

Columba News

October
2025
No. 265



Harvest days near the town



Harvest Thanksgiving will be on October 5 and you will find a donation envelope with this edition. This year the proceeds from our harvest donations will be used to support the work of our local Food Bank. South Ayrshire Foodbank provides emergency food and support to local people in crisis. They also take time to listen and signpost people for further support when needed. Thank you for your donation

Waiting to welcome you

Sundays	Team	Leader
October 12	Team 3	Ann Naismith
October 19	Team 4	Iain McCrae
October 26	Team 5	Jane Murnin
November 2	Team 6	Bill McCulloch
November 9	Team 7	Terry Swinn
November 16	Team 8	Wendy Campbell
November 23	Team 9	Alan McHarg
November 30	Team 10	Linda Hunter
December 7	Team 11	Kerrie Bennet-Lee



From the Interim Moderator

Dear Friends,

As you know the Nominating Committee was chosen, set up and has met twice as at the time of writing. It was originally named the Vacancy Committee - which was a misnomer as the congregation is not truly 'vacant' but on the demission of our minister, Dr Scott McKenna, it created the opportunity to reflect on our journey up to this moment, giving pause to think, what next? And that is what's happening now in the Nominating Committee in your name.



We are looking at the Parish Profile (agreed by the Kirk Session) sketching out who Ayr St Columba Church is, sitting in the town of Ayr? What kind of congregation we think ourselves to be - outward or inward facing (are our activities mainly for ourselves or reaching out to others or both?) Where are we as a worshipping community in theological terms - conservative or progressive (or a mixture of both?).

You might think; 'is all this necessary?' It really is; because we need to inform prospective candidates what they would be coming to and whether that matches their sense of Call? It also gives us as a congregation and parish time to examine who we are and what we see our 'Calling' as being. Time moves on; during which the culture in which we live has changed hugely - and is still changing - so to be relevant we need to take stock, as part of choosing a new leader/minister. There's only one thing worse than having no minister and that is choosing the wrong minister!

President Dwight Eisenhower famously said about leadership - if a man (woman) wants to be a successful leader they must have followers. And to have followers, they must have their confidence, and to gain their confidence, they need to show unquestionable integrity and high purpose. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, on a football field, in an army, or in an office. If a man's associates find him guilty of phoniness, if they find that he lacks forthright integrity, he will fail. His teachings and actions must square with each other.

The first thing we look for and discern in our leaders is integrity and

high purpose.

You'll notice I'm '*working the room*' each Sunday morning - whether I'm conducting the service or not to keep close to the congregation, which has been uplifting and very informative for me! I'm so encouraged to see the congregational numbers are keeping up, when often during a vacancy they start to reduce

Thank you for your encouragement and support; I promise to keep you informed on matters to do with our church, but please ask if you have anything you're unsure of.

John (Matthews)

Interim Moderator

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Jesus said, "I am the Bread of life. He who believes in Me will never hunger."

This is your invitation to be present at the Lord's Table on Sunday, October 26 at our Morning Service at 10.30am, when we will participate in the greatest act of Christian worship, sharing in Christ's Body and Blood with His people around His Table.

St Columba members on the Whithorn Way visit

An enthusiastic group of pilgrims set out for Paisley Abbey on June 21.

It is the second stage of "The Whithorn Way" (the first is Glasgow Cathedral) which is the ancient Christian route to Whithorn where St Ninian was based and built his famous church "Candida Casa". It has been a pilgrimage site for 1300 years.

If we were to walk the 143 miles today it would take 2 weeks!

When we arrived we were taken on a guided tour round the Abbey.

There is so much to discover and understand. The history is very complicated dating back to 1163 when Walter Fitzalan, High Steward of Scotland brought Cluniac monks from Shropshire to found a priory here, becoming an Abbey in 1219 by permission of the Pope.



Highlights of some of the fascinating things the group saw.

The ancient Barochan cross dating back to 10th century with intricate carvings on all 4 sides.

The choir stalls, with detailed carvings, where mediaeval monks worshipped and sang.

The wonderful stained glass windows which tell many stories.

A fascinating plaque in “everlasting remembrance” of the six High Stewards of Scotland.

A High Steward held a senior position at court and the role was passed on from father to son. The 3rd High Steward, adopted Stewart as a surname and his descendants eventually became kings and queens of Scotland.

St Mirin Chapel dedicated to the saint whose shrine attracted many pilgrims to Paisley.

My parents were married there in 1940!

After our tour we had a snack lunch in the Abbey cafe, then went back to the Abbey for a concert with Scottish music played on violin and piano.

These days the Abbey is renowned for its choir, music and worship. I quote from the guide “And the Abbey fully embraces its role as an active church and vibrant focus for the community.”

It was a fascinating mini - pilgrimage. We'll need to go back to learn more about this lovely place of worship!

Muriel Wilson



Walking then lunch...just perfect

This picture is from the end of June!! Despite the fact that it was pretty chilly, we had a good walk around Boswell's Coach house, followed by lunch in the cafe.

After a break for summer, we tried a linear walk from the Burns Centre to Greenan Shore - a change from our usual circular routes. Thanks to Jo for organising that.

On September 26 we will walk at Dundonald, meeting outside the church at the top of the Main Street at 10.30. Our October Walk (on the 31st) will be at Dean Castle in Kilmarnock, meeting outside the visitor centre at 10.30.

Helen Greig



Moderator will preach at St Columba

The Moderator of the General Assembly will be conducting our Morning Worship on Sunday, November 2.

During her busy year the Rt Revd Rosemary (Rosie) Frew has found a space in her diary to visit us at Midton Road and we are delighted that we will have this special visitor in the pulpit.

New session begins for Monday Fellowship

The Monday Fellowship resumes their session on 6th October when our guest speaker is Revd. D. Harper who will be talking about his experiences in the Ministry.

Our syllabus up to Christmas is as follows:

October

20th - Bill Mitchell; Thomas Telford

November

3rd - Kyle Macfarlane; Friends of the Broadway

17th - Brian McBride; 20th Anniversary update on the Aviation Mission Charity

December

1st - Barbara Graham; Nurse Edith Cavell

15th - Mike Blair; Scottish and Worldwide Landscapes in pictures.

Our meetings are on a Monday at 2pm in the Midton Hall and are open for all to attend and you will be made very welcome.

John Ferguson

Secretary

Copy deadline for the December issue will be
Sunday, November 16

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



St Columba Kids get ready for Harvest in the kitchen



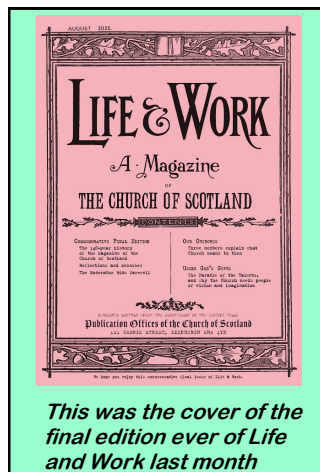
We are embarking on a new programme this session.

Our young people will be getting involved in projects in which they will be encouraged to be mindful of the responsibility we have as stewards of God's world.

Over the autumn weeks children will be learning about how to be more eco friendly and will give a short presentation to the congregation at the harvest service.

Then come November the children will be rehearsing their nativity play and will perform this on Sunday, December 21.

Overleaf is a picture special on the prizegiving and day out in June.



This was the cover of the final edition ever of Life and Work last month

Remembrance service

The church Remembrance service will be held on Sunday, November 9 at 10.30am.

Catch a coffee at Oasis

The popular Oasis cafe is back for the winter session.

The cafe now operates on a fortnightly basis with the October dates 9th and 23rd



Fun time at the farm park





Marking the end of the session

The youngsters of the Sunday School marked the end of session in June with their prizegiving.

Florence McNish and Emily Gow were joint winners of the main award and a cheque was also presented to BFriend to help support local children with social or emotional difficulties.



Catch up with the Kirk Session

Meetings of the Kirk Session were held on 10th June 2025, moderated by Revd David Ness, on 1st July 2025 and on 9th September 2025, moderated by Revd John Matthews. A summary of issues discussed at these meetings is given below:

The Moderator said that Sunday services were going well. The guest preachers had been popular and all members of our own ministerial team were working effectively.

Mr George Park reported that there were currently 11 churches in the Presbytery seeking a new minister. We would become the 12th once Presbytery approval was confirmed.

Mr Robin White gave a comprehensive talk on the fire extinguishers located at various points in the church. He explained where the extinguishers were in the church and emphasised the importance of reading the instructions on the items before using them. He said that the church extinguishers were checked annually by the fire service.

The Clerk advised that Mrs Morag McPherson had submitted her resignation as an Elder at St Columba Church. She intended to join Newton Wallacetown Church along with other members at Lochside. The Clerk had written to Mrs McPherson to express the gratitude of the Kirk Session for her excellent representation of the people at Lochside and to wish her and the good folk at Lochside Church well for the future.

A paper prepared by Mrs Millie McNish which indicated that from April 2025, the implementation of the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, increased the number of roles that now require PVG Scheme membership. Full guidance regarding which roles require PVG Scheme membership would be provided by the Church of Scotland, however, for now, we know that the posts identified are Safeguarding Panel Members and Pastoral Care Workers/Supporters who are visiting Care Homes, on behalf of the church. This will have implications for Ayr St Columba. Mrs McNish was working with the relevant individuals to make the necessary arrangements to take this forward. The Safeguarding Panel at Ayr St Columba comprises the Revd John Matthews, Dr Helen Hunter, Bob Bartholomew and Millie McNish. All panel members require to be a member of the PVG Scheme for both children and protected adults.

The Moderator said it would be a good idea for the Kirk Session to lead worship at a Sunday service. Different individuals could be involved in Prayers, Readings and Sermons. He felt this would be well received by members of the congregation. Elders agreed to this idea.



The Moderator suggested that a Worship Group should be formed and take some services in the church. Mr George Park said that Presbytery offered courses for members of worship teams. Some courses were for taking services in their own church and others for taking services in any church.

The Clerk informed the meeting that our former Minister, Revd Scott McKenna, had now vacated the Bute Way manse. The manse would be checked each week by the Church Officer to comply with insurance requirements and the services of the gardener and the window cleaner would be retained.

Mr John Ballantyne referred to the cost of replacing the Carrick Park door. He said that, given the current projected budget overspend, a sponsored walk, or similar, would be a good idea.

Mrs Irene Bartholomew asked members of Session for permission to donate various toys which were no longer used in the church to local organisations which could make use of them. This was approved.

The Clerk explained that, for several weeks, members had had the opportunity to check that their names were on the Electoral Register and others had had the opportunity to register as Adherents. Elders had been given the opportunity to view the Register and it was necessary for the Kirk Session to formally finalise it. The Electoral Register was agreed without further alterations.

The Moderator said that the Nominating Committee had made a good start. Members were enthusiastic. The Administration Committee had produced the draft Parish Profile which Session were asked to approve. Several Elders praised the document and Mrs Margaret Doncaster said that Irene Bartholomew should be acknowledged for doing the majority of the work entailed so well. It had been a mammoth task and she had made a brilliant job of it. Irene and the Administration Committee were thanked for their excellent work in producing the Profile. Members of Session then approved the Parish Profile.

The Moderator said that, whilst we were a relatively rich church, the direction of travel of our finances was giving cause for concern. Givings were going down and our budgets were now showing deficits. We needed to give serious consideration to our situation and this would be discussed at the Kirk Session meeting in October.

Mr George Park reported that Presbytery had agreed to the disposal of the St Andrew's Church Building, Ayr.

The Clerk reminded Elders that, in 2020, they had taken the decision to serve only grape juice at Communion Services. He asked if there were any

views regarding a possible return to serving port and grape juice. He also asked Elders if it would be appropriate to serve gluten free bread as some members could not take normal bread. The Clerk asked Elders give more thought to these matters and indicated that he would maintain the status quo in the meantime.

Mr A McKinlay said that a number of members felt that Communion Services lacked proper dignity when the serving Elders sat in the front pew. He felt it would be preferable to have the Elders sitting in the Choir seats as they used to do. Several Elders supported this view. The Clerk said that some Elders had expressed difficulty in negotiating the Chancel steps when carrying a tray. However, a compromise might be to keep the elements on a table at ground level so that Elders could negotiate the steps without anything being carried. The Clerk said he would consider the comments received and reach a decision on the matter in October.

Revd David Ness thanked Elders who had agreed to take part in the special service of worship to be conducted by the Kirk Session on Sunday 28th September. He said he would like Elders to meet ahead of the service and enter the church in the same way as the choir do each Sunday. They should occupy the Choir seats and the front pews. For the Introit, Anthem and the Hymns, all Elders should stand and face the Congregation.

The Clerk said that he had received a recommendation that money raised at the Harvest Collection should go to the local Foodbank, which continued to need support and supporting them would be in line with the theme of harvest. After discussion, it was agreed that the money raised would go to the Foodbank.

The Wednesday team were congratulated on the new enclosure to the bin storage space in Carrick Park. The original intent had been to form some form of enclosure to the bins to prevent vandals setting fire to the contents of the bins. This had been well achieved. However, the new enclosure not only protected the bins but it also concealed the unsightly bins and greatly enhanced the appearance of the Carrick Park side of the church.

Two provisional quotes had been received for the new Carrick Park entrance door and surrounding glazing. Work was ongoing looking at how best to address fire safety, wheelchair access and security at the Carrick Park entrance.

Ms Muriel Wilson spoke of her experience on a recent trip to Czechia. She stayed with her friend Anna, who had visited Ayr St Columba in 2018. Anna was a priest in the Hussite church in Czechia, which is very similar to the Episcopalian church here in Scotland. Muriel and Anna had spoken about common problems, such as churches closing and the number of



young people involved falling and they had discussed possible pulpit exchanges.

Ms Wilson said that the Faith/Nurture Committee would like to initiate a book exchange scheme in the church. The logistics of this had still to be worked out.

R A Bartholomew
Session Clerk

Time to Remember service planned

The annual "Time to Remember" service will take place on Sunday, November 30 at 4pm.

We will remember those known to us whom we have loved and lost in the last 12 months. Relatives and friends are warmly invited to this quiet meditative service.

Those present may choose to light a candle to remember their loved one during the service.



Keeping the bins tidy

A summer project the Wednesday team tackled was a new fence to keep the bin store out of sight.

This is part of the upgrading of fire safety around the church.







A great day out in the sunshine

On Saturday, July 12th, 16 happy travellers set off for the Cardwell Centre near Largs for fun, fellowship, retail therapy and lunch!

The journey provided a chance for people to chat and enjoy each other's company. The Firth of Clyde and Arran looked beautiful. It turned out to be the hottest day of the year!

On arrival at the Cardwell Centre some of us made our way to the Edinburgh Woollen Mill in search of a bargain- and there were many to be had!

There was plenty of time to have a wander through the other areas of the store before sitting down to a delicious lunch. The portions were very generous and the staff so obliging.

We then left to go back to Largs in our minibus so ably driven by Malcolm and guess where we were heading- Nardini's of course!

It was too hot to sit outside but we found plenty of seats inside and tucked into the delicious ice cream sundaes and knickerbocker glories!

We returned tired but happy after a lovely day out. *Muriel Wilson*



Busy time at the Presbytery

*The following two reports on the South West Presbytery are by our
Presbytery elder George Park*

14 June, 2025

*Note of the meeting of the Presbytery of the South West which was held
within Castlehill Parish Church on 14 June 2025*

Ayr St Columba Parish Church: Presbytery approved that Ayr St Columba can call a minister on a five-year reviewable tenure.

Ayr St Andrew's Parish Church - early closure: Presbytery agreed to the disposal of the St Andrew's Church Building, Ayr. The Church Family to contact COSIS and if required the Sanctuary Development Manager for advice on the transfer or disposal of any fixtures and fittings and to await the determination to sell from the General Trustees at their future meeting.

Basis of Union: Presbytery approved the union of the congregations of Mauchline Parish Church with Sorn Parish Church to form Mauchline and Sorn Parish Church.

Presbytery Planning: An update was given on the current position within Presbytery. It has been summarised as follows:

The six legacy Presbyteries have combine to become one Presbytery.

The original 116 congregations have reduced to 108 , which will reduce further.

119 Charges have reduced to 89.

65 vacancies to 34.5

Currently there are 52.25 ministers of word and sacrament plus MDS

The Presbytery ministry allocation across Presbytery is 78 (MWS and MDS)

Current discussions - Legacy Presbytery of Ayr

- a. St James/St Quivox/ Newton Wallace town
- b. Auchinleck/Catrine/Lugar/Muirkirk/New Cumnock/Old Cumnock/Cumnock Trinity
- c. Coylton/Drongan/Ochiltree/Stair
- d. Castlehill/St Leonard's
- e. St Columba/St Andrew's/Auld Kirk
- f. Dalmellington/Patna. l/w Dalrymple

It was recognised that adjustments for congregations are not always easy and a minister cannot be foisted onto a congregation and a congregation cannot be foisted onto a minister. The General Trustees have highlighted



their concern that adjustments are not leading to vacancies as quickly as they had hoped. Vacancies across the Church of Scotland are attracting applicants.

Ministers in unrestricted tenure are entitled to withhold their consent to adjustment and some ministers have exercised their right.

Across the Church, the General Assembly recognised the need for a time of Healing and Reconciliation.

Presbytery encourages congregations in situations of vacancy to progress local discussions to progress with calling a suitable minister of word and sacrament.

At the General Assembly, a new process with regards to congregations that are deemed to be 'insolvent' was approved. This is in relation to Giving to Grow contributions and other debts. If by 1 January 2026, a congregation has shortfall in its Giving to Grow contributions, a financial sustainability review will be undertaken over a period of three months. The intention is to then put in place a realistic payment scheme and to help the congregation become financial sustainable. If this is not possible, the congregation could be deemed 'insolvent'. In the worse case scenario, the Presbytery would be required to terminate the tenure of the minister giving six months notice and carry out an adjustment on the congregation.

Presbytery instructs Kirk Sessions to discuss the changes to Process and Procedure agreed at the General Assembly and engage with Presbytery at the earliest opportunity if their congregation falls into any of the categories of change as approved (potential insolvency).

Property: Presbytery noted the sale of various church buildings and halls including Girvan South Church building and hall, Fisherton Church buildings, Troon Old Church building and Lugar Church hall in Logan.

Digital Ministry: Presbytery clarified the distinguishment between digital ministry and digital mission. Digital ministry seeks to build up existing disciples; digital mission seeks to reach out to non-christians.

Mission: Presbytery noted that Brian Devlin, Presbytery's Mission Facilitator is available to Presbytery's and Session Clerks for contacting and consulting on mission ideas.

Presbytery instructs congregations to reflect their Mission and Discipleship plans (focus on mission action plans) as foundations for any requirements from the Presbytery Mission Plan Act VII 2021) for attestation in 2026. This Act repealed the Local Church Review Act of 2011.

Safeguarding: Clarification was given on a number of issues arising from the new Safeguarding Act 2025: Members of church's Safeguarding Panel require to have membership for both vulnerable adults and children.

Church paid employees require to pay for their own PVG registration whilst volunteers do not.

Anyone attending a Care Home on behalf of the Church requires PVG membership for vulnerable adults. This requirement includes elders visiting people in care homes and members of a choir singing at a care home etc.

14 September 2025

Note of Presbytery Meeting of the South West which was held within the Howard Centre, Kilmarnock on 13 September, 2025

Presbytery Planning: North Ayr: Following encouraging discussions with the three Kirk Sessions of Ayr: St James, St Quivox and Ayr Newton Wallacetown, Presbytery approved the amendment to the Presbytery Mission Plan for union of these three congregations to form one parish in the North of Ayr.

Vacancy Procedure Business - Legacy Presbytery of Ayr

Craigie, Dundonald and Symington - nominating committee to be elected

Prestwick, Kingcase St Nicholas - sole nominee (not yet preached)

North Carrick - sole nominee preached (inducted 9 September)

Girvan Valley vacancy - filled

Ayr St Columba - Vacancy Procedure Committee appointed

Monkton and Prestwick Trinity - ongoing Vacancy Procedure Committee

Presbytery noted that the Rev Dr Barbara Suchanek-Seitz, minister at Ayr: St James Parish Church had successfully preached as Nominee for Ardrossan Parish Church and will take up her new Charge on 25 September 2025.

Property Committee: Monkton/Prestwick North, Presbytery approved the sale of the manse in Monkton Road which is currently surplus to requirements following the union of the churches in the area of Prestwick and Monkton.

Prestwick South Church Building: Presbytery approved the disposal of Prestwick South Church Building (not the adjacent Church Hall which is being retained) and to await the determination from the General Trustees.

Vacant Church Buildings - Insurance, A closed church in the Presbytery has become a 'precedent across Scotland' in that Fire Insurance has been withdrawn due to reported vandalism and attempted fire raising within the church property by some youths. The property has now been secured.

According, Presbytery remind Kirk Sessions of the importance of the procedures to be put in place concerning the upkeep and security of vacant



Church properties, churches, halls and manses and keep a record for inspection of the surveillance and measures taken in compliance with these instructions given by the Church of Scotland General Trustees.

Faith Action Committee

Pulpit Supply: Treasurers of vacant congregations are reminded to claim pulpit supply. Each congregation has up to 3 months to claim back the supply fee. As agreed at the General Assembly, only congregations with permission to call can claim back pulpit supply and locum fees from 1 January 2026.

Proposed Day of Prayer: Presbytery are proposing a dedicated day of prayer - a time to come together and acknowledge our shared need for God's help. Presbytery encourage local gatherings for prayer, supported by worship resources that will be made available for those who wish to use them. 29 November is being suggested for this date but there be flexibility for local contexts. More details will follow.

Scotland Demands More: An anti-poverty march and rally is taking place in Edinburgh on Saturday, October 25 and church ministers, elders and members of congregations are all encouraged to attend with family and friends,

George Park, Presbytery Elder

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Group take a break

The Wednesday afternoon keep fit classes have now restarted for the winter session.

The group are pictured at Dobbies where they met up during the summer.

Manse garden gets a tidy up

The church Wednesday team were in action last month at our Chalmers Road manse to tidy up the overgrown bushes and trees.

The tenants have moved out and the property will soon have new residents moving in.

The bushes around the property have all been trimmed especially the tree on the corner which was almost hitting the traffic lights. One large tree in the front garden has been left to a professional squad due to its size.



Muriel visits a special friend in the Czech Republic

I had a fascinating holiday in the Czech Republic visiting my friend Anna who lives in Brno, a 2 hour train journey south of Prague, in the area called Moravia.

Anna is a priest in the Hussite church, founded on the teachings of Jan Hus, one of the earliest Reformers, born in 1371.

The Catholic Church of his time was corrupt and in disarray with 3 men claiming to be Pope!! He challenged the church by insisting on preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and he wanted ordinary uneducated people to be able to understand him so instead of speaking in Latin, he chose the Czech language.

He was accused of being a heretic but he wouldn't recant and was burnt at the stake in 1415.

The present day Hussite church resembles our Anglican/ Episcopalian model. There is a weekly Eucharist and bishops rather than Moderators!

I attended one of the services in her church and enjoyed it very much. It was informal and interactive and there were 24 members there including some young families.

Anna's father had been the Patriarch of the Hussite church and her mother, now 93, had worked as a parish priest like Anna.

Their church suffers from the same challenges as our churches here- an ageing population, few young people and families and church buildings having to close.

Anna took time off her work to show me around and we had some fascinating excursions.

- a sail on the local dam, disembarking at the Viveri castle where Churchill and his wife visited.
- a trip to underground caves at Punkva with extraordinary stalactites and stalagmites.
- an exhibition of the Czech painter Mucha.
- a visit to the Jewish cemetery with 11, 000 graves



including 807 folk who'd died either inside one of the concentration camps or as a result of time spent there.

- a meeting with Anna's bishop. He sent greetings to us! We're going to ask him to apply to be our next minister!!
- visits to the majestic centre of Brno, with beautiful squares, a castle and Cathedral and lots of cafes and bars. Most days it was 25degrees!

Thanks to Anna's kindness I had a great holiday with such a variety of experiences. She visited me in 2018 and loved Ayr, the sea and a visit to Arran. She came to our church too.

Hopefully she'll be back!



Date for your diary:

Abbas Rest Coffee Morning

Saturday 22nd November
10-noon

There will be teas and coffees and stalls.

**Your bric a brac will be welcome and donations
for the bottle stall and raffle!**

Thank you in advance!

*This is a wonderful opportunity to raise money for
the Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Malawi!*

**The Kirk Session will hold its next meeting on
Tuesday October 14 at 7.30**





The Wednesday team were at it again when they cleared under the old stage in the hall.

These toys were from the mother and toddlers group many years ago.

They have now been donated to a charity organisation in Ayr North.



Remnants of the Ayr Battalion Flag, as used by 1st Ayr Boys Brigade Company.
Ayr Battalion was formed on 21st September 1886, and is the third oldest Battalion in the Boys' Brigade movement.



Hanging in the Midton Road hall corridor is a framed display of the old Ayr Battalion colours that previously hung in the church.

When the Battalion received new colours these ones were retired to the 1st Ayr (Cathcart Church) to hang in their sanctuary.

But gradually they have aged dramatically and John Stewart preserved them now in a frame.

Seasonal adjustments

The heating season will soon be here and fuel prices are high. You really can do something about these costs without throwing out your existing gas central heating or getting cold.

I began keeping detailed records and experimenting with different ways to save on fuel seven years ago. The results really surprised me. Since then, I have reduced my gas consumption by over 70%. I spend about the same on gas and electricity as I did in 2018. Your heating system may have less scope for improvement than mine, but improvement might be possible. There have been a number of advances such as variable speed pumps and clip-on radiator fans that might be new to you. There are numerous adjustments and small changes you can make to save gas, too.



This boiler is wasting a lot of gas

Here are four signs that your gas central heating system can be improved:

1. Steam should condense inside your boiler, so you should not see condensing steam coming from your boiler flue when it is firing – except on the coldest winter days.

2. If your room thermostat is in a cool part of your home, it won't work properly. You can save gas by moving it to the room where you spend most time (4 feet off the floor and away from heat sources and draughts). If you have no room thermostat, you need one. A room thermostat is sometimes called "controls". When I added controls to my heating system, made some basic adjustments and sited the controls correctly, I saved about 33% on my gas bill.

3. If you have a hot water cylinder, heated by your boiler and it is not fitted with a thermostat, you are wasting gas. It also needs to be properly insulated. I saved around 13% on my gas bill by replacing my hot water cylinder with a modern one with a thermostat. Further big savings were made by fitting a variable speed pump.

4. If your radiators were installed before 2005, they are designed for an obsolete boiler type and are too small for your condensing boiler. Adjustments, specific types of controls and radiator fans will all help.

This is a complicated topic that cannot be addressed in a brief article. I



have therefore written a dozen or so chapters which will shortly be put into a free online book, once I have all the necessary endorsements.

The material is all available for you now on Substack (an on-line platform) and soon will be sent to Church of Scotland ministers by Andrew MacOwan, the Church of Scotland heating advisor. You can access the manual at: <https://andrewmuirhead.substack.com/p/quick-tips-how-to-save-on-your-gas>

Next week, I will attend an event in Edinburgh where climate activists get the chance to meet MSPs from their region (There are eight that have some responsibility for Ayr). I will make the case for pragmatic solutions that are no longer fashionable.

Ordinary people with modest means need help to reduce fossil fuel use at a realistic cost. I will report back on this meeting in my next article.

Andrew Muirhead , a.g.muirhead@googlemail.com

Fire safety in focus at the church

At a recent Kirk Session meeting the elders had a training session on the various fire extinguishers around the church.

Robin White delivered a comprehensive talk and what appliances should be used for different fires.

The chart below focuses on different types of extinguisher.

WATER Suitable for most fires except those involving flammable liquids or live electrical apparatus. Method 1. Direct the jet at the base of the flame and keep it moving across the area of the fire. 2. Seek out any hot spots after the main fire is extinguished. 3. A fire spreading vertically should be attacked at its lowest point and followed upwards. 	DRY POWDER Suitable for fires involving flammable liquids or electrical apparatus. Method 1. On fires involving either liquids in containers or spilled liquids, direct the jet or discharge horn towards the near edge of the fire. With a rapid sweeping motion drive the fire towards the far edge until all the flames are extinguished. 2. On fires involving flowing liquids, direct the jet or horn at the base of the flames and sweep upwards. 3. On fires in electrical equipment, switch off the current and then direct the jet or horn straight at the fire. 4. Where the equipment is enclosed, direct the jet or horn into any opening, with the aim of penetrating the interior. 5. When the fire appears to be extinguished shut off the discharge and wait until the atmosphere clears. If any flame is then still visible, discharge again. 	CARBON DIOXIDE Suitable for fires involving flammable liquids or electrical apparatus. Method 1. Method and operating instructions are as for dry powder. WARNING • DO NOT use in confined spaces where there is a danger that the fumes may be inhaled. • DO NOT hold the horn because it becomes extremely cold during use. 
FOAM Suitable for most fires involving flammable liquids, apart from cooking oil fires. Method 1. Where the liquid on fire is in a container, direct the jet at the inside edge of the container or at an adjoining vertical surface above the level of the burning liquid. This breaks the jet and allows the foam to build up and flow across the surface of the liquid to smother the fire. 2. Where this is not possible stand well back, direct the jet with a gentle sweeping movement, allow the foam to drop down and lie on the surface of the liquid. 3. Do not aim the jet directly into the liquid as this will drive the foam beneath the surface and render it ineffective. In addition, it may splash the fire onto the surroundings. 	Modern extinguishers have red bodies and their contents may be identified by a coloured zone 	
		WET CHEMICAL Specifically for use on fires in deep fat fryers. Method 1. Turn off the source of heat if safe to do so. 2. Hold the lance at arm's length, well above the fire and with its nozzle at least 1m away from the fire. 3. Holding the lance still, discharge so that the spraying wet chemical falls gently onto the surface of the fire. 4. Even if the fire appears to go out quickly, discharge the entire contents of the extinguisher. WARNING • DO NOT use on fires involving live electrical equipment. 

Congregation and Parish Register



June-September

DEATHS

Rina Lyle
Pat Watson
Joan Christison
Rae Clark
Margaret Dickie
Brian McKinlay
Nessie Greig
Ian Muir
Adam McCracken

BAPTISM

Iona Annie Cuthbertson

NEW MEMBERS

Alastair and Eleanor Dunlop
Steven McLeish
Gemma Mullan

Restored to Church Roll

Vicki Allan

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
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Who to contact

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Depute Session Clerks

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GILLIAN WATSON

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Tel:- 445182

Director of Music:

MATTHEW HYNES,
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irene@ayrstcolumba.co.uk

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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

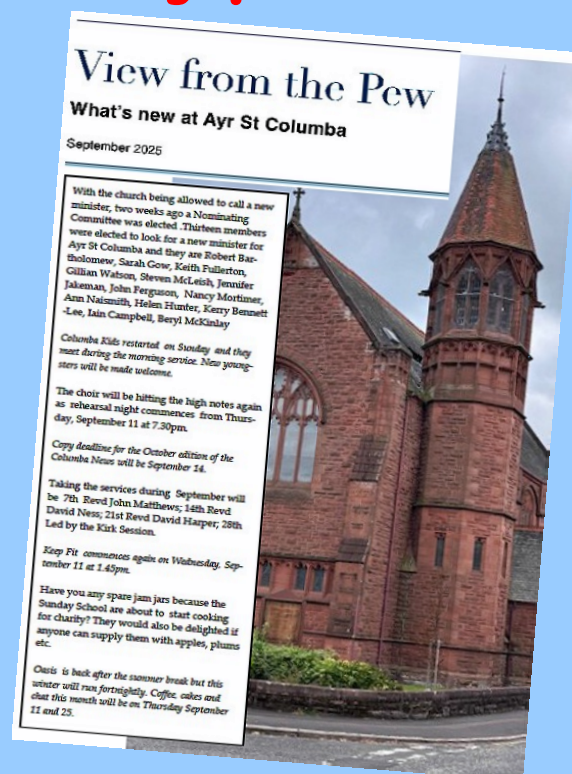
THURSDAY

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

Did you see our new monthly publication?



Last month Columba News editorial added an extra newsletter and launched its new monthly email publication *View from the Pew*. This newsletter will land in members' email boxes at the beginning of each month. If you haven't signed up for church emails then a number of printed copies are available at the church door.