

New minister keeping it in the family

Louise Purden is following in her father John's footsteps and will be ordained a Church of Scotland minister this evening at Bonnyrigg Parish Church.

The 43-year-old who is a former family support, youth and community worker, said she is looking forward to starting her new role and working with the local community.

Her father, Rev John McPake, was minister at Liberton Northfield Church for 13 years.

Mrs Purden said: "I am excited. I have spent all this time preparing and getting as equipped for the challenges that lie ahead as possible.

"But the reality is that you have just no idea what challenges are going to be thrown at you – you have no idea what life will really look like.

"It feels a bit like having children for the first time.

"There is a sense of expectancy and hopefulness – for me and my whole family."

Mrs Purden has been living near Edinburgh Royal Infirmary with her husband Richard and their children Ryan and Christina for the last few years.



She was a probationer under Rev Keith Mack at St John's and King's Park Church in Dalkeith and said her previous job experience had put her on the right footing.

Mrs Purden revealed that she was adamant for a long time that she was not going to follow in her father's footsteps, however.

"I suppose my original reluctance was simply because I am not a fan of institutions," she said.

"I wrestled with the feeling that I would become part of this massive institution and perhaps, along the way, lose sight of the grassroots stuff of engaging with people that I love so much.

"But my sense is that the Church of Scotland is at a point where it is ready for change and is recognising that it is all about engaging in that face-to-face, ground level ministry of connecting with communities and building relationships.

"There are very few other places where you can have that sort of intergenerational contact, where people can really truly care for each other and stand with each other and celebrate different achievements within their community."

Mr McPake served Liberton Northfield Church from 2000-2013 and later took up part-time roles at city churches.

He said : "We are all very proud of Louise's achievements and we are delighted she has found a church family in Bonnyrigg which is not far away from Edinburgh.

"Having been a minister myself, I am aware of the challenges and joys of manse life but we know Louise will thrive as follows Gods path for her."

