

## Weekly Newsletter: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024

### Reflection: The Need for New Home Groups

By Joe Barnard

Here are some questions that I think about on a Monday morning: How do we shift from being a church of 100 to a church of 150? How do we make sure that longstanding members are looked after while new people are welcomed and integrated into the HEC community? How do we make sure that we continue to be an intergenerational church – not just a congregation where people of different ages attend – but a fellowship in which people of different ages interact and befriend each other? How do we make sure that the needs of members are known and cared for? How do we build a network of small groups that is sufficient to make room for all of the people coming into the congregation? How do we find contexts in which new believers are able to ask questions about the Bible without feeling ashamed by what they do not know or understand? How do we train up new leaders who feel competent to take on more responsibility in the church? This is the stuff that comes to my mind as I drink a first cup of coffee.

Now, a vital part of the answer to all of these questions is home groups. Home groups are one of the primary means we have to provide mutual care, to build new friendships, and to train up additional leaders. The stronger our home group ministry is, the healthier will be our discipleship, fellowship, and pastoral care. At the same time, if we are careless not to build a sufficient trellis for our home group ministry, the organic life of the church will eventually suffer as a consequence.

I mention all of this because we are in a season of needing to reorganise our home groups. I realise that, for some, this will be difficult news. One of the strengths of our current groups is the degree to which group members love each other. Many of us would happily live out several more years without feeling any desire for groups to be reshuffled. On the one hand, this is a reason to give thanks. As Ps. 133 says, it's a genuine blessing whenever brothers and sisters dwell together in unity. Yet, on the other, there is a potential danger in groups becoming too tight. Churches are open-door communities in which new people are constantly entering. A challenge facing any growing church is making sure that there is room for new faces to join settled groups of friends. If we are honest, a lot of our home groups do not currently have this capacity. What has happened over the last year or so is that a few groups have swelled in size while others have been stagnant. This is not a healthy model. If our congregation is indeed growing, this vitality should be feeding into all of our groups. We should all be experiencing the privilege of feeling engaged in the work of discipling and caring for the new members of our church family.

There are other difficulties in the current arrangement of home groups as well. A lot of our groups do not have a healthy mixture of ages and backgrounds. This cuts against the intent we have to be an

intergenerational church. Personally, I hope we forever resist the temptation to segment the congregation into silos of old, young, and whatever exists in-between. Just as the gospel eliminates the barrier between Jews and Greeks, so it also ought to remove the distance between teenager and retired. This means that all of our home groups should represent the beautiful mosaic of diversity that is the emerging Holyrood Evangelical Church.

And so, for these reasons and others, the session will be prayerfully preparing to relaunch new home groups in the Autumn. The plan will be to begin to draft new groups over the summer, to have a campaign in August and September to recruit new people to sign up to take part, and, finally, to launch the groups in October. It's worth mentioning here that this reorganisation of home groups will coincide with a change in our weekly schedule as a congregation. As of late Summer, we will be going back to a pattern of having a weekly Sunday evening service. This means that, when home groups restart, they will meet (in most cases) on Wednesday nights on rotation with the prayer meeting. The schedule will be the following: prayer meetings on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> (when there is one) Wednesdays of the month; home groups on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.

I realise that there will be lots of questions in people's minds as they hear this news. My encouragement is for everyone to allow their minds to settle on one main question. It is this: How can I be prepared to join a new home group? In truth, a new home group is a new opportunity. It's a chance to draw close to new friends, to care for new needs, and to disciple new Christians. Let's not be afraid of such an opportunity. Instead, let's go into October believing that, if we expect great things, that God will do great things amongst us – not least within our home groups.

## Children and Youth Prizegiving – this Sunday

This Sunday we'll have our annual Creche, Sunday Club and Youth prizegiving. It will take place straight after the morning service so please stay in your seats after the benediction!

## Missional Planning Morning + Picnic

This Saturday the Mission Team is organising a strategic planning morning. The hope is to plan a calendar of local missional events for the next year (Autumn-Spring). Anyone interested is welcome to come. The plan is to have a bacon roll at 9.30am and then break into small groups for brainstorming and feedback. We'll think strategically about how to reach specific groups in the area as well as how to make use of strategic seasons such as Freshers Week, Christmas/Easter, etc. The planning and prayer will be done by 12pm.

We'll then head out to the park for a picnic (bring your own) and games. Everyone is welcome for the entire morning or just for the picnic.

## Join SASRA in Edinburgh - Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July

On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30pm for 7pm, Scripture Readers together with HQ staff, will be sharing about their work 'behind the wire'. There will also be an opportunity to meet some new Scripture Readers, as well as to hear about their evangelistic outreach to performers of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

**Location:** Ferniehill Evangelical Church, Edinburgh, EH17 7AA

## Finished at last!

By Saheb Borgall



During Phil and Euan's time, for the Christmas appeal, Holyrood Church twice gave us a large amount to build a Church building in Chikkerur of Karnataka State, where we have one of our mission fields. Euan visited that place once.

It took longer due to Covid and a shortage of resources. By His grace, on the 6th of June 2024 we dedicated the building for His glory and want to thank you all for the generous gift

which was given to us without asking for its accountability. I am grateful indeed to you all.

This building will serve during the week for running the creche and Fridays and Sundays for Church service.

## Summer Holidays and Pulpit Supply

Joe will be on holiday for three Sundays in June and July and is speaking at the Moray Convention in August. Here's a note of who will be taking our services while he's away-

Date	Morning	Evening
30 <sup>th</sup> June	David Nixon (Carrubbers Christian Centre)	Jon Gemmell (Cornhill Scotland)
7 <sup>th</sup> July	John Tellis (Word of Life UK)	Caleb Shocklie (Church Planter in Meadowbank)
14 <sup>th</sup> July	Jon Gemmell (Cornhill Scotland)	Jon Gemmell (Cornhill Scotland)
4 <sup>th</sup> August	Communion Service - Bob Akroyd (Free Church of Scotland/ ETS)	Steven Randall (Free Church of Scotland/ ETS)

**There will be no communion in July and Bob Akroyd will take our communion service at the beginning of August.**

The prayer meetings will continue to be in person (with an online option) during July and August. There will be no refreshments beforehand over the summer.

For any pastoral matters when Joe is away, please contact one of the elders (Aaron Allen, Nick Archer, Alex MacDonald, Murdo Macleod, Mark Malaczynski, Robert Nelson, Alasdair Roberts, Andy Scott, Ernie Shippin, John Stewart or Roy Tatton)

Liz will be on holiday from Monday 8th July until Monday 22nd July. There will be no newsletter or prayer bulletin for these two weeks.

## Summer Appeal 2024



**Summer Appeal 2024**

**Hannu & Hazel Sorsamo**  
Finland

**Lorna Ferguson**  
Japan

**James Stewart**  
Singapore

*We-Life Bible Translators*

**To contribute please use the bank details on [holyroodevangelical.org](http://holyroodevangelical.org) (use reference 'Summer Appeal'), send a cheque to our treasurer, Nick Archer, or speak to your elder.**

The summer appeal is open for 2024 and will go towards the support of our three overseas missionaries – the Sorsamo family in Finland, Lorna in Japan and James in Singapore.

The church bank details can be found [here](#) and please use the reference 'Summer Appeal'.

Cheques (made payable to Holyrood Evangelical Church) and cash in an envelope marked 'Summer Appeal' can also be placed in the offering box or given to Nick Archer.

## CARE – engaGE24

Following the Prime Minister's announcement of a July 4th election, CARE have launched a dedicated election website, [engaGE24](http://engaGE24)! It has policy primers, video interviews with Christian MPs, a blog, a podcast, prayer information and also an election quiz where you can find out the party you might align with.

CARE's heart behind this campaign is to equip the UK Church to engage effectively with this election. Pray that these resources are a blessing to the church and pray for all those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2). That is one indisputable thing we can do this election that will make a huge difference.

CARE is strictly politically neutral. They work with MPs from all parties and the engaGE24 site will not tell you who to vote for but it will equip you to think through key issues.

## Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Prayer meeting in person at 7pm (and on Zoom)
- Thursday: Session meeting in person at 7pm
- Friday: Youth Barbecue at Nick and Jean's – 5.30pm to 9pm. Contact [liz@holyroodevangelical.org](mailto:liz@holyroodevangelical.org) for more details.
- Saturday: Missional Planning Morning from 9.30am to 12 noon followed by a picnic in the park (bring your own)
- Sunday:
  - Worship Service at 10.30am (and livestreamed). Joe Barnard preaching.
  - Home Groups (last one for this term)



[www.holyroodevangelical.org](http://www.holyroodevangelical.org)

Incorporated as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Scottish Charity Number SCO44820