

Weekly Newsletter

1st September 2026



Holyrood
Church

Reflection: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8)

By Joe Barnard

We exist before a living God. He's not a concept; He's not an impersonal force; He's not a diffuse “spirit” or “energy” remaining nameless. He is more personal and relational than anything else. He is the great “I Am”. His love pre-exists us; His Word addresses us; His Spirit upholds us. There is no place in which we could detach ourselves from His presence.

We need to remember all of this to make sense of James 4:8. It's no inconsistency to say both that, on the one hand, we are always in the presence of God and that, on the other, we have to draw near to Him repeatedly. Anyone who has experienced a loving relationship knows how these complementary truths fit together. It's one thing to live in the same house with someone; it's something else entirely to maintain an intimate friendship with him or her. There is no surer sign of marital rot than when spouses live in the same space without having loving conversation with one another.

All of this reminds us of the importance of prayer. The Bible highlights in multiple ways the eagerness of God to interact with us. God is not like a GP who tires of repeated phone calls from a demanding patient. God is a perfect Father whose patience is no more limited than is His love. He doesn't bear with His children; He delights in them. He receives their communications with all of the readiness of a dad who hungers to know the intimacies of his child's heart.

Therefore, we should never be hesitant to draw near to God. His promise is that, if we approach Him, He will be right there waiting for us. He may be God of the universe (and whatever else exists); but He always has time for His sons and daughters.

I wonder if some of us need to draw near to God this week? There is an unspoken secret that most Christians are afraid to admit, *prayerlessness*. A lot of us go a long time – a dangerously long time – before having a good chat with our heavenly Father. If that's you, let me encourage you to linger no longer. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

How much better would your day today be if you were full of the love of the Father? How much less anxiety would you feel? How much less stress? How much less loneliness and spiritual hunger? Come to your senses like the Prodigal Son and flee to the front porch of grace. The lights will be on, and the door will be open. Better yet, the everlasting arms will be wide and ready to embrace you.

This Wednesday – Meal and Prayer Meeting

This Wednesday we are having a meal together before the prayer meeting. Come from 5.45pm, food will be served at 6pm and we'll pray from 7-8pm. Everyone is welcome!



Notice Regarding Online Prayer Meetings [Wednesday night and Missionary]

The session has decided to stop the online prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings. The Zoom option was helpful for many in the time during and after Covid; however, there has been a noticeable "Zoom fatigue" that has set in. Due to limited online attendance and a desire to encourage in-person participation wherever possible, we have decided to not resume the online meeting this Autumn.

If anyone has any questions about this, feel free to speak to one of the elders.

For similar reasons, the Mission Team has also reached a decision not to continue the quarterly Missionary Prayer Meetings on Saturday mornings. **Our final one will take place on Saturday 3rd October.** Participation has been dwindling in these meetings and a lot of people struggle to be motivated to join a Zoom meeting on a Saturday morning. Please know that the Mission Team is committed to maintaining - and strengthening - our ties to our missionaries. Therefore, we will be considering new ways to engage the congregation in overseas missions and to support those workers in partnership with the congregation.

Home Groups

This month our Home Groups will recommence for the new term. We will follow our usual rhythm:

- Prayer Meetings on 1st, 3rd and 5th (if there is one) Wednesdays of the month from 7-8pm
- Home Groups meeting around the city on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month

Please contact Liz@holyroodchurch.org if you're not in a Home Group and would like to be. Home Group leaders will be in touch about the arrangements for each group.

Induction of Will Sanders – Christ Church Edinburgh

We are warmly invited by Christ Church Edinburgh to the induction and ordination service of their new minister, Will Sanders. God willing this will be held on **Friday 4th September** at 7.30pm at Wilson Memorial Church, Moira Terrace, Edinburgh.

Enlisted and Deployed, Cross Training Ministries Event – Saturday 12th September

Enlisted and Deployed – from disciple to disciple-maker.

Join us for a training event for men in Edinburgh who are ready to step up. **Saturday 12th September** from 9.30am – 1pm at Holyrood. Speak to Joe for more details.





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Word of life – Autumn Camp



For the first time Word of Life are running an autumn camp from 16th – 18th October 2026 at Lockerbie Manor. This is a chance for young people to build meaningful friendships, hear God's Word, and be encouraged to follow Christ.

Autumn Teen Camp is designed to support local churches by creating a weekend where young people can grow spiritually, have fun together, and return home ready to continue growing in their own church.

Open to young people aged 13–18 and for more details go [here](#).

Psalm Singing Evening

We are invited to a Psalm Singing evening by The City Psalms. This will be their first event back after the summer break, and we are looking forward to gathering again with people from a wide variety of churches across Edinburgh to worship God together!

Date: Friday 25th September

Time: 19:30 (with refreshments from 19:00)

Location: Buccleuch Free Church



Church Calendar

This week for your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Meal at 6pm and Prayer Meeting 7-8pm
- Thursday: Women's Bible Studies from 10.30am – 11.30am
- Sunday:
 - Communion Service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (and livestreamed)
 - Evening Service at 6pm – Jon Gemmell preaching.
- Monday: Baby and Toddlers from 10 – 11.30am

