

Columba News

April
2023
No. 251



It was a spring delight



*Palm
Sunday and
the walled
garden at
Belleisle
Park looked
stunning*

Waiting to welcome you

Sundays

April 30

May 7

May 14

May 21

May 28

June 4

June 11

June 18

June 25

Team

Team 3

Team 4

Team 5

Team 6

Team 7

Team 8

Team 9

Team 10

Team 11

Leader

Mr C. Naismith

Ms G. Watson

Mrs N. Mackie

Mr J. Hume

Mrs H. Fullerton

Mrs F. Boyd

Mrs E. Gardiner

Mr G. Park

Mrs J. Paterson

Evening Services:

May 28: Team 7

From the manse

April 2023

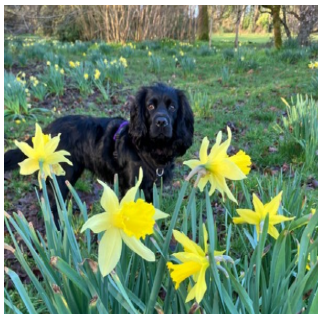
Dear Friends,

By the time you read this, we will have journeyed with Jesus to Jerusalem, accompanied Him through the final days of His earthly life, watched with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane and, finally, looked on as He died on the cross. It is from the tragedy and suffering of Good Friday and the aching emptiness of Holy Saturday that we experience the gentle, almost imperceptible, first light of the Resurrection dawn.



There can be nothing trite or clichéd about human agony. For many people, life experience is lived too long in Good Friday or Holy Saturday experiences; for many, the light of resurrection is barely seen in this life.

What signs and sights might help affirm God's presence and

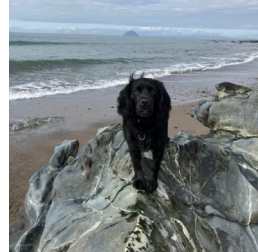


love in our lives? For myself, the delicate beauty of snowdrops, the luminous yellow of daffodils, and the blue purple of bluebells reflect faintly the face of God. In south Ayrshire, it is tremendous that we are surrounded by so much natural beauty. With imagination, in what ways do you 'see' the Sacred in your life? Sacredness is fragile. At the end of March, St Columba Church hosted the Easter services for the Junior and Senior schools at Wellington School. It was

a real joy for me to share with them different aspects of the Easter story. Among other things, I drew attention to the cross we have on the main wall of the chancel. Beautifully crafted and lit, the Celtic cross powerfully reminds worshippers each week of the Risen Christ in the world: the Living Christ is present in our midst. The circle of the cross represents the world; the cross itself represents the broken, crucified, and resurrected Jesus. It is all too easy to take the cross for granted because it is there before our eyes each week but, with imagination, let it speak to you of Christ's Living Spirit within you, and around us.

My life each day is punctuated with walking Rosie. In some sense, I ap-

preciate the walks as a spiritual exercise: the fresh air, the brightness of sunlight, and the beauty of the natural world are therapeutic and, for me, a sacrament. On the other hand, Rosie can be a challenge. In January, she discovered how to use the window button in the back of my car and, driving at 60mph on the way back from Coylton, I saw her from my door mirror leaning out of the window! Argh! On another occasion, she found a dead squirrel and, well, say no more!!



It is always a pleasure for me to see you at church and, if you are able, I very much look forward to welcoming you.
Blessings and peace to you.

Scott

Join the visit to city mosque

Following our successful visit to the Synagogue last year, we are now planning a visit to the Mosque in Glasgow.

The date is Wednesday, May 3 and we will leave Carrick Park at approximately 10.15 am, returning to the Church around 2.30 pm.

There are no refreshments available, so we should take a snack lunch.

We are very grateful to Ayr St Columba for agreeing to pay for the bus but we intend to make a donation to the Mosque of £5 per head.

If you are interested in joining us for this outing, please add your name and contact details to the list in the Carrick Park or phone Ann Naismith on 01292 263883.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated in the church on Sunday, April 30.

There will be one service at 10.45am due to a visit of the Alma choir joining us at the service and also they will be holding a concert in the church at 4pm.

The Kirk Session has decided that the Communion services in April and June this year will continue to use the small capsules of bread and wine due to Covid being still around.

This style of Communion will be reviewed in June and in time for the October Communion.

Take a time note in your diary

On three special Sundays over the next couple of months please note that there will be only one morning service at each.

On Communion **Sunday , April 30** there will be one service at 10.45 and during the service a visiting

choir will join with us in worship.

On Coronation Sunday on **May 7** we again have one service at 10.45 and after the service our street party will be held to mark King Charles III's Coronation.

Another choir will be visiting us on **Sunday, June 4** at the morning service and we again will be holding one morning service, again at 10.45am.

Details of these events can be found on other pages in this edition of the Columba News



Jay cooks up a Table Talk

We meet on the last Monday of the month for a very informal discussion over coffee.

On February 27, Jay Mair spoke about Delia Smith's book (yes - Delia the cook who is now 80 years old!) "You Matter - The Human Solution."

The book is based on the philosophy of Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit priest and palaeontologist and author of many books. He was also a stretcher bearer and ambulance driver in 1st world war.

Delia's theme is that each individual matters. However if we work together rather than against each other, we can harness tremendous energy for the good of the planet. "None of us is as smart as all of us"

We must remain hopeful for the future.

She compares life on a global scale to a vast tapestry where each thread is important.

All aboard for the senior outing

Royal Yacht Britannia

Friday, September 1, Cost £18.50 entry to Royal Yacht plus lunch: Church will provide coach so if you are interested please add you name to list in the Carrick Park corridor.

Payment for Royal Yacht is taken at time of booking and is NON REFUNDABLE

Lunch money will be collected on the coach.

Details of itinerary and cost of lunch will appear in the June Columba News

Treasurer gives his report on the annual church accounts

The Church's Annual Accounts for the year to December 31, 2022 were approved at the Annual Trustees Meeting held in the Church on Tuesday, March 14. Immediately following that meeting, the approved Accounts were received by those members of the congregation present.

The main points from the Accounts document may be summarised as follows:

- The General Fund, through which the Church's ongoing running costs are met, showed a deficit of £24,478 in the year 2022.
- The value of the Church's investments with the Investors' Trust fell by £83,036 over the course of the year.
- The Church's cash at bank position fell by £54,000 over the year.

As a result of these facts, the Church's total Funds value fell by £108,367 over the year 2022.

It is clear that the year 2022 was a severe one financially for Ayr St Columba.

This was due mainly to fall in the value of our investments. Global stock and bond markets suffered a brutal sell off in 2022 due to interest rate increases, a rise in inflation levels alongside the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Ultimately, these factors resulted in the heaviest losses in asset markets since the global financial crisis of 2007-08. Ayr St Columba Church's Investor Trust holdings did not emerge unscathed, and the collapse in world stock markets resulted in an unrealised loss of £83,036 in the value of our investments at the Investors' Trust.

Income from all sources fell by £42,000 in 2022 against the previous year. The main reason for this fall was due to there being no legacy income in 2022 against a figure of £35,000 in 2021.

Expenditure levels in the Church increased by just over £34,000 in the year 2022 against the year before. Very few categories showed any major movement, up or down against the previous year with the exception of our Ministries and Mission contributions which were £15,000 higher, and Fabric Costs which were £7,500 higher than in 2021.

As a result of the fall in the value of our investments, the reduction in income and the increase in expenditure levels, the value of the Church's Reserves fell by £108,000 over the year.

After the Accounts were approved by Trustees, the Annual General Fund Projection for 2023 was presented. It is projected that the General Fund will show a deficit of £10,800 for the full year 2023.

Notwithstanding the disappointing impact of events last year, the finances of Ayr St Columba Church were nevertheless in very good shape as at the end of 2022.

For information, a copy of the full 2022 Annual Accounts document can be found on the Church's website.

Tom Cairns, Treasurer

*Scott's sermon preached from St John 4: 3-30 on
Sunday, March 12, 2023*

Having heard the story of the woman at the well, the woman from Samaria, we will be familiar with the historic and bitter hostility between Jews and Samaritans. While the ethnic tension between Jews and Samaritans dated back four hundred years, nevertheless, in the time of Jesus, the antagonism and enmity were as raw as ever they had been. In His exquisite Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus touched a tender nerve in His listeners.

Why was there such bitterness and tension?

Situated thirty miles north of Jerusalem, the city of Samaria had once been the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Previously two kingdoms, Samaria was the capital of the Northern Kingdom and Jerusalem was the capital of the Southern Kingdom.



Historically, Samaritans were part of the twelve tribes of Israel. The conflict, friction, and hatred between Jew and Samaritan began at the time of the exile in the sixth century BCE when many inhabitants of Jerusalem were taken captive by the Babylonian empire.

Although some Samaritans were also taken prisoner, many remained and, crucially, many of those that remained married non-Jewish women. The Jews in exile felt this to be a betrayal of the Jewish God, Yahweh. Once released from captivity, the former inhabitants of Jerusalem returned to their city and set about rebuilding their temple. However, they refused to let Samaritans take any part in rebuilding the temple. The Samaritans then built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. Human conflicts often have many layers to them but, historically, the exile of the Jerusalem inhabitants seems to have been the catalyst for centuries of bitterness and tension.

Scripture is a window into the Divine and may speak to us on many levels. I was struck by the opening verses of our lesson. In the King James

Version, we read, 'He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria'. Read imaginatively, we gain a wonderful sense of journey: Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria. In the mind's eye, we see Jesus walking from place to place. Under the heat of the Mediterranean sunshine, we too may experience His slow-paced progress and, in our hearts, walk with Him. Imaginatively, what might the heat represent: the times in our lives when we are exhausted by life, or exasperated by circumstances and, at times, worn down by the burdens of those we love?

What might the punishing heat be for you? Through that heat, we walk with Jesus and, surely, Jesus walks with us. Do we feel His closeness?

The story of Jesus with the woman at the well is, in a sense, shocking on a number of levels.

Firstly, a Jew is speaking with a Samaritan. Given the history and animosity between these two peoples, both Jesus and the woman, perhaps mostly the woman, are taking a risk. As a religious leader, Jesus may be reputationally damaged by His action.

Secondly, the story is shocking because a man stands alone with a woman. In the ancient world, such a meeting might typically be a moment of betrothal. When the disciples of Jesus return, perhaps implying that Jesus had been speaking with the woman for a long time, they marvel or



are astonished to find Jesus alone with a woman. Although they asked no questions, is there a sexual tension in this story? However, spiritually, are we to see in this story, a betrothal, a moment of God's expansive love embracing both Jew and Samaritan?

Thirdly, the story is shocking because Jesus asked the woman for a drink. Sharply, she replied, 'You have nothing to draw with? You have no pail, no bucket?' Underlying her reply may also be the suggestion that Jesus had no cup. This is shocking because in that ancient culture women and men were not permitted to share utensils. Not sharing was a social and religious norm which was not to be breached. Jesus reached over that barrier to a Samaritan woman. If we place ourselves in that culture, in those times, do we see and feel how unsettling, if not scandalous, the behaviour of Jesus is?

Fourthly, beyond Jew and Samaritan standing together talking, perhaps the greatest shock is the profound nature of the conversation between

them, not least that one of them is a woman. In a culture where women were considered property, this is a life-changing encounter. In the previous chapter of John, the life-changing conversation of Jesus was not at noon but in the darkness, with a man, Nicodemus, a respected Jewish leader. The woman and Jesus talk deeply and intimately of God, their religious traditions, and personal spirituality. Is the well a metaphor of the depths into which the unnamed woman and Jesus delve together? Is the deep darkness of the well a metaphor for the mystery of God? The fourteenth century mystic, St John of the Cross, spoke of the Divine as 'Luminous Darkness'.



What of the five husbands in the story? And of the man she is now with? It may be that she had had five husbands or, in Jewish writing, the number five is often suggestive of the five books of the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). The fact that she now has a new 'husband' might suggest that, spiritually, she has moved beyond the limits of the Jewish Law?

I suppose the climax of this encounter at the well, however we might interpret it, must surely be the belief of Jesus that God is Spirit, and that

God is to be worshipped in spirit and truth. Explicitly, Jesus said that there will come a time when Jew and Samaritan will no longer worship God in Jerusalem or the temple of Samaria on Mount Gerizim. God is Spirit. I believe this to be profoundly true.



It is in the silence and darkness of the soul that the Luminous Darkness dwells.

What might this message mean for us, for the Church of Scotland, in our time? Our buildings are of immense, immense worth and value to us: they carry spiritual and emotional memories. This sacred space is filled to the rafters with the prayers of generations; it is a place of stillness because of

these prayers, and unspoken memories, and our shared story together. Jesus often went to the synagogue to worship God and lead a community in worship, but what did He mean when He said there will be a time when the temples of Jew and Samaritan are no longer needed?

As the Church of Scotland embarks on a drastic round of reductions in the number of buildings held and used by local congregations, is there a message in the words of Jesus for the Kirk today? We need buildings, surely, and we treasure the stones, the pillars and the pews, that are our spiritual home. Yet however much the current transition plans of the Kirk succeed or not, what of the future? Not today, not tomorrow, not next year, but what of our worship of God in the future? Jesus said, 'God is Spirit'. The central feature of the story of Jesus and the woman is the well, the deep darkness, and so too the sense of journey, always moving forward, always delving more deeply. It is in the darkness, in the profoundest conversations, that we encounter Jesus and taste the living waters, the water welling up to eternal life.

Check out the Presbytery

Note of the Presbytery Meeting of the South West which took place online on 7 March 2023

Self Attestation: Presbytery approved the self attestation of Congregational Records with some Congregations being selected for the physical examination on a random basis each year.

Presbytery Planning: Ministers with Unrestricted Tenure were sent an email on 10 January 2023 seeking their approval to begin discussions with the Presbytery Mission Plan as it affects their own personal circumstances. Many ministers gave such permission while others did not and several did not reply. However, as it is written permission that is required of ministers with security of tenure, before progressing Presbytery plans with their Kirk Sessions and congregations, a form of wording will be sent to ministers to clarify their permission before proceeding.

The Presbytery Mission Plan in relation to the former Presbytery of Ayr is still in appeal stage.

Presbytery is encouraged that some Kirk Sessions and Congregations having downloaded the updates Templates from the Church of Scotland website have begun to consider the details necessary to draw together Basis of Adjustment within their own locality.

However, in keeping with the Act, it is only with the calling of the first

meeting of all parties with representatives from the Planning Committee, that progress towards implementation can occur.

Presbytery was informed that every appeal against the Presbytery Mission Plan of the former Presbytery of Ardrossan has been rejected by the Appeals Panel.

Local Church Reviews: Presbytery instructed the Mission Committee to pause any Local Church Reviews until March 2024.

Warm Space: Presbytery approved an application from Castlehill Parish Church to apply for small grant funding to assist in the operation of a warm space this winter.

Presbytery Dues: Presbytery dues for churches will be charged at one and a half percent of the 2021 assessable income for this year and for future years will be based on the assessable income two years in arrears.

Safeguarding: Presbytery noted that requests for safeguarding courses for congregations should be made through their Congregational Safeguarding Co-ordinator to the Safeguarding Officer.

George Park

Presbytery Elder

Check out the church library

Don't forget that the church library is full of good books!

It's now located in the Centenary Aisle where you can browse at your ease.

The Road to Easter

On Saturday, March 25, 2023, a group of eleven members of Ayr St Columba Church, headed by Scott, our Minister, were welcomed to the home of the Ian and Mandy Stirling at the foot of the Carrick Hills.

Mandy welcomed us with coffee and hot cross buns.

Ian led us in discussion on the road to Easter in two sessions, morning and afternoon, with a wonderful lunch in between in the kitchen of the main house - Mandy (now christened the 'domestic goddess') had prepared wonderful food for which we thank her sincerely.

We shared our opinions of paintings which were interpretations of the artists' emotions about the Crucifixion and the Resurrection - Good Friday

and Easter Sunday - and wondered at the little made of Easter Saturday, at least in the minds of most of us - not in the minds of the three respected Ministers and one Deaconess present, of course.

It is exciting to be on a never-ending steep learning curve when it comes to our Faith. Such was the atmosphere at our gathering, with fellowship drawing us together.

God bless all and many, many thanks to Ian and Mandy.

EC March, 2023.



The Kirk Session will next meet in the Midton Road Hall on Tuesday, April 18 and also on Tuesday, June 13 at 7.30pm.

Christian Aid Week

May 14-20

This year the proceeds from the Christian Aid Week Appeal will be going to help families and farmers in Malawi.

This will allow people to buy and grow better seeds to feed their families and secure fair prices for crops.

Malawi has been devastated recently by cyclone and floods and is in desperate need of our help.

Please return your donation to the church by the 20th May either on a Sunday morning, to the church office or by calling Mo Howie on 07963513620 who will be happy to collect it.

Many thanks. Mo

Copy deadline for the June issue will be

Sunday, May 28

Copy should be emailed to

editor.columbanews@gmail.com

New advertisers should also send their copy to the editor Norman Reid

MARK THE CORONATION AT OUR STREET PARTY

Sunday, May 7, 2023

**STREET PARTY TO CELEBRATE THE CORONATION OF KING
CHARLES 111**

***THE STREET PARTY WILL COMMENCE IMMEDIATELY AFTER
MORNING WORSHIP***

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN PICNIC AND DRINKS

**HOT DOGS & ICE CREAM WILL BE
PROVIDED BY THE CHURCH**

**TABLES AND CHAIRS WILL BE PLACED IN
CARRICK PARK (IF YOU HAVE GARDEN
CHAIRS AND CAN EASILY TRANSPORT TO
THE CHURCH IT WOULD BE GREATLY
APPRECIATED)**

AYRSHIRE UKES WILL PROVIDE ENTERTAINMENT

**PLEASE COME ALONG AND JOIN IN THIS HISTORIC
OCCASION AND FOR CATERING PURPOSES PLEASE ADD YOUR
NAME TO LIST IN CARRICK PARK.**

SEE YOU AT THE PARTY

Hospitality Team

Brownies make a call for help

The 9th Ayr Brownies are requiring some help on a Wednesday evening from 6:15- 7:45pm in the church hall during term time.

At Brownies they enjoy badge work, games and crafts. No experience is required but you need to be over 18 years old.

For more information contact Sally Bentham on 07817169436.



The weather has been kind to us on our last two walks - around Donald castle at the end of February, and in a loop around St Nicholas' golf club in March.

We were happy to welcome two new walkers in March but there is always room for more in the 'Great

Outdoors'.

We celebrate our 2nd anniversary on April 28 with a walk at Boswell's Coach House, followed by lunch. Setting off from Halfords at Heathfield at 10am prompt or meeting at the coach house at 10.30-10.40.

Knit and Natter at Warm Space

The Warm Space initiative ends at Easter, but the **Knit & Natter** will return in September.

Firstly, I would like to thank most sincerely all the volunteers who have turned out willingly and regularly to look after the project. We were not overwhelmed with visitors but those who came received a very warm welcome. Our biggest success has been two special events; **Home Energy Scotland** offer free impartial energy advice, and aim to help people in Scotland create warmer homes, and reduce their energy bills. And **Ahead of the Curve**, who gave tips and exercises to keep us mobile and advice on what to do after a fall. Both events were well attended and the audiences appreciated the input of the speakers. What we lacked in footfall we made up for in enthusiasm.

Musical dates in Ayr St Columba

On the April 30, Communion Sunday, we welcome the Alma Choir from Michigan USA. Will Nicholls and the College student choir have visited us on a number of occasions, but this will be Will's final visit. The Choir's reputation for excellence, its many traditions and its ambitious performing, touring and recording status have established the Choir's standing on the international platform. We look forward very much to the wonderful diverse programme the Choir will deliver!



We will welcome them to the Service at 10.45am and the concert at 4.30pm

...and the music keeps hitting the high notes

In addition to the much-anticipated return of the Alma Choir from Michigan on April 30, we have a number of other musical dates in St. Columba to look forward to in May and June.

As part of *The Organist Entertains* 2023 series (the thirteenth season) we shall be welcoming the following Organists on **Monday lunchtimes** during May:

May 15 Hans U. Hielscher (Wiesbaden Lutheran Cathedral)

May 22 John R. Turner (formerly of Glasgow Cathedral)

May 29 Organ Students from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

These concerts run from noon – 1pm, with an admission of £5.

On the evening of Saturday June 3, we welcome The Clare Chorale, a mixed-voice choir from Ballyclare in County Antrim, from whom an enjoyable and varied programme of music is assured. Sheelagh Greer, the Choir's Musical Director and a BBC Radio Ulster broadcaster, is no stranger to St. Columba, having previously visited with Ballyclare Male Choir as their accompanist in 2018. This concert commences at 7.30, and admission will be free with a retiring collection towards expenses. The Chorale will also be taking part in the single (**please note**) Morning Service on June 4, which will commence at 10.45am.

Matthew

St Columba Guild goes arty



INSPIRATION: from *The Little Art School*

Despite the change from evening to afternoon meetings, we have had a successful session with happy afternoons of worship, fellowship, learning and chat over a final cup of tea or, on special occasions, a very special treat provided by our marvellous committee.

We have been taught, instructed, entertained and enlightened over the last session – what more as a Guild could we ask for? After the restrictions of the last few years, this has been a welcome treat to get together again and regain friendships.

Our members have been very generous and therefore we have been able to support two of the Guild Projects, (The Vine Trust and Starchild), Church of Scotland World Mission with relief for flooding in Malawi, and other local charities through the auspices of our speakers donating their fees to these ventures. Our work carries on regardless.

The Guild will meet again on Monday, October 2 at 2pm in the Midton Road Hall when all will be made most welcome.

Our major fund-raising event next session will be a Coffee Morning on Saturday, November 18 10am – noon

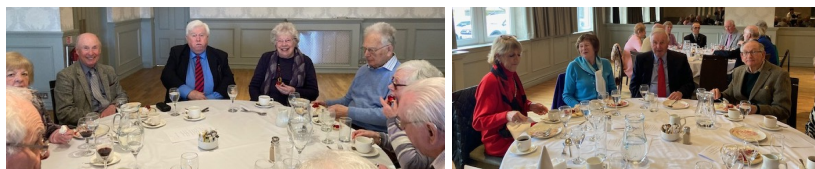
On behalf of the Guild we wish you a happy and restful summer season.

Maureen Fullerton, Secretary

Dorothy Bone, Convener



CELEBRATION – *Christine Logan's Demonstration and our Members' Easter Bonnets*



Monday Fellowship ends a successful session with a special lunch

We resumed our meetings in January with a new meeting time of 2pm. As this has proved to be very successful it has been decided that the 2pm meetings will continue throughout our 2023/2024 session.

Our chosen Charities this year were Scottish Charity Air Ambulance and the River Garden Project at Auchincruive and donations have been made to them both.

Our guests speakers after Christmas have been very varied and all very well received with a short last-minute talk at our AGM by Bob McMillan.

This year we had a change of venue for our end-of-session lunch. This was held at the Fairfield House Hotel where everyone enjoyed the fellowship of other members and wives. The Hotel laid on an excellent Lunch for us and we nearly had to be prised away before staff started setting up for the evening meals!

Grace was delivered by Revd. Ian Paterson and Revd. David Ness gave a vote-of-thanks on behalf of the guests, starting with the immortal words "On behalf of my wife and I"

Our next session will start again in October, same time, same place and everyone is very welcome to attend.

We wish you all a warm / hot summer, good health and warm friendship.

John Ferguson
Secretary



Tribute to Jim Brown elder at Ayr St Columba

The son of John and Elsie, Jim was born in Auchlochan Lodge in Lesmahagow. The family lived in Paisley for three years until Jim's father was killed on the railway.

Jim and his mother returned to Lesmahagow to live with his grandparents; this enabled Jim's mother to work. Jim returned to Lesmahagow primary school, the higher grade, and then to Larkhall Academy, where he was Head Boy in sixth year. Jim loved football and played for the Academy team and later an amateur team in Lesmahagow. He joined the Boys' Brigade at the age of 12 and was part of the company until he was 17.

Jim went to work at J&P Coats, the thread company, in their Glasgow Office. During this time, he was given leave to do his National Service.

Jim met Sheena at a Boys' Brigade camp in Crail. Sheena's dad was the captain, and Sheena and her mother were spending a week in a boarding house. On his return to Coats, Jim was transferred to Anchor & Ferguslie Mills as an Industrial Engineer doing time and motion study on materials handling.

Jim and Sheena were married in Lesmahagow Parish Church in 1960, and they set up home in Paisley, where Douglas and Linda were born. In 1964, Jim started travelling for the company, firstly to Canada, then Mexico where Elaine was born, then Italy and a spell at home before doing two tours of Brazil. His work in Brazil also gave him the real pleasure of meeting the famous footballer, Pele. Proudly, Jim showed off his business card, which was signed by Pele. It read, 'To my friend, Jim'. With such considerable professional experience and skill, when Jim retired in 1992, he did consultancy work for the company in Venezuela, Malaya, and India until finally, at the age of 60, he truly retired. When in Mexico, Jim played cricket, squash, bowls and attended the Olympics. Because the children went to boarding school, holidays were wonderful times when Jim and Sheena were joined by the children.

Jim and Sheena bought their home in Broadwood Park in 1984 while they were still living in different places around the world. Over the course of his life, Jim enjoyed hill walking with his friends and working out at Bannatyne's gym. Jim had served as an Elder at St Columba Church from 1984. Although he had many gifts, DIY was not one of them and son Douglas and son-in-law James attended to any jobs needing done, though Jim did enjoy gardening. The girls, Linda and Elaine, also helped out: Linda in the garden and Elaine helping her dad with the computer. Jim

was very proud of his grandchildren, Christopher and Eilidh, and he loved to hear all their news. There were lots of laughs as they tried to keep their grandfather up to date with new technologies! Jim was someone who wouldn't even use a mobile phone! He did have a passion for researching his family tree, on both sides, and he managed to go back as far as the 1600s.

Jim was a caring man, thoughtful, outgoing, with a cheeky sense of humour, and chatted to anyone; he was eager to help where he could. Lately, life had become more difficult for Jim with his health failing, though he never complained. There is much for us to remember and give thanks for. He shaped our lives and will continue to do so.

Revd Dr S. McKenna

Tribute to Elizabeth (Betty) Murray, elder at Ayr St Columba

Betty Murray was born on 6th March 1937 in Castle Crofts in the village of Dalmellington, the fifth of Robert and Margaret Murray's six children. Betty's father Rab, a Dalmellington colliery fireman, was a quiet man and her mother a kind, hard-working lady, originally from Annbank, was a house-keeper for a local farmer. Betty had three sisters – Margaret, Susan and Rena and two brothers, Willie and Robert! We're very pleased that Robert is able to be with us here today as we give thanks for Betty's life. Perhaps Robert will finally tell us later whether it was he or Betty who was responsible for their mother's broken string of pearls – a crime unsolved to this day.

For unavoidable reasons some close family members can't be with us but they have been in touch; sent their love and we know that they are thinking of their aunt Betty, particularly her nephews Bob, Jim, David, and families, as well as many other old friends in Edinburgh or Ayr and neighbours who are elderly or living at a distance. The family wish to express their gratitude to the staff of Dundonald House who cared for Betty devotedly over the last six years and who are rightly represented here today.

Betty attended Dalmellington primary and secondary school, leaving to start nurse education at the Victoria hospital in Glasgow. Her work ethic was ingrained. She was determined to gain wide medical experience and so she did. Over a long and accomplished career of almost forty years she qualified and served as an RGN, a district nurse, a Health visitor in Ayr, a Midwife in Irvine, a Theatre sister in Glasgow's Victoria and completed

her career as a Matron in Edinburgh's Corstorphine hospitals. She ran a tight ship; expected high standards of her nurses; stood no nonsense and gave 100%. She may always have been so attentive every day in her early career. As a young district nurse, we're not sure who was to blame on the morning she ran in to a Police Officer in Ayr on traffic duty; exiting Barnes street on her NHS bicycle.

She was always delighted when family visited her in Edinburgh and was generous of her limited leisure time especially with nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews in the zoo, at Saughton Park etc. She met up as often as she could with good friends and they dined together in the zoo, of all places, but no less than the private dining room of The Royal Zoological Society. Though Betty had no children she was delighted to have six nephews, four nieces, 10 great nieces and nephews and more recently great, great nieces and nephews. They all knew of her kindness.

Betty loved music, loved to sing in church and at home much to the bemusement of those in St Cuthbert's adjacent pews, who passed the odd comment: she was the first to admit that she was vocally challenged. Despite that, she had a real passion for listening to classical music at home; held a season ticket for the RSNO events in Edinburgh's Usher hall and later for the Ayr Town Hall orchestra concert series.

She was a diminutive, determined and formidable lady. She quietly gave so much of her limited leisure time and income to those less fortunate. She was a regular, generous giver to her favourite charities *Smile Train*, *Cancer Research* and *Christian Aid* and Betty put her own faith into action volunteering for befriending and homelessness projects and in charity shops/lunch clubs in Edinburgh and later, Oxfam in Ayr. She was a very loyal member of the Church of Scotland – a faithful member of Edinburgh's mother kirk, St. Cuthbert's where she was a very active elder and after her retirement, St Columba's here in Ayr. During her retirement back in her native Ayrshire she gave of her time to train, then act as an advocate for adults with additional support needs.

In her youth Betty enjoyed trips with her cousin Margaret McQuade nee McCreath. She loved to travel and that love of travel was developed later in several church holidays to Assisi in Italy, organised by the then St Cuthbert's minister Tom Cuthill. Betty told tales of fine dining, camaraderie, beautiful Umbrian scenery: fun-filled days in the company of her kirk family. Many of these moments were captured on camera and photos carefully annotated by Betty, on her return. She loved those trips to Assisi and spoke of them often.

The travel bug had truly bitten and Betty spent her retirement up until

about 2016 travelling the globe on group holidays. There were few parts of the world she hadn't experienced – China, Russia, India, South Africa, Canada, Peru, Nepal, the U.S. Argentina, Australia and at age 70 was insulted by the suggestion she needed a medical to go to the Antarctic, including the Falkland Islands. She saw so many beautiful places from the Taj Mahal to Machu Pichu and cheerfully climbed Sydney Harbour bridge. She had so many exotic adventures and met so many interesting people.

She retired to a harbour-side apartment in Ayr in 2000 and loved beach-side walks; healthy eating, baking, her charity work, classical music and St Columba.

Nursing was so much part of her life it never really left her. When even in recent years she was ill in the Biggart Hospital, she once chastised staff for the lack of babies delivered that day and in Dundonald House she wasn't slow in offering unsolicited advice to young nurses on how meds should be properly administered etc.

Betty's family have been part of her life; to have been loved by her and to have loved her. It is a comfort to know that she is now with her Lord.

Funeral service conducted by Muriel Wilson

Tribute to Liz Bolland elder at Ayr St Columba

Liz was born in Paisley. She had one sister Isobel. She was close to her and her family all her days. She was brought up in a fun filled house and very musical. Her dad sent the two girls to music lessons although Liz while being an accomplished pianist could not read a word of music - she obviously had a good ear. She enjoyed family holidays in Anstruther and was a regular at dances on the pier.

Her schooling was at Williamsburgh Primary and then Camphill Secondary. When she left school her first job was a clerical post with the education authority in Paisley. Then a move to J P Coats Mill as a production control clerkess. She was there until 1962 when she married Wilson. She used to boast she was brought up in the posh end of town - Arkleston Rd/ Barshaw Park end and he was brought up in Glenburn. Anyway, they met, love blossomed and they were married on 13th March 1962. - honeymoon was in Dublin.

They really were utterly devoted to each other. In the fullness of time Gillian and Steven arrived on the scene. When they married George and

Kerry respectively they gave her her grandchildren Katy, Fraser, Emily, and Jack. She loved them all to the uttermost. Family occasions were the highlight of her life and so often she was the life and soul of the party. The family went many holidays together - I believe Florida was a favourite.

Liz returned to work in 1975 and was the officer in charge at Netherthird Children's Unit in Cumnock. In 1977 she moved to Barnardos Residential School at Thorntoun which is near Crosshouse, and she worked there till it closed in 1990. During this time she embarked upon a Counselling Course and qualified in 1991. She then became a Counsellor in the Townhead Centre in Irvine helping people with addiction problems and bereavement. She was promoted and became a project leader. She was there until she retired, but retirement was not for her - she still wanted to help people so she became involved on a part time basis with the Moving On project based in Ayr. She did finally retire at the ripe old age of 72.

Liz had a special way with children and with adults who needed support and help. She loved her work. She was highly respected and very professional. She enjoyed helping and supporting people in difficult times. She had that ability to make people feel better. Her catch phrase was "Worrying gets you nowhere" - although she was a bit of a worrier herself.

She loved doing things with her grandchildren and took a great interest as to what was going on in their lives. You know at one time she even supported St Mirren. She loved crosswords, table tennis and badminton. She was an avid reader and continued to play the piano for a while.

Liz loved her church and her Lord. She was a member of St Columba for more than 30 years. She was seldom absent from her pew - became an elder and was very effective in that role.

Liz was a truly lovely lady - in every way - her character and personality and also her looks. She was a true Christian lady. Extremely generous and loved being with and helping people. She also possessed a good sense of humour - she liked a carry-on; was a bit of a practical joker and knew how to wind you up.

Sadly her health deteriorated and she suffered from Dementia. Wilson tried to look after her, obviously with the help of the family, but she did end up in care. Her last two years were spent in Windyhall and they were terrific with her.

We all have our own special memories of Liz - and she truly enriched the lives of many. She is at rest and peace now and with her God whom she served all her days.

We shall never forget Liz Bolland.

Revd David Ness

What has been happening at the Kirk Session

A meeting of the Kirk Session, chaired by the Moderator, The Revd Dr Scott McKenna, was held on 21st February 2023. A summary of issues discussed at this meeting is given below:

- The Moderator informed Elders that the Presbytery Mission Plan had been approved by the Faith Nurture Forum in Edinburgh and had been accepted by the Presbytery of the South West. The approval was subject to an 18-month review of church buildings in Ayr.
- Members of Session approved the proposals of the ad hoc committee set up to review the function and practice of all our church committees. The proposals included the expansion of the Clerk's Committee to incorporate the Review and Planning Committee and thus form a new Business Committee and the expansion of the Faith Nurture Committee to incorporate the Education and Pastoral Committees.
- The Moderator said that, following two years during which the communion elements had been served in capsule form, it was time to consider whether or not to return to the serving of elements from common plates and trays. Following detailed discussion it was decided to continue to use capsules in April and June and then to review the matter.
- The Moderator informed Elders that the Alma Choir from the USA would join our service of Holy Communion on 30th April. They would also give a concert in the Church later in the day. He proposed that there should be a single morning service on that occasion and this was approved.
- The Moderator proposed that there should be a single morning service on the following Sunday, 7th May, when we would be holding a street party in Carrick Park to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. This was approved.
- The Clerk reported that a former Session Clerk, Mr John Forsyth, had taken the decision to retire as an active Elder. Mr Forsyth was a highly regarded individual who had given outstanding service to the Church as an Elder, Presbytery Elder and Session Clerk.
- The Clerk reported that both the Lessons and Carols service and the Watchnight service had gone well.

- The Clerk explained that, on the instructions of Presbytery, a Conflict of Interest Policy and a Whistleblowing Policy had been adopted for the church. The policies had been drafted by the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland.
- Mrs Bartholomew said that the Warm Space continued to provide for a relatively small number of attendees. A speaker would talk on 'Exercises to Prevent Falls' on 10th March. The Knit and Natter events on Tuesdays were doing well, but the Wednesday warm space would not continue as there had been no take up then. The Friday warm space would continue.
- Miss Muriel Wilson reported that twenty £10 vouchers had been distributed to needy families via the Foodbank at Lochside.
- Revd Roddy McNidder had initiated a number of 'get togethers' with members of Newton Wallacetown Church in preparation for their eventual partnership.
- A meeting had been held with partner churches to look at possible ways of collaborating in the future.
- Mr Andrew Muirhead informed members that work on eco matters was ongoing and John Ballantyne was making progress with his detailed analysis of the church buildings.
- Mrs Jane Hunter reported that preparations for the Street Party on 7th May were getting under way. It would be a similar event to the Platinum Jubilee party when people were invited to bring their own picnic. Hot dogs and ice cream would be available and there would be entertainment from a local Ukelele Band. Mrs Hunter also said that a Seniors trip would go ahead in September with the destination still to be decided.

R A Bartholomew, Session Clerk

Support for Abbas Rest

At our Coronation Street Party we are hoping to raise money for the Abbas Rest Malawi charity as part of "The Big Help Out" which King Charles proposed to follow the party celebrations.

I am visiting Malawi in August and extra funds for the charity's work would be very welcome, especially in the wake of the destruction wreaked by Cyclone Freddy when crops, buildings, homes have been swept away.

St Columba has always been very generous in its giving and hopefully we'll be able to collect a good amount that day.

Muriel Wilson

HeatHack down at Ayr St Columba

Greta Thunberg is a familiar figure. She started her protests as a school-girl and her message caught the imagination of many people, catapulting her into unfamiliar company.

Her message was simple – Stop using fossil fuel. It had merit but was short on detail.

The problem is that if we suddenly stop using fossil fuel, much of the modern world would collapse. What is

needed is a group of rational people to respond to a childlike request. The group in this picture looks unlikely to solve the problem. Politicians listen to celebrities, focus groups and business interests and rarely experts. Without expert help, they cannot do more than Greta herself.

This was brought home to me when we started using HeatHack to review the way we use energy in Ayr St Columba. HeatHack is a charity funded by the Royal Academy of Engineering with an experienced academic engineer at the helm. There are all manner of things we can do of course. The advice from HeatHack is to first reduce heat demand then insulate then apply modern green technology. I asked what was meant by reducing heat demand, the reply was interesting "Ensure that spaces are heated adequately for the time and purpose booked including frost protection. Ensure that ventilation is adequate but no more than required. Avoid waste."

At Ayr St Columba we have already reduced demand for both electricity and gas. Several years ago, the sanctuary lights were changed to LED and



others were upgraded later. Nearly 2 years ago, Session decided to reduce the temperature in the building to 19 degrees Centigrade. One year ago the small aging boiler used for hot water was replaced by a tank and immersion heater. This last change will have reduced pollution and possibly increased cost a little. I think we are more careful than in the past and the figures support this view.

In the year to November 2019, we paid for 310,000 KWh of gas. That is enough for 25 typical homes. In the last year we used 185,000 KWh of gas, enough for 15 typical homes. Despite the move to electricity for hot water, electricity usage has fallen from 14,000 KWh per year to 10,500 KWh per year. Many people will find this accounting in energy very dull! It is however the way we will show movement in the right direction.

Most of us have noticed increase in our energy bills. Businesses negotiate their arrangement with energy companies and contracts can run for several years. The Church of Scotland has a contract for supply of gas that runs until the end of March 2024 for all of its Churches in Scotland. As a result, energy bills for St Columba have gone down with reduced usage.

The process of HeatHack includes monitoring temperature in different areas of the Church and comparing the measurements with usage of the building. We can then see where there are mismatches between the desired temperature and the period of usage. Errors can be corrected and timings adjusted to get the best effect from the fuel used. We can identify seemingly extravagant use of energy and check if a simple change of schedule of events could help matters. All of this takes time but next to no money.

A thorough survey of the building with regard to energy has been carried out. Various recommended improvements were considered and ranked in order with regard to the circumstances of our building. We will be able to make some further economies on fuel usage based on our data, at no extra cost. We are hopeful that further substantial energy savings can be made before the energy contracts are due for renewal by investing in various improvements too. We still have a carbon footprint that is too large.

It is unlikely that Ayr St Columba will install solar panels or a heat pump in the near future. Our recommendations are likely to be more mundane. Expert help can produce surprising results.

Improvements already made are down to sensible adjustment of indoor temperature and quiet but effective efforts from John Stewart and the Wednesday team over the past few years. They have carefully adjusted heating timings to match the needs of users of the building. Further improvement is still possible using recently gathered data.

People with a green agenda come in all shapes and sizes. Extinction re-



bellion protests make headlines but are not everybody's style.

It is possible to support a Green agenda using small steps close to home. Not everyone needs to be an activist. Being conservative (with a small "c") does not prevent us from making a contribution.

Andrew Muirhead

Please contact me if you would like to promote ecological matters in Ayr St Columba. Any contribution of any type will be appreciated. It need not be a big commitment.

Email a.g.muirhead@gmail.com

Mobile 07526662044

Presbytery holding Worship Leadership training

The new South West Presbytery is organising training for anyone who feels called to lead worship, either as part of a team in their own church or in other congregations

Training for both these roles will be done through a series of modules.

It's important that this training is being offered at this time when there is such a shortage of worship leaders.

If anyone is interested please speak to Scott.

Who to contact

Minister:

Revd. Dr. SCOTT S. McKENNA.
scottsmckenna@aol.com
Tel:- 01292 226075

Associate Minister:

Revd. DAVID T. NESS, LTH,
17 Winston Avenue, Prestwick.
Tel:- 471625

Session Clerk:

ROBERT A. BARTHOLOMEW,
30 St Leonard's Road, Ayr. Tel:- 265794

Depute Session Clerk:

WALTER MUIR, 1 Corsehill Place, Ayr
Tel:- 282931

Treasurer: TOM CAIRNS,

15 Longhill Avenue, Ayr KA7 4DY
Tel:- 443271

Director of Music:

MATTHEW HYNES,
20A Academy Street, Ayr KA7 1HS
Tel:- 870449

Gift Aid Convener:

PETER G. MACDONALD,
23 Dongola Road, Ayr. Tel:- 264059

Free Will Offering Convener:

GRAEME SAVAGE,
27 Newark Crescent, Ayr. Tel:- 445347

Roll Keeper:

MARGARET DONCASTER
20 St Cuthbert's Road
Prestwick KA9 2EB
Tel:-477381

'Columba News' Editor:

NORMAN REID,
4 Hawthorn Drive, Ayr. Tel:-262144
editor.columbanews@gmail.com

Church Secretary:

IRENE E. BARTHOLOMEW,
30 St Leonard's Road, Ayr
Office 269524
irene@ayrstcolumba.co.uk

Beadle and Church Officer:

JOHN STEWART,
6A Ronaldshaw Park, Ayr.
Tel:- 07847639528

Church Office: Carrick Park, Ayr.

Tel:- 269524 Office hours: 9am-noon, Mon,
Tues, Thurs and Fri

Church Charity Number: SC014338

Church Services (Midton Road):

10am - Family Service;
10am Sunday School,
11.15 - Morning Worship;
6.30pm - Evening Services
(Last Sunday of the month)
2pm: HOLY COMMUNION
(Last Wednesday of Month)

Church Services (Lochside):

10am Morning Worship

Webmaster: Iain Bartholomew,

email: website@ayrstcolumba.co.uk.
www.ayrstcolumba.co.uk

What's on in the halls

MONDAY

5.30pm **RAINBOW BROWNIES**

Aynsley Bell, 07914 842118

2pm: **THE GUILD** (fortnightly):

Mrs D. Bone, 441651

2pm: **MONDAY FELLOWSHIP**

(fortnightly):

Mr T. R. Swinn, 441896

WEDNESDAY

2pm: **HOLY COMMUNION** (4th Wed):

Church Office, 269524

2pm: **FITNESS with FRIENDS:**

Mrs Margaret Doncaster, 477381

6.15: **9th AYR BROWNIES,**

Sally Bentham 07817169436

THURSDAY

10am-noon: **OASIS CAFE**

Mrs M. Doncaster 477381 Mrs P. Naylor
570020

6.30pm: **CUB SCOUTS:**

Mr Jereon Bolte 07511489755

7.30pm: **SENIOR CHOIR:**

Church Office 269524

FRIDAY

6pm: **BEAVER SCOUTS:**

Fiona Wilson, 290414

7.30pm: **SCOUTS:**

Jereon Bolte, 07511489755

SATURDAY

MESSY CHURCH

in St Andrew's Church

(First Saturday of the month):

Irene Bartholomew, 269524

Congregation and Parish Register



February-March

BAPTISM

Sophia Isabella Gaden, daughter of Alexander and Vanessa Gaden

NEW MEMBERS

Vivien Black,
Helen Weir,
Ian and Amanda Stirling,
Enid Hope,
Aileen Martin,
Edith Atkinson,
Gordon Bryce

DEATHS

"I am with you always to the end of the age" Matthew 28:20

Elizabeth (Betty) Murray	Dundonald Care Home
Sheena Boyd	The Pines, Murdoch's Lane, Ayr
Janet (Jenny) Brown	Templeton House Care Home, Ayr
Mary Reid	Carrick Gardens, Ayr
Thomas McFarlane	Hillview, Dalrymple
James (Jim) Dempster	Taybank Drive Ayr
James (Jim) Brown	Broadwood Park, Alloway, Ayr
Steven Mellis	Whiteford View, Ayr
Isabel (Ella) Todd	Homebriar House, Ayr
Lynda Sparks	Seafield Road, Ayr
Elizabeth (Liz) Bolland	Windyhall Nursing Home, Ayr
William (Bill) Cunningham	Willow Park. Ayr
Charles Aryiku	Bellevue Road Ayr

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Thank you from Jay

Thank you all for the Love, Good Wishes, Congratulations, cards and gifts on my 90th birthday and also support in recent weeks .I am deeply grateful.

Jay Mair

**Copy deadline for the June issue
will be**

Sunday, May 28

Copy should be emailed to

editor.columbanews@gmail.com

**New advertisers should also send their copy to
the editor Norman Reid**

Bridge time

The Phoenix Bridge Club meets on Wednesdays in St. Leonard's Church Hall. Play begins at 1.30pm. They are a relaxed friendly club and if you don't have a partner we may be able to help.

There is no membership fee. Weekly charge is £3. Further details from Dick Vernon 01292 442195 or Clare Lappin 01292 280075



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Prayer from the Moderator
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