

Columba News

June
2025
No. 264



Waiting to welcome you

Sundays	Team	Leader
June 29	Team 10	Linda Hunter
July 6	Team 11	Kerrie Bennet-Lee
July 13	Team 1	Hazel Steele
July 20	Team 2	Jo Bruce
July 27	Team 3	Ann Naismith
August 3	Team 4	Iain McCrae
August 10	Team 5	Jane Murnin
August 17	Team 6	Bill McCulloch
August 24	Team 7	Terry Swinn
August 31	Team 8	Wendy Campbell
September 7	Team 9	Alan McHarg
September 14	Team 10	Linda Hunter
September 21	Team 11	Kerrie Bennet-Lee
September 28	Team 1	Hazel Steele
October 5	Team 2	Jo Bruce
October 12	Team 3	Ann Naismith
October 19	Team 4	Iain McCrae
October 26	Team 5	Jane Murnin

Kirk Session meetings

The Kirk Session will meet again on Tuesday, September 9 and then on Tuesday, October 14.

Coffee time at Oasis

The Oasis Cafe is open every Thursday morning from 10-noon in the hall for coffee and cakes.

Diary date

The Business Committee is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, August 26.



From the Interim Moderator

Dear Friends,

You may be wondering at the absence of the Interim Moderator from the Sunday services in recent weeks. I was ambushed by the need to have urgent surgery and offered a cancellation - all of which meant I disappeared into hospital and am now recovering at my daughter's in Glasgow! (I own up to asking the Clerk, Bob Bartholomew, not to publicise this information widely as I hope to be back with you as soon as I'm restored)



All of us are profoundly alarmed at the present state of our world: this experience for me has been a reminder that the counter to this is that caring of the most inspiring kind is going on, often unseen, across all areas of our common life. My close-up experience of hospital and the skill, compassion and dedication of nurses, doctors and supportive medicine is truly spiritual!

You'll know that in high dependency units the ratio of ward staff is high with one nurse to two patients. The change over at the end of each day/night shift meant a different nurse. In order to keep track I started writing their names down on the blank side of the diner menu! Word seemed to get out prompting the nurses - and one or two of the doctors on the ward round - humorously asking, "have I made the list?"

This reinforced my long-held belief that valuing each other with praise and an affirming word has a disproportionately positive effect on the people we engage with or who may be serving us! The morning I was being discharged the surgeon who operated on me (he knew I was a minister in the Church of Scotland and told me privately that he was a practicing Muslim) came to say goodbye and tell me to 'take it easy'. There was just the two of us at the bedside and I ask to take his hands, and as I took them in mine I prayed audibly; "God of the universe continue to bless these skilled hands bringing health and wholeness to those in need". He continued to hold my hands and when I looked up I saw he'd become momentarily tearful. People are so often taken for granted - even the most senior!

We should daily be aware that we are conduits through which God's love and actions flow. If you, like me, ask: "what can I do in the face of

such overwhelming evil?" We can live by Christ's alternative Kingdom. The present culture does not have to prevail. It was the American Bayard Taylor, diplomat and poet, who wrote: "*The healing of the World is in its nameless saints. Each separate star seems nothing , but a myriad scattered stars light up the night and make it beautiful.*"

I am so glad that I decided to form a team to serve the congregation throughout the vacancy. It is my constant consolation knowing that Muriel Wilson, David Ness, Ian Stirling, Irene and Bob Bartholomew are covering in my absence, together with - what has been to me - a warm and supportive congregation.

I extend my thanks and warm good wishes.

John(Matthews)

Interim Moderator

Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated in the church on Sunday, June 29 at 10.30am .

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

Enjoy a great day out at the Congregational outing

A summer outing is being arranged, on Saturday, July 12 once again, to Cardwell Garden Centre and Largs.

We hope to have enough drivers to transport us to the garden centre in time for a browse round and snack lunch, after which we will return to Largs for a Nardini ice cream before returning to Ayr. We would hope to leave Ayr around 10.30 and return by 4pm.

Anyone interested should leave their name and phone number on the sheet in the corridor.



Church is supporting the Abbas Rest project



As many of you will know, the Kirk Session has agreed to support Abbas Rest to the tune of £2000 each year for, at least, the next four years and this wonderful donation will make a real difference to the orphans in this part of Malawi.

On behalf of the children, the Trustees of Abbas Rest would like to thank the Kirk Session and everyone at ASC for their generous and invaluable support.

This money will be used to move forward a few of our projects, which include paying for school fees, uniforms and boarding fees for some of the older orphans. A newer project is the supplying of sanitary products - many of the girls were missing a week's schooling each month because of the costs of these and since we have started supplying them, school attendance has improved.

We have also started two projects for school leavers, namely training and equipping two girls to start a sewing business and two boys in welding training.

Malawi is a country which contributes the least to global warming but one which suffers greatly from its effect. Extreme flooding, cyclones and also drought have had a devastating impact on this region and one of our largest costs recently has been the purchase of maize.

Last year we had to increase the amount of maize we purchased from 300x50kg bags to 500 bags at a cost of £10,000 and this year the cost has risen to almost £16,000.

We hope to absorb the increase within our annual fundraising and are extremely grateful to the many of our donors who have helped to close the maize cost gap.

If anyone would like to know about our work in Malawi or would like to help in anyway, please contact Muriel Wilson 07719 355925 or Colin Nasmith 07708777404

www.abbasrest.org

Ready for the Whithorn Way with a guided tour and concert at Paisley Abbey

Saturday, June 21 at 10.45am

The Whithorn Way is one of the oldest and most well known pilgrim routes in Scotland, and runs through Ayr and South West Scotland.

As such it seems fitting to visit some of the destinations along the route. Our first stop will be a guided tour of Paisley Abbey, to be followed by a lunchtime concert by violinist Douglas Lawrence in the Abbey, and a snack or lunch in the Abbey cafe after the concert.

If you are interested, please leave your name and contact details on the sheet in the rear hall corridor. Tickets are £5.

The Abbey is a five minute walk from Paisley Gilmour Street train station.

Transport by car will be available for anyone who can't manage by public transport.

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Katie and Emma Gow take us on the congregational walk up the River Ayr



Our river walk!

It was a lovely sunny day for our walk beside the river. We met in the car park of Ayr College and set off on our journey.

As we started our walk, we saw the river dam and the kayakers getting ready to go on the water.

We spotted some colourful fairy doors on the way to a little beach where we skimmed stones. Daddy was the best at it! Luckily everyone managed to scramble back up to the path. The path lead us through a golf course, and we made our way down to the stepping stones. We were all very brave making it to the other side, but we went twice!

We decided to walk back along the other side of the river, where we saw a couple of horses. A few of us petted the horses but some were too scared (Emma).

Just after the horses Linda made us all laugh by telling us a funny story about a past River Ayr Walk which ended up with her in the back of an ambulance!

A little further along the river we came to an old monument built into the hill. Keith told us that William Wallace had jumped from the hill to escape the English.

The monument had very old carvings and it was fascinating to look at.



Continued on Page 8

When we had almost finished the walk, we had to go over a bridge and from there it was only a short walk back to the car park.

I think the walk was really fun, I enjoyed seeing Scott, our former minister and I would love to do another walk!



Changes for the Columba News from next session

The Columba News will from next session be published on only four occasions instead of six.

It was felt that the six editions were all very close together over the church year and with rising costs this will keep costs stable.

But fear not, it is planned to have a Columba News sister publication '**Pew News**' come out in email at the beginning of each month with quick updates on life going on at Midton Road. If you are not signed up for the congregational email you can still read it on the website or pick up a printed copy at the church doors.

Magazine Dates - Session 2025/ 2026

The dates below indicate the schedule relating to the Columba News in the coming year.

Issue	Occasion	Copy Deadline	Collation Day (Publications Comm)	Publication Day
Sept/Oct	Start of Season	Sunday, 14 September	Friday, 26 September	Sunday, 28 September
Christmas	Christmas	Sunday, 16 November	Friday, 28 November	Sunday, 30 November
Easter	Easter	Sunday, 8 March	Friday, 20 March	Sunday, 22 March
Summer	June Communion	Sunday, 31 May	Friday, 12 June	Sunday, 14 June





FITNESS AND RELAXATION

After a very successful year of classes this super friendly group rounded off the year at the end of May with a lovely lunch at the Fairfield Hotel.

Throughout the summer the Group continues to meet on the first Wednesday of each month for a coffee at Dobbies, just to catch up on how everyone is doing!

There are 30 ladies on the roll 18 or so who are very regular attenders. No one should be under any illusion about the aims of this class – you are very unlikely to drop a dress size but you should be maintaining your mobility and the relaxation ought to send you home each week having felt the benefit of making the effort to attend.

We spend a lot of time improving your breathing and understanding the reason why this is so important. The chat and the cuppa after the class are also very important. Movement, music and laughter are the most important ingredients, not only in the class but in our lives. We are looking forward to a pleasant summer and will restart on Wednesday 10th September at 1.45pm.

All are welcome.





**Out with
the bunting
as the
Oasis cafe
marks VE
Day with
a special
event**



Tribute to Edna Gemmell an elder of Ayr St Columba

Edna was born in Glasgow to John and Rachel - she had one brother David and was close to him and his family all her days. Her secondary education was in Park School for girls. She proved to be a very bright pupil and was good at everything she tackled. She especially loved art and music - could play the piano and went on to get her LRAM. She was also a trained singer.

She left school with a number of highers and intended to go to Glasgow University to study English but her dad was about to open up a hotel in the Isle of Man. So Edna changed tact and went to the Catering College at Ross Hall. She got her diploma, gained work experience in various hotels, then became the Assistant Manager at Gleneagles.

She did that for two years, but didn't like the anti-social hours so looked for another job. She became the Public Relations adviser to the American Air Force - mainly at Adamton House - she didn't meet Elvis. She was responsible for making all the travel arrangements and according to Gavin, nearly everything else. She loved that job and was immensely popular. Gavin said that the moment she entered a room, heads turned. He said that when he entered one, it emptied.

She met Gavin at the Piv in Ayr in July 1965. She was wearing a stunning emerald green dress, and believe it or believe it not, in spite of the colour of her dress he asked her out. They got on famously and she actually ran him home that night. They blethered outside his house for about an hour, he said, "Can I see you again?" She replied, "Not really, I am engaged to someone else". But on the Monday afterwards she was outside his office - they went to the Beverly Hotel for tea. She then invited him to a function at the base - again they got on really well - ultimately love blossomed.

They were married on 19th September 1966 in Kingcase Church and it would be true to say they were utterly devoted to one another. They had a very happy life together. I wonder what happened to the stunning green dress? In the fullness of time Graeme arrived on the scene to be followed by Greig and Justin. Edna wanted a daughter but was afraid to keep going in case she ended up with a cricket team - so no more family. Edna was a superb wife and mother. She would do anything for them - always put them first and herself last.

When Graeme married Yvonne, Greig married Arlene and I did the honours when Justin married Julie, she proved to be a great and much loved



mother-in-law. And the boys, obviously with the help of their wives, gave her the grandchildren - Andrew, Ewen, Georgia, Sofia and Caroline. Edna loved them all and was proud of their achievements - she took a great interest in what was happening to them, and they loved her. You know after Justin was born she attended Art School and gained a Diploma in Interior Design

With her brother David they opened a Kitchen Unit and Craft Centre - that was in 1976. They did that for many years. Edna was a hard worker, always giving of her best and was loved and respected by everyone.

She loved her church and her Lord. She really did have a strong Christian faith. She sang in the choir, was in the Women's Guild, became an elder and in that role did sterling work. She served on the Vacancy Committee that chose Fraser as the minister. She served on the Pastoral Care Committee. She supported the church in every possible way.

She was a member of the Floral Art and Gardening Club in Prestwick. She supported Gavin with his cricket - even accompanied him to a Test Match in Barbados - I am sure that was a real hardship. Actually that started a series of trips to the West Indies where Gavin umpired a series of matches. She especially loved the High Commissioner's Cocktail Parties. She loved travelling and going on holidays. She became the Chairwoman of the Ayrshire Branch of the M S Society. She was chairwoman of the Alloway Conservatives for years - that leads me to a fascinating story. Do you remember in 1984 and the Tory Party conference was in Brighton. Edna and Gavin were guests of Donald and Muriel McLean. After they left and less than an hour later the bomb planted by the IRA went off, with devastating results. Basically Edna loved to serve her community in whatever way she could. She would do anything to help folk.

She was an immensely talented and generous lady - she was a true lady - she liked to look the part. She was warm, welcoming - had a great sense of humour. She was a fantastic hostess and according to the family was a wonderful cook. She loved hosting dinner parties.

Sadly about 10 years ago, her health began deteriorate. She had 4 strokes which greatly affected her mobility. She never complained and in many ways was an inspiration to us all. She was in quite a few hospitals and finally in Bellevue Care Home for the last 6 months where she received excellent care. The family would like me to thank all who looked after her - doctors, nurses and carers

We are going to miss Edna - there is no doubt about that but she shall live on in the hearts and minds of all who knew and loved. She is now with her Lord whom she served all her days. Surely the words of Jesus apply to her. "Well done good and faithful servant."

Rev'd David Ness



Enjoying the Straiton countryside

On the last Friday in April, five of us set off from the car park in Straiton. The weather was lovely and sunny with a light breeze - ideal for walking. The countryside around the village is beautiful and the fields were full of ewes and lambs.



One of my favourite parts of the walk was taking a path through the woods which ran parallel to a stream and listening to the sound of the water as it flowed downstream to join the river Girvan.

We circled back passing a couple of farms with glamping pods and then through the village which has lovely displays of flowers outside the houses.

Our next walk will be on the June 27 when we will meet at Boswell's coach house at 10.30am and will follow the walk with lunch in the cafe. Can you please let Helen know if you intend to come so that a table can be booked.

There will be no walk in July but in August Jo will lead us from the Burns Centre down the path to Greenan to see the now completed murals. This will be a linear walk and again we would like to know numbers so that we can leave a couple of cars at the end of the walk to drive us back to the Burns Centre. New walkers are always welcome!

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Who do you admire and what do you respect?

Our Faith and Nurture committee asked me to write about environmental improvements we could encourage at Ayr St Columba. As you know, the Church of Scotland advises us to “To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth”. This instruction means actions, not just observing nature. At first, I thought this assignment would be dead easy but quickly realised my task was very tricky.

If you run a business and want to sell your products and services, what do you do? TV ads for cars are an interesting example. How many have a serious fellow saying, “this car is cheap to insure and run, has 5-star N-cap safety rating, is like the Tardis with plenty of boot and cabin space and never breaks down?” No you see improbable empty roads suggesting “freedom”. Perfect couples, loads of flashy lights and tech suggesting that this machine reflects your personality, is masculine or feminine and will help you achieve your aspirations. It helps to attract your mate, it reflects your personality and social standing. Of course, you won’t be swayed! But actually we all are, and without knowing, you act as advertiser for the car company by the way you react when a car discussion comes up. Emotions are **everything** and don’t let anyone tell you differently.

The scientific version of environmentalism

Science tells us that the most serious and immediate problem is climate change, caused by CO2 emissions. All animals have a carbon footprint and plants have a negative carbon footprint. Individual humans have a bigger footprint, the richer they are.

The four areas that an individual can readily address are:

Food. Meat is heavy on carbon, so use mostly vegetables cooked from scratch.

Home heating. Generally, that means use less or convert to non-polluting heating

Travel. Most forms of travel cause emissions.

Manufactured goods.

Do you have a solution? Well, just put up the price of fossil fuel. In fact that happened and we can track the effect using the Republic of Ireland’s gas usage statistics. In the period before the invasion of Ukraine, the best insulated detached homes used the same amount of gas per sq. meter of

floor, as the worst insulated detached homes after the price hike. In other words, consumption depends on price. Of course, we are missing something here.

A Christian version of environmentalism

Now, the Church speaks with a quiet voice, often lacking in confidence. It was not always so. Western art, music, values and much else have the Church as their foundation.

In medieval times, the Church set up education, health care and rudimentary social support.

The Church did this based on its doctrine of “Misericordia”. This translates as “Mercies”. These were 6 actions that individuals and the Church encouraged and funded. The 7th was added around the time of the black death.

Give water to the thirsty

Give food to the hungry

Give clothes to the needy

Give shelter to pilgrims/homeless (in other words, people with similar values)

Visit the sick

Visit prisoners

Bury the dead

The Church of Scotland does not explain how we are to protect the integrity of creation, so I looked elsewhere for inspiration.

The late Pope Francis compiled an Encyclical which is sometimes considered an extension of the Misericordia. It provides a different angle on care of creation when compared to the purely scientific approach.

OK let’s look at a few quotes from Pope Francis.

“In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the word “creation” has a broader meaning than “nature”, for it has to do with God’s loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance.”

“Humanity is called to recognise the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.”

“Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.”

“The emptier a person’s heart is, the more he or she needs to buy, own and consume.”

So, who inspires me? Well, Anna and Tom Sibbald are members of Aberfeldy Parish Church, (Church of Scotland). Their Church host their organisation, Warm Connections. They provide free impartial advice to



support people to live in warm, healthy affordable and sustainable homes. They are very knowledgeable and mix kindness, practical help with design, grants and so forth. They are so effective that they have been fully funded by the Scottish Government. This is more than individual effort, it is collaborative too.

Our own Deacon, Muriel Wilson travelled by air to Malawi to see if Abbas Rest was a suitable charity for our Church to support. The carbon emissions of a flight have to be considered in the context of what she was trying to achieve. In a strictly scientific sense, one might be tempted to be critical. In the context of Misericordia and our rich heritage, surely her journey has a different meaning?

How would you react if given a second-hand book for your birthday? If your child/grandchild discusses the possibility of travel after school and is weighing up European interrail and a trip to Thailand, how do you respond? Would you try out vegetarian food recipes? Are people who refurbish furniture just mean? Show respect for appropriate choices and you are really doing something.

I don't have clear recommendations for you, but I can ask: "Who do you admire and what do you respect?"

Andrew Muirhead a.g.muirhead@googlemail.com

Congregation and Parish Register



BAPTISM

Ava Margot McLeish

DEATHS

Mary Reid
William (Bill) Mearns
Lorna Macdonald
Malcolm (Cally) Macleod

NEW MEMBERS

Revd Roderick (Roddy) and
Mrs Ann Macdonald
Mr Robert and Mrs Linda
Smith

Who to contact

Interim Moderator:

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Associate Minister:

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GILLIAN WATSON

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

Church Charity Number: SC014338

Church Services :

10.30am - Morning Worship;
10.30am Sunday School,

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: **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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signs of the island being brought back to life and I had
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IN THIS ISSUE

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'God has guided my journey'

Snapshot of a 36-year journey

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Former Moderators' encounters with the late Pontiff

Pillars of faith

Engaging with visitors at Glasgow Cathedral

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