

Columba News

January
2022
No. 244



Winter chill at Dumfries House



Waiting to welcome you

Sundays	Team	Leader
January 23	Team 8	Mrs D. Bone
January 30	Team 9	Mr D. Campbell
February 6	Team 10	Mr I. Campbell
February 13	Team 11	Mrs A. Cuthbert
February 20	Team 12	Miss K. Lee
February 27	Team 1	Dr H. Hunter
March 6	Team 2	Mr J. McConnachie
March 13	Team 3	Mrs M. Howie
March 20	Team 4	Mr I. McFadzean
March 27	Team 5	Mrs J. Murnin
April 3	Team 6	TBC
April 10	Team 7	TBC
April 17	Team 8	TBC



From our Probationer

January 2022

Dear Friends,

It is at this time of year that people make their New Years' resolutions, and it is at this time of year that people realise that their resolutions were, largely, unattainable!

How much time and effort, not to mention money, has been spent on new fads, new diets, new exercise regimes each January, all designed to create a better version of the person we have been for the previous 12 months?!

We know that even though we say to ourselves each year that we shall change, the resolutions to be more generous, or to live in a more environmentally friendly way, or to read more books, our past experience says that we shall only do this for a few weeks until our lives return to what was normal before this particular change was instigated.

In the nativity stories we hear at Christmas, the echoes of which still linger over the months of January and February, the main characters in the drama of the birth of Jesus as it unfolds are encountered on an annual basis.

We see them at a particular point in time, and with the exception of Mary and Jesus, we don't really get to see how their lives are affected by the events retold each year.

For each of these storied characters, there is no way of going back to the way the world was before, to who they were before.

The narrative is transformative, for once we've seen something and have truly seen it, there is no way of unseeing it.

For many of us, the last couple of years have been hard, but we have been transformed by what we encountered; and as we move further into 2022, we have turned to face the future, knowing that our lived experience brings us closer to God.

Wendell Berry's poem, '*T* [*No, no, there is no going back*]' speaks of such change:



*No, no, there is no going back.
Less and less you are
that possibility you were.
More and more you have become
those lives and deaths
that have belonged to you.
You have become a sort of grave
containing much that was
and is no more in time, beloved
then, now, and always.
And so you have become a sort of tree
standing over the grave.
Now more than ever you can be
generous toward each day
that comes, young, to disappear
forever, and yet remain
unageing in the mind.
Every day you have less reason
not to give yourself away.*

Blessings and peace to you all,
Gillean

Notice of Trustees' Meeting and of Stated Annual Business Meeting

The annual **Trustees' Meeting** to approve the Church Accounts and Budget will be held in the Church on **Tuesday, March 1st at 7.00pm**. All members are welcome to attend. The Trustees' Meeting will be immediately followed by the **Stated Annual Business Meeting** of Ayr St Columba Church.
R.A. Bartholomew
Session Clerk



Ministry of Flowers

At the start of 2021 when we were unable to worship in church, the flower team arranged flowers each week in the font to ensure that they were enjoyed by all those viewing the service online.

The more eagle-eyed among you will have noticed that you were seeing the same arrangement on more than one occasion! When church services resumed, rather than dismantle the arrangement, it was left in place for both filmed and “live” services. It has always been our custom to gift the church flowers each week to members of the congregation and I am delighted to let you know that this is continuing. Each weekend we make up six individual fresh flower posies which are then distributed to members of our St Columba family. This new system has been very well received and will be continued in the coming year.



I would like to thank everyone who makes this possible – from the people whose generosity buys the flowers, the ladies who arrange them and those who deliver them.

A new calendar for 2022 is in place in the Carrick Park vestibule and if you would like to contribute to the flower fund, please feel free to add your name on your chosen date or you can telephone me on 01292 287304. Your contribution can be left in an envelope with your name and date at the church office at any time. (Can I please ask that any cheques be made out to St Columba Church Flower Fund) You are, of course, very welcome to purchase flowers and / or arrange them yourself – just write that next to your name on the calendar.

Finally, I would like to say a huge “thank-you” to the small group of ladies who helped adorn the church (in a covid-free way!) for most of this year- they have been selfless in their dedication. I am delighted to say that the entire group (or at least those who could make it) gathered together for the first time in two years to decorate the church for Christmas. It was lovely to join together again and I hope that everyone enjoyed seeing our efforts!

We wish you all a happy and healthy New Year.

Anne Drennan
Flower Convenor

Table Talk delayed

Due to uncertainty about the effects of the latest variant, and following Church of Scotland guidance, we are postponing the start of this group. We will intimate when we are going to start as soon as things are clearer.

Helen Greig

Men's Association gets back to business

The Men's Association has held their first session of Monday night meetings in the new venue of the airy Midton Hall and very successful it has been too.

We have heard from very diverse speakers on subject ranging from The Scottish Airshow, Ayrshire at War, Abbas Rest (one of our chosen charities) and also our own Minister and Assistant amongst others! Our meetings, every other Monday evening, are open to all and you will be made very welcome in our midst.

As I write this, we are gearing up for Christmas and Covid is having it's effect felt once more with ever ranging restrictions being put in place. We pray that the recent past events are soon to be distant memories and we will all be able to return to normality.

Hopefully, we will be able to meet again by January 19th when our own Alastair Swan is going to "show and tell" about the wildlife around his home in the Coodham Estate. Alastair's talks are always well recieved - as are his photographic skills!

We pray for our members who, for whatever reason, cannot be with us at our meetings and hope to see them in the not too distant future.

The Association would also like to wish all the Church family a Happy, Covid free, New Year and hope that 2022 only brings health, sunshine and happiness.

John Ferguson
Secretary





Oasis Cafe makes a welcome return on a Thursday morning



2021 - An Eventful Year

For Ayr St Columba Church, the year 2021 began with the expectation of better days following months of lockdown and of waiting for the vaccine to be rolled out. The vaccine promised to combat the effects of the Covid virus which had impacted so heavily on the lives of everyone and had caused unprecedented disruption to the life and work of the church.

Even though we begin the year 2022 facing further disruption to both church life and home life due to the emergence of the Omicron variant, we can look forward with confidence that the situation is improving. The vaccine has been shown to protect a high percentage of the population and the effects of the new variant seem to be less severe. We hope and pray that this year will see scientists able to mitigate the effects of all the variants and allow us to return to a more normal way of life.

It is good to be able to record all that Ayr St Columba Church and its members have managed to achieve in such a challenging 12 months. Despite the difficulties, much has been done and we owe a great deal to those folk in our church community who have ensured that worship has continued, that the church has been looked after and that so much of its work has gone on.

Last January the churches at Midton Road and at Lochside were closed and lockdown was expected to last for a further three months. However, the initiative to review the Congregational Roll was ongoing and efforts were being made to improve communication with members and to encourage more members to use Standing Orders and Gift Aid. The Director of Music and the Church Cleaners were on furlough and the Church Secretary was working from home. Sunday worship continued only by means of recorded services.

In the course of the year we have managed to establish a more accurate Congregational Roll, many members have chosen to make their offerings by means of a Standing Order and communication with members has taken place through congregational emails, through the website, through Facebook and, of course, through the church magazine. During the period when Elders were unable to visit, a tremendous amount of work was done to ensure that members received their magazines by post. All our staff are now working normal hours and the Church Secretary works in the office on Thursdays and Fridays. The recording of services for those at home continues and this will be reviewed as we move into 2022.

We would encourage anyone who has not already done so to complete a



consent form in order that our information is complete. Consent forms can be obtained from the church office. We also continue to encourage members to think about giving by standing order, which greatly helps the church at a time when attendance is affected so badly.

The Kirk Session was able to meet by means of Zoom and we are grateful to Andrew Muirhead for ensuring that this operated smoothly several times during the year. More recently, the Kirk Session has met in person, but we await guidance to see if this can continue in the new year.

In previous articles I have thanked those who have taken the church forward so well in these challenging times and, on behalf of the Kirk Session and all our members, I again express our most sincere gratitude to each one of them. Not least, I would like to record the invaluable work done by Elders who have kept in touch with members in their district and who have been a reliable source of support and encouragement over the year.

For your information, I have listed below a few of the notable events of the past year.

An ad hoc committee was appointed to consider the future of pastoral care. *Following the submission to Presbytery of a revised Covid-19 Risk Assessment along with Safety Declaration forms for both buildings, Presbytery gave their approval for St Columba and Lochside to open for public worship from 28th March onwards.*

The WMO Committee started a Walking Group, the first walk being from Prestwick towards Troon along the coast which took place on Friday, 30th April.

Mrs Gilleen Richmond started her 15-month placement with us at the beginning of June.

The Midton Road Hall was used as a Polling Station for the Scottish Parliamentary Election on 6th May.

The Container, which has occupied part of the grounds at Lochside for so long was sold.

Lochside Church received formal approval from South Ayrshire Council to operate as a Food Service Provider, thus allowing food to be served to members of the general public.

A new format was introduced for the first Service on Sundays. The first 20 minutes are family focused and the children are involved. After the children leave to attend Sunday School, the remainder of the Service is adult focused.

Communion Services resumed in September. The elements took the form of a capsule containing a wafer and some grape juice, with helpers will be on hand to assist as required.

The Minister introduced a monthly congregational email which is sent out to all members with email addresses.

The Guild, the Men's Association, the Sunday School and several external organisations resumed activities in the church.

A professional report on heating and energy use at Midton Road and in the Manse was commissioned and this contains various suggestions for providing energy efficient heating in future years.

Presbytery approved a long-term plan for Ayr St Columba Church to eventually unite with St Andrews and the Auld Kirk once the current ministries have come to a natural conclusion.

Lochside will unite with Newton Wallacetown and become a Local Mission Church.

Plaques to commemorate the service of our former Ministers, Bill Christman and Fraser Aitken, to Ayr St Columba Church were dedicated on Sunday 12th December. Photographs of the two Ministers were put in place in the Carrick Park Vestibule at the same time.

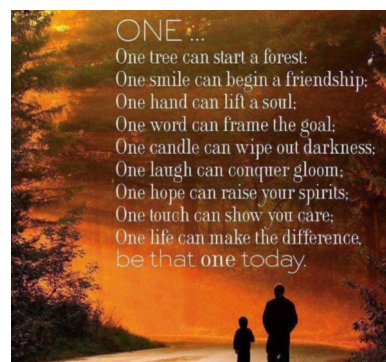
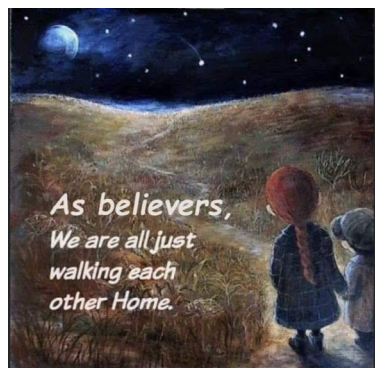
Alongside all this, and many other events, the fundamental work of the church continued. Funerals, Weddings and Baptisms took place and each week the Minister, well supported by Gillean, delivered services and sermons of the highest quality.

I send everyone my very best wishes for a safe and enjoyable 2022.

Whatever challenges await us, please be assured that the church is here for you and that there are many people in our midst who will strive to ensure that we keep going forward and that we do so in both strength and faith.

Bob Bartholomew

Session Clerk



*Gillean's sermon preached from St Luke 1:47-55
on Sunday, December 19, 2021*

During the Tokyo Olympics this year, online abuse of female athletes was found to be 9 times higher than that of their male counterparts. The abuse was predominantly sexual and racist in nature. Globally, 1/3 of women have been victims of gender-based violence – that is physical or sexual violence perpetrated against them because of their gender; much of it goes unreported in the belief that this is just how society operates – or that awful expression ‘boys will be boys’. 2/3 of illiterate adults in the world are female, possibly because women spend 3 times as many hours doing unpaid domestic and care work as men every day – that’s the housework, the cooking and childcare.

Gender bias is prevalent everywhere, and although discrimination is challenged regularly, we continue to experience it now. I can’t remember ever encountering sexism in my first foray into further education over 25 years ago – in fact, my first real and sustained experience of sexism was when I started my training in the Church of Scotland and university in 2018. The Church of Scotland still only has around ¼ of its ordained ministers who are female, and there are plenty out there who use the excuse of religion or faith to say they’d prefer a male minister to a female one. In my 4 short years of training, I’ve heard that my voice isn’t deep enough, or my clothes distract people, or I shouldn’t wear make-up, or people can’t take a woman seriously, or my husband must be hen-pecked, and my children will be neglected. I’ve heard that I’m very good, really I am, but it’s a shame I’m not a man. No-one ever commented on my gender in my previous career: had they done so I’d have been within my rights to refuse to see them again.

Gender-based discrimination has haunted all societies since the beginning of time. Biological, psychological, and religious reasons for this are many, and in fact, our world is experiencing an increase in discrimination against those who are female. We only need to note the new stringent laws coming into force in parts of America and Europe regulating the reproductive rights of women: a reversal of the progress made by women’s rights in the last few centuries.

Elizabeth Cady Simpson lived in the late 1800s, and she plus a ‘revising committee of women’ wrote a work called ‘The Woman’s Bible’. Elizabeth and her contemporaries had identified that the Bible had been used to control, subjugate, and coerce women and they wanted to do something

about it, even though they felt largely uneducated and suppressed.

Their Book starts: 'From the inauguration of the movement for woman's emancipation the Bible has been used to hold her in the "divinely ordained sphere," prescribed in the Old and New Testaments.' Elizabeth Simpson points out that literal interpretation of sacred texts has been used to exercise control over females, teaching that women were the cause of sin in the world, and as a result they were to be dependent on men for everything, grateful for their controlling influence upon them. For Elizabeth and her contemporaries, the understanding of humanity as being corrupted by Eve was flawed, and they were determined to show the male authors of the Bible, and the male interpreters of the Bible, and the male teachers of the Bible that there were different ways of reading it.



They make some very good points. Take Mary, to whom the Magnificat is attributed. Many women have questioned the traditional portrayal of Mary: over the years, generations of listeners and readers have taken the Gospel author's depiction of her to be the ideal female role model. This though, is an impossible role model for women! Virgin and mother, meek and mild, obedient, and perfect. In some Gospel accounts, she is a young girl with pregnancy imposed upon her, yet often the portrait of her is of one joyously accepting her fate, calm, quiet, submitting to God's will, accepting that she will become a mother. I wonder, if we stop and consider the language of the texts and what that has meant over the years, what we can understand today? Is it possible that we have heard these well-known words, but didn't fully consider their meaning? 'The power of the Most High will overshadow you' does not sound particularly consensual. And yet, we modern hearers often just gloss over such a text, made uncomfortable by any insinuation of untoward behaviour. By doing so are we complicit in the continuation of the control and derision of strong females, and are we then continuing to allow discrimination to happen?

In the Magnificat, the song of Mary, the Gospel reveals a different portrait of this girl. The Magnificat is what the author Luke gives to Mary to defiantly shout when she meets her kinswoman. It is a revolutionary text full of historical meaning which would have been clear to its 1st century hearers, but the radical nature of her song has been lost over the years as we've put it to music, prettified it, missed out some of the challenging words, and made it more in keeping with the image of Mary that histori-



cally, the men in charge of Christianity have wanted to portray. But Mary's shout to Elizabeth would have reminded Luke's hearers of the ancient heroines of Israel, of revolution and war, of past declarations from strong women in Israel's history.

Elizabeth addresses Mary as 'blessed.....among women'. This is an unusual greeting – it only occurs 3 times in the Bible. Deborah, prophet, and judge of Israel sings 'Blessed among women be Jael'. You will remember Jael's story. She is on the side of the Israelites at war, when the enemy comes to her camp. She provides Sisera, commander of the Canaanites with hospitality, and then, just before he falls asleep he asks her to keep lookout. 'But Jael, wife of Heber, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, until it went into the ground-and he died.' Jael kills Sisera, and is praised for her actions: she was feisty, she took the initiative. Deborah, also female, sings her praises for using her intelligence and bravery: Jael was not meek, she was a warrior woman!



And then we have the story of Judith, a spy in the camp of the Assyrians, who seduces the leader. She chopped off his head with his own sword whilst he slept, tucked it in her food bag and ran home to the Israelites. Of course, she didn't have her own sword, she was a woman! So she used his sword, chopped off his head, popped it in her bag and headed home, job done. Uzziah, one of the elders greets her return, saying 'O daughter, you are blessed by the Most High God above all other women on earth', and later, at a party given in her honour, celebrating her victory, she sings a song to God. A song in which God's support for the oppressed is proclaimed. This is echoed in Mary's song to Elizabeth - she sings that the lowly will be lifted up, and the rich and mighty will be brought down.

We remember that the audience of Luke would be familiar with the parallels being drawn here. Mary is being portrayed as a radical heroine, a warrior: the Magnificat is a song of revolution, proclaiming the downfall of the prevailing order under which the Jewish people were living. It is a rallying cry! Luke presents Mary as a woman who has a vision of God, what God can be and what



God can mean to us. It is a song of a heroine of Israel, for ‘blessed is she among women’.

I wonder if, for us, Mary’s song can take on new meaning when we consider her situation as a young girl, pregnant, perhaps without consent. Women the world over continue to shout for a heroine like Mary, a rebellious teenager who refuses to be made quiet, whose song speaks to the hopes and dreams of all who strive for equality, fair opportunities, freedom, and a right to education. Her son would grow up to respond to violence and discrimination by calling for justice, not more violence. Even if Mary didn’t speak the words given to her in Luke, we can use our imagination and wonder what the mother of Jesus would have been like as a parent. I’d like to think that Jesus did not become an adult without some measure of his mother’s influence having an effect upon him.

When I consider the nativity stories each year, I am reminded that our one-sided view of the mother of Jesus continues to do us some harm. Of course, there is no way we can have a rounded picture of a woman from 2000 years ago, but perhaps we can consider how the version of Mary we have maintained, has caused harm to women ever since. Are there still ways in which women are being told to be quiet, to accept their lot in life, to stop shouting their loud cries of rebellion against the wrongs that they see in the world?

And yet, it is the human Mary who reaches across the centuries to women in every age and every culture, to highlight the strength inherent in them, to emphasize their inner power, and to point towards their deep Divinity. The Magnificat of Mary speaks to the hopes and dreams of every person who has ever hoped for a world in which the teachings of Mary’s son Jesus are embraced and embodied: for a world without discrimination, a world in which Love reigns.

Amen



THE GUILD - LOOKING FORWARD IN FAITH TO **2022**

It is Hogmanay 2021 and the deadline for articles is two days’ hence. I must put pen to paper (or, really, fingers to keyboard) and I reflect on this time, two years ago, when we had no idea whatsoever of what the future was going to present to us by way of a pandemic. We have survived and although we could not meet for 18 months in total, a goodly number of



Guild members have ventured out since the end of September and supported, participated and enjoyed our meetings ever since.

Restrictions have prevented us from holding our usual fundraising event which allowed all members to work together as a Guild in different capacities but with the one aim to raise money for our Church and our Guild Projects. However, in the meantime, we can enjoy worship together, enjoyment, fellowship and a wee cup of tea at the end of the evening, although suitably masked!!!!

By the time this magazine is published we will have enjoyed our first meeting on 10th January with Mr David Wallace enlightening us on The Wee Kirkcudbright Centipede.

Further meetings are as follows, and all interested are welcome to attend:

Monday 24th January, 7.30 pm - Mr Dennis Rattenbury

Monday 7th February, 2.00 pm - Mrs Rachel Hynes

Monday 21st February, 7.30 pm - Mr Ian Thomson

Monday 7th March, 2.00 pm - Daffodil Tea – Ayrshire Ukulele Clan

Monday 21st March, 7.15 pm - AGM - Alastair Swan Presentation

Dorothy Bone
Convener



Plaques were recently dedicated in the sanctuary to Ayr St Columba's previous ministers, the Revd William Christman and the Revd Fraser Aitken. Photographs of them are also on display in the Carrick Park corridor





It's party time for our seniors





TAKING AN ECO LOOK by Andrew Muirhead

Growing, transporting and storing food has a substantial carbon footprint. Food can be wasted at any stage between farm and fork. Some produce looks imperfect and is discarded but in the last few years supermarkets began to sell cosmetically poor but nutritionally good food at a discount rather than throw it away. I look out for "wonky", "imperfectly perfect" or similar products.

Any ideas for Creation Support that you might have can be emailed to a.g.muirhead@gmail.com or texted to 07525552044.

An environmentalist's view of the current energy crisis

COP26 has come and gone. By chance, there is a full-blown fuel crisis to concentrate our minds and help us consider where we stand on the fossil fuel debate. Home energy is supplied by various companies that appear to be in competition with one another in an open market.

Government regulation does not allow energy markets to operate freely. There is an understandable desire to protect citizens against major price fluctuations. It is however difficult to comprehend the present regime that sets limits on the price of gas paid by the consumer but there are no limits on the price paid by the energy companies, causing them to go out of business in droves. Our system is also excessively complex. In addition, the markets are rigged to extract the highest tariffs from modest users and to discourage measures to reduce our carbon footprints. Let me explain:

If you own a car and travel to a petrol station to fill up, you pay for the fuel you put into your tank. You have already paid for your car. If your fuel costs more at a petrol station in a remote coun-



try district, then you will time your refuelling to coincide with shopping trips into town when possible. The country district petrol station will have to adjust prices to stay open with lower volumes being sold. They may diversify and open a shop as part of the business in order to remain competitive. Car owners are not required to pay a flat monthly fee to maintain petrol stations across the country and then a fee for their car and a further fee for fuel used. The cost of the filling station network is rolled up in the cost of fuel, so gas guzzlers are expensive to run.

Motorists do not have to pay a monthly fee to maintain filling stations

If you or I are unhappy with our spending on petrol and wish to continue using a car for transport, we can buy a smaller car, a hybrid or an electric vehicle. The reduction in fuel cost will be meaningful. The situation is different for home energy.

I think that our disadvantaged citizens should be protected against the highest prices. At present, frugal energy users pay more per unit of energy than lavish users. This is because there is a daily tariff on the supply. Even if no fuel is used, there is a cost to the consumer of around £16.75 per month for dual fuel. If the daily tariff were removed, then the price per unit of energy would increase, but would be the same for all users. Pre-payment meters are another shocking means of exploiting the vulnerable. Energy from a pre-payment meter should be charged at the standard rate payable by everyone. One energy company set up by Nottingham City Council tried to address these problems (Ebico) but failed. Only the modest users joined up, leaving the wealthy to enjoy their traditionally discounted rates and the experiment failed.



Prepayment gas meter

At present, someone of modest means might try to save on gas or electricity. There will be some reduction in bills but this will not compare to savings car owners can enjoy by reducing mileage or by buying a more efficient vehicle. The charging regime discourages expenditure on home energy saving measures. The present regime is inherently unfair and designed to prevent progress towards net zero.

The UK Government has done little to facilitate reduction in home gas usage. Recently it started an insulation program for social housing in England and then only because of an embarrassing failure of a different subsidy scheme. Scotland is ahead in this area.

The way utilities are taxed is also vexing with 5% VAT being paid on

both gas and electricity. As electricity is being rapidly decarbonised, surely it is time to shift the VAT burden on to gas only.

At present some gas from anaerobic digesters (pictured below) is pumped in to the gas grid. This is renewable gas and comprises around 5% of supply. Renewable gas was more expensive than fossil gas (probably not now though). My understanding is that the volatile price of fossil gas makes it less worthwhile for companies to develop increased anaerobic digester capacity. The government could guarantee a price for renewable



gas from digesters, then increase the renewable gas to the maximum compatible with contemporary burners.

My son-in-law was a project manager for a waste disposal company about 4 years ago. He looked at the economic feasibility of separating organic waste in green bins from the rest, then feeding it into

an industrial digester. The problem was that sale of the methane produced would not pay for the process. The project would have only been viable financially with pure organic matter that would have produced both methane and compost. Surely this is a valid area for government intervention? A minimum guaranteed price would clean up our landfill sites that only recover 80% of the methane generated, a very powerful greenhouse gas. This gas is impure and generally burned on site and not used in the gas grid. The remaining 20% is released into the air.

Now consider how building materials for a new house are taxed. These are exempt from VAT. Housebuilders are realising huge profits at present, making this incentive questionable. Materials used to improve insulation in an old house are subject to VAT. This increases the already high cost of retrofitting older properties. Britain has poor insulation in old housing stock. We are far behind most of Europe on this issue.

Much was made of PV panels. As the electricity grid is decarbonised, the ecological benefit of home generated electrical power diminishes. There is little publicity for hot water panels. These require investment but much less than insulation of old housing stock, they usually reduce gas consumption of a home by around 25%. Scotland offers some subsidy for these panels, but not England. Hot water panels, twin coil pressurised cylinders, piping, controls and labour typically cost £5,000. These are all subject to VAT in addition.

The numerous leaks in the gas grid wastes some of the diminishing fossil gas supply that remains. We are only just beginning to look at gas leaks seriously.

In the UK we are ahead of many other nations on our route to net zero. Most of the easy gains have been made. We are now up against harder choices. I expect our government to free itself from the fossil fuel lobby and regulate home energy more intelligently. Adjustments in tax, price guarantees for renewable gas and a sensible and fair pricing structure would make a big difference and cost the public purse little or nothing. If I were wanting to prolong dependency on fossil fuels, I would have designed our tax, winter fuel payments and billing systems for home energy much as they are now.

If like me, you feel that our energy policy is not fit for purpose, you can do something. Write to your MP, the department for business and energy in the UK government or anyone who might have an influence on these matters. We live in a democracy that claims to want to achieve net zero rapidly. We should not permit our leaders to pursue policies that are contradictory.

Andrew Muirhead

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

Email a.g.muirhead@gmail.com Mobile 07526662044

View from the Presbytery

Note of Ayr Presbytery Meeting held on 7 December 2021 within Troon Portland Church

Assembly Paper : Solemnisation of Same Sex Marriage Overture
Presbyteries have been asked by the General Assembly to vote on the above Overture which would allow same sex marriages to take place in churches. It would also allow Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Deacons to apply , if they wished, to the Registrar General through the Principal Clerk to become celebrants to conduct marriages and use the church to perform the same sex marriage. Following a full discussion, Presbytery voted: For Approval - 17; Disapproval - 23.

Property Inspection Levy 2022: While there has been a 5% increase to the Quinquennial Inspection Survey fees this year, Presbytery noted that

the levy charges have been held for a further year at the 2015 rate of £486 per charge; £243 per congregation in a linked charge and £162 for each of the congregations in a triple linkage.

2022 Discretionary Allowance Committee: Presbytery agreed to the following reductions in Ministry and Missions contributions:

Alloway - £8,000 to support Presbytery partnership with Bandawe, Malawi particularly new projects at Bandawe All Girls School.

Dundonald - £8,000 to sustain the post of a mission/community worker in Dundonald for one year.

Troon, Old - £7,000 to assist with the purchase of a semi-portable streaming kit for worship and to promote hybrid education.

Maybole - £6,000 to assist with regular loan repayments and unforeseen vacancy expenses.

Mauchline - £4,000 to assist with the purchase of audio-visual equipment for the church and hall.

Troon, Portland - £5,000 to assist with repairs and maintenance to the Manse and garden following a longer than anticipated occupancy from the former Minister of Ochiltree and Stair.

Prestwick, Kingcase - £3,500 to assist with unforeseen general property maintenance.

New Cumnock - £2,000 to assist with general maintenance to the Manse, church vestry and toilets.

Girvan, South - £1,000 to assist with purchase of laptop and video projector.

Troon, St Meddians - £500 to assist with the Micah Project which provides meals, toiletries etc for youngsters in Troon/Dundonald area.

Food Pantry Pilots: Presbytery encourages congregations to support the 3 Food Pantry Pilots developed by the South Ayrshire Community Food Network that have begun in Ayr, Maybole and Girvan which aim to support food poverty and offer sustainable and affordable food access.

Presbytery Mission Plan: Presbytery agreed the pattern of new charges for each Area outlined in Phase 1 Recommendations as the basis for ongoing local mission planning.

Presbytery reaffirmed the importance of Local Mission Planning that reflects and embodies the five Marks of Mission and urge all congregations to participate wholeheartedly in phase 2 and phase 3 discussions with their partner congregations in the proposed new charges.

Presbytery agreed that to allow sufficient time for Local Mission Planning, an additional two months be allocated for discussions and revised the target date to agree the overall Presbytery Mission Plan back to 3 May 2022.

Presbytery instructed Kirk Sessions to summarise their congregations' mission priorities for each of the five marks of mission, as soon as possible, in preparation for discussions with their partners.

Presbytery instructed Kirk Sessions to participate in discussions with their partners, in order to produce local mission plans for their new charge.

Plans should be expressed in terms of the five marks of mission and indicate how resources (ministry, local staff, buildings) will be used to best achieve these mission priorities. Discussions should start in January 2022 and an outline local mission plan should be submitted to Mission Committee by 1 April 2022.

Violence Against Women Task Group: Presbytery encourage Kirk Sessions to consider over the next year taking part in the basic online training provided by Integrity - The Church of Scotland Violence Against Women Task Group.

George Park

Presbytery Elder

Church office goes hybrid

It looks as though the current status of the office will remain operational for some time to come. The rising number of positive cases is giving cause for concern and working from home continues to be the recommended position by the Church of Scotland.

With this in mind, the Office will function at two sites as it has for the past year. Two days (Monday and Tuesday) at home and two days (Thursday and Friday) in Church.

We have become a hybrid office, a bit like a hybrid car – for now, the engine of the office functions best in two parts. Despite the constraints we have continued to manage all the office business from the two bases. There are still a number of missing consent forms, if you have not completed one, or if you cannot remember please call the office.

Since the summer, activities have been steadily restarted and, despite the continuing constraints the groups are able to keep running.

It is good to see folks filtering along the corridors to Oasis on a Thursday and to exchange a greeting; it is humbling to have the foodbank collections back and donations are growing week by week; the Keep Fit is in good health and the system we have in place works well; all in all hope is restored and you and your friends are so welcome back in the building. In these strange times one of the main difficulties we have is keeping up with

members in hospital, or otherwise unwell. You are encouraged to let the Minister know. It is better to be told more than once than not at all.

Those who have been in Church or online will have noticed a change in the Order of Service which is now a booklet, thanks in part to the new copier – I hope that you like to new look!

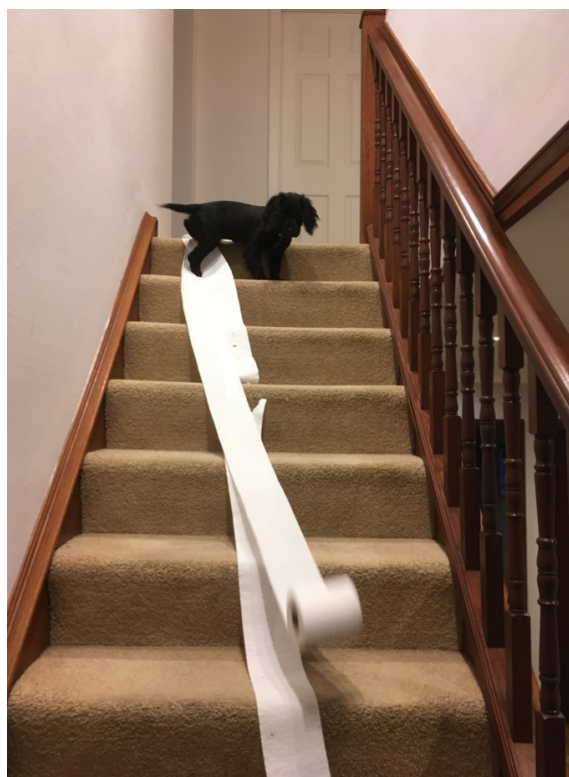
No one can tell what might happen next week, or next month but we go forward full of hope that 2022 will be brighter and if we walk the road together it will certainly be better. Happy New Year!

Contact: Monday and Tuesday 01292 265794

Thursday and Friday 01292 269524

irene@ayrstcolumba.co.uk

Irene



An 'Andrex' moment at the manse with new resident Rosie! Rosie is really enjoying life at the manse; the Minister is faring less well!!!!



St Columba's Kids have fun

This year we have been following along with the stories in the lectionary for each week so that there is a link between what is going on in the services and at St Columba's Kids.

At our Beatitude lesson, we found clues all around the room and then coloured in our memory verse, for Samuel's lesson in listening to God we made telephones and played a listening game, for our story of John the Baptist we played a blindfold game in pairs passing our faith in others, and made Santa stockings filled with ideas on how to help other people.

We have all been donating food for the Foodbank which is our chosen charity this year.

Following Advent we have lit candles in church each week and we have very much enjoyed making our crafts, exploring our stories and tackling our challenges.

We especially welcome our two new girls Kyla and Belle to our group and would be most happy if more children could join our group.

We ask as you read this that you pray for all our families and the team at St Columba's Kids as with the spread of Omicron we are unsure what the future holds for us.

Susan Christie



Breezy outing for walkers

We had a blustery but exhilarating walk around Prestwick St Nicholas golf course at the end of November, battling back along the prom in the beginnings of Storm Arwen!

After a break over New Year, our walk on the January 28 will be at Largs. We will meet at TEN am in the car park at Heathfield outside Halfords so that we can car share.

We will end the walk with lunch (probably at Room on Largs sea front). Please let me know by the previous Friday if you intend to join us as I will have to book a table.

Helen Greig
07922 059368 or
hcgreig@icloud.com



Welcome to Flight 2022

Good morning and welcome to Flight 2022.
We are prepared to take off into the New Year.
Please make sure your Positive Attitude and Gratitude are secured and locked in the upright position. All self-destruct devices: pity, anger, selfishness, pride, and resentment should be turned off at this time. All negativity, hurt, and discouragement should be put away.

Should you lose your Positive Attitude under pressure during this flight, reach up and pull down a prayer. Prayers will automatically be activated by Faith. Once your Faith is activated, you can assist other passengers who are of little faith.

There will be NO BAGGAGE allowed on this flight.

God, our Captain, has cleared us for take-off.

Destination - GREATNESS!

Wishing you a New Year filled with new HOPE, new JOY, and new BEGINNINGS!

Stay Blessed!

And welcome in 2022.



Congregation and Parish Register



October - December

DEATHS

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

Aileen Lees	25 St Phillan's Avenue, Ayr
James Meikle	18 Arrol Drive, Ayr
Alexander Getty	15 Broun Drive, Ayr
James (Jim) Bryce	17 Craigholm Road, Ayr

BAPTISM

Rory Stewart Jack, son of Alistair and Debbi Whitehead



The annual
*Time to
Remember
Service* was
held in the
sanctuary at
the beginning
of December.

Who to contact

Minister:

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

Associate Minister:

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

Session Clerk:

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

Depute Session Clerk:

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

Treasurer: TOM CAIRNS,

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

Director of Music:

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

Gift Aid Convener:

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

Free Will Offering Convener:

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

Roll Keeper:

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

'Columba News' Editor:

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editor.columbanews@gmail.com

Church Secretary:

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

Beadle and Church Officer:

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

Church Office: Carrick Park, Ayr.

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

Church Charity Number: SC014338

Church Services (Midton Road):

10am - Family Service;
10am Sunday School,
11.15 - Morning Worship;
6.30pm - Evening Services
(Last Sunday of the month)

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

7.30pm: **THE GUILD** (fortnightly):

Mrs D. Bone, 441651

7.30pm: **MEN'S ASSOCIATION**

(fortnightly):

Mr T. R. Swinn, 441896

WEDNESDAY

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

Church Office, 269524

2pm: **FITNESS with FRIENDS:**

Mrs Margaret Doncaster, 477381

5.45pm: **9th AYR BROWNIES,**

Mrs E. MacDonald, 445529

THURSDAY

10am: **OASIS CAFE**

2pm: **MEN'S ASSOCIATION GAMES:**

Mr A. Hawthorn 267688

6.30pm: **CUB SCOUTS:**

Mr Jereon Bolte 07511489755

7.30pm: **SENIOR CHOIR:**

Church Office 269524

FRIDAY

6pm: **BEAVER SCOUTS:**

Fiona Wilson, 290414

7.30pm: **SCOUTS:**

Jereon Bolte, 07511489755

SATURDAY

4pm: **MESSY CHURCH**

(last Saturday of the month):

Irene Bartholomew, 269524



Tuning in to our services

In recent months, St Columba Church has been providing services online:

Website: Full Service (see 'Worship Services' tab) Sermon (script and audio) at www.ayrstcolumba.co.uk

Facebook: Full Service

YouTube: Full Service on our YouTube Channel

Dial-a-Sermon: Audio 01292 851074

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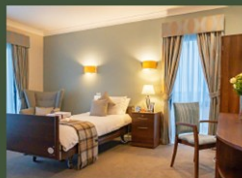
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The editorially independent magazine of the Church of Scotland is packed every month with features, news and opinions on Christian life within Scotland and further afield.

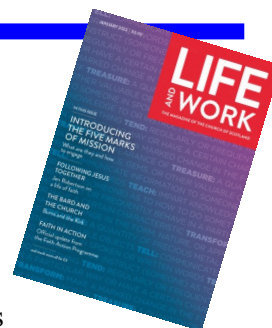
One of the magazine's most important features is reader feedback- the letters pages are lively and very revealing about general attitudes within and beyond the Church.

As the Church pays annually for the magazines, it receives a discount, so we are able to offer an annual subscription rate of £36, to anyone paying before the end of January 2022.

Cheques should be made payable to St Columba Church.

Home delivery can be arranged for elderly or housebound members.

Hazel Steele (tel 861631)



LIFE AND WORK MAGAZINE

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