

## Friendship and relationship

Visit to a Borders congregation enables a Lebanese minister to enjoy Scottish hospitality and share some of her challenges.



EARLSTON Parish Church hosted members of their twinned congregation from Tripoli in north Lebanon for a week.

Minister, the Rev Rola Sleiman and her nephew Jack were able to take part in several events in Earlston and around the Presbytery of Lothian and Borders, and enjoy some Scottish hospitality. They also shared some of the difficult situation that the people of Lebanon are facing at present.

Rola, together with members of the Earlston congregation, led a service of

communion to round off the week.

The partnership shows that relationship and friendship are at the core yet it has allowed an opportunity for the community to engage with the church in supporting Tripoli Congregation and the various projects they are engaged with.

Rola became the first female Christian minister in the Middle East when she was ordained by the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon in 2017. The twinning with the Earlston congregation, in the Borders, was agreed in the same year. ■

**Welcome** to the Life and Work monthly newsletter, a free resource helping Church of Scotland members stay up-to-date with everything going on in the Church and its partners.

Each month there will be exclusive features, news and updates from Church organisations.

The newsletter is free to download from [www.lifeandwork.org/newsletter](http://www.lifeandwork.org/newsletter). Feel free to share with church members, friends and family, and get in touch if you have any comments or suggestions.

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# Seeds for Growth

Hannah Sanderson, Church of Scotland Programme and Innovation Manager, introduces the Seeds for Growth fund and explains how churches can find out more.

SEEDS for Growth launched in 2023. We aim to distribute £25million over the next seven years to projects, initiatives and congregations working in one or more of these areas:

- Developing mission through new worshipping communities
- Developing and nurturing faith in those under the age of 40
- Fostering discipleship and revitalisation within established congregations, with the aim of growing the existing congregation or developing a new worshipping community.

It is exciting to look around and see where God is moving and join in: new ways of being together, different expressions of church, both gathered and scattered. Research shows that small contextually relevant groups of Jesus-followers reaching out to their community to spread the good news are the most successful in connecting with others and growing new believers. Seeds for Growth wants to support you as you create space for God to move in fresh and surprising ways.

We have four levels of funding from £1000 right up to £100,000 per year for three years potentially renewable up to five. Whether you are looking for a small amount, perhaps to run a one-off event or try something out, or whether you have a well-established project to take to the next level, Seeds for Growth can help.

Ecumenical work is encouraged, as is partnering with your community – we just need the Church of Scotland somewhere in the mix. You can apply


through a congregation, as a group of churches, a presbytery or even a group of presbyteries.

Amongst others, we have supported a market garden with monastic rhythms of worship, crafting discipleship groups, online youth work, pioneer training, church for those with additional support needs, youth ministry training and rural church plants.

More information can be found on our pages of the Church of Scotland website. We are also visiting each presbytery to hear about your hopes and find ways to encourage and equip

you. Our next meeting will be in Fife on Wednesday September 11.

We will be in Forth Valley and Clydesdale on Wednesday September 18, online with Clèir Eilean Ì on Wednesday October 2, in Perth on Thursday October 3, Lothian and Borders on Saturday October 5 and online with the Presbytery of England and the Channel Islands on Saturday November 30. Keep your eyes on Life and Work for booking links across the autumn.

For more information contact the Seeds for Growth team by emailing [grants@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:grants@churchofscotland.org.uk) 



**Christ, Crafts and Cakes** is running as a pilot scheme with funding from Seeds of Growth as part of a new initiative at Wardie Parish Church.

The first stage started in May 2024 with an initial seven week programme. The group aims to run as described: Christ, crafts and cakes, with time for Christ in a short led reflection, time for crafts (taught and participants' own work) and time for cakes and a cuppa.

In a short space of time the group has reflected on how different experiences create different ways of expressing faith, how we are always learning, how anything can be difficult at first but practice makes it easier, how faith can help us in different situations and so much more.

As a pilot it's definitely taken this initial stage to get what feels like a good rhythm and atmosphere, but already we're looking forward to the autumn term, and to using the time to try out more new things.

**Mo Brand**, youth worker, [Wardie Parish Church](#)

**2024 marks twenty five years of the Scottish Parliament, and also the [Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office \(SCPO\)](#), which exists to build fruitful relationships between the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Government, and religious groups in Scotland.**

The SCPO enables Scotland's churches to engage effectively in the political process through updates and briefings to MSPs and MPs, to faith groups, and by bringing people together for dialogue.

To mark a quarter century of this work we are joining with the Centre for Theology and Public Issues at the University of Edinburgh to organise a day of reflections, perspectives and visions with some of the key people involved from the early years, as well as the current day.

The event will take place on September 4 at the General Assembly Hall in Edinburgh, and will include key note speakers and panel discussions as well as an opportunity for ecumenical worship and refreshments.

Tickets and more information are available at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/devolution-25-tickets-934555389327>

**The Church Service Society's Annual Study Day will take place on Thursday October 24 at St Drostan's Church, Markinch, and will be themed on pilgrimage.**

It will include contributions from Dr Bess Rhodes of the University of St Andrews, who will offer the historical perspective of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages and early modern times, and the Rev Dr Conor Fegan, minister of the Heart of Fife Parish (which includes Markinch), who will discuss the significance for the Church of the current growth in pilgrim routes.

The afternoon will feature a choice of seminars, led by the worship leader (and past president of the Church Service Society) John Bell, Felicity Burrows and Lorraine Orr of the Church of Scotland, the Rev Dr Richard Frazer, author of *Travels With a Stick*, and Wendy Lloyd, pilgrim guide of Mull Another Way and communications manager with the Iona Community.

The day will also include a pilgrim lunch based on medieval recipes, and a tour of the 12th century church.

For further information, email Douglas Galbraith on [dgalbraith@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:dgalbraith@churchofscotland.org.uk)

**The annual Iona Community Lecture will take place on Friday October 25, 7:30 - 9pm, on-site and livestreamed at New College, Edinburgh**

In this thought-provoking lecture, Simeon Mitchell and Paul Morrison will expose some of the unsustainable assumptions at the heart of current economic approaches. Drawing on biblical insights and examples of local initiatives that challenge conventional economic thinking, they will explore how we can all contribute to building an economy that enables the flourishing of all life.

Simeon Mitchell and Paul Morrison are part of the Joint Public Issues Team, which helps the Baptist, Methodist, and United Reformed Churches work together for peace and justice. The Church of Scotland is an associate member.

On-site attendance is £10, and there is a suggested donation of £5 for online viewing. Register at [iona.org.uk/iona-learn](http://iona.org.uk/iona-learn)

## What's On

**Celebrating Calling**

**September 4, 5.30-7.30pm,  
New Town Church, Edinburgh**

Run by the Church of Scotland's Towards Ministry Team, this event is for anyone exploring whether they are experiencing a call to any of the recognised ministries in the Church.

To register, email

[ministry@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:ministry@churchofscotland.org.uk) or call

0131 225 5722 and ask for the Towards

Ministry Team. More information at

[https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/events/celebrating-](https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/events/celebrating-calling)

[calling](https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/events/celebrating-calling)

**Mental Health Friendly Church  
Training Day**

**September 7, 10am-4pm**

**Trinity Church of Nazarene, Perth**

The day will explore our understanding of emotions and a theology of mental

health, looking at the mental health continuum and explore how the church can eradicate stigma, as well as

consider our response as individuals

and as churches. The training will be

led by Lynette Brooks, Relationship

Manager and Bec Raynes, Scotland

National Development for Kintsugi Hope.

Book at <https://kintsugihope.com/joinus>

**Faith and the Future of Scotland  
September 27, 8.30am-5pm**

**Parliament Hall, St Andrews**

An engaging discussion on the role of faith in shaping the future of Scotland.

Funded by Scotland's Future Series and

organised at the School of Divinity of the University of St Andrews, with insightful

keynote talks from prominent speakers

and thought-provoking panel

discussions.

For more information visit

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/faith-and-the-](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/faith-and-the-future-of-scotland-tickets-981978683677)

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## In September's Life and Work

### Bibles and Buildings

The Guild's new partner projects

### A Time to Reflect

The season of Creation Time

### 30 Years of Fairtrade

In the month of Fairtrade Fortnight, how the movement is celebrating a major anniversary

### 'The Gospel of Grace'

Interview with Emmanuel Murangia, Tearfund Director for Rwanda

### Our Presbyteries

The Presbytery of England and the Channel Islands



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## The Big Picture

Aird Asaig, Isle of Harris, by Bill Kean



**Editor:** Lynne McNeil. **Deputy Editor:** Thomas Baldwin. **Features Writer:** Jackie Macadam

**Business Manager:** Dianne Sanderson. **Administrator:** Melissa Grimley

Life and Work, Church of Scotland, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN. Scottish charity number SC011353