

The Chronicle

October 2026



Crown Court Church of Scotland
Covent Garden, London

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Dear Readers,

With our vacancy firmly behind us, we are now settling into a new chapter at Crown Court Church. 2027, however, is looking to be a more extraordinary period, as we embark on our renewal project, *A Kirk for Tomorrow*. The Kirk Session is exploring options at present, but we are likely to relocate for the duration to a space nearby. Our priority, of course, will be remaining together as a worshipping church community until we can return to Crown Court.



Being so much involved in the day-to-day of our plans for the future, I am often reminded of how much my faith, and Crown Court Church, mean to me. When I moved to London back in 2011, I struggled to find a church home. I attended several church services of different denominations, but often felt a little invisible. I found Crown Court Church entirely by chance: on a Sunday afternoon, I met a former member of the congregation, who was volunteering at nearby Handel House. It is strange to think how different the rhythm of my life would be if I hadn't spoken to her that day. So I want to make sure that as many people as possible can experience our church's welcome, and join our special community of faith.

In this issue, there is plenty of news from our church organisations and congregation members, as well as an update on the progress of *A Kirk for Tomorrow*, and a look ahead to our Christmas season.

Many thanks to the dedicated Chronicle team, Elaine, Naima, Sheena-Jane and Kirsteen, who have helped me to put together and proof-read this issue. Please do consider donating to the cost of printing and posting *The Chronicle* (£100 per issue): any contribution, no matter how small, would be hugely helpful.

And, of course, we are always looking out for articles! Perhaps you are spending Christmas somewhere unusual this year? Or you have started volunteering for a charity? Just drop me a line at outreach-heritage@crowncourtchurch.com. The deadline for our next issue is Sunday 20th December.

Mary-Jannet Leith, *Chronicle* Editor

Dear Crown Court Church Family,

One of the joys I've had in settling in these past four months is the manse garden. With tall walls and trees from the communal garden towering over from the other side, a patio for table and chairs, a south-facing suntrap, and the addition of a hammock which was my birthday gift this year— it's my little oasis of green in the midst of a dense city.



Thankfully, I did not inherit my mother's black thumb when it comes to gardening, but it's a long way from green and I still have to work at it. I've spent a lot of time image-searching the different plants, trying to figure out what they are – if they were intentionally planted or an opportunistic weed. In that process I've discovered a disturbing amount of nightshade, vines that had grown into each other through trees and were choking shrubs, and ivy that was beginning to invade from the public side of the wall. I've also been surprised by a sudden burst of colour in a corner from a bloom I wasn't expecting, and have welcomed regular visitors of butterflies and birds.

There's a quote from the musical *Hamilton* that says, 'What is a legacy? It's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see.' This garden of mine is an inheritance, where I get a peek into the minds of my predecessors - what they enjoyed, created, and planted that I now get to enjoy. I've learned that Rev. Philip Majcher laid the stones for the patio, Rev. Sigrid Marten brought in the pomelo tree that still yields lovely citrus fruit, and Rev. Scott Rennie put in many of the fragrant species of vines and perennials. I've already planted some of my favourites: lavender, blue hydrangea, and saffron bulbs that someone in the church graciously gifted me. Later, I'll hopefully add some outdoor string lights and honeyberry bushes.

Setting into an existing community or church family as the minister is not unlike settling into this garden. It's not something done all at once. It's a process of discovery, seeking to understand the logic of what is already there, how it came to be. Sometimes it's a gentle pruning of what has inadvertently grown or overgrown that is harmful to the health of the ecosystem, and slowly adding your own contributions. That is certainly how I've experienced my first few months as the minister here at Crown Court.

There is so much already growing, and thriving, and blooming in this church. There has clearly been thoughtful sowing, and planting, and investing with a clear vision for what we're building. Part of my work is just asking questions, seeking to understand the often very good reasoning for why things are the way they are. Sometimes those questions may prompt us to re-examine whether the original reasoning still holds water, or if, perhaps, an adjustment would better serve the current needs of the church. I've seen so many beautiful pops of colour and life and mission of the church that I didn't previously know about.

That discovery will continue as we go through all the liturgical seasons of my first year and probably for many years to come. My prayer is that together we cultivate and steward the rich inheritance of those who have come before us to create Crown Court Church into what it is now, and that by our careful tending we continue to grow a thriving legacy to all those who will come after us.

In Christ,
Rev. Tara



The Kirk session held its usual meeting in September, returning to the day-to-day business of the church after the summer break.

We welcomed Rev. Tara as Moderator for her first meeting as minister.



Our Futures Committee reported on their continuing work for our Kirk for Tomorrow project. We are now nearing the time for the works to go out to tender, and our community fundraising campaign is going very well. Do check the project webpage for updates over the coming months.

The Worship Committee has been looking at how it can resolve the streaming issues we have experienced recently. Unfortunately, our area of Covent Garden has not as yet been upgraded to fibre broadband, and so our internet connection relies on 5G signal. When it gets busy in the area, the network becomes overloaded, and, without warning, we can lose the ability to stream. However, a number of suggestions have been made to improve our set-up within these constraints - so watch this space!

There will be a joint service with St Columba's Church on 22 November, at which the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rev. Gordon Kennedy, will be Guest Preacher. The service begins at 11am, and there will be no service at Crown Court Church that morning.

The Session Clerk thanked the Pastoral Care Team for all their efforts. They do such an important job in the church and we are so grateful for all they do.

Our next Kirk Session meeting will be held on Thursday 19 November at 6.45pm in the church hall. Kirk Session meetings are always open, and congregation members are welcome to attend and observe proceedings.

Sheena-Jane Clark, Session Clerk



Sermon preached by Rev. Tara Porr Granados on Sunday 6 September

Scripture: Matthew 18: 15-20 NRSVUE

If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are listened to, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If that person refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

What I appreciate about this teaching from Jesus in our scripture from Matthew 18 is the pragmatic realism he has about humans living in community together. Jesus never assumes that all will be hunky dory kumbaya all the time. There is a presumption in this teaching that there will be conflict, and he gives us a clear kind of flow chart for how to deal with it.

Jesus says that, if a fellow believer sins against you, here's what you do. You go to them one to one to talk about it in the first instance. Try to resolve it yourselves and if you can work it out, great - be reconciled, and move on. Don't rehash the issue in the court of public opinion.

If, however, you are unable to resolve the conflict, go back to them with two or three other believers as witnesses so that it's not one person's word against another as to what is said. It's important that Jesus clarifies that these are witnesses to the conversation, not participants, otherwise it might seem like you're bringing reinforcements simply to gang up on the person to force them into compliance. Rather, these people are witnesses of the conversation, neutral mediators trying to get to the heart of the matter, to the truth of what happened with a goal of reconciliation.

This is the process Jesus gives of how to deal with conflict. It's meant to be a protection both for the individual and for the community. It means that a member or a leader cannot simply decide secretly and unilaterally that a person is no longer welcome in the community. It protects against cults of personality and abuses of power and popularity. It gives the accused person multiple chances to explain or defend themselves, to set the record straight if what they're accused of isn't true or wholly true. Leaders are checked by the will of the community against any blind spots or prejudices they may harbour against someone by having a public hearing as a final step. It also allows the congregation a process to protect itself against those who destructively harm the wellbeing of others in the community. Or as one commentator put it: "the congregation is guarded from violent disruption and from the slow erosion of unresolved antagonisms." It outlines the process of excommunication or disinvitation from a community as an acceptable boundary that may need to be put in place.

This process of conflict management seeks justice with the least amount of communal harm. Conflict is ideally dealt with directly, without drawing people into sides and cliques rallying folks to defend or attack depending on their allegiance. Now, I have lived in the UK long enough to know how often we fail at the first step. We don't like confrontation and so, too often, we don't go to the person directly. We'd rather lick the wound or steep in our resentments until we're bitter like too strong tea. But to keep those wounds to ourselves isn't keeping the peace, it's

allowing hairline fractures to fester and grow into full on breaks that damage the connective tissue of the community all around it.

As an American I've been told more times than I can count that I'm too direct, too brash, too put-it-out-in-the-open and deal with it for British sensibilities. And over time I have adjusted to be more gentle, more oblique, more hedging, but that doesn't mean indefinitely pretending something away as if the hurt or wound or pattern of behaviour doesn't exist. That isn't what Jesus instructs us to do. Jesus says, if someone hurts us, sins against us, we are to first go to them directly. This guards against what they call in family systems theory, triangling. To triangle someone into a conflict works as follows: if Barry and Julie have a disagreement, they both go to Alan to recruit him in to mediate or act as messenger or ally rather than deal directly with each other. Alan is triangled into a conflict that isn't his. This is unhealthy communication and prematurely fractures a community beyond the initial conflict.

There is, however, an important distinction between triangling and safeguarding. And this is where I chafe a bit against this flowchart of dealing with someone who sins against you. Because to go directly to someone with your issue makes an assumption of safety - which, sadly, we can't always do. It's a different story if the sin in question is some form of physical, financial, emotional, or sexual abuse. It is different if there is a history of coercive control or spiritual manipulation. We should never ask or expect a victim to confront their abuser privately as a way of dealing with sin in the "Christian" way. Church history shows that theology has been used to cover up wrongs without proper legal accountability and often allows the abuse to continue on to others. To relationally forgive someone is not to absolve them from legal consequence. Communal confession and forgiveness are not a replacement for legal accountability.

And when no apology is made, when there are no attempts at reconciliation by the offender, it is right that a person is not welcomed back into the community. This is a distinction I wrestled with a lot in my PhD dissertation. While the church is called to welcome all people into a relationship with God without restriction, that does not translate to unrestricted welcome in the community when there is a proven risk of harm. In human community, we have to balance the desire to welcome everyone with the duty of safeguarding the most vulnerable.

There is an Anglican priest I follow named Rev. Jessie Falconer, who serves a congregation in New Zealand. When new to her parish, she was physically assaulted at a monthly community dinner. A woman began beating up her male partner in the driveway of the church, hitting him over the head. Wearing her clergy collar, she felt she had to step in to break it up and was assaulted in the process. That couple finally left, but a friend of the first woman came back into the hall and, unprovoked, punched her twice more, just to ‘finish her off’.

Rev. Jessie got a protective trespass order. This woman has never apologised and never sought reconciliation, but she asked to come to the church fair the following year. She was refused. Another year passed and again no apology, and again she asked to come to the church fair. And this is what Rev. Jessie wrote in her reflection last month about it: “I said no again. Because there has been no reconciliation. No making amends. No putting things right. Would I welcome her to the church fair? Of course. Does she need to make amends? Also, yes. Not just for me but for everyone in my community.”

She says, “Jesus is very clear about forgiveness...he tells us to be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Forgiveness does not mean access. Forgiveness does not mean accepting behaviour. Forgiveness is free. Reconciliation is earned. Jesus doesn’t ask us to pick one.”

I agree with her. Living in Christian community can be beautiful, and wonderful, and give such a sense of meaning and belonging. It can also be infuriating, and messy, and difficult, and hurtful. One does not negate the other. We can take comfort in knowing that Jesus never thought it would be otherwise. So, when we disagree, when we get hurt, when we sin against each other, we’re not newly failing at community in comparison to all the other ones who lived in perfect harmony. Those never existed, they live only idyllic imaginations. In the reality of our lived experience as part of this family, any family, we will have to navigate conflict.

So may we do our part to ask forgiveness, to seek reconciliation, and to guard the safety of all members as we work to build the kin-dom, this family of God here in this place.

Amen.

Over the summer months, the Futures Committee and Fundraising working group have continued to meet, and to have regular meetings with Roger Mears Architects as we work towards RIBA Stage 4, or 'Detailed Design' phase. This is where we really get into the specifics and finalise our plans.

We are so grateful to the committee members, and to Rev. Tara, who have all put in a great deal of time and effort at this crucial stage of the project. We are now moving apace and the end feels nearly in sight!



Project Progress

After a long delay at Westminster City Council, we finally received Listed Building Consent and Advertisement Consent in early July. This meant that our architects could start to work on more detailed design and specifications for the new kitchen and WCs at church hall level. Our resident committee chef, Eilidh, has mapped out the kitchen layout carefully to make sure it is the best use of the space we have available, and we have also now selected appliances, storage units, and lighting!

Input from Building Control (who have the final say when it comes to most matters!) has had an impact on our proposed layout at church hall level, but overall provision remains the same. We will update the plans in the church hall and on the project webpage once the revised configuration is finalised.

As part of the project, we intend to level the rear section of the Gallery so that wheelchair users can access the entire perimeter. Of course, we need to make sure health and safety rules are followed, so we need to add simple metal rails to the wooden balustrade. These have now been scoped out and added to the scheme.

If progress towards RIBA Stage 4 proceeds as anticipated, it is likely that the whole project will go to tender towards this Autumn. Once tenders are received, Kirk Session will be asked to review the options, and select a contractor to undertake the work. This selection must then be confirmed by the Presbytery of England and the Channel Islands, following which final approval will be sought from the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland. Onwards and upwards! Do keep an eye on the project website for regular updates.

Fundraising Launch

After morning worship on Sunday 19 July, we gathered in the church hall for the fundraising campaign launch for A Kirk for Tomorrow. Mary-Jannet Leith and Ross Duguid gave a short presentation about the project, explaining the principles and motivation behind it, the nitty gritty of the plans themselves, and our fundraising progress. Fundraising brochures have now been sent out to all members and friends of the church for whom we have contact details: if you haven't seen it yet, do head to our project webpage, where you can [download a copy](#).

Community Fundraising Campaign Progress

As of mid-September, we're just over half way to our £200,000 community fundraising campaign target! At our September Kirk Session meeting, our Treasurer announced that, in under two months, we have received pledges totalling £102,400 so far, including anticipated Gift Aid and match funding.

A huge thank you to those who have already pledged towards the project. If you are planning to pledge, and haven't yet done so, we would so much appreciate it if you could register your pledge soon. And do share our plans with anyone you think might be interested: the more funds we have pledged upfront, the more confident we can be that we can proceed with the works early next year.





Partners and Friends Showcase

On the evening of Saturday 12th September, we were delighted to welcome many of our partners and friends to a showcase event for A Kirk for Tomorrow - including representatives from ScotsCare, Churches Together in Westminster, Gaelic Services, St Columba's, and the Medici Choir. Rev. Tara Porr Granados, and Mary-Jannet and Chris, conveners of the church's Futures committee, gave a short presentation on our plans for our community and church building, followed by a Q & A, light refreshments and the opportunity to take home a fundraising brochure. The event was very positive, with excellent feedback for the project overall, and received a number of relevant questions and valuable input.

Trust Funding Applications

We continue to submit grant applications as deadlines arise, most recently to the National Churches Trust and Garfield Weston. Every application is slightly different, requiring varied approaches and documentation each time - so they can be hugely time-consuming. Thank-you to the sub-committee members who have helped to get these over the line!

Mary-Jannet Leith & Chris Grieve, Futures Committee Conveners

In June, the summer season and all the regular annual sporting events like Ascot, Cricket Test Matches and Wimbledon are well underway, so we decided to hold our own Games Night on Saturday 13th June. Leaving the batting sports to the professionals, we took on the more genteel game of Beetle - or so we thought! It turned out to be a rather noisy affair, with everyone hastily shaking pots of dice, then rolling their dice on to the table with great speed in an effort to get a head start on their neighbour. In order to start drawing an artistic replica of a beetle - head first, then feeler by feeler, leg by leg - you have to first roll a six. It's all about throwing the right number at the right time, of course, which can be quite frustrating if you are waiting endlessly for that one number to win that never seems to come out of the pot. However, it proved to be a fun evening for everyone.

On Saturday 27th June, we held our Midsummer Party when we were treated to a typical summer picnic with a variety of sandwiches, sausage rolls and a summer fruit bowl sweet, all accompanied by a glass of sparkling Elderflower cordial as a taste of all that is good to enjoy in summer.

On Saturday July 11th, we decided to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of American Independence Day. Our member, Steve Burnett, had recently visited the United States, and he provided us with some decorations and flags for the occasion. It was a really colourful sight of red, white and blue with the star spangled banners, and we were also treated to delicious cookies brought all the way from Florida for our delight. After tea, we were tested on our knowledge of American Presidential history and other historical events in America, which was most enlightening.



With our own King Charles III making a successful and historic visit to America and giving such a marvellous and eloquent speech to their government officials, the very momentous occasion and special relationship was well and truly recognised and celebrated both sides of the pond.

On Saturday July 25th, we held another summer-style evening. It was a very warm day, and the coolness of the church hall was welcome after hot journeys into London on the tube. We enjoyed a tea of outdoor snacks, cakes and cold drinks, which was most suitable for the day, and then enjoyed a casual evening of conversation about one another's holiday plans.

In August, we planned to have a Ramble but, with the temperatures regularly reaching the high thirties, it was felt by all that it would not be sensible or appropriate to go on a lengthy walk where shade and refreshments might not be unavailable, and so the ramble was postponed for this year.

Alison Dartnell and Margaret Ross



Crown Court Church Guild

After the summer recess, the Guild will resume monthly meetings on the first Wednesday of the month. The new theme for the year is 'Beyond the Walls', encouraging members to deepen their faith, strengthen discipleship, and step outside traditional church buildings to engage actively with their local communities and the wider world.

Do join us with your packed lunch at 12.15pm before the meeting start at 1pm. Meetings are open to everyone, so come along and join our friendly group. We look forward to your company.

Jennifer Laird

Crown Court Church was open for visitors as usual this year for Open Church on Tuesday and Wednesdays afternoons from 16 June until the end of August. A total of 214 visitors passed through the door, and all were amazed at the stunning interior of our church. Many people said that they had regularly passed the door and never realised there was a church behind it. Visitors came from all over the world - at least 19 countries - as well as from various parts of the UK. Thank you to everyone who gave up their time to make this possible.

Elizabeth Steel



In September, it's time for Open House Festival! We welcomed nearly 1,000 visitors over the 5 days we opened.

On the first Saturday of the festival, we were invited to take part for the first time in the West End Open House Neighbourhood Festival, in partnership with Westminster City Council and Harmony in Diversity. Elder and piper, Chris, led the procession of the Lady Mayor of Westminster (and a Pearly King and Queen!) into Soho Square, where the festival was based. It was a great opportunity for us to contribute a little bit of Scotland to the festival theme of "Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner".

We are so grateful to all those who volunteer to open up our church to visitors, both during Open Church in the summer months, and during the Open House Festival in September. We're always looking for more volunteers, of course! One of our regular volunteers, Norma, has written about her experience.

One of the great pleasures of volunteering during our own Open Church in the summer or Open House Festival in the autumn is hearing visitors say what a hidden gem Crown Court Church is. Our location in central London is a perfect spot, and, despite some visitors having trouble finding our building, we have welcomed people from all over the world for many years, some of whom return again and again.

There's always a mixture of people who just wander in when they see our doors open, while others specifically come to find us. During Open House Festival especially, many of the visitors have a list of 'must see' destinations for that day. Stewarding during these opportunities to show off the sanctuary of Crown Court is a great way to learn about our history and share your knowledge with others. Don't be put off if you have never done it before, as there are information sheets which can help you and these are available for visitors to read at their leisure during their time in the church. Many people like to take photos and are interested in the history and architecture. And of course, many want to know more about our striking display of stained glass windows. Then there are people who prefer to just sit quietly in the pews.

You never know quite who you are going to meet, and I thoroughly recommend spending a few hours helping with these open sessions at Crown Court. It is very rewarding, especially when our visitors are complimentary about our Church and leave with a positive and lasting impression.

Norma McGoldrick



This summer, I spent two weeks in Scotland on holiday, visiting friends in Glasgow, Perth, Forgardenny, Inverness and Aberdeen! On the first Sunday of my trip, I very much enjoyed attending a special joint service of dedication with Lower Earn Churches Together, held in the new community garden at Aberdalgie Church. The service was led by Rev. Allan Wilson, the parish minister, Rev. Brenda Elwell-Sutton, Moderator of the Presbytery of Perth, and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rev. Gordon Kennedy.

I was so inspired by the peaceful and spiritual atmosphere of the church's new green space, created through the restoration of a historic walled garden. Now, the church hosts Green Shoots, an outdoor learning and wellbeing centre, welcoming schools and early years groups, adult learners and local families, offering them opportunities to learn, connect and grow in a peaceful rural setting.

This exciting, imaginative mission project is the result of many years of prayer, planning and practical work shared by many in the congregation and local community, and it was so moving to see what true community effort can achieve.

During my stay in the Lower Earn area, I was also fortunate to visit Dunbarney church: it is a beautiful building, with a striking illuminated cross outside, and a joyful banner proclaiming the good news of Christ. Despite the many challenges in the Church of Scotland at present, there is so much energy and hope in evidence amongst the community of Lower Earn Churches Together.





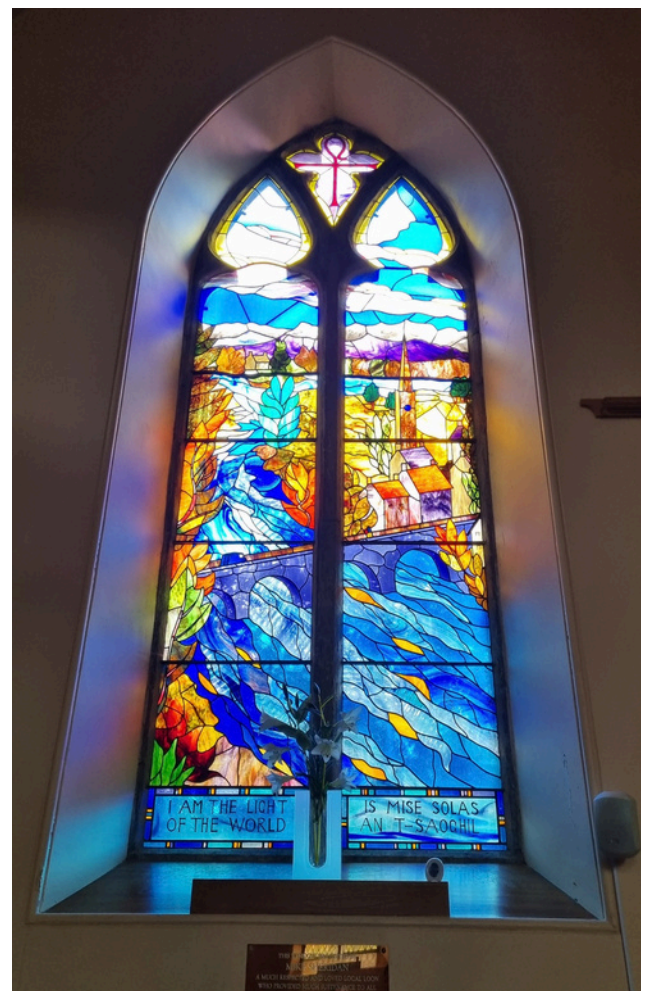
The following Sunday, Tom and I attended the morning service at Strathdon Church, part of the West Gordon Parish in Aberdeenshire.

The service, led by Rev. Simon Crouch, was a hugely moving exploration of Psalm 23 (The Lord is my Shepherd) and what it means for Christians today. The service was streamed to two other churches in the parish, with only a brief interlude when our video was lost! It is reassuring to know that all churches face challenges when it comes to streaming church services; but the results are so much appreciated.

During the service, a member of the congregation spoke very powerfully about a new initiative, which will come to West Gordon Parish soon: The Bereavement Journey. Run by churches for their communities, it uniquely offers holistic support for those who have lost a loved one, and an exploration of faith questions in bereavement from a Christian perspective.

Before returning to London, we spent a rainy day in Ballater, where we popped into Glenmuick Church in the centre of the town. I was so struck by this modern stained glass window, depicting the church and the majestic River Dee.

Mary-Jannet Leith



Finally, Saturday 13 June had arrived, and I found myself standing in a lengthy queue, waiting to get into South Station in the city of Boston to catch the special trains going to Gillette Stadium, home of the famous New England Patriots. But American Football had stepped aside for 'original' football - or soccer as they prefer to call it in North America - for a few weeks in the summer of 2026.

My holiday this year was a couple of weeks in Boston, Massachusetts, staying with friends whom I've known for many years. In a rush of patriotism at the start of the year, I'd booked the trip to coincide with Scotland's two World Cup matches, scheduled to be played there early in the tournament.

Don't forget that it had been 28 years since Scotland's last appearance at a men's football World Cup. I was lucky enough to have been working for the BBC on the TV coverage of France '98, the last World Cup for which the Scotland men's team qualified. This time, though, I was on holiday and just a fan. My holiday checklist included blue and white face paint, a rather oversized Saltire flag and a Scotland cap - essential match day items.

The day before the first Scotland game, we went into Boston city centre, and it was just brilliant. Every corner we turned, we met up with Scotland fans, kitted out in an array of Scotland football tops and t-shirts, and many in kilts. My friends, Diane and Jack, are Boston born and bred, and said they felt like visitors in their own city. Was there anyone still in Scotland?

And so back to match day 1 - Haiti v Scotland. The mood in the queue for the trains was buoyant, which was just as well as we waited for over an hour to board the train. However, once on board, the Tartan Army ramped up their singing along with bagpipes being played in many of the carriages. I did feel some sympathy for the few Haiti fans who were also travelling to the match - they did look a wee bit bewildered by all the crazy Scots men, women and children on the way to watch their beloved team.



And it was a miracle - at the full time whistle, the score was Haiti 0 – Scotland 1. We'd won! The celebrations on and off the pitch carried on for a long time, but eventually the jubilant Scots were ushered from the stadium and we all made our way back to the city centre triumphantly. A wonderful night in Scotland's footballing history.

The Tartan Army left a good impression with the folk of Boston and the surrounding area. The possibility of twinning Boston with Glasgow was discussed by those in authority on both sides of the Atlantic. The Scottish fans' enthusiasm for bagpipes and drinking beer even made the national news in the USA.

Scotland had a second match in Boston - against Morocco, a much more threatening prospect. I was lucky enough to have a ticket for this game and was really hoping for a Scottish win as it was also my birthday. The same enthusiastic fans travelled to the Gillette Stadium, and, if anything, the singing was stronger than before. The *Flower of Scotland* was tugging at the heartstrings once again, but the match outcome was not what we'd hoped for. Scotland didn't overcome the Morocco goal in the second minute of the match. Disappointment all round, and the Tartan Army left the stadium more sombre and subdued.



My holiday ended soon after, and I travelled back to London. Scotland's footballers and fans travelled to Miami to take on the mighty Brazil, which I watched from the comfort of my living room. Brazil well and truly made their point as the stronger team, beating our boys 3-0. That was to be the end of Scotland's World Cup '26, but I knew there would be many already saving for Morocco - Portugal - Spain in 2030. Being a Scottish football fan is sometimes great - especially when united behind our national team playing on the world's biggest stage. Boston '26 is certainly a holiday I will never forget.

It's the third Saturday in May – so that can only mean one thing. Not the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, or the Eurovision Song Contest – but the Crown Court Church Northern Branch Reunion!

After a number of pick-ups in Bridge of Earn, from buses coming in many directions, friends old and new were welcomed to the home of Rev Philip and Linda Majcher in Perth.

The weather was once again our friend, meaning we were able to spread out inside and outside. Some remained inside and very close to the buffet, and who could blame them! An excellent spread was, as ever, provided by Linda, The Twins and other guests. I knew better than to try and take a photograph until the puddings had been eaten!

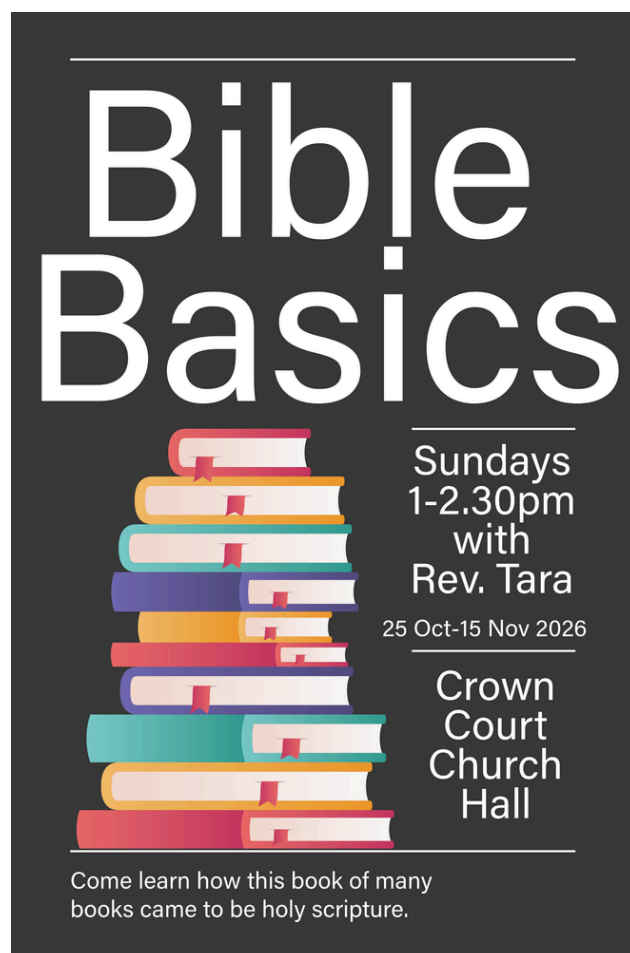
A surprise addition this year was being joined by the next generation of Majchers – with Iain and Andrew being early guests, followed by Sarah with Hugo and Theo. Sadly, none of the party were as good a football coach as Hugo wanted, but we tried!

After your correspondent had rallied following the final heartbreaking minutes of the Scottish Premiership, there was much chat of days gone by, those special 'Crown Court Moments' and looking to the future as we eagerly anticipated the induction of Rev. Tara Porr Granados. Same time, next year – you bet!



This autumn, Rev. Tara will be running a 4-week Bible study, **Bible Basics**, exploring how the many books of the Bible came together to become our holy scripture. The sessions take place after church in the church hall for 4 weeks, starting on **25th October**. Anyone is welcome - you don't have to be a member of the church, so do invite your friends, bring some lunch, and join the conversation.

On **1st November**, we will hold our annual **Thanksgiving Service**, at which we will remember loved ones lost over the past year. The choir will sing Fauré's beautiful "In paradisum" during the serving of Communion.



The lead up to Christmas is always a special season at Crown Court Church, and we would love to see you! We will be also selling Crown Court Christmas cards as always, so do look out for those after Sunday services in November.

Our **Carols by Candlelight** service is at 6.30pm on **Sunday 13th December**, and this year it is in aid of ScotsCare, the charity for Scots in London. The Crown Court choir has already started to prepare some of the carols they are singing this year - it should be an occasion to remember!

Subject to confirmation (watch this space!), we'll hold our annual **Carol Singing event for Christian Aid** at Trafalgar Square on the evening of **Friday 11th December**. Our Outreach team is working with Bloomsbury Baptist Church and the Welsh Chapel to make this year the best yet, and we'll need as many volunteers as we can to sing and to collect - no experience is necessary!

For those staying in London over the festive period, you are most welcome to our **family Christingle service** on **Christmas Eve at 2pm** - with a workshop beforehand from 1.15pm if you want to make your own Christingle!

The London St Andrew's Book Festival returns from Monday 16 to Sunday 22 November, and once again St Columba's, the Caledonian Club and Scotland House will host a week celebrating Scottish authors, books, themes and music. There is a wonderful programme this year, with something for everyone. Among the many guests are Carol Kirkwood, Andrew Lownie, Val McDermid, Jackie Kay, Alan Johnson, Colin MacIntyre, Bill Paterson, Harriet Tyce, Professor Lady Sue Black and Gavin Esler.

There will be crime and history, poetry and current affairs, science and adventure – including the remarkable story of the Maclean brothers' record-breaking rowing voyage across the Pacific last year. For the first time, the festival is also holding a Gaelic evening of words and music, featuring award-winning Gaelic poet Marcas Mac an Tuairneir and the London Gaelic Choir.

The festival will also bring together the two London Churches of Scotland together for a joint Book Festival Service at St Columba's on the Sunday morning. A festival lunch will follow, costing just £5.

Tickets are now on sale, so do have a look at the programme and book early. You can find the full programme, ticket information and details of festival membership at www.standrewsbookfestival.org. And please do help us to spread the word by telling your friends and family.

Hugh Pym



At the September meeting of Kirk Session, the Outreach and Heritage Committee proposed that the church join the Inclusive Church network.

Inclusive Church is an educational charity founded in 2003. Although originally Anglican in origin, the organisation now works with churches of different denominations encouraging them to explore ways in which they may become more inclusive. Inclusive Church's Vision Statement reads:

We believe in inclusive church – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate.

We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.

We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

We will soon join the network, and Crown Court will be listed on the Inclusive Church directory. You can also join Inclusive Church as an individual member, so do head to the website and explore the many fantastic resources there.

We invite & include YOU



Whatever your sexuality, neurodiversity, learning disabilities, mental health, gender, disabilities, ethnicity or background.



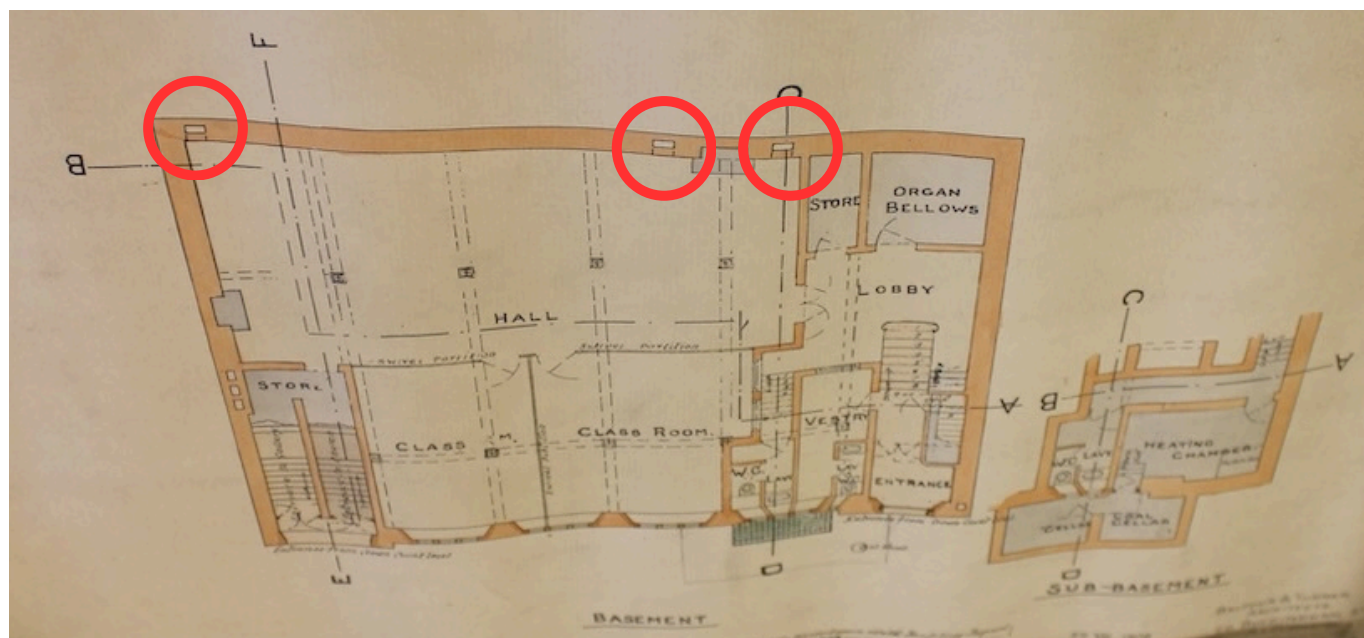
**Inclusive
Church**

An ecumenical network of churches
working together towards a shared vision.

In our preparatory work for A Kirk for Tomorrow, we continue to make interesting discoveries about our 1909 church building. The team at Roger Mears Architects has very much worked with the building, and, where possible, is making use of existing features from Eustace Balfour's original design.

One of the challenges for our mechanical and electrical engineer over the past few weeks has been establishing how to improve the ventilation in the church hall. Regulars in church will know it can get pretty stuffy at times, as we currently only have a few small panels in the windows that open. Of course, we very much wish to make the space more comfortable for all who use it, particularly bearing in mind that the summer months are increasingly hot. To achieve this, it has been recommended that we install mechanical ventilation, and, fortunately, we can make use of the fact that we still have our Edwardian passive cooling system - though not in use at present. There are 3 original ventilation shafts, running the height of the building, as well as two chimney flues, one of which we can use to ventilate the new kitchen and WCs at church hall level.

You can see the ventilation shafts on the original plan of the church hall level below. There are also a few other differences from today's layout, if you look carefully: a double staircase from the Crown Court double doors to the Sanctuary; no secondary staircase from the hall to sanctuary; and it seems that the room we now call the 'organ loft' (which still contains the organ bellows) was originally two separate rooms!



Have you ever thought you'd like to be part of our church choir? Or perhaps you'd like to just come along sometime and try it for yourself?

Everyone is most welcome to come and join a Wednesday evening choir practice in the church hall from 7.15pm to 8.45pm. We rehearse together and have a break for tea and biscuits, and a good natter, half way through.

Whatever your experience of singing or your musical knowledge, come and give it a try! You're certain of a warm and encouraging welcome. If you're not sure what voice part you would be, don't worry - that's something we can easily figure out.

We sing a wide range of music, usually one anthem during the morning service, as well as leading the congregation in singing the hymns. At the moment we're working towards our Carols by Candlelight service at Christmas, which is always a really special occasion.

If you want to find out more, chat to Robin Walker (Organist/Choir Director) or Elaine (Choir Secretary) - or anyone in the choir - and we'll take it from there.



Baptisms

12 July: Axel Beverloo

13 September: Grace Brooks

Marriages

4 July: Chloe Rigby and Lukas Koenig

11 July: Mark Beckett and Alex Botic

Pastoral Care

If you require pastoral support, please contact your Elder in the first instance. For longer term support, please contact the Pastoral Care Team either by phoning the church office or by e-mailing the minister at tgranados@churchofscotland.org.uk. All information is kept completely confidential.

Donations

We are very grateful for all the financial support the Crown Court family receives. If you would like to donate, you can place an offering in the plate on a Sunday, use our card machine as you enter the sanctuary, or donate online at any time [through our secure platform](#), Give a Little.

You can also obtain our bank details by contacting the Church office. We encourage anyone who is able to Gift Aid their donation to do so.

Church Website and Social Media

For up-to-date information about Crown Court, and to sign up for our weekly newsletter, do visit our website at www.crowncourtchurch.org.uk.

There's a calendar and a news section highlighting upcoming events, as well as a wealth of information about our church history, church groups, and wider community.

On [our YouTube channel](#), you can watch live-streams of all our Sunday morning services, which remain available for catch-up.

We also have active social media pages on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), so do follow us if that's your cup of tea.



Sunday 4 October	11.15am: Sunday Worship with Rev. Tara Porr Granados
Sunday 11 October	11.15am: Harvest Sunday with Rev. Tara Porr Granados
Sunday 18 October	11.15am: Sunday Worship with Matthew Gutteridge
Sunday 25 October	11.15am: Sunday Worship with Rev. Tara Porr Granados 1pm: Bible Basics Study
Sunday 1 November	11.15am: Thanksgiving Service with Rev. Tara Porr Granados; 1pm: Bible Basics Study
Sunday 8 November	10.50am: Service for Remembrance Sunday with Rev. Tara Porr Granados; 1pm: Bible Basics Study
Sunday 15 November	11.15am: Sunday Worship with Rev. Tara Porr Granados 1pm: Bible Basics Study
Sunday 22 November	11am: Joint service at St Columba's, Pont Street
Sunday 29 November	11.15am: Sunday Worship with Rev. Tara Porr Granados
Sunday 6 December	11.15am: Sunday Worship with Rev. Tara Porr Granados
Friday 11 December	TBC: Carol Singing for Christian Aid in Trafalgar Square
Sunday 13 December	11.15am: Sunday Worship with Rev. Tara Porr Granados 6.30pm: Carols by Candlelight
Sunday 20 December	11.15am: Sunday Worship with Rev. Tara Porr Granados
Thursday 24 December	2pm: Christingle Service with Rev. Tara Porr Granados
Sunday 27 December	11.15am: Sunday Worship with Sheena-Jane Clark



Contributions

The Chronicle is published four times a year, and the next issue will be published on 1st January, with a copy deadline of **Sunday 20th December**.

The Editorial Team welcomes contributions, suggestions, corrections and, of course, compliments. We will also be delighted to receive your news - please don't assume that we have already heard it!

Whilst we are always grateful to receive material, the Editorial Team cannot guarantee that it will be published and reserves the right to edit contributions before publication. You can contact the Editorial Team by emailing: outreach@crowncourtchurch.org.uk.

Donations

The Chronicle is available free of charge to all. Whilst we do encourage you to read your copy online, we also print a limited run of each issue for those who require a physical copy, and for visitors to Crown Court.

Any donations to cover the cost of printing (£100 per issue) are always gratefully received; please contact the Editor if you would like to make a contribution.

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