

A photograph of a stone church building with a large arched window and a cross on the roof. A flowering tree with white and pink blossoms is in the foreground on the right.

Weekly Newsletter: 10 June 2025

Reflection: A New Season of Trust and Obedience

By Joe Barnard

Did you miss the AGM? If so, let me encourage you to go back and watch the recording [here](#). We are at a special time of mission at Holyrood. God has richly blessed us as a congregation. The question we need to be asking is this: how do we move forward together in courageous faith?

I offered a brief reflection on this question at the AGM. Here is a summary of key points.

First, it's time to stop being surprised at growth. No one is amazed in the summertime that - with sunlight and rain - grass, weeds, and hedges are growing. And so it is in the church. Is the gospel preached? Is the congregation welcoming? Is the basket lifted from the light of God's people? If so, we need to anticipate new shoots of life filling empty seats on Sundays.

I believe we are only at the beginning of a growth curve. My prayerful expectation is that Holyrood 2028 will be twice the size of Holyrood 2022.

Second, we need to embrace the kind of growth that God is giving us. I think a lot of us have the sense that the Holyrood of tomorrow will be the same as the Holyrood of today – with just a few new faces added. This is naïve. Edinburgh is changing; Easter Rd. is full of diversity. The more successful we are in evangelism and discipleship, the more we should expect the Holyrood of the future to reflect the melting pot that is East Edinburgh.

Of particular importance is allowing new people at Holyrood to reach the very centre of our congregation. I'm going to be frank here. There are two groups that are often welcomed warmly, but kept at arm's length. This is unintentional. But it still happens – consciously or unconsciously.

One group is internationals. Another is a group Mez McConnell calls "the least, the last, and the lost". The future of Holyrood needs to be shaped by the reality of Easter Rd. and the Meadowbank areas. This means we need to excel at incorporating diverse people into our fellowship and in discipling people whose problems and struggles may be very different from what some of us have experienced through typical, middle-class upbringings.

But, in fact, we need to go even further than this. We need to see these new people as worthy of training, investment, and potential leadership. One of the things I love about 20 Schemes is the way in which they

find apprenticeships and ministry opportunities for people from hard upbringings. We can do the same. We can begin to see the mosaic of people God is bringing in as the raw material of potential gospel workers that God wants us to train for the future.

Third, we need to be so careful not to allow the building to absorb too much of our finances. Buildings are important. So much of our outreach and discipleship depends on having a place to meet. [And here I need to say a huge thank you to a handful of volunteers who do so much to keep the building in pristine condition.] Yet, still we need to be careful. There will never be a time when our building cannot be upgraded. Chairs can forever be more comfortable; screens can always get bigger and brighter.

But with such improvements there is a cost. To sink too much money into a building is to miss out on better things. The truth is our great need right now as a congregation is not for a better building, but for a more complete ministry team. We have missional opportunities in our reach that we cannot act on because we lack the personnel needed. Student ministry, children's clubs, Road to Recovery groups – these are just a few of the ministries that could easily be developed if we had the right people to champion them. People, not bricks, are the temple of God. If we get the right leaders, they can release us to be more effective in discipling East Edinburgh. And to see more conversions and more lives transformed would not just be thrilling to us; it would be well-pleasing to God.

Finally, I believe now is a moment for us to have the foot on the accelerator. There is no need to wait two, or three, or four years to see ourselves set up for more gospel ministry. Jesus tells us, "To whom much is given, much is expected", and there is no doubting that, in recent months, Jesus has given us much. In my mind, this means that we need to act with faith and courage. Increased resources is not a reason to lean back and relax; it's a motive to press in and do more.

At our AGM, Nick quoted the wonderful motto of William Carey: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God". Let's expect; let's attempt. With God on our side, who knows what might be possible in the next 12 months!

Youth Discipleship Team

We believe that children are part of the family of God. Therefore, we are serious about children and youth discipleship at Holyrood. Besides offering Sunday Club and various youth events, we aspire to build a youth ministry that includes setting up families to disciple kids at home, offering outreach events and clubs for the community, and making children feel as if they are part of an intergenerational spiritual family.

We have a wonderful team that spearheads this vital ministry in the church. Key leaders on the team are Aileen Malaczynski, Jean Archer, Aaron Allen, and Murdo Macleod in the Sunday Club; Serenna MacLennan and Matthew Dewar (sadly, leaving HEC for new opportunities) for youth; Liz Scott, who organises the creche; and I have a minimal role in terms of some planning. Andy Scott is sometimes called in to help with games and sport if we have special events.

Please be praying for the children/youth ministry in the church. This is a team that could use further volunteers, especially for the Summer Sunday Club that takes place in July and August. Children are the future of the church. Let's pray for more members who are willing to invest in the hearts of our future leaders.

Are you ready for the Community Picnic?



Hospitality is one of the core values of Holyrood. Sometimes this looks like opening our homes up for lunch guests; sometimes this looks like a meal before a prayer meeting; sometimes this looks like having a hog roast and inviting the whole of the neighbourhood.

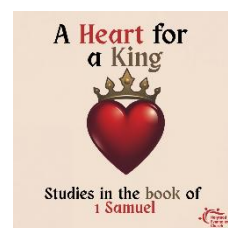
The Hog Roast was a huge success last year. Three things you can do for this year: (1) invite friends to come along **on Saturday 21 June from 12 noon – 3pm**; (2) pray for God's blessing; and (3) *bring outdoor chairs or a picnic blanket on the day*.

The plan is to follow the same format as last year. Weather permitting, we'll have games outside for kids. The food will be served inside the church. There will be ice cream both indoors and outdoors.

1 Samuel: A Heart for a King

For the next two Sunday evenings (15 and 22 June), we'll be continuing our series **1 Samuel: A Heart for a King** with Jon Gemmell.

Don't miss this exciting journey! It would be such a joy to have you join us as we explore this remarkable book and its timeless message.



Holyrood Youth

The final youth get together for this term will take place on **Friday (13 June)** from 7-9pm at Portobello beach. There will be games, a barbecue and hopefully no rain! More details on the Youth WhatsApp Group, contact Liz@holyroodevangelical.org if you aren't on the group and would like to be.

Summer Appeal 2025

The current total is £3255. Each year our Summer Appeal goes towards the support of our three Holyrood missionaries – Lorna Ferguson (serving with OMF in Japan), James Stewart (serving with OMF in Singapore) and the Sorsamo Family (serving with Wycliffe in Finland). The appeal runs until the beginning of August. There are two ways you can give:

1. Electronically via BACS payment to the church account: Sort Code 80-22-60, Account number 12345666 and use the reference 'Summer Appeal'
2. By cheque or cash in the offering box marked 'Summer Appeal'



Summer Appeal 2025



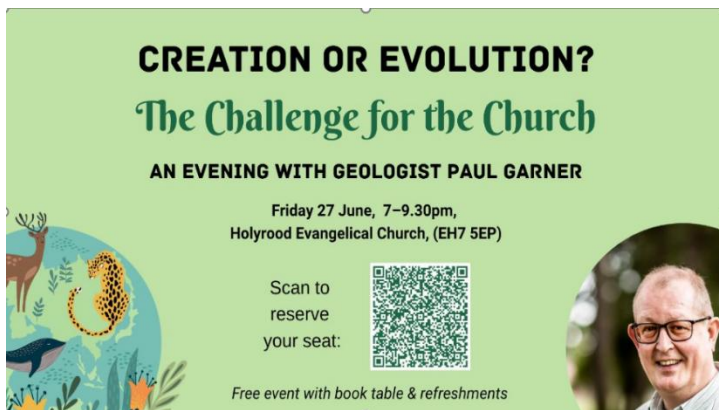
Hannu & Hazel Sorsamo
Finland
Lorna Ferguson
Japan
James Stewart
Singapore



To contribute please use the bank details on
holyroodevangelical.org (use reference 'Summer Appeal')
or cheque/cash in the offering box marked 'Summer Appeal'

Please speak to Nick Archer if you have any questions about how to give. Thank you!

Creation or Evolution?: The Challenge for the Church



How should Christians think about the issue of origins? Does it matter what we believe? How do we deal with claims that evolutionary theory has conclusively put paid to the notion that God created the world? How should we assess claims that evolutionary theory can coexist peacefully with Christian belief?

If you've ever wondered about any of these questions, then **Creation or Evolution?: The Challenge**

for the Church has been organised for you! Come along to Holyrood on Friday 27 June from 7-9.30pm to an evening with geologist Paul Garner. We'll be exploring the great relevance of the creation and evolution debate to the life of the Church today.

Tickets are free and available [here](#).

Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Home Groups
- Thursday: Session Meeting at 7pm
- Friday: Holyrood Youth at Portobello beach from 7-9pm
- Sunday:
 - Morning service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
 - Evening service at 6pm – Jon Gemmell preaching (live streamed)
- Monday: Baby and Toddlers from 10-11.30am



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