



COWAL KIRK NEWS

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

ISSUE No. 40

APRIL, 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

~ Call for help ~

Dear Friends, I hope this message finds you in good health and high spirits.

As we continue to grow as a community, we want to take a moment to highlight the vital role that each of you plays in our

church and to encourage more members to step forward as volunteers, particularly in the area of pastoral care.

Pastoral care is at the heart of our mission as a church. It is the loving arm of our community, reaching out to those in need, offering support and comfort during difficult times, and celebrating the joys of our lives together. Whether it's visiting the sick, lending an ear to someone in distress, or assisting with community events, your involvement makes a profound difference in the lives of those around you.

We believe that everyone has something valuable to contribute. Volunteering in pastoral care not only enriches the lives of those you serve, but it also nurtures your own spiritual journey. It allows you to forge deeper connections within our congregation and empowers us as a community to embody the love and teachings of Christ.

And so we invite you to consider the following ways to get involved:

1. Visits: To visit those who are homebound, hospitalised, or in need of companionship.
2. Prayer Support: Praying for individuals and families in need.
3. Meal: Help organise or prepare meals for families experiencing challenging times.

4. Support Groups: Facilitate or participate in groups for those navigating grief, recovery, or other life transitions.
5. Planning Events: Assist in organising events that foster connection and support among our church members.

If you're interested in volunteering or simply in learning more about pastoral care, please reach out to either myself, the Session Clerk or the Administrator. We are excited to share more about this essential ministry and explain how you can help make a difference.

As we reflect on our calling to love and serve one another, let us all be reminded of the impact we can have on each other's lives. Your hands and hearts are needed, and we believe that together, we can continue to build a loving and supportive community where everyone feels welcomed and cared for.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to serve. Let us embrace this calling with joy and commitment, knowing that together, we can share God's love in meaningful and tangible ways.

Blessings,

Everisto

PREACHING ROTA

6th April	Kirn & Sandbank	
13th April	St. John's	Palm Sunday
20th April	Toward & Innellan	Easter Sunday
27th April	Kirn & Sandbank	
4th May	St. John's	Submariners



HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES IN COWAL KIRK : 2025

Monday 14th April	11 - 12 noon	Cowal Kirk, St. John's Hall
Tuesday 15th April	11- 12 noon	Cowal Kirk, St. John's Hall
Wednesday 16th April	11 - 12 noon	Cowal Kirk, St. John's Hall
Thursday 17th April	11 - 12 noon 6.00 pm	Cowal Kirk, St. John's Hall Agapé Meal with Celebration of The Lord's Supper High Kirk Hall, Hanover Street
Friday 18th April	11 – 12 noon 7.00 pm	Cowal Kirk, St. John's Hall Cowal Kirk, Kirm & Sandbank Church: Good Friday
Sunday 20th April	10:30 am	Cowal Kirk, Toward & Innellan Church: Easter Service

Walk of Witness
through the town centre on
Saturday 19th April
Meet at
St. John's Church Gardens
at 1 pm

HELPERS NEEDED

We are sending a call out for help at our Holy Week services. These will be taking place each day from the 14th to 18th of April, at 11am in St. John's Hall. If you can spare the time, we would love to have your assistance. We need two people to serve tea/coffee after the service, and one person to welcome folk as they come in. If you can spare the time, please contact our Session Clerk, or the Administrator.

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We are also looking for helpers to come along and lend a hand at our monthly Pizza Church (the next one will be on 25th April). These are really fun events, but we could really do with some extra hands.



### Guild outing to Erskine Home

10 members of the Guild recently enjoyed a tour of Erskine Home. Our tour guide was Alison Sturgeon who was very knowledgeable and extremely interesting.

We were enthralled by the amazing mural painted by two of the veterans who had put their thoughts and emotions down whilst at “her majesty’s pleasure” in Barlinnie. Rangers FC have donated a bust of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II which sits at the main reception area. Rangers are one of their biggest donors. The fundraising team have to find £10m(!) every year, to fill the gap between the running costs and any donations they receive.

We were impressed by the friendliness of the staff and residents, the wonderful accommodation, which caters for all abilities and disabilities.

If you have never visited Erskine House, can I encourage you to do so. Better still, join the Guild,

because I am confident that we will be making a return visit.

**Don’t forget.** Next week is our last meeting of this session. We have a “fun” day planned. SEE YOU THERE ?

*Lawther Murchison*



## AGAPÉ MEAL

On Maundy Thursday (17th April) Cowal Kirk will be hosting an Agapé Meal in commemoration of the Last Supper, when Jesus gathered with his disciples in Jerusalem for what was to be the last meal before his crucifixion.

Derived from the Greek, agapé denotes a selfless, unconditional love. It is the word used for the love that moved God to send his only son for the world's redemption. The term extends to the love of and for one's fellow humans and, as such, is the reciprocal love between God and humankind made manifest in our unselfish love of others.

We will gather in the High Kirk Hall at 6.00 pm for a meal, which will culminate in a celebration of the Lord's Supper. Contributions to the meal will be gratefully accepted but, in order to help with catering, please add your name and what you can bring to the list available in the Wee Shop where you can also pick up your FREE ticket.



## FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

It has been suggested that we have two more meetings of our fun '**Meet and Greet**' afternoons, i.e. April and May, and then take a break until September. You will be kept informed if this is changed.

Our Wee Shop "Christmas Night Out" took place on March 22nd at The Royal Innellan, where all enjoyed a lovely meal, and a good night out.

This month **The Wee Shop** donated a box of general goods that had been requested by Hilltop Nursery, an orphanage in Kenya, supported by a Dunoon group led by Vivienne Hannah. This was sent in the name of Cowal Kirk, and we are hoping that Vivienne may be able to visit the Guild at some time to tell us more of the history of 'Hilltop'.

*Lawther Murchison.*



## WHO'S PACKING YOUR PARACHUTE?

I came across this story about a U.S. Navy jet pilot in Vietnam, named Charles Plumb, and I thought I would share it with you.

After completing 75 combat missions, Charles Plumb's plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. He ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent six years in a Communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal, and he now spends his time lecturing on the lessons he learned from that experience.

One day when he and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up to them and said excitedly, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk! You were shot down!"

"How in the world do you know that?" asked the amazed Charles. The man replied, "I packed your parachute." Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. While he was recovering from his speechlessness, the man pumped his hand and said, "Well, I guess it worked!" On regaining his composure, Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today." And they parted.

End of coincidence, end of story? Well, not quite. You see, Plumb couldn't sleep that night. He kept thinking about that man. He kept wondering what he might have looked like back then in a Navy uniform: a white hat, a bib in the back, and bell-bottom trousers. He wondered how many times he might have seen him and not even said, "Good morning, how are you?" or even said anything at all, because he was a fighter pilot, and this man was just a sailor. He then began to think of the many hours that that ordinary sailor would have spent on a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn't know.

Having thought long and hard about this meeting, Plumb now asks his audience when he lectures, "Who's packing your parachute?" His point is that everyone has someone who has packed their parachute, who has blessed them, who has provided what they need to make it through the day. And he goes on to point out that in fact he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory. He needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute ... and his spiritual parachute. He called on all these supports before reaching safety. Somebody had put them there, had richly blessed him, and he was grateful and determined to pass on that blessing.

We should probably ask ourselves: Who blessed me this week? Who packed my parachute?

*Ruth*

# Children & Families News

## A month with a Gratitude Attitude

Following on from our Pizza Church in February, when we explored what it meant to have a Gratitude Attitude, it's been amazing to see how different our days and lives can be when we start our days with this spirit of thankfulness.

Our 'homework' was to fill in a daily Gratitude Calendar for the month, and it has been lovely hearing the stories of the children's excitement and enthusiasm in doing this; that their hearts are filled as they begin to notice all they have to be thankful for everyday, all around them; the big things as well as the little things too.

It's about noticing the things we often overlook, like when someone has been kind, or generous; the things God puts before us everyday which we can miss, if we aren't careful.



## Full of Kindness

This led to the theme we explored in March at Pizza Church - Kindness.

We need to be thankful for what others have done to be kind towards us, but also to look at how Kind our God is - and how we, too, can learn to be the Kindness givers. We want to be the **I** in **KIND**.

I was inspired

by Ruth's last Newsletter piece: *"What if lent wasn't just about giving stuff up?"* and especially the line which read: *"bring God's kingdom into the lives of others, whether they recognise it or not!"* We really wanted to explore just what the bible teaches us about kindness.





So we looked at the wisdom of Proverbs, and also the story in Luke of *'The Good Samaritan'* through which Jesus teaches us about loving our neighbours.

Ruth shared with Pizza Church a little about the Starter Packs project - an ecumenical project run by all the churches - to which we can all contribute with our own kindness and generosity - to help those in need within our own town.

### **Seeds of Generosity**

This week we are excited to launch our new *Good Food* project!



We are packing bags of *Good Food*, to be distributed to local families, each containing a recipe from our very own Maureen Robinson, with instructions, for families to cook at home.

We are so thankful for the seeds of kindness and generosity which have been

planted within us and have taken us to where we are now. As we enter into the season of Spring and see new life coming into bloom, my prayer is that the seeds we are planting will, too, in their time, bloom and flourish.

Lorna McGinnigal

To contact:

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or 07967191238



# **1st Cowal: Introducing our 'Adventure Fund'**



As mentioned in recent issues of the Cowal Kirk Newsletter, the 1st Cowal Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association has grown significantly over the past couple of years. We now have around 60 young people on our books, with even more on our waiting list.

However, this growth is taking place against the backdrop of a challenging economic climate. A cost of living crisis, driven by fluctuations in energy prices, interest rates, and other factors, continues to affect many families. We are also seeing an increased awareness of additional support needs, including ADHD and Autism.

Many of you will know that Dunoon is highlighted by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation as one of the most disadvantaged areas in the country, with some parts falling into the most deprived 10%. At 1st Cowal, we are committed to ensuring that no young person is excluded from our programmes due to financial constraints. That's why we have kept our weekly subscription fee at £1 since I became Captain in October 2020.

This commitment doesn't just apply to our regular Wednesday nights; we want every young person to be able to take part in all our activities. That's where our new 'Adventure Fund' comes in. From April 2025, we will be launching an ongoing crowdfunding campaign, encouraging both one-off and regular donations from the community and other fundraising sources. This fund will enable us to invest in equipment, training, and a range of adventure-based activities, whether they take place during our weekly meetings or as part of our larger events. Examples include our annual Adventure Day, where our Junior, Company, and Senior sections enjoyed a day at an Outdoor Activity Centre, and our Fun Days at Hunters Quay Holiday Village. We are also hoping to organise our first weekend residential within the

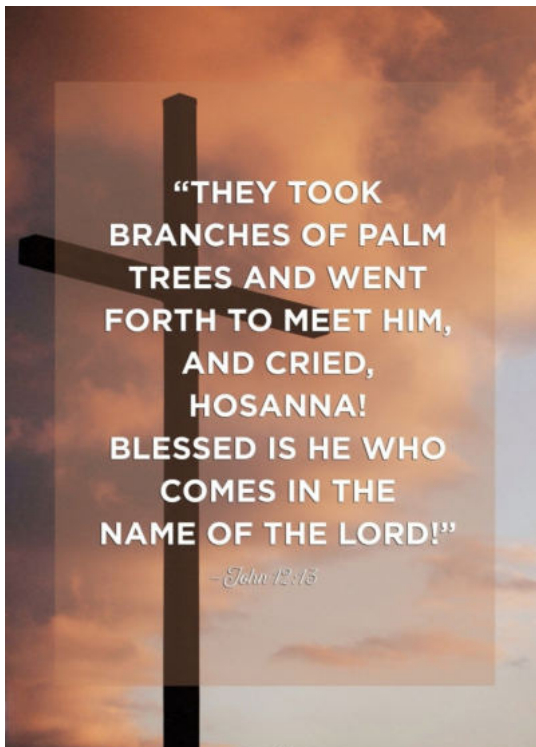
next couple of years - an exciting prospect, but one that can cost between £150 and £250 per person, depending on the venue. For families with more than one young person in the BB, this expense can be substantial.

Through the 'Adventure Fund', we aim to subsidise these costs, giving more of our young people the chance to benefit from the confidence-building and life-changing experiences that come with getting out into the great outdoors.

We'll have more information about how to donate to our 'Adventure Fund' in the next newsletter. In the meantime, we're sharing this news with our Church Family in the hope that you can help spread the word, mobilising our community to support young people as they learn, grow, and discover in transformative ways.

Thank you all for being part of this journey with us!

Jamie, 1st Cowal BB&GA Captain.



Lord,  
Grant us the  
grace to open our  
hearts to others  
and to act with  
love towards our  
family, friends  
and neighbours,  
wherever they  
may be.

Amen.

**“To generate faith among Young People we need to build relationships with them by providing opportunities and positive Christ-led fellowship for them to participate in. Opportunities that demonstrate the everlasting, forgiving, inclusive love of Jesus Christ and help them to choose God. Opportunities that open their eyes to truth which helps them make sense of their lives. Opportunities that allow them to put into practice for themselves the things that they have seen and felt from our fellowship with them.”**



Dear Cowal Kirk Friends and Congregation,  
I would like to extend my sincere thanks for all you have done to support me personally and to support the work of eXp over the years I have been working as MDS for the Church of Scotland firstly in the Argyll Presbytery and then more recently in the newly formed Clèir Eilean I (CEI) and as the Team Lead for eXp – experiencing faith in Cowal. It is with anticipation and trust that I move on from these posts with my last day being April 30th. The ‘what next and where’ are still unclear but as Corrie Ten Boom put it “It is easy to put an unknown future into the hands of a known God!” Please purpose to pray for the right person to fill these rolls going forward. Please support them and encourage them as you did for me. I have learned in my 58 years of being a Jesus Follower that the Spirit filled, and God-centred community participates in God’s presence and the presence of one another and the mark of that participation is love and care of one another. When this is the way, growth happens, faith is strengthened, forgiveness is second nature, encouragement becomes a companion and gratitude abounds. We need to remember as the church goes through changes and innovations that innovation and change are (as Rev. Andrew Rollinson puts it in his book ‘Conversations by the Sea’) more than being relevant – it is about being sensitive and obedient and to be firmly sensitive and obedient we need to practice true attentiveness to God.”

Wherever God leads Gordon and I we will hold dear our time building relationships and serving the people of Cowal.

God’s Best,

Susan Whyte,  
MDS CEI Church of Scotland, Team Lead – eXp.

## Sandy's Jamboree

An enjoyable afternoon's entertainment was put together by Philip and Lynda Norris, and Frank Barclay, to thank Sandy for his contribution to Cowal Kirk in his role as OLM.



In no particular order there were some organ solos from Frank, duets on a keyboard from Philip and Lynda, songs Scottish and comical from Tom Irvine, and songs from Frank. One in particular deserves further mention as, to the tune of "I left my heart in

San Francisco," Frank left his in Inverchaolain; then other bits and pieces all over the world, including his teeth on Table mountain - you get the picture?



John Paterson, Barry White and Alastair Stevenson then performed "Three Little Maids are we," and John Paterson sang two or three other numbers including "My Brother!" for which he was appropriately attired as a very untidy wee boy.



Everisto then presented Sandy with a bottle of his favourite Bombay Sapphire Gin, to which Sandy replied with a few words.



Everyone then retired to the hall for tea.



## **“MISSION FOR A NEW TOMORROW”**

Following the well-attended Hub Consultations held throughout the Cowal Kirk area during 2024, the Mission Plan Review Group resumed their work on 29<sup>th</sup> January to develop a new Mission Plan. As a reminder for congregation members, the key and agreed points in taking forward the Mission Plan Review are:

- To take the new Plan forward, with the Mission Plan statement being at the centre of all that we do.
- To develop a new inclusive Mission Plan, with the focus being on the Cowal Kirk congregation.

Our agreed objective is to create a structured Mission Plan that identifies the various issues by priority, and to find ways that these issues could be resolved, with realistic initiatives being promoted, developed and delivered within the period of the Mission Plan. Equally important is to put in place a range of monitoring measures on those initiatives that will ensure their delivery.

Guaranteeing that our Church continues to be at the heart of our community, by developing and further strengthening our open-door policy and approach.

At this meeting, the Review Group noted that many of the issues highlighted already have a number of initiatives in progress, dealing with much of what had been identified.

Our next steps will be to consult with eXp, the uniformed organisations and other interested groups, to seek their views.

Once we have completed our work, we will proceed towards drafting a Mission Plan for consideration by the Kirk Session and the congregation.

Convener, Mission Plan Review Group.

## **HOSPITAL VISITS**

Further to Everisto's requests in his pastoral letter, if you, or if you know of anyone who is, or is about to go into hospital, could you please let either the Session Clerk, the Administrator, or Everisto know, so that if time permits they can receive a visit. There is nothing more distressing than being told that someone has spent an amount of time in hospital and no-one has been to see them! Equally, if you are able to help while people are away from their home and familiar surroundings, please ask them if there is anything you can do to ease their worries.

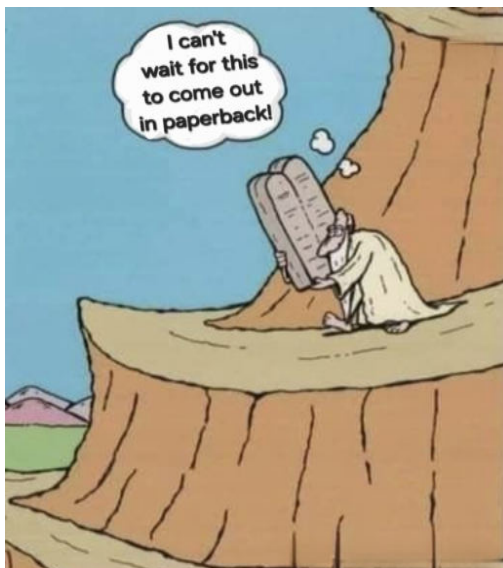
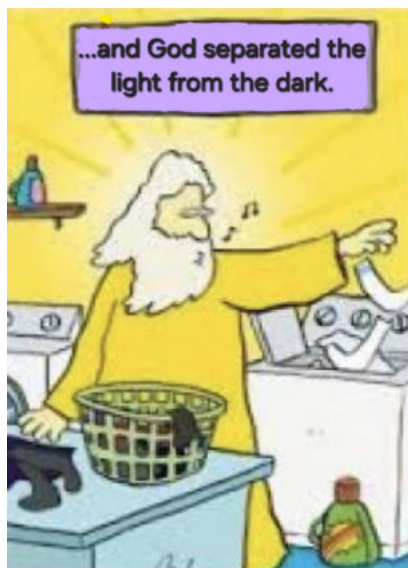
## Care Home Services

Services will be held in Ashgrove and Ardenlee as listed below:

Support on these occasions is much appreciated.

Ashgrove - Tuesday, April 8th at 11.00am.

Ardenlee - Tuesday, April 22nd at 2.30pm.



## Flower Rota for March

**Kirn & Sandbank**      **St. John's**

**6th** Mrs Moore -

**13th** Mr John Leckie      Mrs Gillian Laidlaw

**20th** Mrs Julia McFarlane      Mr Barry White

**27th** Mr & Mrs A Stevenson      Mr Richard Murry

### Contacts

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Mobile: **07570 973011**

Mobile: **07779131257**



## World Day of Prayer 2025

### Cook Islands

'I made you wonderful'



## World Day of Prayer

The service on Friday, March 7th was held in Cowal Kirk St John's and thanks are due to Dr Frank for playing, and to Jayne Boyle for supplying the technology.

While the attendance seemed small in the large sanctuary, six local churches were represented, including five different denominations.

The ecumenical committee members all shared in readings and made paper flowers to brighten the day, and help everyone to feel closer to the Christian women of the Cook Islands in the South Pacific, whose theme was from Psalm 139 - 'I made you wonderful!'

Next year, we hope that the new Rector of Holy Trinity, the Rev David Rushton, will allow us to hold the service there, prepared by the Christian women of Nigeria.

An offering of £163.00 was sent to the WDP Scottish committee, and this will support charities in the Cook Islands.

## MID - WEEK WORSHIP

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

Everyone is welcome.

Plans for April are listed below:

Wednesday, April 2nd - Simon Wallace

Wednesday, April 16th - Holy Week in St John's Church Hall.

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Please note: **Last day for May Newsletter contributions : 20th April**

Please email these to EDITOR as above – thank you.