

# THE BRIDGE

SUMMER EDITION | JUNE 2026

FAITH • COMMUNITY • HOPE



## ASSEMBLY

Highlights from  
General Assembly



## BADMINTON REVISITED

A nostalgic trip



## NORWAY ADVENTURE

A fun family trip



## QUIETNESS

Absorbing peaceful  
interludes



## GROWING YOUNG

Focusing on youth



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### Kirk Roll

The current Kirk Roll stands at 198 with two new people joining our church family, namely

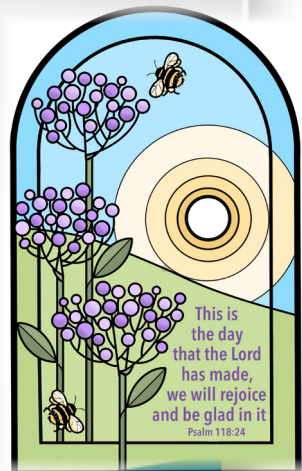
**Muriel Cathcart**

**Robert McOust**

We give them a very warm welcome and hope they will quickly feel part of our church family

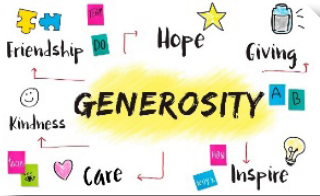
There was also the wedding of

**Hamish Elwis and Emma Howell** on Sunday 24 May 2026. We wish them in their married life.



## Editorial - A Generosity Of Spirit

I have been so encouraged by events in the church over recent times. It all started with Muthill in Bloom's plant sale and coffee morning. Then there were the Christian Aid events which did amazingly well and, most recently, we have had the Community Bus coffee morning which also saw a packed sanctuary with people enjoying coffee, homemade eats and catching up with other village folk. These events not only raise good sums of money but more importantly they



bring people together and one is made aware of how generous people can be with their time in helping with baking, setting out tables and chairs, serving coffee, selling plants or raffle tickets – whatever, all for the common good! These are such fine examples of what makes community. Within our own church family we are about to build further on such generosity of spirit with one or two newcomers to our church family taking the lead in the new Vision Group set up by the Kirk Session to look at the challenging area of our missing families and younger folk. It is to be hoped that their research and discussions will produce new strategies not only to further enlarge our church family but also that they will achieve a more balanced church family, more representative of our village and the community we seek to serve. I know they will want to consult with ideas being tried out elsewhere within the Presbytery and beyond but I also hope that many of our church family will want to contribute with their own ideas. The more we all get involved the greater the benefit to come and the easier the implementation.

There is a sign-up sheet at the church's Welcome Desk for anyone to sign that they have comments or ideas that they would like to share with the Group and it is to be hoped that many will respond. We thank **Gail Clark**, **Fiona McMichael**, **Jennifer McRae** and **Adrian Davidson** for accepting this important role on the Vision Group. We thank them for their generosity of time in undertaking this important task. Let us pray that their conclusions and proposals are met with equally generous encouragement and openness to change by our church family.

## Interim Moderator's Letter

Dear friends,

As you will now be aware, the Presbytery of Perth has agreed that Muthill Parish Church should enter a period of guardianship. Effectively, this means that we carry on as we have been doing for upwards of the past three years, in a period of vacancy. In our own case, there are advantages in this, in that we enjoy a variety of Sunday preachers and we rely on our own talents and resources, collectively, to live out the gospel message in our own community. The main disadvantage, of course, is that we don't have a designated spiritual leader around whom, in other circumstances, we would gather. If we look back to when the vacancy started and consider what has happened since we have been without a minister, we can point to a freshly developed sanctuary with chairs, carpets and fresh paint. We can point to organisations thriving as they did before and a positive spirit about the place. We can point to larger congregations and a regular supply of visitors making a point of saying how much they appreciate the welcome that they receive and the feeling of warmth from the minute that they come through the door. We can point to a visit from the Moderator. I know of no other congregation in vacancy that has run an Alpha Course. So let's continue to think positive and to be positive. God holds the future of Muthill Parish Church in His Hands and with His divine guiding hand on us, we will continue to carry out His work and ministry faithfully.

Are there challenges ahead in the immediate future? Yes there are and one that we all can see is in the age of our congregation. Actually, we are not an old congregation compared to some others that I know, but we need some younger people. The Kirk Session are responding to that and have formed a Vision Group to look seriously at how we best face up to that. Please pray for them as they set to work, get to know who they are and assist them in any way that you can. Their names are elsewhere in this magazine.

We all have a role to play in the future spiritual growth of our church. Please help the growth in any way that you think you can, offer what skills and talents you have, and let's make sure together that 'guardianship' really means something positive at Muthill Parish Church. May the Lord's blessing be with us all.

**Iain F. Paton, Interim Moderator.**

## Letter To Editor

Sir,

This time last year I remember writing to you regarding what a good idea it would be for the village to put up a life buoy, a rubber ring, at The Beach (Basin) where the River Earn takes a right angled turn to



the left and has dug out a lovely big bowl where there is almost no current and it is not very deep, so ideal for swimming.

My suggestion was taken forward and presented through the Community Council to the Estate, but sadly turned down as they did not wish to encourage swimming and it might get vandalised. Instead, they have put up more signs saying “No Swimming”. I believe in an ideal

world all children should get the chance to learn to swim and The Beach (Basin) offers a great opportunity for outdoor swimming, rather than paying for an overheated, chlorine filled, indoor pool. As with almost any sport there is always a risk and the safer one can make it the better. However to try to ban it can never be the answer especially as people can legally swim in almost all lochs, rivers, ponds, reservoirs and the sea in and around Scotland and it is a great fun, healthy, outdoor activity. Very sadly, this year during the last week or so in May there was a tragic surge in deaths in open water swimming due to the sudden heatwave across Britain and at least 17 people died. This was largely due to the shock of the very cold water which had not had time to warm up. I have no idea if there were life buoys available in any of these cases. However I do know if someone is in distress in the water, how much better it would be to throw them a rubber ring than try to help yourself and maybe get into difficulty as well. I'd love to know if any of your other readers in the village support my cause?

LC

## Assembly Focuses On Change

*“We are Facing not an Age of Change but a Change of Age”*



The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has come and gone for another year after being held in a new format over the weekend of 15-18<sup>th</sup> May to encourage more working people to take part and to reduce cost. I watched various sessions this year via the live link and, as always, found it very helpful in understanding how our national Church is continuing to deal with a range of changes and challenges. Below I have tried to summarise some of the key reports, speeches and decisions taken, but copies of all the various reports presented and videos of the different sessions are available in full on the Church of Scotland website ([www.churchofscotland.org.uk](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk)). To dip into any recordings of the sessions will give you a flavour of our traditions and the high standard of presentation of reports by the chairs of the various committees as well as the wide ranging and sometimes moving contributions from the floor.

This year's highlights included the very moving adoption of a form of apology by the Commissioners for the Kirk's historical role in slavery and the present day challenges including finance, and 70 year decline in



The recommended adoption of a formal apology for the Kirk's involvement in slavery was powerfully presented to Commissioners by Rev. Sally Foster Fulton, a former Moderator, telling about the sin of the Church and the distortion of the Bible. Following her speech, there were several moving contributions to the debate from Commissioners before the giving of an official apology was sizeably approved by the Assembly. This was then followed by Commissioners standing in silence for the reading of the apology by the new Moderator, and concluding this item of business, there was a reaction from three representatives of churches in the Caribbean and Africa who each gave telling responses on behalf of their church communities - altogether a powerful and symbolic display of unity and contriteness marking a significant end to a chapter in the Kirk's history which cannot be undone.

As for the present challenges affecting the Church, Rev. Scott McRoberts, St Columba's Inverness, made a stirring speech on finding our true identity again, one based not on titles, buildings or our status in the community but as followers of Jesus. We should speak less on the church and its buildings and much more on Jesus. Repeated General Assemblies from

the 1960s to the present have acknowledged we are not facing an age of change but rather a change of age which is seismic and rapid. So, rather than seeing the decline in membership as a challenge, we should see it as an opportunity to find our true identity again.



In the presentation of the Joint Report of Assembly Trustees and Church of Scotland Trust, it was reported that finances had improved in the short term with there being a small surplus in the past year, but the underlying trend remains challenging. There is a need to develop a sustainable model of ministry. Assembly was asked to approve the

principles of a new model of less centralisation and congregations being given more agency. “We are no longer a Church of inherited privilege but rather now the Church operates in a secular and pluralist society”. This demands a vision for growth, based on growth in faith, deepening fellowship, service, light and salt and courage to name what is no longer sustainable to let go what does not serve the Gospel and to change things that no longer bear fruit. The national church also still requires a system of sharing resources and so replacing the current “Going for Growth” programme there will be a central Solidarity Fund using weightings to allocate proportions of the Solidarity Fund to Presbyteries who will then allocate down to individual congregations.

Under the same report Assembly also gave consideration to the Scots Hotel in Tiberia. Assembly was told that the £9.5m investment in the Scots Hotel had resulted in accumulating debt of over £14.5m and it was now recommended that the hotel be leased on a 25 year lease, rather than sold as this would only achieve the equivalent of a fire sale under the present geopolitical climate. Such an arrangement which was being advanced with one interested operator would protect the Church’s interests, enable repair and upgrading, whilst maintaining our commitment to presence and purpose in the longer term. This was duly approved.

As for the report of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, there

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was division on the way forward in regard to the provision of academic partners for teaching the ministry. The FAPL report recommended the appointment of one lead academic partner, namely Trinity College in Glasgow but continuing to work also with others in a support role. The Assembly was divided on the deliverance but by a narrower majority it was approved.

This year's Assembly was concluded with a clarion cry from the new Moderator, Rev Gordon Kennedy, saying that God was calling the Church to act. It was time for the Church to get up and as Jesus followers to walk in all his ways, and to use the presence of the Holy Spirit to give full witness.

## Muthill Village Trust Update

Following feedback and requests at various community events MVT have been working with Muthill Community Council and other village groups to deliver a website for the village. We've now engaged the services of The Piccolo Project to design and build the site. The aim is to offer a platform for the community to find and share information about groups, local businesses and events. It'll also be a source of more general information about Muthill too which will hopefully be helpful to those who are new to the village and those planning to visit. We'll also be able to support groups that don't have a website of their own but could really benefit from one by creating a mini website for them within the site. MVT will be covering the costs of both the build and maintenance of the site as we really want to support all our community's groups and businesses. We've begun reaching out to groups and businesses now about their listing but if you're interested in finding out more just email us on [admin@muthillvillagetrust.org](mailto:admin@muthillvillagetrust.org)

Our Coronation Park planting project is going well and all our fruit trees and fruit bushes are now planted in and establishing nicely. Our thanks to Muthill In Bloom for liaising with PKC on the sowing of a wildflower meadow on the banking beside the new orchard. We're planning to add some complimentary native wetland loving plants to this over time. There won't be any fruit this year while everything gets established, but we're looking forward to the community enjoying a delicious selection of berries, apples, plums and pears in the years to come.

Finally just a reminder that the Muthill Sportive takes place on Sat 29<sup>th</sup> August. As ever, there are routes to suit all abilities including the popular family ride, plus you can bring your bike along in the morning for a free maintenance check. You can find out more and book at [Entry Central](#). We're always happy to welcome new volunteers too so, if you're interested in supporting on the day with marshalling or

catering then please just get in touch on [sportive@muthillvillagetrust.org](mailto:sportive@muthillvillagetrust.org). For regular updates on these projects and access to the village oil club why not consider joining MVT? It's free and easy to join. You can sign up on [www.muthillvillagetrust.org](http://www.muthillvillagetrust.org) and if the online world's not your thing we have paper copies of our membership form on the display board in the small hall in the village hall. Just fill one in and we'll do the rest, you can also choose to receive a paper copy of our newsletter.

Thanks for reading and best wishes from all at MVT.

**Fiona Cannon**

## Christians In Sport

### 1. The Christian faith is far more widespread than many people realise.



The headline finding was that three in four clubs surveyed reported Christian players in their first-team squads. For those who assume Christianity has largely disappeared from public life, football offers a surprising counter-example. Christian players can be found throughout the football pyramid, from the Premier League to the National League South. This is a huge contrast to times of the past. When the ministry began in 1976, there were believed to be only a handful of known Christian players across the professional game. Today, Christian footballers are present in most clubs.

### 2. Christians are not just surviving – they are gathering

One of the most encouraging discoveries was the extent of Christian fellowship taking place within clubs. Four in ten clubs reported regular Christian activities such as Bible studies and prayer meetings. In the Premier League, the figure rises to half of all clubs surveyed. Behind those statistics are real people. One Championship club reported up to fourteen people attending regular Bible studies. A club in National League South reported 12 attending.

More than a third of these gatherings are led by players themselves. At a time when many Christians feel increasingly isolated in their workplaces, there is something deeply encouraging about believers opening the

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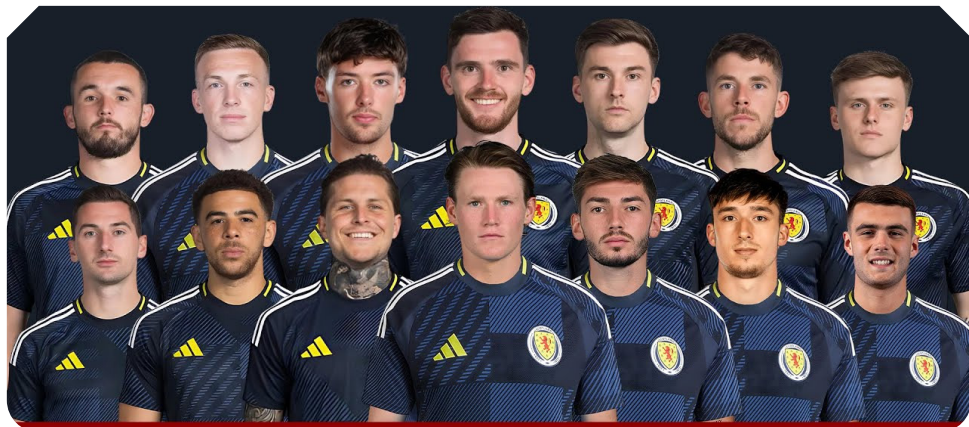
scriptures together in football clubs up and down the country.

### **3. Following Jesus in football remains costly**

The research also revealed significant challenges. Again and again, players spoke about the tension between dressing-room culture and Christian convictions. They described the pressure of wanting to belong while remaining faithful to Christ. Others highlighted the relentless scrutiny that comes with professional sport. Performance, contracts, injuries, selection and criticism can all become powerful influences on identity and self-worth. One player described feeling like an outsider because conversations and behaviours within the dressing room often conflicted with their beliefs. Another spoke about the difficulty of finding Christian fellowship because football schedules make church involvement complicated.

These are reminders that Christian footballers need more than admiration from afar. They need prayer, friendship, discipleship and support.

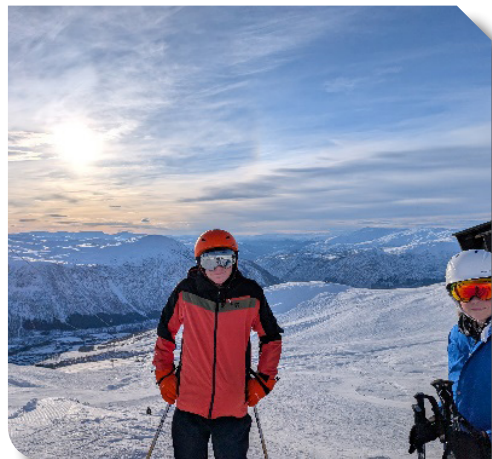
**Graham Daniels**



**Good Luck Scotland!**

## Norway Adventure In The Mountains

After a night in an airport hotel, the four of us were tired, but excited. A lady, wearing a tee-shirt with Oakhall on it, spotted us and came over to help us use the electronic check-in. Over



the next 30 minutes we met some of the other 'guests' who were off with us to ski in Norway. Everyone was friendly. Two hours later, after landing in Bergen airport, we were on a coach gliding past frozen waterfalls and lakes, sprinkled with ice-skaters. We chatted with the strangers around us, learning names, what had brought them here, what they'd left behind at home...

Over the next six days, we had the most amazing time skiing the local

mountains – most of the time in small groups with our new friends, gliding down sparkling snow under largely blue sky - no wind, no queues for lifts. The four of us had chosen to have lessons to try and improve. The two instructors, Richard and Callum, part time volunteers with Oakhall, had travelled from Gatwick with us and over the week they gave us many tips and encouraged us.



Nestled in a beautiful mountainous area, our hotel was named Helgatun – meaning the holy place. We learned that it was owned by a Christian trust and soon found that the managers, chefs and other staff simply wanted to help us enjoy a week of the very best hospitality that they could possibly provide. The food was amazing (although many of us avoided the pickled herring at breakfast) - as much as we could eat and delicious.

Our group of about 60 were from all 4

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nations of the UK and were the only guests in the hotel. In the evenings most of us went along to a Christian meeting led by a church minister who



had volunteered to come out to Norway for the week. Singing contemporary songs rather than hymns, the two Oakhall leaders or three volunteers shared personal stuff that had contributed to who they were, shared and explained passages from the bible, and prayed.

There was a sports hall where the young people and some, not so young, played table tennis or table football. There was a piano that our Thomas would play some Queen or

Abba on. Each night there was a leader-led activity - we took part in a walk along cross-country ski trails, a team quiz, and one night simply stood outside to watch the Northern Lights in wonder. There was certainly no compulsion to join in meetings or activities. Some went off on a coach tour of the fjords or dog-sledging.

But, seven days later we were at Gatwick and the hardest thing was having to say goodbye to our new friends. I doubt it's usual to be sharing hugs with so many fellow guests on a package holiday! Many of us joined a WhatsApp Group and have been keeping in touch with some of our new friends.

By the way – as well as winter sports holidays, Oakhall do 'explore the planet' holidays for the rest of the year. In the 1960's, their first expedition went off in a second-hand ambulance. But, now, you can join thousands of others for Oakhall holidays all over Europe or further afield – travelling in comfort. Some guests go as families or couples but many go on their own. Have a look!! [www.oakhall.co.uk](http://www.oakhall.co.uk)

**Adrian, Becky, Thomas, Joseph Davidson**

## Growing Young

“Growing Young” is a book that I am very thankful that Adrian Davidson has introduced to the newly formed Vision Group and myself as it is written by



a group of researchers from the Fuller Institute in the USA who undertook a four year study of churches in the USA. As one critic of the book, a Dean from Princetown University, writes: “If you are a leader who cares about helping all generations grow and thrive in your church this book should be on the top of your list” and I for one having now read it could not agree more.

It is often said that the US culture is very different from UK, but the facts presented in this book and the statistical decline in church membership are very similar in both countries and the findings based on an analysis of over 250 healthy churches, urban and rural, large and small, is illuminating and very helpful in suggesting how any church should focus on the key factors that can bring about church growth of young people - the future of our church. As the well-known Christian author John Ortberg puts it: “What is irresistible about “Growing Young” is that it is not primarily about age – it’s about hope. Through story after compelling story the authors demonstrate how prioritising the young is a church-changing strategy.”

The Book reminds us that youth should be the number one priority of every church if we serious about discipleship and building our church.

Today’s society has never been more stressful for youth. They are experiencing changes in life in a different way from previous generations, as they are maturing earlier but entering full adulthood later. Advances in technology and greater sexual freedom have added to such stress and when this is coupled with parental abandonment serious problems can be

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experienced. Young people are increasingly anxious to find their identity, to feel that they belong and to feel that they can contribute. The more



that churches empathize with today's youth and understand that relationships are all important in making young people feel comfortable within a church, and further that it is authentic intergenerational friendships that matter and through such relationships displaying how our faith gives guidance and purpose to coping with life, the more churches are likely to succeed in gaining young people who feel they belong and want to contribute. Church leadership must be able to give this and inspire others to get involved, otherwise the future is bleak.

It also states that there is a profound difference between polite welcomes and welcomes that involve deeper relationships, giving time, sharing coffees and meals and welcoming young folk into your home. That is true vibrant Christianity. Worship, of course, matters and particularly the feel good inclusive factor but it is not regarded as such a high priority as giving young people identity, belonging and purpose.

As one of the responders put it, great sermons can be found on the internet but real relationships cannot. The overall impression that comes from the book is that any church, if it really wants to grow looking to its future and flourish, whatever the makeup of the church family, it should be actively involved in giving maximum attention to the young focusing on Jesus, his life and example displaying that our faith can be vibrant. This resonates so much with what was said in this year's General Assembly of how we need to focus on Jesus and not the church.

It is a great read.

## Badminton Revisited

Between 1967 and 1991 I probably rode round Badminton Horse Trials



about 26 times and when I retired in 1991, and so was no longer competing there, I continued to go doing the BBC TV commentating along with Mike Tucker, Clare Balding and one or two others until about 2002.

Thereafter, I have tried to go most years as I love to catch up with my old friends and fellow competitors from the past and also walk the cross country course (which changes every year) before going home and watching it on TV as I feel I can't criticize it unless I've walked it! Plus I can't face the massive crowds on cross country day. Sadly the amount of TV coverage shown these days has



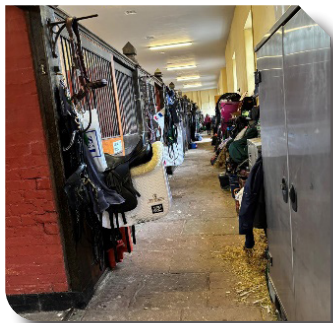
been cut down vastly since the 1970s, '80s and '90s! The sport has also changed a great deal although the basic principles are the same.

The horse trials are held in the grounds of Badminton House in Gloucestershire, the home of the Duke of Beaufort and have been held there since they were first established by the 10<sup>th</sup> Duke in 1949 to help British riders train for

International and Olympic competitions. The horse trials are made up of three disciplines, dressage on the first day, cross country on the second and show jumping on the third, all performed by the same combination of horse and rider throughout. It is, therefore, the ultimate test of both.

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Horse Trials originated in Europe from the Military where the dressage was to represent the horse on parade and public duties, followed by the cross country which represents the horse going to war and consists of 4.5ml. at the gallop over approximately 36 fixed fences showing courage, speed and endurance (this used to also include another 12 miles made up of roads and tracks and 2.5ml. of steeple chase but this has now been dropped). Then, the 3rd and final day is one round of medium height show jumping just to



prove that the horse is still fit to continue in his active duties after the rigours of war the day before. The total score of the three decides the winner.



This year, probably against my better judgement I was persuaded to take my 10 year old granddaughter (pony mad) and her mother as I still get a couple of passes which helps enormously with the expenses. Then my ex-husband, Richard, and his carer decided to jump on the band-wagon and come too! Trying to keep track of 5 of us amongst 180 to 200,000 people takes a bit of doing.....especially as my granddaughter had three main wishes:

- that Ros Canter would win (beyond my control) but I'm happy to say she did!
- that if she could meet Clare Balding that would raise her street cred by 1000% at home, thanks to Clare's part in The Traitors on TV recently!
- to see round the famous Badminton stables where all the horses live for the duration of the event and which are sadly closed to the public these days.
- Having managed to organize all three with grateful thanks to Badminton Horse Trials Director, Jane Tuckwell, and Clare Balding very kindly giving up her time a good time was had by all!

Having once been a part of it all, it is very difficult being on the outside looking in but Badminton and Burghley, our two top events, have so much going on it is impossible not to enjoy them. The tented village at Badminton, with nearly 500 trade stands selling everything from Garrard's silver, top designer clothes, hand crafted furniture to horse boxes, hot dogs and kids toys is considered to be one of the largest tented villages in the world. It functions as a massive, temporary outdoor department store that attracts over 200,000 spectators annually, many of whom never even see a horse jump a fence but come for the amazing shopping and wonderful crafts tents, large exhibition Pavilions and great hospitality with high-end dining areas, food courts and outlets, luxury life-style brands and even luxury glamping sites for many are the main attraction. Overall, Badminton is quite an experience and I think Phoebe, my granddaughter, and the rest of my party all had a very happy time.

**Lorna Clarke**

## What Is A Vision Group?

I don't know if you have noticed that we have a new Mission Statement for our church. This came about from discussions at last year's congregational study day and more recently the new wording was approved by the Kirk Session. It now reads:

*"The mission of Muthill Parish Church is to achieve a closer relationship with God and, as an ever welcoming church family, to tell all we meet about the joys and challenges of following Jesus".*

Then, this Spring, the Kirk Session went further and approved the establishment of a Vision Group to assist the church leadership in tackling some of the key issues affecting the future of our church today in delivering

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its mission. As was announced by Helen-May Bayne, our Session Clerk, in her report to the congregation at the Annual General Meeting in May the new Vision Group will first tackle the issue of missing families and younger folk and will attempt to come up with solutions to broadening the composition of our church family.

There has been a previous Vision Group in the Church which made exciting proposals for developing the church as a village Hub, Whilst much of their vision was not achieved for good reasons their inspiration and effort has resulted in our enjoying the benefit of a more flexible and comfortable sanctuary and we are further continuing the process of modernisation with a new enlarged kitchen and improved toilet facilities.

The new Vision Group will now focus on issues affecting delivery of our mission and, as such issues will normally involve change, a primary purpose of the Group is to encourage involvement of members of the church family beyond the membership of the Kirk Session. In this case with the focus of the first study being on how we engage and encourage families and younger folk into our church family, newer members of our congregation have been approached to join and lead the Group along with a couple of representatives of the Kirk Session. This, it is hoped, will secure solid proposals not only in line with our traditions but appropriate to the needs of the church seeking to serve realistically in today' society. Using a step by step process of reporting to the Kirk Session and the wider congregation, it is also hoped that this will enable change to be effected in a comfortable and acceptable way. The Vision Group will be encouraged in their task to explore their remit widely and take evidence from other churches and from members of our own congregation. It will not be standing committee but rather the Group is constituted for one study at a time and, when further studies are considered necessary by the Kirk Session, the Group will be reconstituted afresh.

We wish them in this first study and look forward to receiving their analysis and proposals in the autumn.

## Quietness

In a world filled with constant noise and distractions, it is easy to overlook the profound beauty found within moments of quiet reflection. I

sometimes feel that it could be part of the process of ageing as I certainly have to come to value quiet more and more as I have aged. No doubt the development of gradual hearing impairment that often comes with ageing has a part to play in this but, whatever, I do find myself reflecting more on the beauty and value of quietness.



For me, there are many magical expressions of quietness that come to mind such as the feeling of peace that comes from relaxing in a secluded woodland space when the sun is shining and there is dappled shade. That is a time when I really feel close to nature, and become keenly aware of what is around me such as the quiet rustling of leaves, the fascination of watching insects bustling and going about their lives on the ground and sometimes being soothed by hypnotic birdsong. At the same time, it is also fascinating to observe when night approaches in that same place how quietness can sometimes change from a soothing feeling to something that is less comfortable and at times slightly eerie. For you the reader, I am sure it is different for we all find beauty and serenity in different experiences.

Then, there are many man-made places which for me exude quiet in a different but soothing form. The splendour and reverence found in sitting quietly in a cathedral or historic church, absorbing the architecture of the

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building or the atmosphere created by sunlight dancing through the stain glass windows; even sitting in your favourite place in your home surrounded by memorabilia of a lifetime enjoying the sun or perhaps the gentle crackling of a log fire can provide a special soothing sense of quietness The hush found in museums and art galleries which enable you to lose yourself in the paintings or objects on display is just one another that comes to mind for me. But quietness has many forms for there are other places



which can be equally silent but the spell of soothing quietness is absent such as a waiting room where your mind is on what is about to happen more than taking in your surroundings - the relaxed reflection element is missing. A more recent different and newer experience of quietness for me has also been that of travelling in an electric car - a consciousness of a yet different form of quiet!

I am sure we all have our own special places of quiet that come to mind, but it also makes me ponder that when there are so much beauty and joy related to quietness why so many people find it an experience that has to be interrupted or disturbed. We live in a world of ubiquitous earphones, restaurants and cafes that pump out background music. Then, there is the propensity of some motorists and bikers have for revving their machines

in our streets and even the serenity of our villages can be stolen by the punctuating sound of agricultural bird-scaring repeater guns.

I have to accept that we all have our own different reactions to quietness but I do often wonder if those who crave constant noise in their ears are not missing the value of their own thoughts rather than being constantly given input chosen by others. It is that special value and serenity that accompanies quietness that makes so many writers and poets earnestly seek to give it expression as they explore the mystique and depth of quietness. One such example follows:

### **Whispers of Stillness**

*In the hush where silence dwells,  
Thoughts flutter softly, like autumn's spells.  
Leaves dance gently on a breath of air,  
Each whisper, a moment, an unspoken prayer.  
In tranquil spaces, the mind's eye roams,  
Searching for peace in the heart's quiet homes.  
Like shadows that play in the light's gentle weave,  
Each thought finds its solace, each sigh finds reprieve.  
Calmness envelops, a warm, tender shroud,  
In this sacred stillness, I'm lost in the crowd.  
As nature's soft chorus sings sweetly above,  
I cradle each thought, like a feather, with love.*

# The tale of the Two Sons



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS

HE ONCE TOLD A STORY ABOUT A FATHER WHO HAD TWO SONS.

THE FATHER WENT TO HIS OLDER SON AND ASKED HIM TO WORK IN THE VINEYARD

'NO I WON'T!' SAID THE OLDER SON...

...BUT THEN HE CHANGED HIS MIND AND WENT AND HELPED.

THE FATHER THEN WENT TO HIS YOUNGER SON AND ASKED HIM TO HELP IN THE VINEYARD TOO.

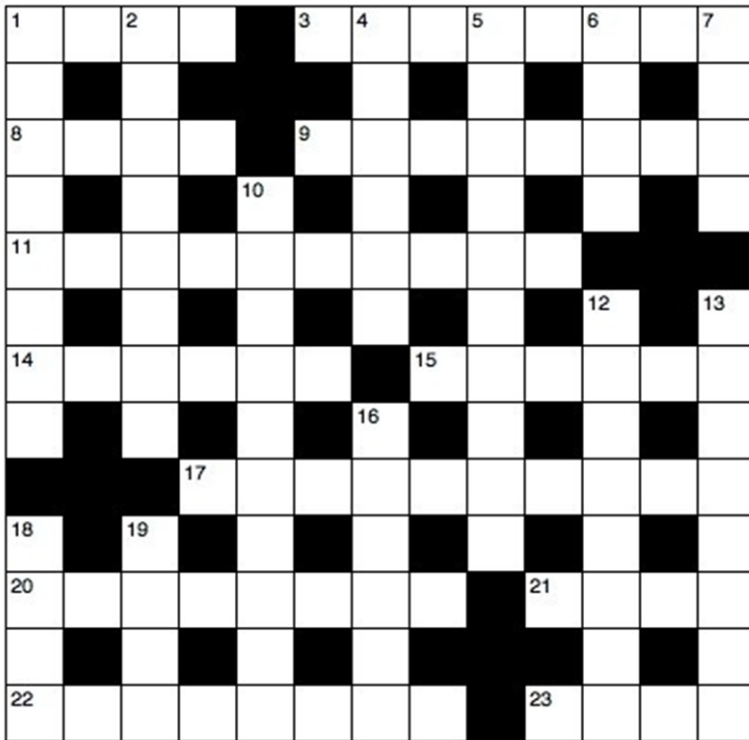
'OF COURSE I WILL!' SAID THE YOUNGER SON. BUT HE PROMPTLY FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT....

...AND DIDN'T DO A STROKE OF WORK!

'WHICH ONE DID WHAT HIS FATHER WANTED?' ASKED JESUS...

WHICH DO YOU THINK IT WAS?

## Crossword And Sudoku



### Across

- 1 Proverbs describes her as being 'of noble character' (Proverbs 31:10) (4)  
 3 'Shall we go up again — — against the Benjamites, our brothers?' (Judges 20:23) (2,6)  
 8 A descendant of Shem (Genesis 10:28) (4)  
 9 'Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my — ' (Luke 14:27) (8)  
 11 Resentment(Ephesians 4:31)(10)  
 14 In Cain(anag.)(6)  
 15 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to—' (Psalm 139:6) (6)  
 17 Intense (1 Thessalonians 4:5)(10)  
 20 Third Order of the Roman Catholic Church(8)  
 21 'At midnight the cry rang out, "Here's the bridegroom!Come out to — him"' (Matthew 25:6) (4)  
 22 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in — ' (2

Corinthians 12:9) (8)

23 'As the — pants for streams of water,so my soul pants for you, O God' (Psalm 42:1) (4)

**Down**

1 Nickname of popular First World War chaplain, the Revd G.A. Studdert Kennedy, — Willie (8)

2 Occasion of religious joy (Lamentations 2:22) (5,3)

4 'We three kings of — are' (6)

5 Allegation or charge (Jude 9) (10)

6 Kind (1 Chronicles 12:33) (4)

7 'Open your — and look at the fields!' (John 4:35) (4)

10 Also known as the Feast of Lights (John10:22)(10)

12 Area that saw the healing of two demon - possessed men and a herd of pigs stampeding to their deaths (Matthew 8:28) (8)

13 Forebear(James2:21)(8)

16 Name given to the first two books of the Apocrypha(6)

18 Esau sold his birthright for this (Genesis25:34)(4)

19 Rear(anag.)(4)

2		5				8		
			6	5	3			
9							6	
			4		6			1
3								4
7			2		9			
	2							9
			5	7	4			
		4				6		5

\*Solutions on page 33

## Kirk And Community News

### Muthill in Bloom Does it Again

It was so good to see Muthill in Bloom's annual Coffee Morning and Plant Sale being well supported in the church and grounds on Saturday 9th May. The event was firstly blessed with fine weather that morning and from just before 10 am onwards people streamed in to enjoy the coffee, tea and eats whilst the plant sale outside was very busy. The Muthill in Bloom Team did excellent work in preparation for the event and in organising the many detailed things required on the day. We are delighted to report that a great total of £4044.64 was raised. This makes all the hard work so worthwhile and will help set up Muthill in Bloom's plans for taking part in the Beautiful Scotland Competition this summer in its 60th year.



It was also good to see the new buggy make an appearance. Looking very smart and already much appreciated it will be used for watering the many plants displays around the village, transporting soil, and taking items to the recycling centre. Many congratulations to Susan and her MIB team!

## Christian Aid Week 2026

Our Christian Aid Team did very well this year with two events to mark Christian Aid Week 2026. These were led and organised excel-



lently by Fiona Macmichael, who took over as our church's Christian Aid Coordinator from Alison Hockly who had done such sterling work in previous years.

With a new and enlarged Christian Aid Team, there was firstly the Big Brekkie on Communion Sunday, 10th May, which went off to a resounding success with the

Bruce Hall packed to its limit. With added items such as cinnamon buns as well as the traditional bacon and sausage filled rolls, there was great chatter and fellowship resulting in a bit of effort to get people into the sanctuary for the morning service. Thanks go to several new members of the team who contributed to the arrangements, including Katherine Dandridge's Wellnest Wellbeing organisation in Willoughby Street which sponsored most of the food on the breakfast menu, with Gail (veggie sausages), Irene (juice), Susan (Bloomers' flowers) and Donald, Mathew, Alison and Sandy helping additionally.

Then, on the following Friday evening, 15th May, with another good attendance of 30 plus we had a fun night of quizzing, organised by Mike and Eleanor Dove and the Christian Aid Team. There was the usual scratching of heads and exasperations from memory loss found at such events, as Quizmaster, Mike, entertainingly took us through the evening's questions. With lots of laughter and good humour, added to by superb eats and drinks, a most enjoyable evening was had by all. It was also great to note that both events produced £882.13 which, with Gift Aid still to be added on, will now go to Christian Aid.

## Kirk And Community News

### Church Family Summer Rambling Group

Despite the fact that the weekend of 9-10th May was already jammed full of church events, the new Summer Rambling Group also held its inaugural walk on Sunday 10th May, and we were very pleased to have 13 ramblers. The first walk was round the village of Muthill itself finishing with a cream tea in the church. Each participant was given a leaflet on key historical points of interest and it was great having Donald Hood as one of the walkers as he filled in on where there had been shops and pubs as we walked along the



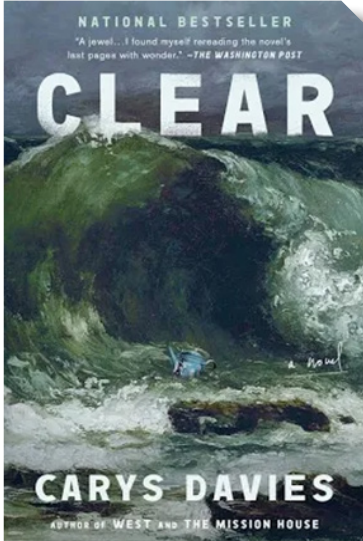
main streets. Starting at our church after noting the history of our own church building the group first ventured into the Old Church and its graveyard which had been used up until the present building was completed in 1828. It was so interesting to note the inscriptions on several gravestones of the many people who had died young and also the common family names of the time. Afterwards, we sauntered along Willoughby Street, up past Highlandman Park and the Petrol Station, then turning up Lintibert Road to the fields beyond, through the woods, over Thornhill Road, along the beautiful hilltop path, with fine view of the Strathearn valley, down through the golf course and finally descending through the fields adjacent to Pitkellony House back onto Drummond Street and much needed refreshment.

It was a longer walk than originally planned with the many stops of historical interest but we all made it intact after two hours back to the church and definitely ready for a seat and a cream tea! It is fair to say that it was enjoyed by everyone and with several very different walks planned to come over the summer, it is hoped that even more people will pick up a leaflet on the different walks from the Welcome Desk and decide to join us. All remaining walks will not be more than 1.5 hours in total with a café stop usually at the end.



## Book Club

It is so true that Book Clubs, if you dare to join one, not only provide great fellowship and the impetus to read more, but their review meetings also provide such great insight into different interpretations of reading the same book. This was certainly true of the Book Club's latest choice of *Clear* by Carys Davies. Meeting for our review meeting on Friday 8th May, we had one of our most stimulating discussions to date. The book itself was set on a very northerly island off Scotland at the period of the clearances. For a comparatively short novel it was found very much to be a page turner with fascinating revelations on the times of the clearances, the disruption of the Church of Scotland and the creation of



the Free Church and how loneliness and language barrier can impact on relationships. Our next choice or reading which will be reviewed shortly before the publication of this edition of the magazine will be *The Bookseller of Inverness* by SG Maclean. We always meet 4-5 weekly on a Friday afternoon. If you are interested, there is a leaflet on the Club at the Welcome Desk in church, and friends beyond the church are always welcome.

## Kirk And Community News

### Kirk Session Meeting, 9th June

The Kirk Session held its latest meeting on 9th June. Amongst items discussed was the possibility of our joining discussions with Crieff and Mid Strathearn as they explore linkage. Whilst the position of Muthill Kirk Session remains that it has accepted a future linkage with Ardoch and Blackford, with Perth Presbytery being more fluid in its thinking on potential groupings, the Kirk Session feels that, if allowed by Presbytery, it should be part of wider discussions which might affect us. Presbytery will also be asked for a more detailed briefing on guardianship, which has now been approved for Muthill, to ensure we are aware of the various options for ministry available to us during the period of guardianship.

With regard to our church building, Graham Donaldson, our Property Convener, gave a full update on the current building project to upgrade our kitchen and toilet facilities. This building part of the project is currently estimated to last around 5 weeks (into July). The kitchen will then need to be fitted and the Bruce Hall repainted. Quotes have also been obtained for re-flooring and improved lighting in the Bruce Hall with further consideration being given to improving the acoustics. Whilst the entrance lobby has been freshly painted with improved lighting, the inner lobby remains to be done and commitments have already been made to have this work undertaken. The overall costs of the current building project are likely to be around £100k for which the necessary approvals and budgeting have been done.

The meeting also noted that the Vision Group had been established and that they had had their first meeting. There was a brief report from the Session Clerk on their inaugural meeting and she made it clear that the focus on youth and families would become the top priority for the Kirk Session in leading the church forward. The Kirk Session will next meet in early September.

## Muthill Community Transport Group

Congratulations to the Trustees, drivers and helpers who made the MCTG coffee morning in the church, held on Saturday 30th May, such a success! Since its inception a couple of years or so ago the Commu-



nity Bus service has steadily grown in stature, with its priority runs for hospital appointments, as well as shopping trips and the occasional social outings. One only has to read the entries on Whatsapp to appreciate how much it is already valued by its members and cer-

tainly it has transformed an important part of life in our village. Great thanks go to the trustees and the volunteer drivers who give of their time to ensure that the service always runs smoothly and plan effectively for the Group's future. It is also good to see them continuing to use the Church as their hub.

The coffee morning did well raising over £1100 towards the Group's funds whilst thanks are due to Perth and Kinross Council for maintaining and fuelling the bus for its trips.

It was also good to see Muthill Community Council using the occasion to survey villagers on their views with regard to traffic problems in the village. Despite the reduced speed limit introduced by the Scottish Government it remains clear that there are still many concerns about the speed of some cars transiting the village.

## Kirk And Community News

### New Tai Chi Exercise Class to Start in Autumn

With our Live Active Exercise Class having been in abeyance since early 2026 due to our trainer, Kirsty Ballingall, suffering a ligament rupture, the future of this class has been confused and our regular members of the class have sadly lost out for some time. Because of this and the uncertainty of resumption, enquiries were made as to the possibility of the popular Crieff Tai Chi Class running a class in Muthill Parish Church. This has now been agreed and it will start and be held weekly in the church on a Thursday morning from 3rd September at 10.30am. This should mean that church members and their friends will have a choice of different types of exercise at a comparative cost. Several may enjoy both as they provide complimentary experiences. The Live Active general exercise class will continue on Tuesdays starting at 2.15pm.

The Live Active Exercise Class focuses on mobility, balance and strength and is ideal for those looking for exercise at a slower pace and less impact. Tai Chi is highly rated by for all age groups and ability levels and is considered particularly helpful in that gentle movements help lower stress, promote mindfulness and provide a deep sense of well-being. Participants report feeling more supple, improved balance and overall energy flow. Iain Naylor's Tai Chi sessions start with Qi Gong warm-ups followed by the simplified Wudong 9-posture form. Sign-up sheets for both classes will be available from mid June at the Welcome Desk on Sundays and otherwise booking a place in either class can be made through [macahiph@gmail.com](mailto:macahiph@gmail.com) or by telephoning 07825544225. There is a slight difference to payment for each class with the Live Active Class being payable weekly (currently £4 or monthly in advance (£20)), whereas the Tai Chi Class will be monthly in advance (£20). Places are limited to 16 in each class.



# CONCERT

BY

**MUTHILL COMMUNITY CHOIR  
& FRIENDS**

**SATURDAY JUNE 20**

**6PM**

**MUTHILL VILLAGE HALL**

**ENTRY FREE**

**(Donations welcome)**

## Sudoku Solution:

2	6	5	1	9	7	8	4	3
4	8	7	6	5	3	9	1	2
9	1	3	8	4	2	5	6	7
8	5	2	4	3	6	7	9	1
3	9	6	7	1	5	2	8	4
7	4	1	2	8	9	3	5	6
5	2	8	3	6	1	4	7	9
6	3	9	5	7	4	1	2	8
1	7	4	9	2	8	6	3	5

## Crossword Solution:

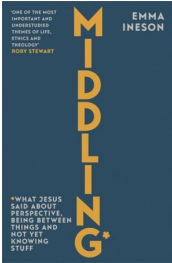
### ACROSS:

1, Wife. 3, To battle. 8, Obal. 9, Disciple. 11, Bitterness. 14, Niacin. 15, Attain. 17, Passionate. 20, Tertiary. 21, Meet. 22, Weakness. 23, Deer.

### Down:

1, Woodbine. 2, Feast day. 4, Orient. 5, Accusation. 6, Type. 7, Eyes. 10, Dedication. 12, Gadarene. 13, Ancestor. 16, Esdras. 18, Stew. 19, Area..

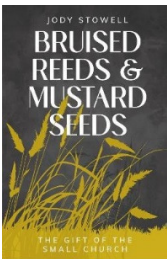
## Book Reviews



### **Middling – what Jesus Said About Perspective, Being Between Things and Not Yet Knowing Stuff By Emma Ineson, SPCK, £12.99**

From St Augustine to Shakespeare, and from the wisdom of Scripture to the example of Jesus Himself, many of our greatest voices have praised the virtue of moderation. In *Middling*, Emma invites readers to rediscover the creative, faithful power of living in the middle. The middle is where most of us spend much of our lives - between certainty and doubt, conviction and compassion, what has been lost and what is yet to be found. Yet we are often taught to apologise for this space, to rush toward extremes or easy answers. *Middling* challenges that assumption, revealing the middle as a place of integrity, nuance, and deep humanity.

Emma reflects on the difficult questions faced by leaders and disciples alike: when to speak, when to remain silent, and how to hold tension without losing hope. At the heart of the book is Christ as the ultimate "middle" figure, holding all things together. In choosing to dwell intentionally in this space, *Middling* shows that the middle is not only fruitful - but quietly, profoundly joyful.



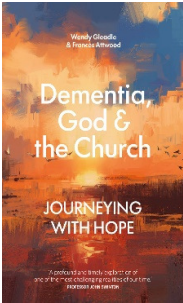
### **Bruised Reeds and Mustard Seeds - The Gift of the Small Church By Jody Stowell, Canterbury Press, £12.99**

At a time when churches across denominations face a steady decline in attendance, smaller congregations often find themselves overshadowed by the push for growth and numbers. While larger 'Resource Churches' are praised for their expansion, the true value of the smaller church is frequently overlooked. But what if there's a unique gift in these smaller communities?

Jody Stowell invites you to explore how, in the race for growth, we may be missing the deep significance and essential role of smaller congregations. As anxiety about survival and financial security spreads throughout the church, local churches and their leaders bear the

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burden. Yet within these smaller churches lies a richness, resilience and spiritual depth that is often lost in the noise. This is a call to rediscover the profound worth of smaller congregations and recognise their vital place in the future of faith communities.



**Dementia, God and the Church: Journeying with hope**  
**By Wendy Gleadle and Frances Attwood, BRF, £12.99**

Dementia is one of today's most feared health conditions, and Christians with the condition may also worry about losing their faith and their connection to God. However, there is still hope: those living with dementia can still find meaning in their life and their faith.

Written by two practitioners in this field, *Dementia, God and the Church* aims to show how person-centred approaches to dementia can provide hope. Wendy Gleadle first examines the difficulties of maintaining religious beliefs as cognition declines, and the implications of this if faith is equally emotional as cognitive. She explores other forms of spiritual awareness, such as relationships, the arts and creativity. Frances Attwood asks how churches can better support those living with dementia, through examining what they and their families and carers find helpful and want most. Throughout, space is given to first-hand stories of those with dementia, those working with them and those caring for them.

A Prayer for the Summer  
Heavenly Father, Saviour Jesus and Holy Spirit,  
protect us from our weaknesses  
and deliver us from despair.  
We look to you in our suffering,  
and raise our voices in worship.  
All praise is given to your name, amen.



**Our Mission** in Muthill Parish Church is to achieve a closer relationship with God and, as an ever welcoming church family, to tell all we meet about the joys and challenges of following Jesus.

Registered Charity  
Number  
SC004984

### Church Contacts:

Address: Station Road, Muthill, Crieff PH5 2AR  
Church website: [www.muthilparishchurch.co.uk](http://www.muthilparishchurch.co.uk)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/muthillchurch](http://www.facebook.com/muthillchurch)  
Email: [muthillparish@yahoo.com](mailto:muthillparish@yahoo.com)  
Bridge Submissions: [macahiph@gmail.com](mailto:macahiph@gmail.com)

### Useful Telephone Numbers

#### Emergencies:

NHS 24	111
Emergency	999
Water	0800 0778 778
Floods	0345 988 1188
Environment	01738 476476

#### Hospitals:

Crieff Comm.	01764653173
PRI	01738623311
Ninewells	01382660111

#### Crieff Medical Centre:

Blue Practice	01764652283
Red Practice	01764652456
PKC:	01738 475000

#### Church of Scotland:

Perth Pres.	07596868064
Central HQ.	01312255722

#### Police:

Emergency	999
Non-Emergency	101
Action Fraud	101



Our Cover theme for this edition is “**General Assembly**”

(Photo from Church of Scotland website)

Thanks go to Raffie for sourcing the graphics and helping in the production

### Our Aim

The Bridge seeks to give updates on church activities and to be thought provoking on issues affecting delivery of our mission

**Submission Deadline for Next Edition**  
**Friday 7 August 2026**