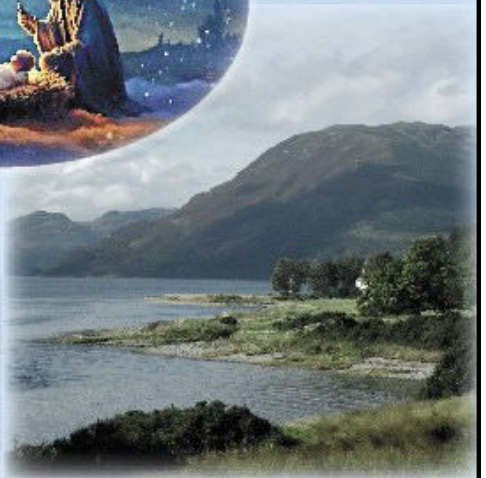
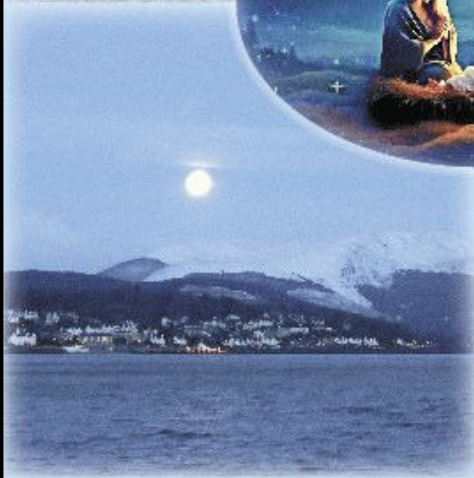
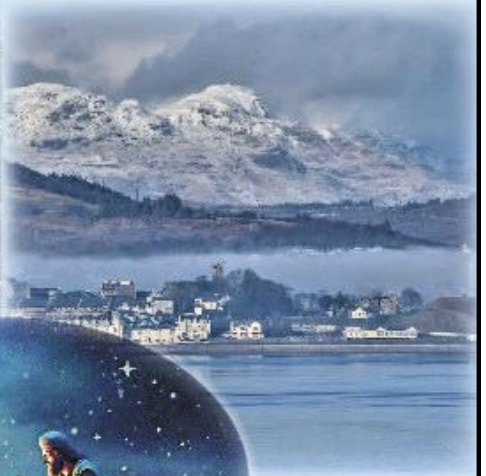
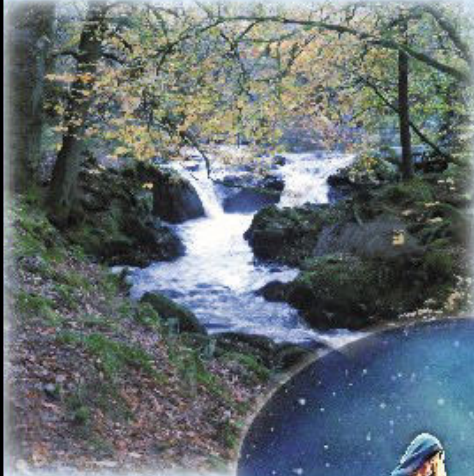


Cowal Kirk News

wishing you
a Very Happy Christmas
and all the Best for the New Year



CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SCOTTISH CHARITY No. SC001976

ISSUE No. 47 ~ DECEMBER, 2025 - JANUARY 2026

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



Our God, heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain,
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty —
Jesus Christ.

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER
BY CHRISTINA ROSSETTI AND GUSTAV HOLST



FROM THE MANSE

~ A Season of Joy and Reflection ~

As we approach the Christmas season, our hearts are filled with anticipation and joy. We celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who brought light and hope to a world in need. The story of Jesus' birth is a powerful reminder of God's love for us and the gift of salvation that He offers.

As we prepare to celebrate the coming of the Messiah, let us also take time to reflect on the year. It's been a year of triumphs and challenges, of joys and sorrows. We've experienced the blessings of community and fellowship, and we've faced difficulties that have tested our faith.

As we look back, let's give thanks for all the wonderful things that God has done in our midst. Let's acknowledge the achievements and milestones that we've reached, and let's celebrate the lives of those who have served and contributed to our community.

Unfortunately, we also remember those who have gone to be with the Lord. We honour the memory of our brothers and sisters who have passed on, and we give thanks for their legacy of faith and service. May their memory inspire us to continue the work of the kingdom.

As we look forward to the new year, we're filled with hope and expectation. What will the future hold? What opportunities and challenges will we face? We don't know, but we do know that God is with us, guiding and empowering us.

Let us approach the coming year with faith, hope, and anticipation. Let us trust in God's goodness and sovereignty and let us seek to follow His leading. May the joy of Christmas fill our hearts and overflow into our lives, as we look forward to a new season of ministry and mission.

May the peace and joy of Christmas be with you and your loved ones.

Everisto



COWAL KIRK **DOES** **CHRISTMAS**



NOV 29

Christmas Chat & Cheer

Toward Church
2pm - 4pm



DEC 1

Meet & Greet at Christmas

High Kirk Hall
2pm - 4pm



DEC 4-6

Christmas Tree Festival

Kirn & Sandbank Church
Thurs, Fri - 10am - 4pm

Christmas Family Fun
Sat - 10am - 1pm



DEC 14

Salvation Army Brass Band

St John's Church, Dunoon
10:30am



DEC 19

Pizza Church

Christmas Special

High Kirk Hall
4:30pm



DEC 21

Nativity Service

Kirn & Sandbank Church 10:30 am

Carol Service

Kirn & Sandbank Church 3pm



DEC 24

Family Service

St John's Church, Dunoon, 7-8pm

Watchnight Service

Kirn & Sandbank Church, 23:15pm



DEC 25

Christmas Day Service

St John's Church, Dunoon
10:30am



Volunteers Wanted

Saturday 6th December, 10am - 1pm

Christmas Family Fun

In Kirn & Sandbank Church

Volunteers needed for hosting, serving hot drinks.

Wednesday 10th December, 2 - 4pm and 6 :30 - 8pm

Toward Primary School Nativity

In Toward & Innellan Church

Serving hot drinks and mince pies after the Nativity.

Thursday 11th December, 9 - 11am

Dunoon Primary School Nativity

In St. John's Church

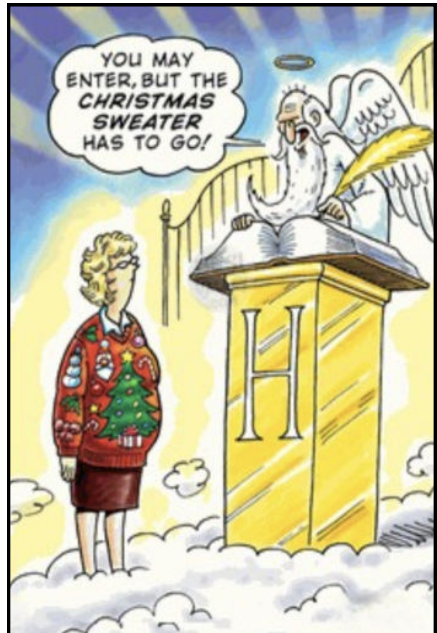
Serving hot drinks and mince pies after the Nativity.

Friday 19th December, 4.30pm - 6pm

Pizza Church - Christmas Special / Singalong

In the High Kirk Hall, Hanover St

All help appreciated - and musicians welcomed!





Carols BY CANDLELIGHT

with Special performances from Alba Ballet
& Kirn Primary School Choir

VOICES  of ARGYLL

CONDUCTED BY ALISON MCNEILL

Thursday 11th December, 7.30pm
ST JOHN'S CHURCH, DUNOON

TICKETS: £14 FROM WWW.VOICESOFARGYLL.COM
OR ON THE DOOR (CASH) UNTIL SOLD OUT

MID - WEEK WORSHIP

Short services are held on the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month, at
11.00 am in the High Kirk Hall, Hanover Street,
and Everyone is Welcome.

December 3rd - Rev Jim MacFarlane

December 17th - Zoom with Bethlehem

January 7th - Simon Wallace

January 21st - Shirley Robins

WEEKLY FREE OFFERING ENVELOPES



While standing orders are the most efficient and convenient means of receiving offerings, some of you may choose to give using freewill offering envelopes.

Using envelopes for your offerings allows us to record the

amount which we can reclaim through the Gift Aid scheme.

There are still some envelopes available for 2026. If you would like to receive a supply, please get in touch.

PREACHING ROTA

7th December	Toward & Innellan	
14th December	St. John's	with Salvation Army
21st December	Kirn & Sandbank	with Nativity
24th December	St. Johns	@ 7pm - Family
	Kirn & Sandbank	@ 11.15 - Watchnight
25th December	St. John's	Christmas Day
28th December	Toward & Innellan	
4th January	Kirn & Sandbank	
11th January	St. John's	
18th January	Toward & Innellan	
25th January	St. John's	
1st February	Kirn & Sandbank	

Fund Raising Report

On behalf of Cowal Kirk, I'd like first of all to thank Brenda Wallace for her volunteering in the Wee Shop. Saturday won't be the same without you. Enjoy your retirement! It has certainly been well earned.

We have had a really busy month: I think everybody and their cousins have been having a "Christmas Clear Out," with the result that we have received some nearly new, and some definitely new Christmas decorations, plus 8 Christmas trees (only 4 left)!

Part of these Clear Outs have included the clearance of many a toy box, which has come at just the right time for our annual -

PUDSEY CHILDREN IN NEED APPEAL

and I can announce that as of the writing of this report, we have donated £140 to this worthy cause. So thank you to all who supported.

Our next event is -

TOWARD & INNELLAN : CHAT & CHEER : £3

An afternoon tea on **Saturday, 29th November, 2pm to 5pm**. There will be a few stalls, including some home baking and gifts. You are encouraged to come along and support this first venture of the Toward and Innellan folk since the installation of their much-needed new kitchen and facilities. As the saying goes: "If you don't use it ... you lose it!" We look forward to seeing you all there. Tickets are available in the Wee Shop.

Hopefully it's not too late to remind you that our last

MEET & GREET

of 2025 is on **1st December at 2pm** in the High Kirk Hall, Hanover Street. Where did the year go? Come and join us for a Snowman Drive and enjoy a fun afternoon.

Please note: There won't be a Meet & Greet in January, and the Wee Shop will be shut from 31st December until Tuesday, 16th January.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ONE AND ALL



Cowal Kirk & Friends

would love to invite you to their

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



Thursday 4th Dec 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Friday 5th Dec 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Family Fun Day - Saturday 6th Dec 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Kirn & Sandbank Church

Hot Drinks | Mince Pies | Free Entry
Donations Welcomed



FREE

JOIN US FOR

CHRISTMAS FAMILY FUN

AT COWAL KIRK CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

**SAT 6TH DECEMBER
10AM - 1PM**

KIRN & SANDBANK CHURCH

CHRISTMAS CRAFTING
FACE PAINTING
COOKIE DECORATING
HOT CHOCOLATE STATION
SANTA'S GROTTO
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

CHILDREN & FAMILIES NEWS

Earlier this month, Jack and I were asked to come along and speak at the Guild. I have to say, it was a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and we'd like to thank everyone for making us feel so welcome. I hope it was both enjoyable and insightful for you, too, as we shared what God has put into our hearts this last year, and all that we've been doing - with a little bit of humour along the way, with our 'Sister Act' clips.

Public speaking hasn't been something I have particularly enjoyed; in fact just this last month at Pizza Church, I have been sharing how much I have been able to overcome this fear, and a huge part of that has been thanks to the encouragement I've received.

So, I would now say, never underestimate the power of your words. Speaking about life and offering encouragement to others is a huge blessing and we may never know just how much someone may need to hear those words.

Anyway, I digress... back to this month's news.

At this month's Pizza Church (which just happened to fall on Hallowe'en) Everisto opened by reading a poem by Marianne Williamson, entitled "Our Deepest Fear".

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us.

Let's give that a moment to sink in....

As Everisto finished reading, all the children entered the darkened hall carrying balloons with lights inside and singing "This little light of mine".

It was powerful, and a deeply visual reminder that we, as Christians, are called to be Light in the darkness. And doing it together is way less scary and much more fun.



"You're the light of the world... A city built on a hill can't be hidden. People don't put a lamp under a bowl or a bed. They put it on a table so it can give light to everyone in the room. So, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" **Matthew 5:14-16**

That night we pondered over how Jesus didn't call his followers "light of the church," He called them - and that means us - the "light of the world." Light shines brightest where it's needed most. We don't have to look far in our community to see there is a lot of need.

As a church, we are committed to seeing where we can be a blessing to our community; where we bring Light and meet a need, and in this way show Christ's Love in action.

As we look forward to the month ahead, we are excited for all that is to come; and yet for many, the festive season can be a time of loneliness, of anxiety, and of financial struggle.

Our prayer is that as a church we can love our neighbours so well through this Advent season, that we can let go of our fears and our feelings of inadequacy and we can SHINE brightly as we reflect God's light, and that through everything we are doing, we can point our community towards Jesus, the unlikely King, born in a stable, our Immanuel, our "God with us"

May we all know his Peace, Joy and Love this Christmastime.

*Lorna McGinnigal,
familiesworker@cowalkirk.org.uk*



And here's just a few photos of what we have been up to so far this month, apart from Pizza Church 'Let your Light SHINE' —

We had our regular Kirk Café - a safe and welcoming space where both adults and children are welcomed and together join in fun activities.



A collection of travel items including a kettle, a mug, a sleeping bag, a backpack, and a first aid kit.

Ruth Griffiths

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?" Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."

On the Wings of Prayer

*Just close your eyes and open your heart
And feel your worries and cares depart.
Just yield yourself to the Father above
And let Him hold you secure in His love.*

*For life on earth grows more involved
With endless problems that can't be solved.
But God only asks us to do our best
Then He will "take over" and finish the rest.*

*So when you are tired, discouraged and blue,
There's always one door that is open to you;
And that is the door to "the House of Prayer"
And you'll find God waiting to meet you there.*

*And the "House of Prayer" is no farther away
Than the quiet spot where you kneel and pray;
For the heart is a temple when God is there
As we place ourselves in His loving care.*

*And He hears every prayer and answers each one
When we pray in His name: "Thy will be done"
And the burdens that seemed too heavy to bear
Are lifted away on "the Wings of a Prayer".*

Helen Steiner Rice

Reminiscing Circle

- Don't miss out ~ All are welcome -

Come along to reminisce about activities, places and people from your past. The next gathering will be on 10th December in Kirn & Sandbank Church Hall at 1.30pm, and the discussion will focus on your memories of Christmases gone by. What were your family traditions?

Please spread the word so that more can enjoy the benefits.

The general feedback says it was: "relaxed, entertaining and thought provoking" and that it "got the brain matter working".



DECEMBER/JANUARY PICTORIAL



Betty Anderson, a lifelong member of Cowal Kirk, spent a very happy time at the end of October when she celebrated her 101st Birthday with family and friends.



A happy day when Morgan Russell married Craig Cooper in Kirn & Sandbank Church on 15th November 2025.



Ms. Lorraine Park married M. Mickaël Vultaggio in the Mairie, Ville de Grasse, on Saturday, 15th November, 2025. Here with their blended family.



The wedding of Rachel Gillies and Kris Boyd in St John's Church on 10th October, 2025.

SEEMS FAMILIAR???

My forgetterer's getting better but my rememberer is broke.

To you that may seem funny but to me that is no joke.

For when I'm "here" I'm wondering if I really should be "there,"
and when I try to think it through I haven't got a prayer.

Oft times I walk into a room, say "what am I here for?"

I wrack my brain, but all in vain!

A zero is my score.

At times I put some thing away where it is
safe, but "Gee!"

the person it is safest from is generally me!

When shopping I may see someone,
say "Hi" and have a chat,

then when the person walks away,
I'm wondering "who was that?"

Yes, my forgetterer's getting better while my
rememberer is broke,
and it's driving me plumb crazy - and that
isn't any joke.

ERSKINE
Caring for Veterans since 1916

This is to let you know
that thanks to your
generosity, the Retiral
Collection for Erskine
Care Home on
Rembrance Sunday
raised **£362.22**.

Portban Youth Weekend Update Hearts Fired Up for Jesus!

Hello Everyone! What an absolutely incredible weekend we had at Portban Holiday Park for our recent Christian Youth Gathering! We saw God move in amazing ways as young people from Cowal and beyond came together for a time of fun, fellowship, and deep connection with faith.

The Gathering: New Friends, Great Fun!

Our group was a fantastic mix of friends, proving that faith can build bridges across Argyll! Nine brilliant young people joined us from the eXp group here in Dunoon, and they were joined by 4 fantastic young people from the SKY (South Kintyre Youth) group in Campbeltown. It was wonderful to see new friendships blossom and groups cheering each other on!

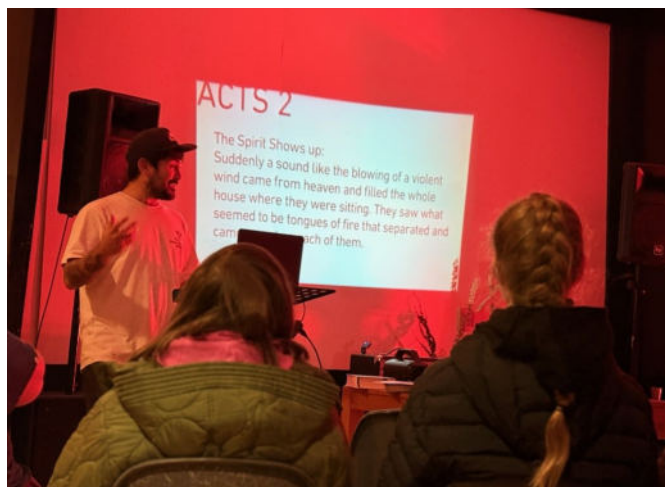
Digging Deep: Following Jesus

The heart of the weekend was focused squarely on what it means to truly follow Jesus. Our very own eXp Team Lead, Jack McGinnigal, delivered four dynamic teaching sessions that were challenging, inspiring, and accessible. The young people were encouraged to consider the call of discipleship and what that looks like in their daily lives.

A Weekend of Celebration!

We are thrilled to share the most exciting news from the weekend: Eight young people made a profound commitment! They either decided to

follow Jesus for the very first time, or chose to take a significant step to follow Him more deeply than ever before. This is the very core of what eXp is about — seeing young lives transformed! Please keep these young people in your prayers as they begin this new chapter.



Huge Thanks to Our Amazing Team!

None of this would be possible without a dedicated crew of leaders and volunteers. Our total team of 7 leaders included the awesome support of Lizzie Brayshaw (Church of Scotland Under 40s Advisor), Lizzie Jasper, and Kenny Wilson

(from Campbeltown) who helped make the weekend run smoothly and safely. And a massive shout-out to our essential support volunteers: Lorna McGinnigal: for being an



incredible support in absolutely every aspect of the weekend — you are a rock! Collin Adams (Dunoon Baptist Church), who led our worship with passion and energy, setting a brilliant atmosphere for our sessions. Chris and Ros Brett (Kames and the Episcopal Church), who kept us all fed with delicious food all weekend — thank you for your incredible service! And Duncan Freeman (New Life Church), who worked so hard in the kitchen, tidying up after meals, and being a constant source of inspiring conversation— and helping our young men see how God moves in his life daily.

What a blessed time! We are so grateful for everyone who prayed for, supported, and participated in the Portban Youth Weekend.

The future of faith in Cowal is bright!

"Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world."

C.S. Lewis

"It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you."

Mother Theresa

Care Home Worship

Members of Cowal Kirk will lead worship in two local care homes on the dates below. Help at these short services is much appreciated.

Tuesday, December 9th - Ardenlee - 2.30pm

December 16th - Ashgrove - 11.00am.

January 13th - Ashgrove - 11.00am.

January 20th - Ardenlee - 2.30pm.

The Top 8 Reasons God Made Eve

- 1) He was worried that Adam would frequently become lost in the garden because he wouldn't ask for directions.
- 2) He knew that Adam would need someone to find the remote for him.
- 3) He knew Adam wouldn't ever go and buy himself a new fig leaf when his wore out.
- 4) He knew Adam couldn't make a doctor, dentist or haircut appointment for himself.
- 5) He knew Adam wouldn't remember which night to put the bins out.
- 6) As Keeper of the Garden, he'd never remember where he left his tools.
- 7) Adam would need someone to blame for all his troubles.
- 8) When God had finished His creation of Adam, He stepped back, scratched His head and said, "I think I can do much better than that!"

Flower Rota for December and January

Kirn & Sandbank

St. John's

DECEMBER 7th Christmas Tree Festival

Mr Lindsay Hunter

14th Christmas Tree

Christmas Decorations

21st Christmas Tree

Christmas Decorations

28th Christmas Tree

Christmas Decorations

JANUARY 4th -

-

11th - Mrs Liz Jackson

Mrs Margaret Hunter

18th - Mrs Jean Morrison

Mrs Margaret Stewart

25th - Rev. Janet MacKellar

Mrs Moira Ross

Contacts: Mrs Maureen Robinson **702903** Mrs Linda Murry **830022**

Mobile: **07570 973011** Mobile: **07779131257**



Cowal Kirk Guild

The Cowal Kirk branch of the Church of Scotland Guild meets every Thursday at 2pm in St John's Church Hall. Everyone is welcome.

Please bring your own mug to enjoy tea/coffee and fellowship.

The programme for the next two months is as follows:

2025

December 4th Dunoon Primary School, with Cowal Elderly Befrienders.

11th Carols by Candlelight

2026

January 8th AGM

15th Rev Janet MacKellar, Moderator, Cleir Eilean I

22nd Bible Quiz

29th Wendy Rarity and Pearl Adamson -
Scottish Music.



BLYTHSWOOD SHOEBOX APPEAL

The Guild's Annual Shoebox Appeal was once again very well supported, with this year a total of 78 shoeboxes and over £475 being forwarded to Blythswood.



The charity checks each box and includes a Christian tract in the language appropriate to that Eastern European country. Again in 2025 a large proportion of boxes were delivered to Ukraine, so many thanks to all who donated.

On a personal note after over 30 years involvement, we have reluctantly decided to step back from this annual appeal.

We very much hope others will continue this work and we will offer all the assistance we can.

Pat and John Paterson



Friday 19th December

High Kirk Hall, Hanover Street
4.30pm - 6pm

Dine In Only!



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Please note: **Last day for February Newsletter contributions : 25th January**

Please email these to EDITOR as above – thank you.