

# Columba News

January  
2025  
No. 262



## *Keep fit ladies go to lunch*



*The Wednesday afternoon keep fit ladies enjoyed a Christmas lunch*

---

## Waiting to welcome you

<b>Sundays</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Leader</b>
January 19	Team 10	A Swan
January 26	Team 11	K. Muirhead
February 2	Team 12	G McMillan
February 9	Team 1	B. Cowan
February 16	Team 2	G. Mackenzie
February 23	Team 3	M. Johnston
March 2	Team 4	I. Storm
March 9	Team 5	A. Mooney
March 16	Team 6	L. Murray
March 23	Team 7	C. Kennedy
March 30	Team 8	M. Fullerton
April 6	Team 9	TBC
April 13	Team 10	TBC



## *From the Interim Moderator*

*Dear Friends,*

T. S. Eliot in his poem, 'Little Gidding' says:

*"Last year's words belong to last year's language  
And next year's words await another voice.  
And to make an end is to make a beginning"*



I'm conscious as I write this pastoral letter that this is where our congregation presently stands: we are at the end of an eventful year as we say farewell and God Speed to our minister, Scott McKenna, and 'await another voice'. We are seeking Presbytery's permission to call another minister and I want to assure you that the Kirk Session is actively engaged on this.

I also wanted to tell you that, with the help of the Associate Minister, David Ness, and our loved Deacon, Muriel Wilson, we plan to undertake the Sunday services each week among ourselves in the absence of a designated locum. (Locums are not easy to secure) Besides, we felt that the congregation would feel "less vacant" if we were able to manage the services and pastoral care within the congregation.

We also plan to invite 'guest preachers' who are known to you to conduct public worship together with ourselves, thus enriching our congregational life and fellowship.

We, the three Clerks, Muriel, David and I, feel it is vital that we hold our congregation together during this potentially uncertain period and promise to keep you informed as things progress.

Vacancy is not meant to be a fallow or aimless time, but an opportunity to reflect on where we are as a congregation and what the future looks like as we seek a new leader to guide us into the next stage of Ayr St Columba's spiritual journey.

I think it was, Louisa May Alcott, in 'Little Women', has, Josephine 'Jo'

say, "at Christmas, all roads lead home". I hope you have had a lovely Christmas with returning family - and for you, who like me, live alone, have experienced the kindness of family, friends and church folk.

Thank you all for the warmth with which you have welcomed my appointment as Interim Moderator.

Warmest good wishes

**John**

*Rev John Matthews*

*Interim Moderator*

## Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated in the church on Sunday, January 26 at 10.30am .

As previously the Communion services have reverted back to the traditional style of serving the elements.

The small capsules of bread and wine the church used during Covid will also be available at the door if some members would prefer to use these instead of the common plate.

## Thanks from Christian Aid

I recently received a letter from Christian Aid thanking St Columba for the contribution of £800 which was collected during Christian Aid Week.

I have posted the letter on the Carrick Park notice board for you to read.

Personally I would like to thank everyone for your generosity as this money will help families around the world improve their quality of life.

It always amazes and pleases me how very generous our congregation is when asked to help those in need and for that many families are indebted.

Sincere thanks.

*Mo (Howie) C.A. Rep.*



## Monday Fellowship hits the afternoon high notes

We have had a very good first session of meetings since resuming in October with attendances well up on previous years, bolstered by the addition of ex Guild members.

It has certainly improved our singing! The fellowship and mix of people is very welcome and we hope other members of the Congregation will feel free to join us.

Our speakers have been very interesting and amusing, covering a fairly wide range of topics.

We are looking forward to resuming on January 13 with a very interesting topic on the "World of Urine" delivered by John Rattenbury, a well kent face in Ayr.

Our next session finishes on Wednesday, March 19 with a lunch at the Fairfield Hotel.

We hope that everyone has a Happy and Healthy 2025.

***John Ferguson***  
***Secretary***

---

## Walkers head for the Beach Park

We had a nice walk at the end of November down the River Irvine and round the beach park.

Although it doesn't look like it in this picture, the water was very still, and we were remembering the first time we did the walk last June when it was blowing a gale!

The January walk will be beside the River Ayr, hopefully followed by lunch at the Italian on the corner of Newmarket Street and Sandgate.

We will meet outside TKMaxx at 10.30. Please advise Helen if you are coming for lunch so that a table can be booked.

***Helen Greig***





Copy deadline for the April issue will be  
**Sunday, March 30**  
Copy should be emailed to [editor.columbanews@gmail.com](mailto:editor.columbanews@gmail.com)





## St Columba youngsters stage their special Nativity





## Enjoying a festive treat at the congregational lunch









Farewell to  
Scott after  
his final  
service at  
St Columba  
five years on



## Coffee time to help support Abbas Rest

Santa's elves started working a little early this year in St Columba Church.

On Friday, November 29 during the day they were preparing for the bottle stall- wrapping the bottles in brown paper and folding up the tickets.

Then in the evening they were busy again- setting the tables: assembling all the amazing bric-a-brac : displaying the raffle prizes and the beautiful water-colour flower painting by Jean Berry for the silent auction: making sure all the bottles and tickets were in order. Thank you Agnes, Linda and Frank and John and Elizabeth Ann!



Columba Kids had also been working hard for a few weeks on their Christmas decorations and they had a lovely wee stall.

Then on Saturday morning the home baking arrived- delicious scones, loaves, tray bakes and empire biscuits as well as tablet and other goodies. What generous bakers we have!

David was on the door ensuring the entrance tickets and money were safely collected.



The teas and coffees team-Muriel Forbes, Helen Hunter ,Iris Hodgson and Linda Bonfanti were constantly on their feet ferrying teas and coffees and home baking to everyone. The hall was buzzing!

People found lots of bargains at the bric- a- brac stall, ably managed by Shelagh who got the best prices

*Continued over the page*

## ABBAS REST COFFEE MORNING

2

possible!

Scott was the champion raffle ticket seller and in fact he was so good we ran out of tickets! He and Simon, our student minister, called out the winners.

John and Elizabeth Ann were on the bottle stall helping folk unfold their tickets and unwrap their mystery bottles.

There was a very happy atmosphere in the Midton Hall. It was great to see visitors from other churches there too.

At the end of the morning we had raised £1783.96p and as I write people are still giving donations! It really is a wonderful result! We can't thank you enough for your support and generosity!

From the Malawian folk in Chiringa “  
Zikoma .Mulunga adalitse “  
Thank you and God Bless”

*Muriel Wilson*



ABBAS REST COFFEE MORNING

3



## New minister has the Ayr St Columba connection

Rev Christopher Watt has been ordained as full-time Ministers of Word and Sacrament to the Church of Scotland.

Christopher who lived in Ayr was a well known face at Ayr St Columba before he moved on to university a number of years ago.

He was the choirmaster for the church's junior choir when the church hosted a royal visit from the Princess Royal and her husband.

Christopher was ordained at Thornhill Parish Church in Dumfriesshire, and was a lawyer before deciding to study for the ministry.

He said: "I've always been involved with the church and probably from my early 20s I would have told you that at some stage I was going to work within the church, but I didn't know what that would look like."



**Ordination:** Christopher and his wife Erin

He went on to study remotely with Dingwall-based Highland Theological College (HTC) and his first placement was in St George's Parish Church close to his home in Dumfries.

This coincided with the Covid lockdown, but Mr Watt was able to find a positive in these unusual circumstances.

He completed his probationary period at Thornhill, Penpont and Durisdeer, and will remain there as assistant minister until he moves to his own charge.

Mr Watt said: "I strongly believe that the Church needs to work hard to become a substantial part of the community again and wherever I have been on placement, that has been my goal."

To do so, he has been able to use his own interests and skills in the service of the church. A keen musician and musical director for his local amateur musical company, he has been playing the organ in church since he was 17 and is always happy to step in when needed."

*The full article first appeared in the November edition 2024 of Life and Work*



# Check out the Presbytery news

*Note of the Presbytery Meeting of the South West which took place by zoom on 3 December 2024*

**Interim Moderator:** Presbytery noted the appointment of the Rev John Matthews as Interim Moderator at Ayr St Columba with effect from 1 January 2025 and the appointment of the Rev David Gemmell as Interim Moderator for the deferred Union of Prestwick: Kingcase St Nicholas with effect from 17 September 2024. Presbytery noted the appointment of Interim Moderators is the remit of the Presbytery Clerk

**Finance:** Work is continuing on core funding budgets beyond 2025. Presbytery approved the Presbytery Dues for 2025 rising to 2% of individual congregation's assessable income. This will enable Presbytery to boost reserves in order to cover future salaries and expenses once core funding ends.

**Safeguarding:** Presbytery instructs congregations submit Forms SG7 (Congregational Safeguarding Register) and SG11 (Congregational Safeguarding Audit ) by 31 March each year either to Presbytery Office or direct to the Safeguarding Officer.

**Local Church Review:** The Mission Committee has completed a study of ways to implement Local Church Review for the Presbytery in a manner which maximises focus on Mission and discipleship, and with a light touch on governance. This aims to maximise administration on individual congregations by making maximum use of existing returns, with increased focus on the command to go and make disciples. This will involve all congregations conducting a focussed session each year to update their mission plan, with an invited two or more local Presbyters as Independent Presbytery Reviewers. Congregations are already asked to submit a Mission Plan annually to the Presbytery Clerk but this LCR initiative will hopefully result in a more focussed activity in this area, consistent with Presbytery's stated intent to be a Mission Focussed Presbytery.

**Presbytery Planning:** Presbytery acknowledged the specific purposes meeting of the Business and Nomination Committee on December 10, 2024 to approve various Bases of Adjustment. In respect of the former Presbytery of Ayr

**Basis of Union:** Coylton Parish Church, Drongan The Schaw Kirk, Ochll-tree Parish Church and Stair Parish Church to form Ayrshire: Kyle Community Church, School of Scotland: Ballantrae Parish Church and St Col-

mon (Arsheen, Barrhill and Comonnell) Church to form Ballantrae and St Colmon Church of Scotland. Auchinleck Parish Church, Catrine Parish Church, Lugar Parish Church, Muirkirk Parish Church, New Cumnock Parish Church, Cumnock Old Church and Cumnock Trinity Church to form South East Ayrshire Parish Church of Scotland

**Property:** Presbytery approved the sale of St Colmon Parish Church on the open market. At a congregational meeting held on November 3, 2024, 18 members of the congregation voted on selling the church building - 15 in favour and 3 against

Presbytery approved the possible sale of three manses (at least two manses) in Troon to allow the church to seek another two suitable energy efficient homes that meet manse criteria.

Presbytery approved the re-siting of the pipe organ from Girvan South Church to Girvan North Church with the conditions as noted in the report.

**Repairs;** Presbytery approved a number of repairs and adaptations to the following churches - Cumnock Old Trinity; Prestwick South Church Hall; Mauchline Church and Straiton Church.

*George Park, Presbytery elder*

## Red Bags are handed over





**SENIORS' CHRISTMAS PARTY**

1



SENIORS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

2





*TAKING AN ECO LOOK by Andrew Muirhead*

## Should we try to communicate our beliefs? If so, what is the best way to do so?

The Christian Church is shrinking in Britain. Christian values nevertheless underpin much of our art, music, government, ethical code and legal system. There are a variety of ways we can communicate our beliefs and different people will choose what suits them best. It is very important that all methods of communication are respected and none is considered sufficient in isolation. Environmental enthusiasts, who have no connection to a Church, have a very similar problem when trying to communicate ideas.

### *Communicating by example*

A good friend of our family, Jean (not her real name) is bright and has a scurrilous sense of humour. She was brought up in a strict Christian denomination and became a GP in Scotland. She decided to become a medi-

cal missionary and went away to work in Pakistan. She joined a clinic in a small town near the boarder with Afghanistan where she looked after mainly women and children for many years. She built up strong enduring relationships with a wide range of people. Jean does not try to convert others to her denomination, or indeed to Christianity, by talking to them. She is not interested in collaborating in writing articles. Her beliefs are very obvious just by watching her example.

### ***Communicating by speaking***

All of us enjoy speaking with others. Sometimes, ideas are expressed that are at odds with our core beliefs. This happens in the company of people in the Church as well as outside the Church. There is a time and place to make our position clear. I find this aspect of communication the most difficult! Do you have similar difficulties when discussing what your Faith, including environmental issues, means to you?

### ***Communicating by writing***

Writing letters to MPs, newspapers and articles such as this, are a way of expressing ideas and values. I never previously thought that writing would have any effect. I have been surprised recently. There are a lot of people outside Ayr St Columba who read the magazine online. Some even read my eco articles! I know this because they have contacted me. I have written to the Herald and the Financial Times. My letters were printed and I have had feedback from as far away as Tokyo and Dublin. The lady from Dublin found my email address through Columba news.

What do others say about the Church? I was interested to read two articles by Andy Haldane. In the first, [“Society counts the cost of decades of bowling alone”](#) he argues that trust and social connectivity boost the economy as well as a sense of well being for individuals. This is down to improved opportunity. In the second ["How to get from the me to the we society"](#) he notes “Social capital is based on strong social infrastructure” His first example is faith-based institutions and others follow. This is a strong vote of confidence in the role of the Church. We already know that regular church attendance improves longevity.

Speaking out about what matters to you can be surprisingly effective. You have a choice of methods. Why not give it a try?

***Andrew Muirhead***

a.g.muirhead@googlemail.com



# Congregation and Parish Register



*November-December*

## **DEATHS**

Alexander O'Farrell  
David Seath  
Ronnie McLellan  
Essie Murray  
Eleanor Hudson  
Alistair Gardiner

## **NEW MEMBER**

Mrs Beryl McGinty

## **BLESSING**

Charlotte Rose  
Rory Andrew James

## Who to contact

### **Interim Moderator:**

Revd JOHN MATTHEWS

### **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, Ayr 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](mailto:editor.columbanews@gmail.com)

### **Church Secretary:**

IRENE E. BARTHOLOMEW,  
30 St Leonard's Road, Ayr  
Office 269524  
[irene@ayrstcolumba.co.uk](mailto: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,

### **Church Services (Lochside):**

10am Morning Worship

**Webmaster:** Iain Bartholomew,  
email: [website@ayrstcolumba.co.uk](mailto:website@ayrstcolumba.co.uk).

[www.ayrstcolumba.co.uk](http://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** (4<sup>th</sup> Wed):  
Church Office, 269524

2pm: **FITNESS with FRIENDS:**

Mrs Margaret Doncaster, 477381

5.45pm: **9<sup>th</sup> 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



Copy deadline  
for the  
April issue will be

Sunday,  
March 30

Copy should be emailed to  
editor.columbanews@gmail.com

signs of the island being brought back to life anyway, I had

*Fancy finding your, true, voice?*

A bird does not sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song.

Personalised 30, 45 60 minute, 1-2-1 sessions. Christmas gift vouchers also available. Contact Rachel on 07771601820

*Need, 1-2-1 help with, your, breathing?*

...life was unclear. I had

signs of the island being brought back to life anyway, I had

**- BARRY WHALEN -  
FUNERAL DIRECTORS**

*Genuine, Caring & Professional Service*

Golden  
Charter  
Funeral  
Plans 

(01292) 611 148  
RIVER TERRACE, AYR



 **Davidson Gas Services**  
Installation, Maintenance and Repair

Full Heating Installations and Boiler Replacement  
Heating Upgrades - Radiators, Thermostatic Valves, etc.  
Appliance Installation - Cookers, etc.  
Service & Repairs - All appliances  
System Powerflush  
Free Quotes

**Mobile: 07815 140402**  
Ex Scottish Gas Engineer

Professional,  
Affordable,  
Reliable

**JM Joinery**

*All aspects of joinery  
undertaken*

2 Corranbae Place, Ayr  
07785746690

# LIFE AND WORK

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

JANUARY 2025  
£3.50

## IN THIS ISSUE

Why I am a Christian  
Seven people talk about faith

A lifeline for so many  
The Church in action

A safe place  
Prison chaplaincy in Barlinnie

'The aim is to introduce  
people to Jesus'  
New Worshipping Communities

Look again  
The power of Image

and much more all for £3.50

