screening, St Columba's by the Castle
- **Tuesday 1 September:** Folk Open Mic and Singing Circle, St Peter's, Lutton Place
- **Saturday 5 September:** Plants are Our Teachers: Hedgerow, Berry and Earth, St Mary's Cathedral
- **Saturday 5 September:** Silent Reflective Morning, St Anne's, Dunbar
- **Saturday 5 September:** Choral Taster Singing Day, St John's, Princes Street







We love hearing your updates! Please email us at communications@dioceseofedinburgh.org

Don't forget to like and share what we post on the diocesan social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram and Bluesky). It does make a difference.