Columba News an salumn 0 December 61 JM \mathbf{O}

Time to remember



The Scout group placed their special tribute for Remembrance Sunday on the grass in the church garden. It was made up of painted stones.

Waiting to welcome you

Sundays	Team	Leader
December 8	Team 4	I Storm
December 15	Team 5	A. Mooney
December 22	Team 6	L. Murray
December 29	Team 7	C. Kennedy
January 5	Team 8	M. Fullerton
January 12	Team 9	I. Sutherland
January 19	Team 10	A. Swan
January 26	Team 11	K. Muirhead
February 2	Team 12	G. McMillan
	Evening Service January 26, Team	

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From the manse

Dear Fríends,

Christmas is almost upon us! At the time of writing, the long weeks of warmth and little rain have been replaced by cold winds and a hailstorm. I look forward to seeing the church Christmas tree and decorations, and to singing the great hymns of the season and the smell of mulled wine and turkey and trimmings!

For many, Christmas is a time of real joy: a celebration of faith, but also a time to spend with those we love. For others, the warmth and



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with those we love. For others, the warmth and happiness of Christmas that fills the air may be a sore reminder of loneliness, loss, and poverty.

The story of the Christ Child, the birth in a manger, is incredibly potent. Far from being ancient history or a fairy-tale, it is myth. The German author, Thomas Mann, wrote, 'Myth is the way things never were, but always are'. For me, the Christmas story is that God is to be encountered in the mess and muck of this life. It is true now. Encounter is now.

Often it is our view or understanding of God, the mystery we call 'God', which prevents us from encountering the Sacred. Where are we to look? And what are we looking for? We are very familiar with God 'speaking' in the Bible. In the rabbinic tradition, the tradition of Jesus, the Divine voice was described as the 'thinnest silence'. In other words, it is not that God breaks into the silence and 'speaks', but that the thinnest silence is the voice of God. The elusive mystery we call 'God' is present with us when we are present to God's presence, open to the Eternal. It may be enjoying the company of someone we love, appreciating the wonder of another human being, absorbing the staggering beauty of a sunrise or sunset, or being touched by a word or phrase in Scripture.

As an exercise, it can be helpful to look back over our lives, perhaps the points of change or, equally, extended periods of stability. Look back at the decisions made, the roads taken, the good choices and the less good, and to be aware of any sense of blessing we may feel. It is all too easy to be snagged on feelings of regret. The decisions we have made we have made in the time and circumstances of the past.

Crucially, are we able to see the good and to sense the presence of God





in our lives in all the twists and turns?

I am truly grateful to the congregation of St Columba for the call to be your minister. For the most part, at least, I hope that you have found en-

richment and benefit from my ministry. I have most certainly been led further on my spiritual journey in the time I have been with you. I wish you well and every blessing on the road ahead. Thank you for welcoming me and Shelagh into this community!

We hope to buy a house somewhere in Ayr, and it'll be good to see you whenever our paths cross. Rosie will miss her celebrity status in this piece.



Again, thank you for your love, warmth, encouragement, and support over these past five years! Be assured of my prayers, good wishes, and continuing affection for the community and church of St Columba.

Scott



Copy deadline for the January issue will be **Sunday, December 29** *Due to the printer's festive holiday no late copy can be accepted due to a tight production schedule* Copy should be emailed to editor.columbanews@gmail.com

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Dorothy led the walkers at Dumfries House estate

The walking group enjoyed a lovely autumn walk in the grounds of Dumfries House, led by Dorothy Kane. As you can see from the picture, the colours of some of the trees were spectacular.

Our last walk of the year was on Friday. November 29. The group met outside Greggs in the Asda car park in Irvine at 10.30, and walked down the river to do a loop at the beach park.

Details of next year's walks will be in the January edition, but the January one is likely to include our usual 'late Christmas lunch'.

Anyone interested in joining the group would be most welcome. We don't go far - or fast!- but we do exercise our tongues at least as much as our legs.

Helen Greig

Ladies join Monday Fellowship

Our opening meeting on October 7 saw a major boost to our numbers and it was wonderful to welcome so many ladies who joined us from the Guild. They certainly help to improve the singing of the hymns!

Our first speaker was Christine Murray, Clerk to the Presbytery, and she gave a very interesting talk on her life before she became Clerk and an

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insight into the workings of the Presbytery.

In a slight change to the advertised programme, Ian Watkins was our second speaker and he delivered an extremely interesting, illustrated talk on his work, since retirement, with the Home Office and his training of Police Officers in countries all around the Middle East and further abroad. We nearly had to sign the Official Secrets Act!!

The Rev. Jill Clancy was our third guest and what a bundle of energy she is. Talk about enthusiasm. She told us all about her career and how she finds, and loves, working in HMP Barlinnie with all the different inmates there. She will certainly help them to manage their changes to "outside life" with her personality and love.

As I write this, we are looking forward to an illustrated talk from Jane Dare, an intrepid traveller, who will be describing a Journey from Victoria to Cape Town.

Our penultimate meeting on December 2 is our first Charity speaker. Terry Wright will be talking about the Commonwealth War Graves Charity and have just past Remembrance Day, this will be a very important talk.

Andrew Girvan, Carrick Resilience Team, will be our final speaker of 2024 (where has the year gone?) and he will be telling us all about the Resilience Team and how they impact on the Community.

As mentioned at the beginning, it is very heartening to have such a large membership and we look forward to next year with relish. Anyone will be very welcome to attend our meetings and even to join as a member.

All at the Monday Fellowship wish the Columba News readers a very Merry Christmas.

John Ferguson

Secretary

Nativity time in nearing

The Sunday School are enjoying a busy start to their session. But now the focus is on preparing for their Nativity presentation which will be held on Sunday, December 8 at the morning service at 10.30am.

Glass panes for uplift Two sheets of armoured glass that cannot be cut are available free for uplift from the church. They measure 2.2m x 875 x 10mm. Contact church officer for details.

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Catching up with all the news from the Kirk Session

Meetings of the Kirk Session were held on 10th September and on 8th October 2024, moderated by Revd Dr Scott McKenna. A summary of issues discussed at these meetings is given below:

• The Moderator referred to emails which had been sent to Elders and members indicating that he was demitting his position as Minister at Ayr St Columba to take up a full-time post as Spiritual Lead at the Ayrshire Hospice in January 2025. He said his decision had been difficult and he acknowledged that it had caused upset for many members. He expressed his gratitude for the many words and messages of support he had received from members since the email was sent.

• The Clerk reported that Ms Sharon Lindsay had taken over as Treasurer from Mr Tom Cairns on 1st September. He welcomed Ms Lindsay into the role and assured her of the support of the Kirk Session and church members.

• The Clerk paid warm tribute to the work which had been done by Mr Cairns in his eight years as Treasurer. He spoke of Mr Cairns' whole-hearted commitment to tasks he took on, relating both to Finance matters and to whole church matters.

• The Clerk welcomed Mrs Millie McNish to her first meeting as Safeguarding Coordinator.

• Mrs McNish gave an update on a number of issues. In the past three months PVG applications had been approved for herself, Mrs Sarah Gow and Miss Katie Rice. All three ladies were involved in the Sunday School. Dr Helen Hunter had received her basic Disclosure Certificate which would allow her to take up her position on the Safeguarding Panel along-side the Minister, the Session Clerk and the Safeguarding Coordinator.

• Safeguarding training was still required for some members and Mrs McNish would contact the individuals who were required to undertake training.

• The Clerk said that the recent tragic stabbings of young people in Southport had raised concerns regarding security at events and locations where people gathered. This included church services. The Church of Scotland had asked all churches to review their security procedures and to complete a Risk Assessment on security matters. The Clerk was working

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on the Risk Assessment and Mr John Stewart was organising improved CCTV coverage at the main door of the Church. Appropriate signage would be put in place.

• It was intended to hold a practice emergency evacuation of the church on Sunday, November 3. Mr Ballantyne would organise this and arrange for improved signage in the church. Clear instructions would be distributed to Welcome Team members ahead of the event.

• Mr J Ballantyne reported that the work on the installation of the replacement central heating boilers was essentially complete. The resolution of the fan vibration issue has meant that Gibson and Goold (the contractor) has been able to complete its commissioning tests which have all shown satisfactory results. This means that the replacement boilers are safe to operate.

• A paper on Finance prepared by Mr Tom Cairns had been distributed to Elders ahead of the meeting. This included a statement from the outgoing Treasurer in which he took the opportunity to offer his sincere gratitude to the people within the church who had greatly assisted him in the task of looking after the church finances.

• The Moderator referred to a paper prepared by the Faith/Nurture Committee which proposed that we support the Abbas Rest charity with a guaranteed amount. Elders approved a motion which meant that we would support Abbas Rest with a guaranteed amount of £2,000 per annum for a period of four years.

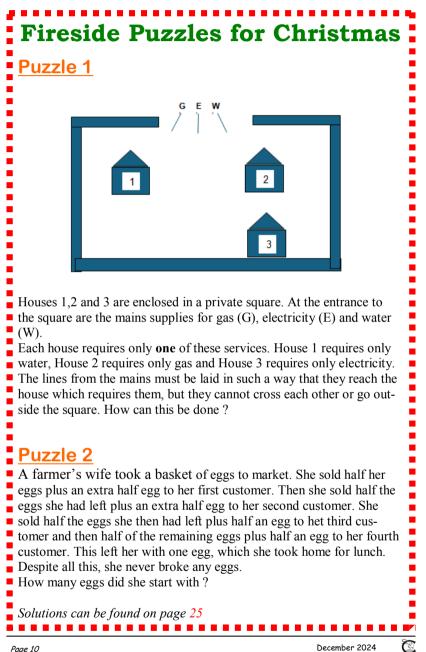
• The Moderator said that the transfer of responsibility for Lochside to Newton Wallacetown Church was likely to happen by the end of the year. There was an issue concerning our employee there and this was currently being dealt with.

• Presbytery had indicated that it was hoped that the General Trustees would agree to St Columba being allowed to make a call for a Minister to a deferred union. If so, the individual called would become Minister at Ayr St Columba and would become Minister at each of our partner churches when the present incumbents left.

R A Bartholomew Session Clerk

> Copy deadline for the January issue will be Sunday, December 29 Copy should be emailed to editor.columbanews@gmail.com

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LIFE AND WORK MAGAZINE

The editorially independent magazine of the Church of Scotland is packed every month with features, news and opinions on Christian life within Scotland and further afield.



One of the magazine's most important features is reader feedback- the letters pages are lively

and very revealing about general attitudes within and beyond the Church.

As the Church pays annually for the magazines, it receives a discount, so we are able to offer an annual subscription rate of £42, to anyone paying before the <u>end of December 2024</u>.

Cheques should be made payable to St Columba Church.

Home delivery can be arranged for elderly or housebound members.

Hazel Steele

LIFE AND WORK MAGAZINE

Annual subscription for $2025 = \underline{\pounds 42}$ payable before December 2024

 \Box I enclose my subscription for 2025.

Cheques made payable to Ayr St Columba Church

Home Delivery required?

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Please return to me **as soon as possible**, either to the church office or to my home address.

57 Auchendoon Crescent, Ayr KA7 4AT

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St Columba group enjoyed a special pilgrimage to Iona

Iona is a special place indeed. A Christian Community was founded by St Columba and his Irish followers in AD 563 and became the cradle of Christianity in Scotland and the final resting place for many Scottish kings.

In the early 13th century a Benedictine Abbey was established where Columba's original simple church would have been located. Iona has long been a place of pilgrimage, and is one of the oldest Christian religious centres in Western Europe. A perfect destination for Ayr St Columba's 4 day retreat.

Twenty great souls set off very early for the lunchtime ferry from Oban to Mull. After a welcome breakfast stop at the Green Welly and a picnic stop at Duart castle, we drove again across Mull to sail to Iona. We had driven through golden autumnal countryside, and by the time we reached Fionnphort ready to depart for Iona we had left the rushing around of our everyday lives behind. The sun shone, the sailings were calm and any fears of impending storm Ashley upsetting our travel plans were long gone.

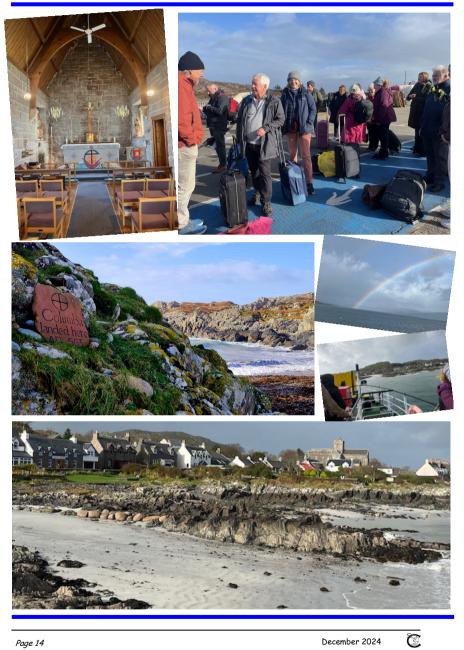
Our home for the next three nights on the island was Bishop's House. A retreat house situated close to the Abbey, it overlooks the Sound of Iona and its garden goes down onto the beach. It has its own small chapel in the heart of the house, a beautiful quiet library with log fire, a large lounge with unlimited tea, coffee and home baking, a welcoming dining room and our bedrooms were comfortable, warm and with beautiful views. Our hosts Robbie, his depute Gerda and their staff could not have been more welcoming, and our meals were tasty and plentiful.

That afternoon we made the most of the glorious weather and headed up along the north end beach walk, reaching a dramatic rocky shore and a series of beautiful beaches behind the dunes with views over the Inner Hebrides.

Sunday presented several opportunities – despite the onset of storm Ashley! After communion in the Abbey and a welcoming cuppa from the Iona community, some chose to return to the Abbey in the afternoon for a

Words continued on page 16 and 17: Pictures 14, 15, 17 and 18

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From Page 13

sound bath – a hypnotic experience with vibrational gongs almost drowned out by the howling winds in the rafters. Others were welcomed by the Abbey's resident musician and eight associates of the Iona Community who were staying in the Abbey and joined in with running over the hymns to be used in the following few days' services – some old favourites and some new ones. More intrepid souls took themselves out into the wilds of the storm - and where better to experience the power of nature than on a 3 mile long lump of 1000 million year old rock. The most sensible of all stayed cosy in the lounge (more homebaking!) and enjoyed the wonderful spectacle of the huge waves through the double glazing.

By Monday morning the wind had died down and we set off on the nine mile pilgrimage route (or as far as we were able) around the island to the bay where it all began, crossing the hill and rocks of the island much as St Columba would have done. Each stopping off point along the way was of special significance, emphasised by the readings and reflections so thoughtfully put together by Ian and Mandy.

Starting at St Martin's Cross outside the Abbey, along the Street of the Dead to the Nunnery and out to Martyr's Bay, we climbed steadily up to the crossroads and onto the Machair and the small reservoir, with magnificent views of St Columba's Bay in the distance.

At St Columba's Bay, if you search carefully, you may find small pebbles known as St Columba's tears. Most are rock with a small seam of serpentine marble within. The most elusive of all are pure green translucent serpentine marble. It was a delight that Ann found one such rare treasure.

Further on, listening for the calls of corncrakes, we came to the Hermit's Cell, a place away from the Abbey, used for quiet contemplation away from the distractions of everyday life the Abbey.

And so it was with our own pilgrimage. Whilst enjoying the camaraderie of our fellow travellers, we were each able to find silence and renewal on a personal, spiritual level.

Back at Bishop's House, Muriel's friend Rev. Joyce Watson, a resident of Iona and former warden of Bishop's House, gave a very informative talk about the island. She is a talented wildlife photographer and an expert in Iona's native wildflowers and geology. Her enthusiasm and love of the island shone through in the stories she told. The highlights of the trip were many, but special mention must be made of our morning and evening re-

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flections in the small beautifully atmospheric church in Bishop's House. Very special thanks to Scott, Ian and Muriel who each led our services of worship with music and readings. Thank you to Iris for her bible reading and to Agnes for her signing of the hymns which was especially moving. I think we all agreed that these quiet services played a huge part in our appreciation of what it means to take part in pilgrimage. Probably something different for each one of us there, yet strengthened by the fellowship of those around us.

And what fellowship that was! We were a real diverse bunch of characters and it was such a pleasure getting to know each other over the course of our trip. After four days of meals and stories shared together on this tiny island so close to the elements I think some of us began to feel like the last survivors, plotting not to escape but rather to stay longer, hoping another storm might blow in and cancel our ferry!

Perhaps our hosts summed up our trip best when they said goodbye to us. "We loved having you – you have been such a joyful party of guests!" I suspect this is their shorthand for saying how much we laughed, shared, reflected and chatted throughout our stay, and there's no better summary of St Columba's first (and certainly not last) Iona pilgrimage. A huge thank you to everyone who played a part in making it such a success, and to Ann and Colin in particular, who put together all our travel and accommodation plans.



Chilly but blue skies for the group

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A Happy band of pilgrims set off, This breezy Autumn Day Walking in the footsteps Saint Columba, Sun was rising O'er over the hills and vales. Happy band of pilgrims Onwards we shall tread blessed by warmth and love and joy safely with happy memories blessed and content The ferry took us over the sea to Iona A rainbow spanned the heavens And the sea here always seemed sparkling green like the most precious rarest jewels. As we Pilgrims travelled on our way the views that fell upon the gaze sure did take one's breath away. Autumn glory from the trees such beauty all Creation breathes No human hand created these The changeless beauty of the trees.
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At dark they leak like lights to guide
At dark they look like lights to guide
So we felt such warmth within,
the heart gave out a happy sigh.
Over the waters, wind snell and keen.
A happy band of pilgrims cruising land and sea
wild horses racing the ocean soon we reached this special place
Tranguillity and Peace beyond all measure
Memories we will always treasure
The stormy tempest could not break us.
But, healing it did sure embrace us
White horses racing across the shores.
Cradled on this Island we adore.
Its peace shall go from shore-to-shore
Healing grace and so much more.
© Agnes Fisher. October. 2024

Seniors Christmas Party



Join us on Saturday, December 14 from 2pm until 4.30pm

Enjoy a festive afternoon with good company, afternoon tea, music and best of all Santa

The entertainment will be provided by Isobell Montgomerie and the Rural Revellers

It's guaranteed to start those toes tapping ready for Christmas

If you would like to join the festivities, please complete the form below and return it to the office or the posting box in the Carrick Park corridor

Seniors' Christmas Party

Please reserve.....a place

at the Seniors' Christmas party on Saturday, December 14

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A big thank you from the Ministry of Flowers

On behalf of the ladies of the flower team, we would like to say a huge *thank-you* to everyone who has so kindly donated to the flower fund during the last year.

Your donations are used to provide flowers in the Chancel, as gifts for special anniversaries and small pretty posies each week to members of our congregation.

We know from the letters and cards we receive that the flowers are very much appreciated - so many people say that they really lift their spirits and bring joy and colour into their homes.

The calendar for 2025 will shortly be placed in the Carrick Park hallway and if you would like to mark a special date - or simply pass on kind thoughts please add your name on any date.

Your donation can be handed in to the church office at any time. If anyone would like to join the team, you will be made most welcome.

Thank you once again - your generosity is, as always, very much appreciated.

The Flower Team

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AYR ST COLUMBA CHURCH **SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAR9IS**

SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER

AT 4.30PM

followed by Mulled Wine and Mince Pies



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TAKING AN ECO LOOK by Andrew Muirhead

Christmas cheer for the environment

The news tends to be full of things that have gone wrong! Sometimes a few things go well. Even better, sometimes things go well locally. On environmental matters, we really can sometimes make a genuine contribution that will count.

Travel seems to be very difficult to decarbonise, especially travel by air. Modern aircraft burn kerosene and sometimes form contrails. These contrails are responsible for just as much global warming as the fossil fuel that is burned by aeroplanes. Have you noticed they sometimes look a bit like a Scottish flag?

Matt McGrath of the BBC reported that "COP (29) aims to draw attention to the fact that relatively simple changes to aviation practice could eliminate much of the warming impact of these trails". He goes on "Tweaking the flight paths of a handful of aircraft could reduce contrail warming by more than half by 2040, at a cost of less than £4 per flight." The ballooning of the aviation industry in the last couple of years might be offset by inexpensive and simple changes.

You are likely to know that land based wind turbines are switched off if the wind blows too strongly and don't work when wind is too light. Energy companies have the duty to provide supply irrespective of weather conditions and level of



demand. This means that Scotland must import electricity quite often because energy storage is inadequate. <u>Calum Corral of the Largs and Millport weekly news</u> wrote that the Hunterston estate would become one site for a new battery storage facility, the other being at Kincardine. Each site will store 400 MW of power and will be two of the largest in Europe. I understand these projects are now complete but have not found confirmation in the Press. These batteries address surges in demand for short periods. Hunterston will also host <u>Highview power's long duration energy</u> <u>storage plant</u>. This will be the largest such plant in the world. This press

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release was picked up by <u>Mark McDougall of the Herald</u>. The liquid air energy storage facility will store 2.5GW of electricity, a huge amount, for longer periods and make wind power much less reliant on other sources of electricity.

Do you want to give business in Scotland a Christmas present? If so, low cost electricity might fit the bill. At present we have very expensive energy. <u>Katrine Bussey of insider.co.uk</u> reported on an interview of Greg Jackson the CEO of Octopus energy. He said that "If we had regional pricing in the UK for electricity, every region would be cheaper than it is now."

"Scotland would have the cheapest electricity in Europe." If you agree, it might be a good moment to write to your MP (Energy is not devolved). Business here would flourish and energy would become greener more quickly.

Andrew Muirhead

References

<u>Cheap fix floated for contrail plane vapour's climate impact - BBC News</u> <u>https://www.largsandmillportnews.com/news/23766955.explained-</u> <u>hunterston-battery-storage-plant-new-road-built/</u>

<u>Highview Launches Second Phase of its Long Duration Energy Storage</u> (LDES) Programme with 2.5GWH Power Plant at Hunterston, Ayshire -Highview Power | Highview Power

World's largest liquid air energy facility to be created in Ayrshire | The Herald

Market reforms could give Scots 'cheapest energy in Europe' - Business Insider



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Answers to Fireside Puzzles 1 2 The farmer's wife started with 31 eggs in her basket. Half of these plus half an egg equals 16 eggs for her first customer, so there are 15 eggs remaining. Half of these plus half an egg equals 8 eggs for her second customer so there are 7 eggs left. Half of these plus half an egg equals 4 eggs for her third

Congregation and Parish Register

customer, leaving just 3 eggs. The fourth customer gets half of these plus half an egg which is 2 eggs, leaving the one egg which she took home for lunch.



November

Baptism

Ava Kathleen, daughter of Kerrie and Ashley Bennett-Lee

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Who to contact

Minister: Revd. Dr. SCOTT S. McKENNA. scottsmckenna@aol.com Tel:- 01292 891238 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 Treasurer: SHARON LINDSAY 4 Gower Place, Avr KA7 4SL Tel:- 445182 **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): 10.30am - Morning Worship; 10.30am Sunday School, 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

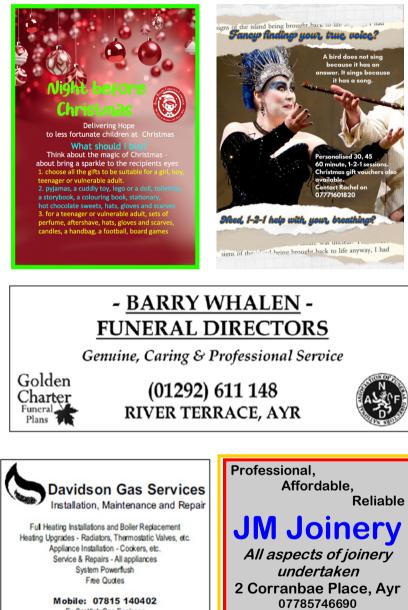
What's on in the halls

MONDAY 5.30pm RAINBOW BROWNIES Aynsley Bell, 07914 842118 2pm: MONDAY FELLOWSHIP (fortnightly): Mr T. R. Swinn, 441896 TUESDAY 10am: Knit and Natter Carol Morrison, 07999444200 WEDNESDAY 2pm: HOLY COMMUNION (4th Wed): Church Office, 269524 2pm: FITNESS with FRIENDS: Mrs Margaret Doncaster, 477381 5.45pm: 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: Matthew Hynes, 870449 FRIDAY 6pm: BEAVER SCOUTS: Fiona Wilson, 290414 7.30pm: SCOUTS: Jereon Bolte, 07511489755

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