

Columba News

Easter
2026
No. 267



Thanks from the team

The Flower Team would like to thank everyone who has so far donated to the church flower fund. If you would like to help bring a little floral cheer to those among our congregation who receive flowers each week, please add your name to the Flower Calendar in the Carrick Park vestibule.

Your donations can be handed in to the office in an envelope marked Flower Fund with your name.

Please make any cheque payable to Ayr St Columba Flower Fund. Thank you so much.

Anne Drennan



Waiting to welcome you

Sundays

March 29

Holy Week

April 5

April 12

April 19

April 26

May 3

May 10

May 17

May 24

May 31

June 7

June 14

June 21

Team

Team 5

Team 6

Team 7

Team 8

Team 9

Team 10

Team 11

Team 1

Team 2

Team 3

Team 4

Team 5

Team 6

Team 7

Leader

Jane Murnin

Michael Whiteford

Janet McKnight

Ron Currie

Iain Campbell

Janette Leishman

Gavin Gemmell

Graeme Savage

Sandra Wylie

Bob Bartholomew

Yvonne Russell

Gordon McKinlay

Michael Whiteford

Janet McKnight

Team leaders change from April 1



From the Interim Moderator

Dear Friends,

One of the things I'm enjoying most, since becoming Interim Moderator, is that I get to speak to individual members of the congregation as they come in to fill the church! It's called "working the room." I'm learning about the membership of our church and also how wonderful those on duty are as welcomers!

Visitors coming into a strange church for the first time - or returning after an absence, are naturally nervous about how they will be received in this lovely, but overwhelmingly sacred space.

St Columba are a very warm and welcoming community, very experienced at making people feel at home. It has made it so easy for me to work off the back of that atmosphere as I move through the church each Sunday morning. Sometimes I get engrossed with the interesting conversations I'm having that John Stewart, the Beadle, has to come and get me before the service starts!

That's what happened a few weeks ago when my son, Stuart, was sharing the service with me. John (Stewart) fetched us both back into the vestry, before taking the bible into the pulpit, and on coming down the steps ushered us into the church - except we had forgotten the choir! (You may have noticed Stuart and I retrieving our steps and returning behind the choir!)

I am assuming that you are enjoying the interaction as much as I am since one of our elders said to me the other week that the one thing we should not lose in the vacancy is for our new Minister having the "ability to work the room!"

If it's a skill - I learned it when I was a manager in industry. I had several manufacturing plants for which I was responsible and before I took my coat off when I arrived in the morning I went into the top of the plant and worked my way through the bays. The striking thing that seemed to have impressed the workforce most was that I ignored the tannoy asking; "would Mr Matthews please come to the telephone!"

They noted that I saw my engagement with them to be as important - or



more important - than breaking off my factory tour!

As in my manufacturing days - I'm learning so much about the congregation and what they want, need, enjoy and appreciate. Thank you for indulging me with the warmth of your conversations.

Finally, you will start to see some activity and information around our 2026 Stewardship Campaign – Holding Fast, Looking Forward. A stewardship campaign is a focused effort, usually lasting a few weeks, where a church encourages its members to reflect on and commit to how they use their time, talents and money in support of the church's mission. Think of it as a spiritual/practical check-in - not just a fundraiser. Further information is contained within the insert in this issue of the Columba News and of course any questions are more than welcome as I "work the room." (I want to do this and not leave it as the first thing the new minister is involved in).

Warmest good wishes

John

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, April 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.

Catch a coffee and a chat at Oasis

The popular Oasis cafe is back in full swing.

The cafe now operates on a fortnightly basis. Check out the April dates in View from the Pew

**The Kirk Session will hold its next meeting on
Tuesday, April 14 at 7.30pm**





THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
Ayr St. Columba Church
Services for Easter

at 10.30am

Sunday 29 March Palm Sunday Revd David Ness

at 7.00pm

Wednesday	1 April	Passion Play	Holy Trinity
Thursday	2 April	Maundy Thursday	Revd John Matthews
Friday	3 April	Good Friday	Revd David Ness

"O come and mourn with me awhile"

All Services to be held in Ayr: St. Columba **except** Wednesday.

The Passion Play will be held in Holy Trinity

The Maundy Thursday service will be a Service of Holy Communion

Easter Sunday Services

Sunday 5th April 2026

8.30 am – Early Morning Service
Low Green with Deacon Muriel Wilson

Followed by Breakfast in the Midton Road Hall

10.30 am – Morning Worship
Sacrament of Baptism

SUNDAY SCHOOL

5th April – Easter Sunday – No Classes
12th April – No Classes
19th April – No Classes
26th April – Classes resume at 10.00 am





From the seafront to the royal estate

For the last Friday in January the walkers were very fortunate with the weather for the walk along the prom. Cold but bright. We met at Ayr India and welcomed Margaret who was joining us for the first time.

We headed along to the mouth of the river. We then followed the path by the river and arrived at the Secret Garden where we enjoyed a cup of coffee.

The group met at Dumfries House on Friday, February 27.

The weather was sunny, and we had a pleasant walk through the estate to the walled garden where there was a beautiful array of crocuses. We then had a light lunch in the cafe.

The next walk will be on March 27 at a time and place to be decided.

Details will be in the pew leaflet.

Margaret Johnston and Helen Weir.



Welcome support for Abba's Rest due to droughts and flooding

As most people know, the Session of Ayr St Columba generously agreed to support Abba's Rest to the tune of £2000 per year for at least four years.

This, along with the wonderful support from a growing number of our congregation who have generously taken out a monthly standing order to support our work in Malawi, has allowed us to increase the vital support we are providing.



Malawi has recently experienced crippling currency devaluations which, together with ever increasing droughts or flooding, has increased prices and caused severe financial hardship. Last year we had to increase the amount of maize we purchased and then provide to the orphans during the hunger months of December and January, but were able to meet this through the generosity of many in Ayr St Columba. Sadly this coming year looks no better and our on-going support is vital.

Along with the purchase of maize we also provide support for school fees and learning materials for orphans attending both primary and secondary schools. A recent World Bank Report found that 270,000 school leavers



enter the job market each year, although the Malawi economy creates only 40,000 jobs, resulting in most young people becoming dependent on the informal economy, with little income and no security. Last year

we provided training and equipment for four school leavers to start their own businesses, two in clothing manufacture and two in welding. We plan, with your help to do more this year.

Abba's Rest is partnered in Malawi by Care and Share who are wholly funded by Abba's Rest and deliver our support programmes in the Chiringa area. They recently received this letter from one of the local schools.

*Dear Management of Care and Share Organization,
I write this with a heart full of gratitude to sincerely thank you for the kindness and generosity you have shown to us today. We are deeply thank-*

ful for the maize you generously provided to me during your support exercise for our students who benefit from your organization.

Your continued support to our learners through the payment of school fees and the provision of other essential school materials has made a great and lasting impact on their education and overall wellbeing. Many orphans who would have struggled to remain in school are now able to learn with hope and confidence because of your commitment and compassion. As the Chairperson of the Bursary Committee, I would like to express our sincere appreciation on behalf of the school, the students, and the wider community. Your acts of kindness do not go unnoticed, and they truly reflect a spirit of care, love, and service to humanity.

May God bless you abundantly for your generosity and reward you greatly for the lives you continue to touch. We pray that you remain strong in this noble work and extend the same kindness to many others in the future.

Once again, thank you very much for your unwavering support and generosity.

Yours faithfully,

Ulemu Nasiyaya

Chairperson, Bursary Committee

If anyone would like to know more about our work in Malawi or feel that they could help in anyway, please speak to Muriel Wilson or Colin Naismith. Trustees of Abba's Rest.



The Columba kids and leaders enjoyed a festive lunch at the Fox and Willow



Time to keep up with all the Kirk Session business

Meetings of the Kirk Session were held on 9th December 2025 and on 12th February 2026, moderated by Revd John Matthews. A summary of issues discussed at these meetings is given below:

The Moderator informed Elders that the Minister's post had been advertised on the Church of Scotland website. It would be necessary to check the eligibility of the candidates before the applications were discussed within the Nominating Committee.

The Moderator was pleased to note that Sunday attendances were staying high.

Presbytery had agreed the sale of St Andrews Church and bases of Union had been agreed for St James, St Quivox and Newton Wallacetown Churches, for Auchinleck and Catrine Churches and for Lugar, Muirkirk, New Cumnock and Old Cumnock Trinity Churches, with a reviewable charge of a Team Ministry of two Ministers of Word and Sacrament. The Minister at St Leonards Church, Revd Brian Hendrie, had decided to retire.

Congratulations were extended to Mr John Crone on his engagement to Ms Sue Christie, to Mrs Hope Docherty on the birth of her daughter, Susannah, and to Mrs Susan Scott on reaching the venerable status of grandmother.

Mr Mike Whiteford proposed that the proceeds of retiring offerings at the three special Christmas Services should be divided equally between Crisis Scotland and Ayrshire Cancer Support. This was approved.

A report produced by the Safeguarding Coordinator, Mrs Millie McNish explained that members who attend worship services in care homes for older people to provide a supportive presence and shared Christian fellowship, but do not lead, assist, or deliver any aspect of the service, no longer require to undertake the Introductory Safeguarding Training. However, they do still require to join the PVG Scheme. In April 2026, PVG Scheme membership will change to a five-year scheme. This means that those with PVG membership older than five years, must have it renewed.

A report including the Draft Budget for 2026 had been distributed to Elders ahead of the meeting. This projected that Expenditure would exceed

Income by £27,890. There were no questions on the draft Budget which was approved by members of Session.

Mr John Ballantyne updated members on the proposed new doors at the Carrick Park entrance. It was necessary to obtain planning permission for the doors. A two-door system was planned, including a fire door and a one door exit.

Mr Keith Fullerton spoke of the difficulty some choir members had in negotiating the steps into the Chancel. He proposed that a handrail be provided to assist them and this was approved by members of Session.

The Moderator asked members to consider inviting other people to come along to services, emphasising that word of mouth was of great value. The Church could offer individuals comfort and fellowship.

A paper outlining the rationale for a Stewardship campaign had been distributed to elders ahead of the meeting. The Moderator informed Elders that, following the very sad passing of Mr Tom Cairns, the Treasurer, Sharon Lindsay, had agreed to take forward the Stewardship campaign, subject to the will of Session. It was envisioned that the campaign would be launched on Sunday, 22nd March when Revd Matthews would preach on the subject. It was important to run the campaign before a new Minister was in post. The Finance Committee had asked the Kirk Session to approve the launch of the Stewardship campaign and to delegate the details of its various elements to the Interim Moderator and the Business Committee. This was approved.

The Clerk said that both the 7.00pm Family Service led by Revd Ness and the 11.10pm Watchnight Service led by Revd Matthews had been first class and had been well attended. He said that very few Elders had volunteered for door duty at the services and he was very grateful to those who had turned out and to family members who had agreed to help.

Mrs I Bartholomew said that some duty teams had experienced difficulty because individuals unable to attend when on duty did not identify a substitute. Some were not Elders, but they should contact the Office if they had an issue.

Mrs Bartholomew expressed thanks to Mrs Mo Howie and others who formed duty teams for Funeral Services in the Church and who were retiring from this duty. She said that it was necessary to find new volunteers and hoped around a dozen members would come forward. This would allow those involved to be used occasionally rather than for each service. In addition, a Team Leader was required for the new team.

Ms Muriel Wilson informed Elders about the 'Quiet Day' to be hosted by Revd Ian and Mrs Mandy Stirling at their home on Saturday, 21st February.



The theme would be 'The Wisdom Years' and it would be led by Margaret Silf. It would allow people to reflect on the challenges and gifts of their later years. She commended the event to all.

Mr J Stewart said that the Wednesday Team would remove the existing CPDs door springs from the Carrick Park door and fit a hydraulically damped door closer. This should provide a temporary fix until the new doors were installed.

Mr K Fullerton expressed thanks to the Church Officer and the Wednesday Team for installing the handrail in the Chancel.

R A Bartholomew
Session Clerk



Members get their Heartstart training

Ready for action are the Heartstart team at the church after going through their training



Catch up with South West Presbytery news

The South West Presbytery held their latest meeting by zoom on March 3, 2026

Finance Committee: In October 2024, Presbytery approved a charge of 2% of each congregation's Income Base figure for payment of Presbytery Dues. Presbytery approved the Presbytery's 2026 Budget and noted that the 2% Dues may hold through 2026, 2027 and 2028. Although these figures cannot be guaranteed especially if Presbytery undertakes other work through initiatives or through the Committees when extra funds would be required.

Presbytery Mission Planning: Now that new congregations have been formed through various adjustments, the PMP Committee are also looking to progress Parish Groupings while looking at Parish Boundaries. These adjustments will be brought to Presbytery.

Congregational Local Action Plans: A template is being drawn up for congregations to express and monitor their ongoing mission and how they look to the future to meet the needs of the people in their respective parishes.

Vacancy Procedure Committee: From the beginning of 2026, 7 charges (none within the former Ayr Presbytery) are considered vacant but not in vacancy and their Locum Payments will be paid centrally for the first six months of this year. Further conversations need to take place with Stair Parish Church and with Irvine Old Parish Church as there is no permission to call and no central payment of Locum supply payments.

Current Vacancies: Within the Presbytery, there are currently 13 Vacancies including :

Ayr St Columba - Advertising, 5 year Reviewable Charge

Craigie, Dundonald and Symington - Advertising, Unrestricted Tenure

Monkton and Prestwick Trinity - about to advertise

Doon Valley - preparing for Vacancy Procedure Committee visit

South Ayrshire - preparing for Vacancy Procedure Committee visit

Safeguarding Committee: April 2026 will see the introduction of the 5 year membership of the PVG. All new members will have a 5 year membership and existing members will be contacted by Disclosure Scotland in due course about the process of converting to five year membership. Presbytery reminded everyone of their training requirements:



All congregational trustees are required to attend Trustees Safeguarding Training every 3 to 5 years.

All church workers, volunteers and employed staff who are in a regulated role involving children or protected adults are required to attend an Introductory Safeguarding Training Course every 3 to 5 years

All members of the Congregational Safeguarding Panels including Congregational Safeguarding Co-ordinator are required to attend and Advanced Safeguarding Training Course is every 3 to 5 years.

Ministers are required to comply with Safeguarding Learning Pathway.

The first three courses are available at Presbytery level, the last course is the Pathway, the Minister's course is delivered by the Safeguarding Office.

Ministries, Education, Resources and IT Committee Study Leave:

Presbytery noted that ministers in their first five years are now entitled to two weeks of study and reflective leave annually and that congregations are responsible for meeting the cost of any pulpit supply required.

Mission Committee: Mission Action Plans: Presbytery noted that congregations will be required to produce Mission Action Plans covering certain areas of church life. It is not the intention of the Mission Committee to require congregations to use the Mission Committee's proposed template. This is optional. The template will enable congregations to comply with the General Assembly's Act on church review. The template and supporting guidance will be issued at the June Presbytery meeting.

Seeds for Growth Funding: Presbytery encourages congregations to apply for Seeds for Growth Funding for projects seeking to develop new worshipping communities or to renew existing congregations. There are different levels of funding from £1,000 up to £40,000. Presbytery encourage all to explore if Seeds for Growth could help congregations with mission. More details can be found on the Church of Scotland website and applications should be forwarded to the Mission Committee Convenor in the first place.

Property Committee: Manses: Presbytery noted that the Manse Handbook and schedules have been updated as of May 2025. For future use fabric teams should adopt this Manse condition schedule as it has some additions concerning facilities recommended and essential for manses of today. Congregations should also be aware that a Mandatory Energy Performance Certificate should be provided for all manses.

Manse Sales: Presbytery approved the sale of a number of manses including vacant manse Old Cumnock Old; Ochiltree manse and North Ayr manse.

Church Sales: Presbytery approved the sale of a number of churches in-

cluding St Quivox Church, Auchincruive and Prestwick South Church.

Church Buildings Repairs: Presbytery approved the repairs required to be undertaken by a number of churches including wall stone restoration at St Meddan's Church, Troon amounting to £95,790 ex VAT

Business and Nominations Committee: Interim Moderators: Presbytery appointed the Rev Allan Vint as Interim Moderator of Doon Valley Church from 1 January 2026; Rev Jack Brown as Interim Moderator of Monkton and Prestwick Trinity Church from 14 February, 2026 and Mr Bill Duncan as Interim Moderator of South East Ayrshire Church from 1 March 2026.

Attestation of Records: Presbytery noted that the annual Attestation of Records will take place on Wednesday 6 May 2026.

Presbytery Website: The Presbytery website is now live and can be viewed at www.southwestpresbytery.org.uk

George Park, Presbytery Elder



The Wednesday maintenance team have halted the Carrick Park door from slamming shut.

A pulley system was tried, (*pictured above*), but was only partially successful.

But investigation under a brass plate on the floor under the door revealed a complicated spring and piston system (*pictured left*). It was filled with hydraulic oil and it has proved successful..



Lord Lieutenant on parade at the Monday Fellowship

The last meeting of our session is fast approaching and will probably be past by the time you read this.

We have enjoyed a (numerically) healthy membership this year, averaging around the 35 mark and it is good to see the occasional visitor attending, too.

Our programme of speakers has been very varied with the penultimate speaker, the Lord Lieutenant of Ayrshire and Arran, Sherriff Iona McDonald (pictured) when she very kindly appeared "fully booted and spurred" in her official uniform, complete with ceremonial sword. No heads were lost during that afternoon!



Our AGM is to be held on Monday 23rd March when the forthcoming year's office bearers will be elected and our weekly offerings will be split amongst our chosen Charities who were represented by a speaker this past session. Our end-of-session lunch is at the Balgarth Pines on Wednesday, March 25.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Irene, church secretary, for her help in keeping our fortnightly meetings to the fore in the pew leaflet and also for printing our Hymn sheets for each meeting. Many thanks are also due to our volunteer pianists who led the music to enhance the dulcet tones of the members!



We look forward to our next session starting in October and would very much like to welcome all new members.

*John Ferguson,
Secretary*







It was a Day of Quiet Reflection

As we approached the driveway we were welcomed by a sea of snowdrops dancing in the breeze and stretching far into the woodland. An even warmer welcome was in store for us as we entered the converted henhouse with its blazing log fire, which would be our home for the day. The setting was, of course, the delightful home of Ian and Mandy Stirling, high in the Carrick Hills, surrounded by mother nature and the ideal place for a day of quiet reflection and meditation.

After a bit of chatter, coffee and homemade scones, we were introduced to Margaret Silf, our leader for the day. Margaret is an accomplished author, speaker and leader of such retreats.

We explored the Wisdom Years with their associated challenges and feelings. Lively discussion took place and soon it was time for a delicious lunch.

The afternoon continued as we reflected on our own mortality and our legacy to the future. It was a lovely day, immensely enjoyed by all and we are most grateful to Ian and Mandy for inviting us into their home and for their warm hospitality.

Anne Swan



Tributes to former church treasurer and elders

Tom Cairns, past church treasurer

The untimely death of Tom Cairns at the age of 71 was received by his many friends and admirers with a mixture of shock and sadness. Tom had suffered from a long standing pulmonary condition. At the beginning of November last year he and his wife, Ann, went on holiday to Japan. This proved to be an arduous event for him. So much so that the holiday had to be curtailed. Soon after returning home he was admitted to Ayr Hospital where he was given oxygen on a continuous basis. He was subsequently transferred to Crosshouse Hospital where he was placed on a ventilator. He passed away on 13th December.

Tom was a native of Kilmarnock. He was born in 1954 and lived the early years of his life in the Shortlees area of the town. He was educated at Kilmarnock Academy before going on to study accountancy at Glasgow University. After gaining his degree he qualified as a Chartered Accountant. In later years he also obtained an Economics degree at the university. Upon qualification he didn't take the conventional career path by going into private practice or the wider commercial world. He was first employed by the Scottish Football League and subsequently by West Sound Radio. When the opportunity arose for him to use his skills for the benefit of Kilmarnock FC he grabbed it. He was appointed Finance Director of the club. Thereafter he owned and operated a golf driving range next to Prestwick Airport. He was very much a "hands on" owner. After closing the range he involved himself in helping charities and, fortunately for us, in taking charge of our finances.

Tom was a talented footballer. He played for the university football team and gained a Blue. He was also a more than capable golfer and was for many years a member of Prestwick St Nicholas GC. Owing to poor health he had to give up the game. Sport played a big part in his life. He was a passionate supporter of Kilmarnock FC and of the Scottish national team. He followed both club and country to many European places to give them his support.

Tom was prodigious worker and was possessed of great financial acumen. Even when he was latterly in Ayr Hospital he was carrying out church related work. He played a huge part in our church life whilst Treasurer. He was appointed to the role in July 2016. Over and above the monitoring of income and expenditure he played a significant part in the stewardship campaign which led to more of our members giving by direct debit



and in the establishment of the true extent Congressional Roll. He was also at the forefront of sorting out the various problems associated with the management of the youth project at Lochside. He demitted the office of Treasurer in 2024.

Tom was a family man. He, Ann and their children, Rachel and Graeme, were a close and loving unit. His first grandchild, Rory, was born only a few months before his death. He was also in his nature a modest and unassuming man. That said, he held strong views and he expressed them in an intelligible way. For relaxation, holidaying in Greece and frequent visits to curry houses were much to his and Ann's liking. So too was walking along the front at Largs and on Cumbrae. The huge turnout for his funeral service in the church is eloquent of the high regard in which he was held. Those who worked closely with him in the affairs of the church most keenly feel his loss. He wasn't an Elder but, such was the esteem in which he was held, that a sizeable number of Elders honoured his memory by processing into the sanctuary before the service commenced. At the end of the service as people were making their way out Mathew played "Paper Roses" on the organ. The sweet refrain of the Kilmarnock FC anthem. Tom would have loved to see and hear that just as he would have been amazed to see the packed church.

We extend our warmest condolences to the family and thank God for Tom's life which was full of Christian witness.

Walter Muir

Bob Templeton, past assistant treasurer and elder

Bob was born in Keith - one of three. He was in the middle between Grace and John and he kept in touch with them all his days. The family lived in Alves - where he went to school and his dad was the Heidi. After primary he went to Forres Academy. I asked Elizabeth if he excelled at anything - she gave me a one word answer - "golf". I don't think he enjoyed school very much.

After school, he went to the Royal Bank in Elgin - that was in 1969. He was with the Royal Bank more or less all his working life. He served in Elgin, various branches in Aberdeen, Glasgow, Paisley, Ayr, in the Commercial centres in some of these places, and finally Glasgow West End. He retired from banking when he was only 51. He then became Secretary to Williamwood Golf Club LMA - there he was their bookkeeper and anything to do with finances. He then finally retired. He was a real hard

worker all his days, and he was extremely popular with everyone. Everyone had the highest opinion of him personally as well as his professionalism.

He met Elizabeth through the bank. She was brought up in Girvan, Worked in the bank and was moved to Aberdeen, and guess what !! She met Bob at a friend's party but he was quite shy but eventually overcame his shyness. It was her birthday - the first one away from home. She was a wee bit sad, but Bob was there. Love blossomed - that was in July 1975 - engaged on 1st January 1976 and married on 1st March 1976. How is that for a quick romance? Bob did not hang around. He knew he was on to a good thing. It would be true to say that they were utterly devoted to each other. Elizabeth was terrific to him all his life, and he to her. They started life in Bob's flat - then Bridge of Don and eventually in 1992 to Ayr.

In 1979 Greg appeared on the scene - it was the day after Bob's birthday. Bob was a superb husband and father and when Greg married Deidre, they produced his grandchildren Emma and Jamie. His family was complete and he loved them all to the uttermost and they loved him just as much in return. He was a very proud grandfather to Emma and Jamie although ill health prevented him playing the active role he'd have liked. He looked forward to family gatherings. They came first in his life but golf was a close second.

He was scratch golfer in his day. Latterly a member of Royal Troon. Even his son Greg who is a jolly good golfer isn't quite up to his dad's standard. A highlight in his golfing calendar was his annual trip with Greg to Carnoustie to play in the Tassie tournament. This was a real focus in the golfing year for both of them. Many stories abound as to some of their exploits there. I know Greg looks back very fondly at many other golfing adventures with his dad. I love the story when Bob, remember he was an Aberdonian, grudged the investment of a new grip for his driver, simply sanded his old worn one down on a rough wall at the back of the tee before playing his shot. Besides Carnoustie there were many other trips - Hoylake, Southport, Lytham St Annes as well as courses up north. The number of courses they played on is too numerous to mention. Although a memorable one was a day at Muirfield to mark Bob's 60th birthday. And what about that other golfing crowd of which Bob was an enthusiastic member. The Gallus Ayrshire Golfing Association - known as GAGA in view of some of their off course activities. Their 4 day trips took them far and wide, Royal Dornoch, Royal Aberdeen, Nairn, Gullane, Portrush, Portstewart, Castlerock to name but a few. Fantastic golf trips, fantastic



courses and fantastic camaraderie. Needless to say the local bars and restaurants got their fair share of the boys' custom - Bob was known to enjoy a few rusty nails. I must say that members of that group were terrific at visiting him when he was ill. Do you think we have said enough about golf? We could be here till the cows come home talking about his golfing exploits.

He played badminton and tennis with Elizabeth and friends when he was fit. He enjoyed football and enjoyed going to games with the boys. One of the best was a day in May 1990 when Aberdeen won the Scottish Cup beating Celtic on penalties. He would have loved to have been able to join Greg and Jamie in May last year when Aberdeen repeated the performance. He loved reading, crosswords, any sport on television - well anything with a ball. Enjoyed walking the hills although according to Elizabeth often got lost. He enjoyed theatre, musicals, plays, indeed even took Elizabeth to the ballet in Vienna. He loved his holidays although on many an occasion there happened to be a golf course at their destination. What a coincidence!! What do you think of his socks. I believe in tribute to him many of his cronies are wearing outrageous socks today.

He enjoyed live music along with Greg - the Who, Elton John and Bob Dylan, Jools Holland and others.

He loved his church. His mum was a lay preacher and his dad the church organist - so from a young age was always involved with the church.

When he moved to Ayr he joined St Columba and became an elder. He was seldom absent from his pew.

He served diligently on the Finance Committee and was assistant treasurer for a while. He gave sterling service, was a great elder and loved by all. He would volunteer to do anything.

It was a real privilege for me to get to know Bob and I am sure many of us feel the same. He was such a gentleman, such a lovely person - someone we will never ever forget who will forever live on in the hearts and minds of all who knew him.

The family would like me to take this opportunity to say an enormous heart-felt thank you to the support provided by friends and neighbours throughout Bob's illness.

They would also like to thank the staff at the Inpatient unit at the Hospice for their quite magnificent care and support in Bob's final weeks - it was so very much appreciated. Also to Dr Dawson and Kate at Barns Medical Centre.

Revd David Ness

Jean Lindsay, elder

Jean Lindsay was the second daughter of David and Annie Bruce and there were four girls in the family Anne, Jean, Mary and Jenny. The family grew up in the Fort area so that their father, a local fish merchant, could be close to the harbour. Jean recalled fondly a great childhood growing up by the beach, helping at out at the harbour store stocking the fishing boats.

The Bruce's were very family centred and this has been handed down through the generations that followed.

Jean trained as a hairdresser and worked in a local salon. She was frequently at odds with her dad as she wanted to wear make up and have her own ideas on style. Her style was not missed at Ayr Ice Rink where she met James Lindsay, a miner from Rankinston. They married in March in 1958 in Cathcart Street Church.

Very soon blessed by their first daughter Angela, quickly followed by Jane. Diane came along 5 years later. Jean became a stay at home mum to look after the children.

Jean's father died at the age of 59 and Jean and her family moved to the Arran Terrace house where they enjoyed multi-generational living.

When the girls moved to secondary school Jean took a part-time hair-dressing job working with her college friend in Avril's hairdressers on Prestwick Road, Ayr.

James was a keen bowler and Jean very soon joined him on the bowling green, she made many good friends and continued playing into her late 70s. They were both very involved at local bowling greens and organised many social events with live music and dancing.

Jean enjoyed watching the bowling on TV, often the same game over and over.

Arran Terrace was a real family home where the extended family would gather for celebrations, and there would be food, music, singing with love and laughter.

Grandchildren brought Jean immense joy. James came along first and Jean and Jim provided full-time childcare, Jean could be found on the beach early in the morning digging, in the swimming pool taking part in the kids swimming lessons and at the mother and toddlers groups, she loved it all.

Iona and Dana came along to complete the team and Jean enjoyed watching as they improved in dancing and gymnastics. She was always, in true Granny form, proud of all their achievements

She was also close to Allan, Jane's husband and to Tommy, Diane's partner.



Music was always a big part of Jean's life, she played in an accordion band when she young, the accordion came out every New Year. She was delighted when James starting playing the pipes and enjoyed following the pipe band. Iona and Dana also played instruments and she revelled in all their achievements.

She always enjoyed holidays, visiting her sister Anne in America. Each year the family would have a summer holiday, often camping in the early years and later the family had a touring caravan and many a fun trip was had both up north and down south. Jean and James also liked to go abroad once the family were older. They also enjoyed holidays on the Norfolk Broads with Jane, Allan and James. She enjoyed a trip to Crete with Dana, cruising with Diane, Tommy, Angela and Iona. All very special memories for her. Sadly, James died just 5 years after retiring. Luckily Jean was able to continue taking many trips with Angela until Angela died in 2018. The big family holiday was the highlight of her year when the whole family would go off together.

She continued with her fitness pursuits: swimming, keep fit, yoga and the bowling for as long as she was able. She felt it was important to keep social events on the calendar, and she has a wide circle of friends and valued the time spent with them. She would meet her sister Mary most mornings for coffee and participated in lively debate when they were looking after the grandchildren and for all the years after. There is a good chance many Ayr coffee shops may now go out of business.

She had a set routine and meal and coffee times were sacrosanct, the family always knew when to turn up or else.

She was blessed with a great granddaughter Norah two years ago and as GG had a new lease of life. She would sing along to the nursery rhymes and play with the toys and somehow Jean managed to get Norah addicted to Bargain Hunt. Latterly when she was unable to go out so much she delighted when the house was filled with her family.

The Church meant a lot to her, she was an elder and very much involved when the three churches became St Columba. She was a very diligent and conscientious elder very popular with the church members in her district. When she retired from being an active elder Jane took her place. She took part in a host of church activities.

She was determined to enjoy life even when she was so frail, last Christmas she enjoyed festive lunches with her sisters Mary and Jenny and with friends and after spending Christmas day with everyone, Jean was able to fulfil her wish to spend her last days at home looked after and comforted by all the family supported my Pauline, Kate and Margaret.

Jean was a real character with warm personality, full of life and vigour, she got on well with people and always kept an open house. She and James made a great team and had a huge number of friends. She was generous, had a great sense of humour what you saw was what you got, no airs and graces. She told it as it was and don't try to pull the wool over her eyes.

Revd David Ness

Bryce Hartshorn, elder

Bryce Hartshorn was born on 27th November 1947, the only son born to Len and Elma Hartshorn. The family home was in Broomhill Drive in Denniston, Glasgow and Bryce attended Alexandra Parade primary school and Alan Glen's Secondary.

He went to Sunday School at the local Rutherford Church and it was there that he met his oldest friend, Jimmy Stewart. They were both involved in the Seaside Mission at North Berwick and Aberdeen in their late teens. Jimmy was Bryce's best man and is David's godfather. He visited Bryce every fortnight in Creggan Bahn- what a wonderful, enduring friendship they had!

After school Bryce went to Glasgow University and in 1969 gained an M.A in English and Philosophy. At the student Christian Union, he met two other great friends, Gordon Matthew and Iain Gray. Their friendships with Bryce have lasted 60 years!

Bryce also developed other long lasting friendships in those Glasgow years with David Scott, Bill Telford and Tom Allan, all studying for an Arts degree. They wrote poetry and shared their poems with each other. Bryce also enjoyed playing snooker with Jimmy and Tom as well as lawn bowls.

A few years later, when Tom married Marilyn, Bryce was his best man. More recently, Tom created a WhatsApp group for Bryce's friends. This allowed them to coordinate their visits and provided a wonderful, invaluable support network for Bryce.

After his graduation, Bryce spent a year working for a newspaper in London. He then went to Aberdeen University to study divinity, graduating in 1972. It was there that he met two fellow students whose friendship has lasted a lifetime. - Dave Kirkpatrick and Maurice Gray. Dave was a militant atheist and Maurice a humanist!

Bryce invited them to play in a football match, which he arranged, between the Divinity Faculty and the Humanist Society to determine the



existence of God!

It was part of the Students' Charity Week events and they raised a decent sum of money!

I don't know which team won - and if God's existence was proved! Bryce also wrote reports for the Student Magazine on other football matches.

He had a quirky sense of humour and enjoyed fun and laughter. He gathered together a group of students from his Hall of Residence and got everyone to write scripts and perform sketches and songs in a revue which he directed. There were two performances and they were very well received!

In 1971 Royce spent a summer as an assistant minister in Alabama and then four years as an assistant minister with the Church of Scotland in Corstorphine in Edinburgh. Bryce decided however not to pursue the ministry, feeling called instead to teach religious education.

From 1978-82 he was assistant teacher of RE and English at Cumbernauld High School. He then became assistant Principal teacher of RE at Crookston Castle School from 1982-85 followed by his final school teaching post as Principal Teacher of RE at Abornhill High School in Cumbernauld from 1985-89.

At a Teacher Training Conference in Seamill, Bryce met Irene McGoldrick and they were married in 1982 at the Church of the Nazarene in Parkhead in Glasgow.

Their daughter Jane was born in 1986 when the family were living in the West End of Glasgow. They then moved to Scotstoun where David was born in 1989.

That same year Bryce had started a new job as a lecturer in RE at Craigie College in Ayr, which later became the University of the West of Scotland, and so the family moved to Ayr in 1991.

Bryce loved his work - his subject and working with the students. Bob Bartholomew, our Session Clerk, remembers how effective he was in his support and assistance of Probationer Ministers at that time-that was one of his roles at the University.

Bryce was always a very reflective person. He loved ideas, reading and learning and in 2000 he graduated with a Master of Education from Glasgow University.

But he also loved the outdoors - cycling, hillwalking and his friend Maurice Gray wrote about his love of walking with Bryce and having lengthy discussions on the way on a variety of topics.

Bryce was an elder here in ASC for many years and was a very conscientious visitor of folk in his district, including my mother! I remember on

one occasion he came to visit her at the Biggart Hospital after an operation on her hip. It was her birthday and it was a beautiful sunny afternoon. All the family were outside on the patio having a celebratory glass of sherry! Bryce was delighted to join us!

He was also Convenor of the Education Committee for several years and facilitated a regular Bible Study. Everything he did he did well- his preparation was always so thorough.

Bryce and I used to meet each month for coffee and we had excellent conversations about the church, religion, God etc! He was very well informed and a deep thinker. I learned a lot from our meetings.

Although he retired in 2007, he was very active. He continued to visit secondary education students at the University of Strathclyde. He became involved in a "Befriender" programme and used to play chess with a befriendee, Jo, in Morrison's in Troon. He was also active in Adult Literacy and Advocacy programmes.

Bryce was very keen on literature, especially Shakespeare and he and Jane went to Stratford-upon-Avon to see "The Winter's Tale". His own book "Community Action" was published in 1988.

He enjoyed visiting Gladstone's Library in Wales for short courses. He was always keen to learn and understand more.

In 2014 he visited David in New Zealand and they had a wonderful active, outdoor holiday together with many adventures and great fun. Very sadly in 2016, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. But his Faith and his determination helped him to come to terms with it and bravely, the following year, he took the opportunity to travel to Australia to visit David and his partner Kristeen where they are now living.

Bryce was valiant in his determination to cope with his Parkinson's. However, as he became frailer and needed more support, he decided to move into Creggan Bahn Care Home in 2023. He had lots of visitors- family, church friends, the WhatsApp group. Douglas Gullan, who had been a fellow lecturer with him at the UWS, was another regular visitor. When he was fitter, Bryce used to visit Douglas and his wife Elspeth every weekend at their home in Prestwick and they would do the crossword together.

Bryce was a sensitive, intelligent and very conscientious person. His Christian faith meant the world to him and led to his choice of work and his involvement in ASC for many years as a very diligent elder. He took his responsibilities very seriously, both in work and in the church. He prepared so thoroughly for everything he undertook.

Now his journey here on earth has ended. He has run his race of life with courage, generosity and integrity always seeking to serve God to the best



of his ability.

He has gone on before us into God's eternal kingdom of love and light, free of pain and suffering, where there is peace, healing and joy.

I imagine the voice of God saying to him "Welcome! Well done my good and faithful servant"

May that be a comfort to us on this sad day of parting.

Deacon Muriel Wilson

TAKING AN ECO LOOK by Andrew Muirhead

Fancy trimming your energy costs, well Andrew Muirhead and John Ballantyne are looking for volunteers to have their central heating adjusted to help ease the burden of gas prices.

Muriel Wilson has already signed up for the money saving experiment.

If anyone else wants to try out some of the Cambridge Architectural Research adjustments for themselves, Andrew is happy to help. It really helps to have mobile controls and a smart meter before starting.

There is a good chance that savings would be around 20% of gas used.

Names to Andrew and *Columba News* will bring you results as we go forward.

What happened to consensus on environmental issues?

The problem is that we have lost sight of what matters most to our own population. We all want clean water to drink, clean air to breathe and healthy food to eat and the best conditions we can create for our grandchildrenor do we?

On 19/1/26, Alistair Grant wrote a front page article in the Scotsman about the Diffley report. It was commissioned by the Joseph Rowantree Trust. The article was entitled "Economic insecurity driving political disaffection in Scotland". The findings of the report were summarised as follows:

- *Nearly half (47%) of all adults in Scotland are feeling worried about their family's economic security,*
Around a quarter of Scots (26%) are not confident that they would be

*able to pay an unexpected cost or bill of £200 in the next seven days,
Three in ten (30%) are worried about their current levels of debt*

Increasingly, people consider that environmental concerns are for the wealthy. This perspective is not unreasonable because the single best predictor of the carbon footprint of any individual is income. For normal folk, just getting by is the main priority. The cost of essentials and housing were the main worries, with energy costs as the top concern. Politicians tap into those concerns and adjust their policies accordingly. The population has drifted into groupings, encouraged by social media.

On 19th February 2026, David Bol wrote an article in the Scotsman. The Scottish Government's own commission heavily criticised the SNP for failing to deliver a "Just Transition" for the workforce who have worked in polluting industries and have lost their jobs. New jobs in the "net zero" economy have not materialised. Big industrial employers such as Ineos and Exxon Mobil have closed facilities before anything was ready to replace them. The report concludes that "there is no path to net zero through deindustrialisation". This is because we will become reliant on imports from places with fewer scruples and pollution will continue, only elsewhere.

So, how should we improve the environment? Personally I think that ambitious aims to reduce emissions and pollution by passing laws that legally bind the country to a timeframe are probably a mistake. Instead, I believe should consider what is genuinely within our power to deliver.

On a policy level:

*We can improve air quality, such that heart and lung disease is reduced
We can ensure that water quality is maintained and is as free as possible
from PFAS (poly-fluoroalkyl substances or "forever chemicals").*

*We can improve and support Scotland's natural environment including
food security, soil quality and wildlife.*

We can build resilience to expected climate change.

*We can develop less polluting energy sources, including more efficient use
of fossil fuels in an orderly manner that reduces pollution and cost all at
once.*

On a personal and community level:

We can support wildlife in our gardens

We can reduce waste of food

We can reuse and recycle

*We can examine our values and check how they align with the natural
world and the welfare of our neighbours and descendants.*

Fossil fuel should be used with care and every efficiency

should be extracted.

This is not a matter of who believes in climate change and who does not. It is a matter of delivery of a sensible plan...with much less hype.

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

10-16 May 2026



Christian Aid Week

7 days to make a difference. This
Christian Aid Week, what will you do?

*A Christian Aid envelope comes with this edition. You
can place your envelope in the offering plate on a Sunday*

- BARRY WHALEN - FUNERAL DIRECTORS

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Copy Deadline

**The copy
deadline for the
June issue of
Columba News will
be Sunday, May 31**

Congregation and Parish Register



December-March

NEW MEMBER

Mrs Emily Haggerty

DEATHS

Mr Donald Macdonald

Mr Tom Cairns

Mrs Janette Graham

Mr John Brown

Mrs Jean Watson

Mr Bob Templeton

Mrs Jean Lindsay

Ms Marjorie Elliot

Mrs Jean Peterson

Mrs Catherine Voak

Mr Bryce Hartshorn

Mrs Eileen Kenneth

Mrs Betty Milne

Mrs June Greenwood



Who to contact

Interim Moderator:

Revd JOHN MATTHEWS

Associate Minister:

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

Session Clerk:

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

Depute Session Clerks

KEITH FULLERTON
GILLIAN WATSON

Treasurer:

SHARON LINDSAY
4 Gower Place, Ayr KA7 4SL
Tel:- 07753511927

Director of Music:

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

Free Will Offering Convener:

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

Roll Keeper:

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

'Columba News' Editor:

NORMAN REID,
4 Hawthorn Drive, Ayr. Tel:-262144
editor.columbanews@gmail.com

Beadle and Church Officer:

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

Church Secretary:

IRENE E. BARTHOLOMEW,
30 St Leonard's Road, Ayr
Office 269524

irene@ayrstcolumba.co.uk

Church Office: Carrick Park, Ayr.

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

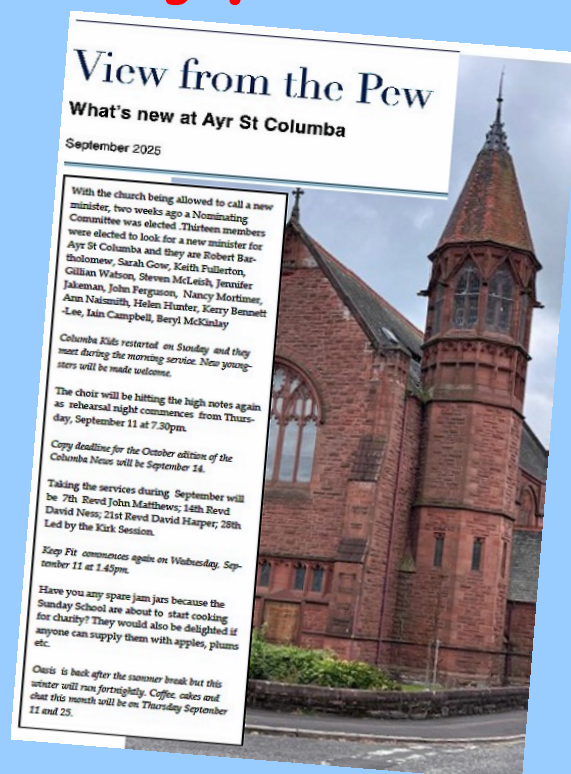
THURSDAY

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

Are you enjoying our monthly publication?



Hope you are all enjoying our extra newsletter that comes at the beginning of every month. The email publication *View from the Pew* has all the latest news from Ayr St Columba. If you haven't signed up for church emails then a number of printed copies are available at the church door.