

Summer /Autumn 2022

The Challenge



For all who are new to the High Kirk, come and meet the family!

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From September we look forward to seeing many of our events start back.

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Please continue to pray for our Mission, Ministry & Prayer Partners.

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Is 'doing church' differently here to stay? Read more...

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With grateful thanks to Stewart McGookin for this beautiful photo of the High Kirk.

A VIEW FROM THE MANSE

Dear Friends,

As many of you will already know, sadly, the Presbytery Mission Plan was passed at Ardrossan Presbytery by a ballot vote on Tuesday 15th June 2022 (29 for and 10 against). The Plan highlights that Ardeer Church will be dissolved, the Livingstone Church building would be kept for the future, and the High Kirk to be sold off. Although disheartening for the High Kirk, this is only the beginning stages of a long process. The General Trustees and the Faith Nurture Forum will shortly be meeting to discuss whether they agree with the Presbytery of Ardrossan's Mission Plan. At the moment we are unable to do much until we receive notice on the outcome of that meeting.

If the General Trustees and Faith Nurture Forum approve the Presbytery Mission Plan, the High Kirk will then move to make an appeal. If our appeal is to be successful, it is so important that the Church of Scotland recognise that we are a growing, mission-focussed church.

It has always been the High Kirk's desire to be a God-honouring, Christ-Centred, Spirit-Filled, Gospel Driven and Mission Focussed Church. Therefore please continue to pray that the Lord will fill us afresh with his Holy Spirit; and may we know His love and compassion for the "lost" and "broken" in our communities. Please pray and invite family, friends and neighbours to come along to the High Kirk. Pray for God's presence to move through hearts, homes, streets, communities and our nation. Please pray that we may experience His drawing power where many will come to find life, wholeness, salvation, mercy, love, joy, healing, peace, and God's irresistible grace.

And for those who are able, please get involved in the life of the Church, giving of your time, talents and treasures to the glory of God. Can I especially encourage you to pray, pray, pray!!!

1. Please consider devoting part of your daily prayer life to praying fervently for Stevenston High Kirk - our church and future ministry.
2. Please pray that we would experience new life and spiritual growth.
3. Please pray that many will return to church and will experience new life in Christ through God's saving grace and power.
4. Please pray for the High Kirk to deepen in its unity amid diversity, where we experience hearts burning at the same temperature for Jesus.
5. Please pray that we will see many Christians going out from the High Kirk with a passion to share the gospel of Christ; showing love, mercy, grace and loving kindness in action.
6. Please pray that the High Kirk would become a bright light on the hill where prodigals, strangers, wanderers, and those feeling lost would be drawn to its light, and would come and experience God's loving, healing and delivering power.
7. Please pray for a true heaven-sent revival where God would pour out His Spirit where we would experience times of refreshing and renewal.
8. Please pray that God would raise up disciples, helpers and volunteers willing to serve God in practical ways with their time, talents and treasures.
9. Please pray that the High Kirk would continue to be consistent in giving joyfully, faithfully and sacrificially.
10. Please pray for Minister and Kirk Session, and all those involved in leadership, servant and volunteer roles, that they would grow in their dedication to God's Word, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Your Friend

Rev Scott Cameron



New To Stevenston High Kirk?

Over the past year we have been blessed with new members and seeing new faces attend the High Kirk. We are especially aware that coming to a new church can be intimidating. Therefore, in this special edition of our Challenge Magazine, we want to share our church family life and history with you all, and especially for those who are new.

We are part of the national Church of Scotland located in North Ayrshire on the south west coast of Scotland. Our church is made up of people like you and me; people with dreams, hopes, fears and frustrations; folks who have made mistakes in life, and who have experienced real life problems. We are also a people who have come to experience deep love, joy, peace, goodness, forgiveness, and acceptance. Jesus promised life in all its fullness, a newness of life, a life in the extreme, a life worth living, a life with meaning and purpose. We are a church with passion and purpose.

Here at the High Kirk you are not judged on how you speak, what you wear or what you have. You come as you are! We don't have to get ourselves right before coming to church; it is when we come as we are that the Spirit of God can then change us and give us meaning and purpose to our lives.

We are a church built upon "relationships" and not upon mere "religious duties". We do not come to church to merely ease our consciences; we come because we want to grow in a relationship with God the Father who created us, and with his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ who loves us, and with God the Holy Spirit who can profoundly change us. As we seek to grow in a relationship with God, we also grow in our relationship with others, which is what makes the High Kirk such a warm and welcoming home for so many.

During our Worship Service there is a Crèche and children's Sunday Club. Those attending church are welcome to drop their children off at the Church Hall on the High Road. At Sunday Club our children learn about God in a safe, caring and fun environment.

Each Sunday morning we meet in the Church sanctuary at 10.30am. We are led by our Minister and members of our church through preaching, singing, prayer, and reading from the Bible. We seek to be sincere and relevant in our music and singing whether our songs are traditional or modern. Our singing each Sunday is led by our organist and Praise Group.

The preaching is sincere and passionate, as we believe the gospel message to be radical and life-changing. We believe the Bible to be the Word of God and teach it as being relevant and foundational to daily life.

After the Church Service we hope to provide an area in St Monach's Aisle where we can enjoy fellowship and a cup of tea before everyone goes home. After the Service you are welcome to keep your seat and can indicate to the Minister or members from our prayer ministry team to sit and pray for you.

Who Are We?

High Kirk History

The lands of Stevenston were granted in about 1170 to Stephen Lockhart, from whom the town derives its name, by Sir Richard Morville, High Constable of Scotland and Lord of Cunninghame, an Englishman who took part in the murder of Archbishop Thomas A' Becket and who also founded Kilwinning Abbey. The ancient parish was a vicarage under the monks of Kilwinning Abbey.

Pre-Reformation

Though few facts are known of it in pre-Reformation times, the obit book of the church of St. John the Baptist, Ayr, tells us that the early ministers of the parish included Richard Pethede, Canon of Ross and Vicar of Stevenston in 1449, and Stephen Wilkinson, Curate in 1547. James Walker conformed to the Protestant faith during the Reformation of 1562.

The Church of 1670

A new church was erected on the site of the previous church in about 1670 and in 1744 Saltcoats parishioners added the Saltcoats Aisle.

This church was often used by mariners trading in and out of Saltcoats, and the centre of the three lofts was called the Sailors' loft, the others being the Ardeer and Kerelaw lofts. This loft had a strict order of naval precedence, the front row reserved for captains, the second for mates and the remainder for sailors, while the Harbourmaster was the custodian of the door.

Other seats belonged to certain notable families living in the houses of Kerelaw, Ardeer, Seabank, Mayville, Hullerhurst and Hayocks. This church was taken down in 1832.

Church Interior

Many relics of the past can be seen inside the Church. On the walls are plaques to

the notable local families, Cunninghams, Warners and Fullartons. More prominent is the plaque to James Wodrow and another to William Lockhart, a naval doctor. The font and lectern are war memorials to the men of the church killed in the two World Wars.

The windows on either side of the pulpit are inscribed with the initials of David Landsborough, James Cruickshank and John Fraser Grahame, and are surrounded by paintings by James Wylie.

On a strip of wood by the minister's pew (No.1) can be seen the initials M.I.B.I.B, the initials of John Bell the 17th century minister and his wife. Pictures and photographs of the ministers since Thomas McKinlay can be seen on the stairs, and by the belfry window is a sundial to David Landsborough.

The Vaults

Beneath the church are the three family vaults of the Cunninghams, Warners and Fullartons, formerly the most notable families in the area. These vaults were originally the prayer stalls of the earlier churches.

The Present Church

The present church was built in 1832 and opened in May of 1833 during the ministry of the famous Reverend Dr. David Landsborough, whose son William was one of Australia's greatest explorers (born in the manse in 1825). Dr. Landsborough, a noted biologist as well as minister, led the Ayrshire ministers at the Disruption of 1843 and founded the Free Church of Scotland in Saltcoats.

St Monachs Aisle

The extension containing a small chapel and vestry was built on at the back of the church in 1957, during the ministry of the Reverend John Miller Scott, and named after St. Monach, a contemporary of St. Columba's.

The Graveyard

The graveyard is situated on the hill around the church and many of the graves are older than the present church.

Some of the ministers are buried here - David Landsborough's gravestone is set up against the wall on the left of the gate between church and manse. Near this, by the left of the gate, is a memorial plaque to the Reverend John Bell.

In the churchyard are the graves of the people of Stevenston and Saltcoats, the stones bearing the name of the family head, his occupation and his wife and children. Among the most common names are those of Boyd, Kilpatrick, Conn and Young.

Ministers of the High Kirk

Pre -Reformation

Ricardo Petit (1427)

John Blair (1471)

Stephen Wilkinson (1547)

James Walker (conformed 1562 – died 1569)

Post Reformation

Rev. Archibald Crawford (1569)

Rev. Patrick Wilkinshaw (1581)

Rev. Archibald Crawford (1569)

Rev. Alexander Campbell M.A (1603)

Rev. John Bell M.A (1613)

Rev. John Bell M.A – son of above (1641)

Rev. John Cramond M.A (1668)

Rev. David Mitchell M.A (1681)

Rev. John Keith M.A (1684)

Rev. Robert Stirling D.D (1689)

Rev. William Reid (1700)

Rev. Robert Finlay D.D (1744)

Rev. Thomas McKinlay D.D (1746)

Rev. James Wodrow M.A D.D (1759)

The Present Church of 1833

Rev. Dr. Landsborough, D.D (1811-1843)

Rev James Cruickshank (1843-1880)

Rev. John Fraser Grahame, B.D (1881-1885)

Rev. Robert Joseph Kyd (1886-1921)

Rev. Alexander MacDonald, M.A (1921-1927)

Rev. John Geddes Ritchie, B.D (1927-1954)

Rev. John A Miller Scott, M.A, B.D (1954-1963)

Rev. John Heron, M.A, D.D (1963-1975)

Rev. Thomas McIntyre, M.A, B.D (1976-1988)

Rev. Ann C McCool, B.D, DSD, IPA, ALCM (1989-2001)

Rev. M Scott Cameron, M.A, B.D (2002-Present)

Joining The High Kirk

Here at the High Kirk we count it a joy to welcome new members into the church family. When we have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour it is important to find a good local Church where we can feel at home, enjoy fellowship, and grow in the Christian life.

There are three ways of becoming a member of the High Kirk:-

(1) By Profession of Faith

Where church membership is being sought for the first time, first and foremost, if you are not already doing so simply start to attend regularly. Let the minister know of your interest, he will invite you to a series of classes which involves no obligation on either side. Afterwards if you decide to join you would take vows of membership at a future church service.

(2) By Certificate of Transference

Any member of a Church of Scotland congregation wishing to become a member of the High Kirk should ask their previous Minister or Session Clerk to send them a transference certificate (lines). This certificate should then be given to the Church Secretary (or the Minister) with a view to your name

being added to the membership of the High Kirk. It is of course important that you take an active interest; otherwise such membership would be meaningless.

(3) By Resolution of the Kirk Session

Where someone seeking membership has been a Church of Scotland member but cannot supply a certificate or if they are a baptised member of another denomination, then the Kirk Session can resolve to admit them into membership.

For more information about joining the High Kirk Family, please contact the Minister on 463356 or email him: scott.cameron@churchofscotland.org.uk.

Through The Week

Sunday Service - 10.30am (Church)

Every Sunday morning we worship together from 10.30am. Highlights from the Morning Service are made available for online viewing. We are led by our Minister and members of our church through music, preaching, prayer, and Bible Readings. Our Minister preaches the Word of God each Sunday to help us live-out the Christian life.

Crèche - 10.30am (Hall)

A crèche for 0-3 year olds is run by volunteers in the church hall to allow parents to attend the morning service in the church. All crèche volunteers have been fully disclosed by Disclosure Scotland and follow the church's safeguarding policy.

Sunday Club - 10.30am (Hall)

Children from age 3 until Secondary 4 are welcome to join the Sunday Club. On the first Sunday of each month (apart from July & August) the Sunday Club join with the rest of the congregation for a Family Service, before the children leave for their own activities. Singing, games,

quizzes, drama and crafts are all used to teach the Bible engagingly in a fun and safe environment.

Rainbow Club (Hall)

Starting back this September...

Our lively parent and toddler group runs on a Wednesday morning from 9:30 -11am during school term time for children from 0-5 years. The session begins at 9.30am with free-play - a large hall filled with baby mats, rockers, construction & imaginative toys, puzzles, etc. Later we have a drink & biscuit with our Bible Story, followed by art & crafts, and we finish with singing.

Girls Brigade (Hall)

At the 3rd Stevenston Girls' Brigade, the girls join together for friendship and fun on Wednesday nights at 6pm in the Church Hall. We always look forward to welcoming new girls and young women into the Girls Brigade company as we seek, serve and follow Christ.

Prayer Fellowship (St Monach's Aisle)

On Wednesday mornings at 10.30am we meet as a church to pray corporately for the local national church, for ministries and missions across the nation and around the world. Before we pray, we hear a short message from the Bible to encourage and guide us in our prayers. We receive updates on our church family and friends, along with reports on our mission and prayer partners. We are then invited to join together in an open time of prayer. As we end our Prayer Time together, we close our meeting with a time of fellowship over a cup of tea.

Discipleship Group (Hall)

Our Discipleship Group is made up of men and women of all ages and at all stages of our faith journey. We meet on Wednesdays at 1pm in the Church Hall for fellowship, care, prayer and mentoring. It is a place where we seek to become more like Jesus, where we help each other grow in maturity and where we discover together our part in advancing God's Kingdom.

Church Of Scotland Guild (Hall)

The Church of Scotland Guild invites and encourages both women and men to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and enables them to express their faith in worship, prayer and action. With around 20,000 members, the Guild is one of Scotland's largest voluntary organisation. Why not join us in the Church Hall at 1.30pm on the first and third Thursdays of the month (October-April). All Welcome!

Friday Fellowship Night (Manse)

Please join us on Friday nights at 7.30pm in the Manse for our Fellowship Night. This is a wonderful, relaxed night, where we encourage one another to pursue a closer walk with God.

Prayer Line

The **High Kirk Prayer Line** receives many phone calls from family, friends and others who require prayer through difficult times of trial and suffering. Others phone to give thanks to God for answered prayer.

Many who call just want to know that they are not alone and that someone will pray for them. And we know it works! We often have people phone back to thank us for praying, and that people's lives have been changed as a result of prayer.

Being part of the **High Kirk Prayer Line** is a great way to make a difference in the lives of those who get in touch.

Perhaps you could join our volunteers, who each help to make our **Prayer Line** possible?

If you have time to pray and have a desire for God to help others through your prayer life, then we are looking for people like you, who:

- Love to pray and believe that God can transform even the most difficult of situations
- Have some spare time on a regular basis, during the week or evenings.

For more information, contact Margaret on 601322.

Christians Against Poverty

Christians Against Poverty has been providing free professional debt help through local churches throughout the UK since 1996.

We recognise that the UK is made up of four unique nations that each have their own culture, government and policies.

In Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales we have teams working to advocate for the unique needs of each nation. These teams have developed a deep understanding of the differing laws, policies and procedures, and this ensures we can tailor our services and resources to best serve these contexts.

We want to see an end to poverty in the UK, and so we're involved in campaigning and influencing government policy as well as the finance industry.

CAP has been working in Scotland for over 20 years, supporting hundreds of people to become debt free.

We have a network of Debt Centres across Scotland from Aberdeen to Edinburgh, Inverness to East Kilbride.

We have a dedicated team working in Scotland based in our Edinburgh Office to both support our service delivery and work tirelessly to shape and influence policy in Scotland.

Morning Service With CAP

On **Sunday 16th October** Mr Alan McLaren (CAP's Debt Centre Coach for North Ayrshire) and his team will be leading the Morning Service from Stevenston High Kirk at 10.30am. Please join them and why not invite family and friends!



The latest prayer & praise letter (25) from Sam Gordon joyfully serving the Lord with **Truth for Today**.

Hi there,

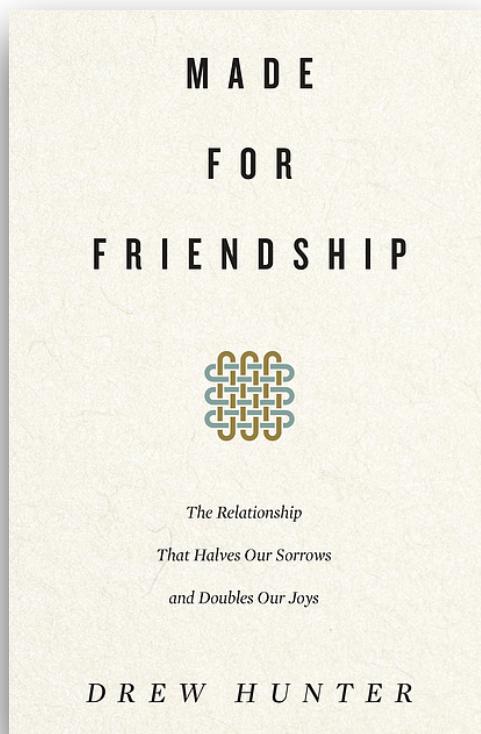
as summer beckons, it's great to touch base with you all again. At the outset, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who got in touch with me in response to my last Prayer & Praise letter, March 2022. Your response was both humbling and massively encouraging. We had hoped and prayed that by now we would've secured an appointment with a neurosurgeon but, alas, that has not happened. So your continued prayers are needed! Looking back, it's been a most fruitful quarter and I'm grateful to the Lord for every open door of opportunity to 'preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

As you will see from my diary, a busy couple of months is on the horizon. In all honesty, the fact that you are partnering with me in the ongoing ministry of Truth for Today is a tremendous spur to keep plodding on - echoes there of Habakkuk 3, methinks.

'Finally, dear brothers and sisters, I ask you to pray for us. Pray first that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and be honoured wherever it goes, just as when it came to you.'
(2 Thessalonians 3:1)

Thank you!

Sam



BOOK REVIEW

“Made For Friendship” by Drew Hunter

“Few people would be crass enough to suggest that friends are unimportant. But how important are they? Really important? A little bit important? And what does friendship really look like? What does it mean to be a friend or to have a friend? After reading Drew Hunter’s *Made for Friendship*, I was left with the realisation that friendship is far more important and far more wonderful than I had ever imagined.

I’m always nervous to heap praise on books lest it build people’s expectations unnecessarily. No one likes reading a book or watching a film that someone claimed was life-changing only to reach the end utterly untouched. But after some reflection, I’m near to suggesting that *Made for Friendship* is one of the most important books I’ve ever read.”

The Gospel Coalition

Giving To Stevenston High Kirk



Giving to the Church

Members and regular attendants of the Church of Scotland provide most of its income through giving to their local congregation. Therefore, if you wish to contribute to Stevenston High Kirk, you can do this in different ways:

Contributing directly

If you wish to contribute directly to support the work and ministry of Stevenston High Kirk, or to specifically fund our church's MISSION, please send your donation to Stevenston High Kirk (Church of Scotland), 19 Schoolwell Street, Stevenston, KA20 3DL, or contact our Church Treasurer - Ruth Burns (ruthhighkirk@gmail.com).

Cheques should be made payable to 'Stevenston High Kirk (Church of Scotland)'

Gift Aid

Did you know? Gift Aid is good news for the Church because:

- It increases our giving by 25 per cent
- No minimum contribution is required
- No particular amount has to be promised
- There is no fixed term during which contributions must be made
- Tax made be recovered retrospectively.

All that is required is that the donor must pay UK income tax or capital gains tax, at any rate, at least equal to the amount of tax being reclaimed, and give their offering or donation through offering envelopes or by bank standing order or by cheque to establish the necessary audit trail. Donors must also sign a Gift Aid Declaration Form, which gives the name of the congregation and the donor's name and address (including postcode). The donor signs and dates the form under these words:

"I want the congregation to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration, until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations."

For all other enquiries about Gift Aid, please contact our Church Treasurer - ruthhighkirk@gmail.com.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR AMAZING SUPPORT...

PLEASE PRAY FOR...

Our Gospel Partnerships

Please continue to pray for our Mission, Ministry & Prayer Partners.

Sadly we are not able to highlight all our mission, ministry and prayer partners here due to internet security and safety issues. But please remember our friends and partners in India, Thailand, China and in other areas of the world where Christians are being persecuted.

Please continue to remember:-

RAIN EDGE INTERNATIONAL, KENYA

Rain edge International is a non-profit community based organisation with its offices centred in Nakuru Kenya. It was founded by **Pastor Sammy Nawali** out of a passion to alleviate poverty especially within the marginalized children, i.e. street children, the vulnerable and those at risk in one way or another within the community.

TRUTH FOR TODAY MINISTRIES UK

Please pray for the Bible teaching Ministry of **Sam Gordon**. Truth for Today is a Word focused, Christ-centred ministry, teaching the Bible in a warm expository style so that people's lives are influenced to such a degree that they impact their world for Jesus Christ...

PLATFORM 67

Psalm 67 is one of the great missionary Psalms. It's why we do what we do: to 'make God's ways known on earth, his salvation among all nations.' There is no better reason to be alive today! We have some really Good News and a platform is simply a stage from which to proclaim it - loudly and clearly! Please remember **Martin Dudgeon** and the Platform 67 leadership team in your prayers.

TEARFUND

Tearfund is a Christian charity that partners with churches in more than 50 of the world's poorest countries. They tackle poverty through sustainable development, responding to disasters, and challenging injustice. They believe an end to extreme poverty is possible. Please remember the work of Tearfund in your prayers.

OPEN DOORS UK

Every day, millions of Christians risk their lives to follow Jesus. In more than 60 countries, Open Doors supports them by supplying Bibles, providing emergency relief and helping persecuted believers stand strong for the long-term. In the UK and Ireland, Open Doors helps the church to pray, give and speak out for those who share our faith but not our freedom.

RELEASE INTERNATIONAL

Release International is a Christian ministry working through local church partners in around 30 countries across the world, helping persecuted Christians prayerfully, pastorally and practically.

Our Mission

Crisis Bags

The increase in the use of food banks has made headlines across the UK as more and more people are affected by food poverty and the 'cost of living' crisis. Sadly, some even struggle in getting to a food bank. Here at the High Kirk, we provide crisis bags of groceries to meet the needs of those who struggle most. Our volunteers help collect donations of food, pack them in bags and deliver them to the most vulnerable people in the Three Towns.

You can support this ministry through prayer, or through giving grocery items, or joining the team of volunteers to deliver the grocery bags.

Please contact Margaret on:
margaretdurham51@gmail.com



Homelessness

CHANA

CHANA stands for Churches Homeless Action North Ayrshire. It is a group of representatives of various churches in the area and the aim is to provide whatever kind of help might be needed with the problem of homelessness. As far as can be ascertained, there is not a problem with "rough-sleepers" in our area, i.e. people are not sleeping on the streets. However, a fairly large number do not have their own tenancies. Some are accommodated in one of the two hostels which are run by North Ayrshire Council and some have been allocated their own tenancies but lack the resources to turn them into comfortable homes.

The causes of homelessness are many and varied and, at some stage in the future, action of a more "political" nature, or perhaps a befriending service, may be organised by the group. For now, however, the main help offered consists of providing items such as toiletries and cleaning materials (there is a list of required goods in a basket in the Church Hall). Donations may be made there, or left alongside the contributions for the Crisis Bags. CHANA also supports local Syrian refugee families, who have been allocated houses in the area. The group is working closely with the Council's Housing Department to ensure that assistance is given wherever it is most needed. Meetings normally take place every six weeks in the High Kirk Hall.

For more information on CHANA, please contact Margaret on:
margaretdurham51@gmail.com

North Ayrshire Foodbank

MAIN LOCATION

150 A Glasgow Street, Ardrossan, North Ayrshire, KA22 8EU.

WEBSITE: <http://northayrshire.foodbank.org.uk>

EMAIL: info@northayrshire.foodbank.org.uk

Other Foodbank Centres

Ardeer Community Centre - 23 Shore Road, Stevenston, KA20 3LA

Monday to Thursday (10:00 - 15:30)

Bridgend Community Centre - Bridgend, Kilbirnie, KA25 7DJ.

Mon (10:00 - 14:00); Wed (15:00 - 17:00); Thu (10:00 - 14:00); Fri (12:00 - 16:00)

Castlepark Community Centre - 4 Castlepark Road, Irvine, KA12 9LQ.

Tue (13:00 - 15:00); Wed (09:30 - 11:30); Thu (09:00 - 15:00); Fri (13:00 - 14:30)

Dalry Community Larder - St. Margarets Avenue, Dalry, KA24 4BA.

Wed (17:30 - 19:30); Sat (09:00 - 11:30)

Kilbirnie Social Services - Garnock Valley Area Centre, Craigton Rd, Kilbirnie, KA25 6LJ.

T: 01505 684551

Mon (09:00 - 17:00); Tue (09:00 - 17:00); Wed (09:00 - 19:00); Thu (09:00 - 17:00); Fri (09:00 - 17:00)

Kirkgate Church - Ardrossan Road, Saltcoats, KA21 5BW.

Tue (12:00 - 14:00); Thu (12:00 - 14:00)

St. John's Church - Hayocks Road, Stevenston KA20 4DE.

Please phone in advance to arrange a collection. This centre is only open upon a telephone request - 07437 521930

Wed (16:00 - 17:00)

Towerlands Community Centre - Towerlands Farm Road, Bourtreehill South, Irvine, KA11 1PY.

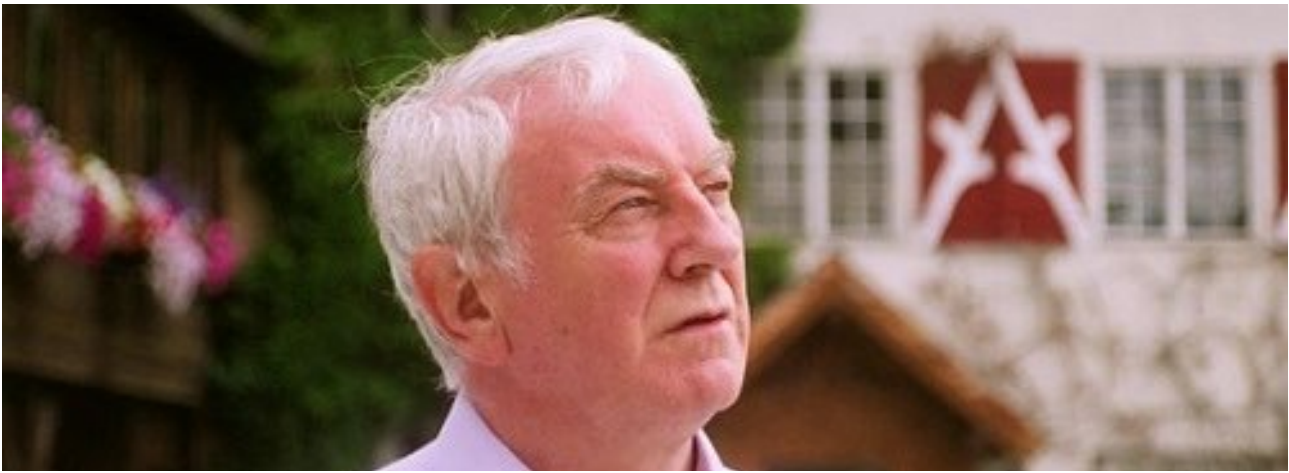
Mon (09:00 - 15:00); Wed (10:45 - 17:00); Fri (09:00 - 14:00)

West Kilbride Parish Church, Main Street, West Kilbride, KA23 9AW

Mon (10:30 - 12:00); Tue (10:30 - 12:00); Thu (10:30 - 12:00); Fri (10:30 - 12:00)

Woodwynd Community Centre - 50 David Gage Street, Kilwinning, KA13 7AH.

Mon (10:00 - 15:00); Wed (10:00 - 15:00); Fri (10:00 - 15:00)



Is 'doing church' differently here to stay?

By Professor Donald MacLeod

Now that lockdown restrictions are being lifted, everyone's straining at the leash, longing to return to their pubs, football grounds, restaurants, theatres, cinemas and nail salons; and by the same token those providing such services are looking forward eagerly to seeing every seat taken and every table full. Others, with more modest ambitions, are simply longing to see Lewis again, provided CalMac can find a ferry.

Churches will never return to the way things used to be?

But what of our churches? They don't seem to share either the eagerness or the confidence of pub-owners and football clubs. Instead, pessimistic voices murmur, 'We'll never return to the way things used to be.'

It's not simply a matter of people having lost the habit of going to church. That's serious enough, but it's not the only issue. More serious is the fact that many have found alternative ways of 'doing church.' They can stay at home, have a leisurely morning, avoid the dreaded search for parking, and worship on-line.

Much of what's available there, and particularly on livestream, is excellent, and such provision will be a Godsend for the housebound long after the virus has lost its momentum. But as regular spiritual fare, it cannot be more than a temporary measure, forced on us by an epidemic of apocalyptic proportions. Football fans don't regard watching the game on television as any substitute for the real thing, and neither should Christians be content with on-line worship. A church, in every language, is a gathering of real people assembled to worship God together, to hear the ancient message of apostles and prophets proclaimed through a living voice and personality, and to share in the Lord's Supper with fellow believers, most of them familiar friends. We can't take Communion on-screen.

Such a gathering is not simply a matter of receiving instruction. In terms of pure learning, you might well get more out of a book, which is what many of the old Highland Separatists did when they didn't like the parish minister. They stayed at home and read an old book: the older, the better.

Few today, however, would be tempted to stay at home by such a substitute for church. They are far more likely to be tempted by the thought of their favourite tele-evangelist: a

man or woman of much more splendid talents, they think, than their own rather average minister. Not that such ministers should feel too put-out. When a class of American Seminary students were asked some years ago who their favourite preacher was, not one replied, 'My own minister.'

Some of these celebrity preachers are indeed splendid, yet their congregations would never be content with just seeing men like Tim Keller or Alistair Begg on-screen. They want to be present in-person, sharing the experience with others, and it is from their presence, and from their loyalty, that such preachers draw much of their inspiration. Without their congregations they could no more preach with such compelling power than Martin Luther King could have delivered his 'I have a dream' speech to an empty room.

But when we, 3000 miles away, watch these vast congregations on-screen, what we are doing is not worshipping. We are merely watching other people worshipping; and though there are Christians the world over who never attend a local church, but proudly point to a celebrity preacher and say, 'That's my pastor!' this can never be the case. That image, that barrage of electrons, I see on-screen, doesn't know me, doesn't care for me, doesn't pray for me, doesn't visit me, or even phone-up to see if I'm OK.

And besides, I know nothing about him (he's still usually a 'him'). For all I know he may firmly believe that the pandemic is fake news, that the world is under threat from a paedophile conspiracy from which only Donald Trump can save us, and that the Covid vaccines are a plot by Microsoft's Bill Gates to get samples of our bloods, change our DNA, and rule the human race; and once you refuse to believe anything you read in the papers, but believe everything you see on YouTube, you need only a few random clicks to stumble on brilliantly-slick presentations that 'prove' all the conspiracy-theories to be true. Then you prove you're an alpha male by refusing the jag.

Churches must never return to the way things used to be?

But alongside the voices telling us that things 'will' never be the way they used to be, there are others declaring that things 'must' never be the way they used to be. If we want our people back, we can't return to the way things were.

And true it is, indeed, that churches must be open to change. After all, as Professor Van-Tam, our eminent Covid-guru, recently reminded us, If you're steering a great liner across the Atlantic, you have to be prepared to make adjustments to your course; and this is no less true of churches. We have to change when circumstances change, or when we've clearly got it wrong, or when we discover a better way of doing what we used to do. But adjusting our course doesn't mean that we throw away the charts and the compass, ignore the lighthouses and the GPS satellites, and ballot the officers, passengers and crew to find out what course they would really like to take. The High Seas have their protocols and so, too, does divine worship. We approach God on his terms, few, but clear.

Of all the things that define Presbyterianism, this is the most important. Sadly, the simplicity he loves doesn't always suit our human taste; and we deem ourselves to be, of course, the best judges of what he ought to like. But one thing we cannot do is to stand before the High King of Heaven and tell him that unless he lets us worship him as we like, we won't worship him at all.

This article first appeared April 2021 in the Stornoway Gazette.

CHURCH REGISTER 2022



Mr Raymond Bennett
Miss Chloe Bennett
Mrs Jan McLellan
Mrs Mary Young
Mrs Jean Niven
Mrs Marie McNeill
Mrs Maureen Montgomery
Mr James McLellan

DEDICATION & THANKSGIVING

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

Sunday 28th August at 1pm

Jamie Ann Christina Russell
Bonnie Helen Russell-MacKay
Daphne Caroline Angela Russell-MacKay



BAPTISM

Shortly we will be celebrating the Baptism of **Murray Lee** - son to Jessica & Greg. Date still to be confirmed.

WEDDINGS

“Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away...”

Friday 23rd September at 4pm

Naomi McKee & Kenneth Gilmour

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Since lockdown the High Kirk has continued to see growth and have counted it all joy to welcome new members into the church family.

Mrs June Duff
Mrs Susan Stroyan
Mrs Janice Fullarton
Mrs Caroline McMaster
Mrs Jane Cochrane
Mrs Jean Robertson
Mrs Margaret Milligan
Mrs Ann Bennett
Mr Ian Bennett

DEATHS

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”

Thomas McIntyre
Elizabeth Robertson
Caroline Smith
Susan Rodger
Jean Nicol



NOTE: We hope to include the obituaries of our church members in the next edition (Winter) of the Challenge Magazine.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS



AUGUST

01. Mark 6:45-56
02. Mark 7:1-23
03. Mark 7:24-30
04. Mark 7:31-37
05. Mark 8:1-13
06. Mark 8:14-21
07. Mark 8:22-30
08. Mark 8:31-9:1
09. Mark 9:2-13
10. Mark 9:14-32
11. Mark 9:33-37
12. Mark 9:38-41
13. Mark 9:42-50
14. Mark 10:1-12
15. Mark 10:13-16
16. Mark 10:17-31
17. Mark 10:32-34
18. Mark 10:35-45
19. Mark 10:46-52
20. Mark 11:1-11
21. Mark 11:12-19
22. Mark 11:20-26
23. Mark 11:27-33
24. Mark 12:1-12
25. Mark 12:13-17
26. Mark 12:18-27
27. Mark 12:28-34
28. Mark 12:35-40
29. Mark 12:41-44
30. Mark 13:1-31
31. Mark 13:32-37

SEPTEMBER

01. Mark 14:1-11
02. Mark 14:12-42
03. Mark 14:43-15:41
04. Mark 15:42-47
05. Mark 16:1-8
06. Mark 16:9-20
07. Esther 1:1-22
08. Esther 2:1-18
09. Esther 2: 19-23
10. Esther 3:1-15
11. Esther 4: 1-17
12. Esther 5:1-8
13. Esther 5:9-14
14. Esther 6:1-14
15. Esther 7:1-10
16. Esther 8: 1-17
17. Esther 9:1-17
18. Esther 9:18-32
19. Esther 10:1-3
20. James 1:1-18
21. James 1:19-27
22. James 2:1-13
23. James 2:14-26

24. James 3:1-12
25. James 3:13-18
26. James 4:1-12
27. James 4:13-17
28. James 5:1-6
29. James 5:7-12
30. James 5:13-20

OCTOBER

01. Proverbs 1
02. Proverbs 2
03. Proverbs 3
04. Proverbs 4
05. Proverbs 5
06. Proverbs 6
07. Proverbs 7
08. Proverbs 8
09. Proverbs 9
10. Proverbs 10
11. Proverbs 11
12. Proverbs 12
13. Proverbs 13
14. Proverbs 14
15. Proverbs 15
16. Proverbs 16
17. Proverbs 17
18. Proverbs 18
19. Proverbs 19
20. Proverbs 20
21. Proverbs 21
22. Proverbs 22
23. Proverbs 23
24. Proverbs 24
25. Proverbs 25
26. Proverbs 26
27. Proverbs 27
28. Proverbs 28
29. Proverbs 29
30. Proverbs 30
31. Proverbs 31

NOVEMBER

01. 1 Cor. 1:1-9
02. 1 Cor. 1:10-17
03. 1 Cor. 1:18-31
04. 1 Cor. 2:1-5
05. 1 Cor. 2:6-16
06. 1 Cor. 3:1-23
07. 1 Cor. 4:1-21
08. 1 Cor. 5:1-13
09. 1 Cor. 6:1-11
10. 1 Cor.6:12-20
11. 1 Cor. 7:1-24
12. 1 Cor. 7:25-40
13. 1 Cor. 8:1-13
14. 1 Cor. 9:1-18
15. 1 Cor. 9:19-27

16. 1 Cor. 10:1-22
17. 1 Cor. 10:23-11:1
18. 1 Cor.11:2-16
19. 1 Cor.11:17-34
20. 1 Cor. 12:1-11
21. 1 Cor. 12:12-31
22. 1 Cor. 13:1-13
23. 1 Cor. 14:1-25
24. 1 Cor. 14:26-40
25. 1 Cor. 15:1-11
26. 1 Cor. 15:12-34
27. 1 Cor.15:35-58
28. 1 Cor. 16:1-24
29. Philemon 1-25
30. Jude 1-25

DECEMBER

01. Song of Songs 1:1-17
02. Song of Songs 2:1-17
03. Song of Songs 3:1-11
04. Song of Songs 4:1-16
05. Song of Songs 5:1-16
06. Song of Songs 6:1-13
07. Song of Songs 7:1-13
08. Song of Songs 8:1-14
09. Matthew 1:1-17
10. Matthew 1:18-25
11. Matthew 2:1-12
12. Matthew 2:13-18
13. Matthew 2:19-23
14. Mark 1:1-13
15. Luke 1:1-4
16. Luke 1:5-25
17. Luke 1:26-38
18. Luke 1:39-45
19. Luke 1:46-56
20. Luke 1:57-66
21. Luke 1:67-80
22. Luke 2:1-20
23. Luke 2:21-40
24. Luke 2:41-52
25. John 1:1-18
26. 1 Timothy 1
27. 1 Timothy 2
28. 1 Timothy 3
29. 1 Timothy 4
30. 1 Timothy 5:1-6:2
31. 1 Timothy 6:3-22