



COWAL KIRK NEWS

**CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SCOTTISH CHARITY No. SC001976**

ISSUE No. 39

MARCH, 2025

MISSION STATEMENT

As a church family,
we seek to grow closer through fellowship,
more compassionate through outreach,
and stronger through worship.
We aspire to be a caring, inclusive community
within a spirit of Christian love.

Our focus will be to:

- † Connect with the youth in society
- † Support the elderly and vulnerable
- † Put our church at the heart of the community



~ FROM THE MANSE ~

Hope and Encouragement

Dear Friends,

As we journey through this season together, I want to take a moment to share a message of hope and encouragement with each of you. In times of uncertainty, it is our faith and our community that can uplift us and provide strength.

Hope is a powerful force. It can light our path, inspire action, and create a sense of possibility even when circumstances seem challenging. As members of Cowal Kirk, we have the unique opportunity to nurture hope not only in our own lives but in the lives of those around us.

I encourage each of you to actively engage in our church and the wider community. There are countless ways to get involved: Volunteer Opportunities - Join in serving at community events. Your hands and hearts can make a difference.

Small Groups - Consider joining or forming a small group. These gatherings provide fellowship, support, and the opportunity to grow spiritually together.

Inviting Others - Share your faith and invite friends and family to our services and events. Your invitation could be the spark that brings someone closer to hope and community.

Prayer and Support - Let us continue to hold one another in prayer. Reach out to those in need within our congregation and be a source of comfort and encouragement.

Together, we can cultivate an environment of hope, kindness, and support. Let's remember that we are not just individuals but part of a larger tapestry that weaves together love and purpose through our shared faith.

I am grateful for each of you and the unique gifts you bring to our community. Let's continue to lift each other up and respond to the world around us with faith and action.

With love and blessings,

Everisto

World Day of Prayer 2025

Cook Islands

'I made you wonderful'



Friday, March 7th

at 2.30pm in Cowal Kirk (St John's)

This year's service has been prepared by the women of the Cook Islands.

The theme is: "I made you wonderful"

(Psalm 39, verse 14)

~ All are welcome to this ecumenical event ~

MID - WEEK WORSHIP

Service are held in the High Kirk Hall
on Wednesdays at 11.00am.

All are welcome.

March 5th (Ash Wednesday) - Shirley Robins

March 19th - Paul and Isobel Copp

FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

Our first Meet and Greet in 2025 was another success, and a BIG THANK YOU is due to Dick Walsh for stepping in for Lawther. It was noted, however, that Dick didn't get heckled quite so much and, as a result, got through the game at a better pace.

So, *be warned* ... no inch will be given on March 3rd (See next page) PLEASE remember to get your ticket BEFORE the event, if you are able. No-one will be turned away without a ticket, but the door prize only goes to ticket holders.

Our next fund raiser will be a gift of a tube of Smarties to EVERYONE. All you have to do is enjoy the contents and then FILL the tube with 20p coins, then return the tube to a Fund-Raising committee member, OR place it in the collection plate. All monies donated will go to Christian Aid.

This will start on the first Sunday in March and continue until the end of May — which is Christian Aid month.

We will be helping at the Guild Spring tea in April, so watch out for more information on that nearer the time.

If you have any other ideas or suggestions for the committee, or if you need our help, please get in touch.

*Lawther,
Fund-raising Co-ordinator.*



*"I'm giving up my New Year
resolutions for Lent"*

PRINTED NEWSLETTERS

If you know someone who has difficulty in reading the printed newsletter, an audio version of it can be provided via a USB stick.



FreeTTS (Free Text To Speech) is the process by which this is done, and it seems to be working quite well. We currently have one monthly user, and two more are giving it a trial run.

We are delighted with this latest version of FreeTTS as it enables us to put in pauses at appropriate places, and adjust the speed at which the text is read. If anyone would like to get involved in this process, or just wants to find out more, please contact the administrator.



Eyes Down

for a FUN afternoon

Cowal Kirk are hosting
another afternoon of

BINGO

in the

High Kirk Hall

on

Monday, 3rd March

2pm to 4pm

Entrance
by
Donation

Tea, Coffee
and Cake

BRING YOUR TICKET WITH YOU!

BIBLE STUDY



Bible study continues to be an opportunity for those interested in an informal gathering to discuss and learn what the bible tells us. These take place on Tuesday afternoons in the Manse, from 2 to 3pm.

If you would like to join in on these occasions, please just come along to the Manse at the appointed time.

STARTER PACKS PLUS

In response to frequent questions regarding what items are needed to meet the referrals we receive, the following items are currently in short supply: Frying pans, Washing up bowls, Tin openers, Face flannels and any general purpose cleaning spray or pack of wipes.

In the past, if I had reason to go over to Greenock, I was able to source some of these items at Tesco's fairly economical prices, or in Home Bargains. But I haven't been able to do so for a while, which means I have on occasion been unable to meet every item requested.

The organisations through whom these referrals are made understand that it is not always possible for us to provide all that they need and are most grateful for the help we do give.

It would be nice, however, if we were fully able to support these individuals who find themselves in such dire need.

The list of everything that we try to keep a good stock of should be on the noticeboards, but if you can't find it, just ask. There are, of course, a lot more items that we need to keep topped up, and not all of them are at small cost (e.g. duvets, kettles, toasters, mops & buckets, etc.) and I know in our current economic climate that it's just too much to ask for these items to be gifted. However, every donation, no matter how small, is welcome.

So I'm taking this opportunity to thank those who have donated recently; your contributions have made a huge difference.



Ruth Griffiths

PREACHING ROTA for MARCH

Sunday	2nd March	St. John's
	9th March	Toward & Innellan
	16th March	Kirn & Sandbank (Communion)
	23rd March	St. John's
	30th March	Toward & Innellan (Mothering Sunday)



Guild Report

This is the final month of Guild meetings
in the High Kirk Hall at 2pm on Thursdays.

Everyone is welcome, but please bring your own mug.

March 6th - Speaker - Dr J David Dorren

March 13th - South America with Abigail Cameron

March 20th - Outing to Erskine

March 27th - Closing Social

Easy fundraising

I received an email this week informing me that I am one of 22 supporters raising free donations for Cowal Kirk (Church of Scotland) every time I shop online.



easyfundraising

Share the



And that, so

far, 133 donations have
been made to Cowal Kirk.

But I am sure there are
others among us who also
do on-line shopping, which
means you can join in too!
Sign up to support them
using the link below and
over 8,000 retailers will
make a donation on your
behalf when you shop with

Your support means the world to Cowal Kirk (Church of Scotland)



You are one of

22

supporters



them. All the big names like Sainsbury's, M&S, Argos, Just Eat and many more are ready to donate at no extra cost to you. Unfortunately Amazon no longer support this initiative, but every donation via these others will help us! Please sign up today: <https://join.easyfundraising.org.uk/cowal-kirk/12W2A5/s2s/ZdU7Z020/SE878/facebook/>

Editor

Philippians 4:13: "I can do all this through him who gives me strength"



FAMILIES & CHILDREN NEWS

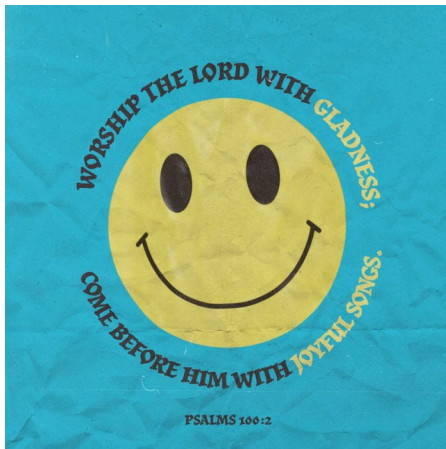


~ Hope, Gratitude, and a whole lot of Pizza! ~

The start of the year has been filled with hope & gratitude - literally! So far those have been our themes for Pizza Church in 2025; and what an adventure it's already been .

A Stormy Start, but Kindness Shines

January's Pizza Church had to be postponed thanks to Storm Eowyn,



which gave our wee corner of Cowal a dramatic start to the year. We hope you all made it through safely! Our own home took a bit of a beating, but in the middle of the chaos, we experienced something amazing - the kindness of neighbours and friends, stepping up in ways that we tend to take for granted when life is running smoothly.

People came together, offering warm spaces, food, and support

to those without power. It was a wonderful reminder of how much good there is in our community, and it got us thinking: How can we continue to serve our local families and children in meaningful ways? That's a question we're bringing to God in prayer as we look for new opportunities this year to love and support our community.

Pizza, People & the Hope of Jesus
This is exactly why we love Pizza Church so much. It's all about gathering friends (and strangers) around a table, sharing good food, stories of real life,



and the hope of Jesus. There's something truly special about eating together - it creates space for connection, for laughter, and for deep conversations.

February's theme was Gratitude and we spent the night reflecting on all we have to be thankful for. It's easy to focus on what we lack, but



when we pause and look around, we see so many blessings.

Cookies & Cuppas at Kirk Café

We're getting excited at what's in the planning for 2025 - more of that in next month's Newsletter!

We're also enjoying meeting all the lovely people who are coming through the doors at Kirk Café . It's been a special couple of months, with new arrivals (literally weeks old)

coming to join us. We share songs and stories and cuppas and cookies. Sweet friendships are being formed with children and adults alike, and we continue our weekly crafting too. It makes such a lovely morning and everyone is welcome to join us at any time. I can't thank you enough, all those who come along to help and serve.

For all of this, we give thanks to God.

Lorna McGinnigal

familiesworker@cowalkirk.org.uk

REQUESTS FOR VISITS

If you know of anyone who would like a visit, for any reason or none, either from an Elder or from the Minister, would you please pass the information on to either Everisto or Jim Anderson.

So often we learn too late that someone has had a fall, been in hospital, is having a difficult time or is just feeling lonely. We are a caring community, so we need to keep abreast of all such circumstances.

What if Lent Wasn't Just About Giving Stuff Up?

Realising that the season of Lent is almost upon us, I came across a blog with the above title. Curiosity made me look further where I found I was being asked to approach Lent not just as a time of sacrifice but as a season of generosity.

Traditionally, Lent is associated with giving something up; but if at the same time we are contemplating the events just ahead, at Easter, this carries the risk of becoming more of a chore, rather than a task from which to benefit.

Whilst it's not a bad thing to abstain from things we might enjoy but are unhealthy (i.e. sugar, chocolate, alcohol, smoking, social media, etc.), abstention doesn't necessarily result in transformation. And the whole point of what happened at Easter was that we might be transformed.

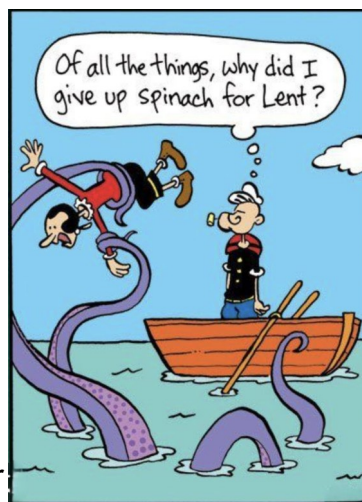
Jesus generously gave his life for us that we might have life, and live it abundantly. That gift inspires us to "pay it forward" and show generosity to others in ways that bring God's kingdom into the lives of others, whether they recognise it or not!

Spending the Lenten season, doing tangibly generous things for people, could be a good way to reset and renew our attitude towards generosity. With that attitude in mind, it occurred to me that February 17th was designated Random Acts of Kindness Day, so I thought we could maybe just re-schedule that and make March the Month of Random Acts of Kindness?

Practical acts of generosity and kindness are the stuff that transforms society. We can't all change the world, but we can all try to transform one person's world by doing something that might create a space for God's presence in their everyday.

What do you think?

Editor



PRESBYTERY NEWS

Clèir Eilean Ì ~ Highlands & Hebrides



Our Presbytery, Highlands & Hebrides (Clèir Eilean Ì) represents over 100 Christian congregations across more than 40% of Scotland's land-mass, covering from the Mull of Kintyre to John O'Groats, and from the Western Isles to West Moray.

Being part of such a large Presbytery presents its own problems, so it was decided that a number of the matters could be better dealt with in a more localised setting. As a result, CEI now has four mission districts.

And on Wednesday, 12th February, Presbytery members from the former Argyll and Lochaber Presbyteries were able to meet up for a first get-together of Mission District 4 (MD4). This gathering, along with sharing ideas, provided an opportunity for some great fellowship and the chance of getting to know one another.

The Presbytery has its own facebook page, and we would encourage all who are able to signpost or engage with the newsletter via fb or the website: <https://cei.presbytery.org.uk>.

We have also received the following message of good news from our friend the Rev. Professor Ken Ross in Malawi. He writes:

'On Friday 31st January, Zomba Theological University launched a new Masters programme which is based on the idea of countering an "economy of death" by promoting "an economy of life." This year's cohort began their studies on February 10th, online and in person.

Our minister, the Rev. Everisto Musedza, is a Clèir Eilean Ì representative on the Faith Action Leadership Programme Team at this year's General Assembly. The team has 24 members across Scotland.

Everisto is also on the Ministry and Mission Committee of Clèir Eilean Ì. So, if you have any questions about any of the above please contact him.



Care Home Worship

Ashgrove - March 11th at 11.00am.

Ardenlee - March 18th at 2.30pm.

(Both service had to be cancelled in February
due to illness in both Care Homes.

Please pray for the residents and their families)



Christian Aid's 80th Anniversary

Christian Aid was founded in 1945 when the Rev. Douglas Lister called on British churches to respond to the humanitarian crisis that followed the end of the Second World War. EIGHTY YEARS on, they're still united in the fight against poverty and injustice; and with our support, they've been able to offer hope to communities around the world who have needed it most. Over these 80 years, they've harnessed something formidable. Something that can't be silenced by injustice. Something that refuses to sit back and watch poverty ravage communities.

2025 will be a year to reaffirm their resolve; to remember the work that's been done, and to reflect on how we should all respond to the challenges that are still facing us as a global family.

They share with us a gospel call to champion dignity, equality, justice and love. Together with their supporters, they've grown and evolved, living these values - even when the going got tough. They have never been more committed to their calling, and they hope they can continue to count on us to stay the course with them.

There will be a number of special events throughout the year, such as a Service of Thanksgiving in St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh on Saturday, 17th May, which coincides with the start of this year's General Assembly. If you wish to find out more: Get the latest 80th Anniversary news and announcements at: caid.org.uk/80years.

As mentioned in our Fund-Raising News, you will be given a tube of Smaries to be filled (once empty) with 20p pieces, with the proceeds going to Christian Aid. The familiar red envelopes will also be handed out on 4th May at St. John's, 11th May at Toward & Innellan (start of Christian Aid week) and collected on 18th May at Kirn & Sandbank (end of Christian Aid week).

PASTURES NEW

From Rev. Sandy

Dear Friends,

As I imagine many of you will know, Presbytery recently appointed me as Interim Moderator in the Charge of Upper Cowal (Strachur, Lochgoilhead, Strathlachlan, and Cairndow), in preparation for a Linkage with the Charge of West Lochfyneside (Inveraray and Cumlodden).

Over the past eighteen months or so I have been conducting services regularly in the Upper Cowal churches, and with the recent retirement of the Rev Dr Robin MacKenzie, it seemed appropriate for me to take on a more 'permanent' role there. Once the Linkage has been formalised I will then continue as the Ordained Local Minister.

This means my role in Cowal Kirk has come to an end, although I will remain a member of the congregation, so you will see me 'around and about' now and again.

To say that I am disappointed to relinquish my duties in Cowal Kirk is an understatement, while on the other hand I have come to know the Upper Cowal congregations well, and so I am very much looking forward to working with them.

It is almost exactly twenty-three years since I came to Dunoon and took up the post of Organist and Choirmaster at The High Kirk. As time progressed and I was accepted as a candidate for Ordained Ministry, I very much valued the support of the congregation as I undertook theology studies and then training placements.

It has to be said that being appointed Locum Minister to the newly formed united congregation of Cowal Kirk on the day after my Ordination presented quite a challenge; but in the two years which then followed, and in the years since, I have again received and very much appreciated the unstinting friendship and prayerful support of the congregation.

It has been an enormous privilege and pleasure to have served you over these past four years, sharing in all the events which have taken place, and being with you in every facet of the lives of so many of you.

Together we have laughed a lot, and sometimes we have cried. We have enjoyed a worshipping fellowship, singing praises and reading God's Word. Above all, we have sought to bear witness to the love and saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I thank you for allowing me the privilege of sharing in that ministry and mission with you.

Every blessing,

Sandy

A small group of believers have been offering a time of praise and worship of and to God since June 2023. They 'pop up' in Cowal and together enjoy a time of worship and also a time to hear what God is doing in each other's lives. The event ends with refreshments and fellowship together.

You are invited to join with them in a

Cowal Pop-Up Songs of Praise

in the

Heron Hall (Strachur Village Hall)

Saturday, 29th March

from 2 to 3pm

(with refreshments afterwards)

If you would like to get in touch with the team,
please email songsofpraise.cowal@gmail.com or
phone Grace on 07880767329



Flower Rota for March

Kirn & Sandbank

2nd Mrs L. Croucher

9th Mrs Lillian Douglas

16th -

23rd Mrs Jo Haddon

30th -

St. John's

Mrs Margaret Turnbull

Mr Lindsay Hunter

Mrs Betty Jukes

Mrs Linda Murry

Mr Ronnie Oliphant

Contacts

Mrs Maureen Robinson **702903**

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(apologies for error ^ last month)





Cyber Awareness

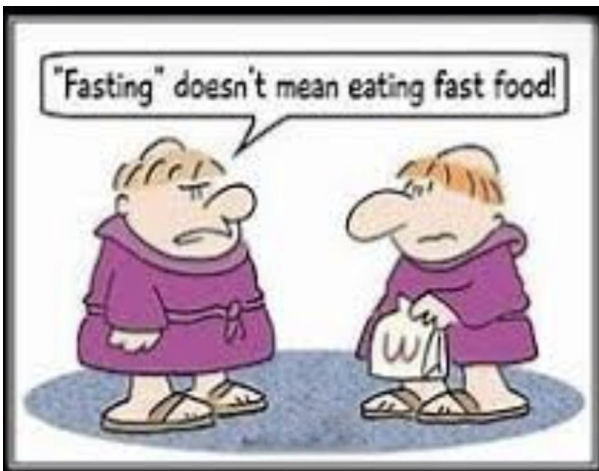
Keeping Children Safe On-line

Last month's newsletter flagged up concerns regarding how to keep our children and young people safe in our ever-increasing digital world? The internet can be a wonderful place for children and young people, from helping with school research reports, to communicating with teachers and friends, and playing interactive games. But the online world also comes with risks, like

inappropriate content, cyberbullying and scams. Police Scotland are keen to increase awareness around some of the risks associated with the digital world in order to keep the public safe online.

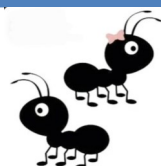
We know that ensuring children and young people stay safe online is a concern for every parent and carer. In partnership with Police Scotland's Cybercrime Harm Prevention Team, Parenting Across Scotland hosted a virtual event during Cyber Scotland Week 2025. The event explored how we can help keep ourselves and our loved ones safe whilst online.

If anyone was able to tune into this event and has further information, please let the Editor know and we can include it next month.





Laughing Away Stress with Ants



5 ants + 5 ants = Tenants

To bring an ant from another country into yours = Important

An ant who is looking for a job = Applicant

An ant who does not co-operate = Recalcitrant

A very little ant = Infant

An ant who is a specialist = Consultant

A proud ant = Arrogant

An ant who runs away from school = Truant

An ant who has turned away from evil = Repentant

An ant who keeps financial records = Accountant

An ant who lives in a house = Occupant

An ant who is important = Significant

An ant who doesn't agree easily = Reluctant

An ant who goes to church = Congregant

An extremely fast ant = Instant

An ant who is annoying = Irritant

An ant who has high hopes = Aspirant

An ant who doesn't complain = Tolerant

A very careful ant = Vigilant

An ant who smells nice = Deodorant

A happy ant = Jubilant

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Please Note: **Last day for April Newsletter contributions : Sunday 23rd March**

Please email these to EDITOR as above – thank you.