

Cowal Kirk News



CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SCOTTISH CHARITY No. SC001976
ISSUE No. 49 ~ MARCH, 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



*Racing clouds and whistling winds,
Coats flapping in the breeze,
Bright kites circling in the skies,
The dance of swaying trees,
The cheerful sight of crocuses,
The first sweet breath of spring —
Just part of all the many moods
The month of March can bring.*

FROM THE MANSE

~ Hope for the Future ~

As we navigate the complexities of life, it's easy to get caught up in the present moment and forget the goodness of God in our past. But, as the people of God, we have a rich history of His faithfulness; a track record of His love and provision that stretches back for generations.



From the Israelites' deliverance from slavery in Egypt to the early church's perseverance in the face of persecution, we see a God who is always at work, always leading, and always loving His people. And that's exactly what we need to cleave to as we face the challenges of today.

The church is not immune to the trials of life. We face struggles, setbacks, and uncertainties that can make us wonder if God is still with us. But the Bible reminds us that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He is our constant, our rock, our hope.

So, what does this mean for us? It means that we can have hope for the future; not because of anything we've done, but because of who God is. He has promised to be with us, to guide us, and to lead us into a future filled with purpose and promise.

As we look to the future, let's remember the ways God has shown up in the past. Let's recall the times He's provided, healed, and delivered. Let's hold onto the truth that He is still working, still loving, and still leading us into a brighter tomorrow.

In the midst of uncertainty, we have a sure foundation. In the face of challenge, we have a faithful God. And in the darkness, we have a beacon of hope that shines bright – the promise of God's presence and provision.

Let's press on, dear friends, with confidence and hope. Let's build on the solid ground of God's faithfulness, and let's trust Him to lead us into the future.

Blessings, *Everisto*

TESTED IN THE WILDERNESS

We remember that although Jesus will not turn stones into bread to satisfy his own hunger, he will soon reach out in love to feed thousands with a few loaves and fish.

And even though he refuses to throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple, he will later overturn the tables there.

Instead of succumbing to the temptation to be an earthly ruler, He chooses the path of service and love that ultimately leads to his crucifixion.

As we begin this season of Lent, let's journey with Jesus into the wilderness, opening ourselves to the gifts and challenges of that place, so that we can join him on the costly path to the Cross.

(Matthew 4)

Marvellous March

As winter's chill begins to relent, March emerges as the gateway to the enchanting realm of Spring. Named after the Roman god of war, Mars, this month is bursting with historical events, cultural celebrations, and the promise of warmer days. From ancient traditions to modern-day festivities, here's a collection of intriguing facts about March – some of which you may find surprising.

- March was originally the first month of the Roman calendar.
- March marks the arrival of Spring in the Northern Hemisphere with the Spring Equinox on Friday, 20th, when day and night are approximately equal in length.
- On 10th March, Alexander Graham Bell made the first phone call.
- The Ides of March, made famous by the assassination of Julius Caesar, fell on 15th of the month, but was traditionally a time for the settling of debts.
- We celebrate Mothering Sunday on 15th March, the fourth Sunday of Lent, a day to honour mothers and maternal figures.
- The popular social media outlet Twitter was launched on March 21st, 2006, with the first 'tweet' going out the same day.
- March is the month associated with the sight of the cheerful yellow daffodil. It is also the symbol of Marie Curie cancer charity in the UK.
- St. Patrick's Day is celebrated on 17th March. He is patron saint of Ireland and is renowned amongst other things for using the shamrock to explain the Trinity.
- 1st March is St. David's Day or Dewi Sant in Wales. A teetotal vegetarian, he has been their patron saint since the 12th century.
- March is the time of year when animals come out of hibernation; their behaviour giving rise to the expression: "Mad as a March hare," which refers to the frenzied, activities of hares during their breeding season, but popularised by the character in the tales of "Alice in Wonderland."
- Red Nose Day, on 20th March, is a biennial charity event organised by Comic Relief.
- And of course we have Holy Week, which begins on Sunday, 29th March and carries us from Palm Sunday, through the events of Jesus' harrowing journey to the Cross and His glorious Resurrection.



FUND RAISING NEWS and THE WEE SHOP

Hopefully it was just due to the cold weather, but it resulted in quite a few of our volunteers sadly falling victim to “the lurgy.” If you were one of those who arrived at THE WEE Shop only to find it closed, please accept our apologies... there simply were not been enough of us left standing to fill the vacancies. **“Hint for help”**



Regarding our wonderful donations, we had quite a mixed bag this month, which resulted in the decision to have a 25% discount on all things electrical. This helped not only with our sales but also with the available space.

It now feels as if time is running away from us: Anne had just managed to get one window dressed only to find it was time to change it for another theme. In fact, as I type, she is already creating a “good quality” window, whilst at the same time planning the next for — “The true meaning of Easter.” On that note, we have just received a donation of some nice quality Easter cards, if you are looking for some. In the same vein, can I also recommend a wee visit to the “Once upon a Christmas” shop, as Sharon has a good range of Spring related items not everything is focussed on Christmas.

Our next **MEET & GREET** event will take place - **Monday 6th April** for an afternoon of BINGO. Please get your tickets soon.

And the Activities Committee is also planning another **Agapé Meal (see next page)** to take place on Maundy Thursday, 2nd April, in the High Kirk Hall, Hanover Street. Please get your FREE ticket early from Lawther, Tina or Joyce.... and, of course, the Wee Shop!

Last year we catered for 90(!), so we do need your help to ensure there is enough to go round, and also to avoid any food waste.

TO THAT END: When you get your ticket, be prepared to give your name, and details of your donation — if you wish to bring one?

Lawther Murchison, Fund-raising Co-ordinator

WELCOME TO OUR

AGAPÉ meal

*with celebration of
the Lord's Supper*

on
**Maundy Thursday,
2nd April, 2026,
at 6pm
in the High Kirk Hall
Hanover Street.**

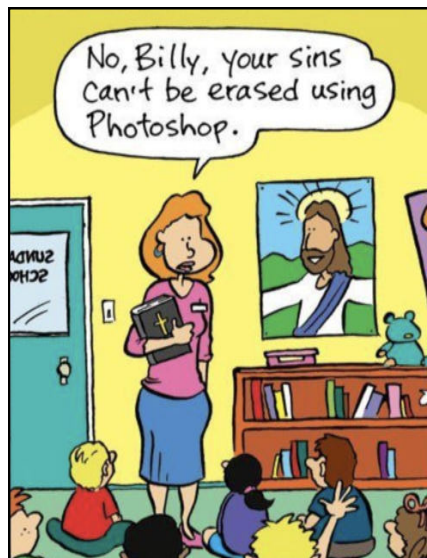
PLEASE PICK UP YOUR FREE TICKET FROM
THE WEE SHOP TO HELP WITH CATERING.



The background of the poster features a collage of various food dishes, including soups, stews, and breads, arranged in white bowls and trays. In the bottom left corner, there is a small inset image of a painting depicting the Last Supper, showing Jesus and his twelve apostles seated around a long table.

The above event, as already mentioned, is a ‘ticket only’ meal — purely to comply with Fire, Health and Safety regulations. So don’t delay — come along to The Wee Shop to get yours.

A little boy was playing in the garden with his mother’s broom. That night she realised her broom was still outside and asked her son to go out and get it. The little boy confessed he was afraid of the dark, but his mother comforted him saying: “The Lord is out there, don’t be afraid.” Hesitantly, the little boy opened the back door and softly called: “Lord, since you’re out there already, will you please pass me the broom?”



COWAL KIRK GUILD

Meetings are held in Cowal Kirk St John's Hall at 2pm on Thursdays. Everyone is welcome to attend and please bring a mug for tea or coffee.



The programme for March is as follows:

- March 5th Andrea Sinclair, Bute Welfare Rights
- March 12th Julie McPhee and children, Clyde Cottage Nursery.
- March 19th Visit to Robin House, Children's Hospice
- March 26th Closing Social

Open Church

This is an invitation to any and everyone to come along to Kirn & Sandbank Church on any Wednesday ~ between 9:30am and 3pm.

The church will be Open ~ for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat in the hall, or just an opportunity to sit in the church for some quiet contemplation.

Everisto will be available between 12 and 1pm.

PREACHING ROTA

1st March	Toward & Innellan	
8th March	Kirn & Sandbank	
15th March	St. John's	with Communion
22nd March	Toward & Innellan	
29th March	Kirn & Sandbank	Palm Sunday
5th April	St. John's	Easter Sunday

MID - WEEK WORSHIP

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

Everyone is welcome. Details for March are below:

March 4th - Donald Manson

March 18th - Rev. Sandy MacPherson

The things we learn from Noah's Ark

1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
4. Stay fit. When you're getting old, someone might ask you to do something really big.
5. Don't listen to the critics, just get on with the job that needs to be done.
6. Build your future on high ground.
7. For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
8. Speed isn't always an advantage; the snails were on board with the cheetahs.
9. When you're stressed, float a while.
10. Remember, the ark was built by amateurs, the Titanic by professionals.
11. No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.



“God give me work,
till my life shall end
And life,
till my work is done.”

*Winifred Holtby
(1898-1935)*

CHILDREN & FAMILIES NEWS

Hello! I hope this Newsletter finds you all well.

Spring is coming closer — hallelujah!

I know I said last month I was enjoying the slow January - time to read etc., and I truly was/am..... but now we are into the month of March, I feel that I'm definitely ready for some sunshine on my skin.

That said, I have continued with my reading and have loved gaining a new understanding and perspective from the pages, not least from those of our favourite Holy book, the Bible.

There are times when I lift the book with purpose, and others out of habit. But then there are days when I forget to look at it at all, or simply don't make the time. I do know, however, that whenever I do make the time, God always honours it by showing me something new, teaching me something... in fact, if I could give some encouragement to anyone as you read



this, it would be to just take a moment to pick up your bible, and let God speak to you through it.

He will never, ever disappoint.

And Bible reading is something we are very passionate about at Cowal Kirk.

Not just on Sundays (and not just once a month at Pizza Church either!)

Last month we found a whole box of bibles in the church, that had been collecting dust for goodness knows how long. So, we decided to take them along to Pizza Church and to give them away. We placed a few on each table and encouraged the families to take one home with them. And Everisto also stood by the door offering them out as

our families left.



I am now DELIGHTED to report that we don't have many left! Praise God. I'll now be praying — along with you? — that these bibles do not, once again, become dust gatherers on a bookshelf, but are opened and read in their new homes. We hope that you soon find they are FULL of the GOOD news, truly good news, news

that we desperately want our community to hear about, as well as to find out for themselves. News of so much LOVE, indeed — it's surely the greatest love story every told.

And our God, who loves us so dearly, so passionately, that he was/ and still is willing to die just for us, is there, in heaven.

So I leave you with my favourite quote from another book I'm currently reading:

***'For anything to be good, truly good,
there must be love in it.'***

Allen Levi

Let us commit to picking up and reading our bibles... and encouraging others to do so too!

Every Blessing to you and your families,

Lorna McGinnigal, familiesworker@cowalkirk.org.uk

**PLEASE SEE BACK PAGE FOR DETAILS OF
'KING OF KINGS'**

HIGH KIRK HALL, SATURDAY 4th APRIL at 6.30pm

We are once again looking for volunteers to help us with our regular **Pizza Church** events. These are held on the last Friday of March, April, May and June, from **4 - 6:30 pm**. And if you can help in any way, we will be delighted to have you join the team.



COWAL KIRK GUILD NEWS

March is the last month of the Guild winter session and the details of our programme are available in the Kirk News (see page 7).

Since New Year 2026, we have enjoyed numerous speakers and learned much about the work of the church at home and further afield.

Rev Janet MacKellar gave us a comprehensive report of her first 6 months as Moderator of the Presbytery of Cleir Eilean I, accompanied by wonderful pictures of lots of the good work happening.

David Wilson also had pictures of the out reach of Mission Aviation Fellowship, taking the gospel and essential goods into very remote, otherwise inaccessible parts of the world.

On a lighter note, Anne Rhodes and Pearl Adamson, accompanied by Russell Cowieson, entertained us to some Burns' music and, with thanks to the new technology in the hall, we had a successful Bible Quiz.

If you care to come and join with us, all members and friends of Cowal Kirk will be made most welcome, and then you can see for yourself.

Jen Zielinski

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING DATES

A Training Course - for Safeguarding Panel Members, Ministers, OLMs and Safeguarding Coordinators will be held in Ardrishaig Church Hall on Saturday, 14th March at 2 pm.

There is a similar course being held in Dunbeg Church on Saturday, 28th March at 2 pm.

If you would like to attend either of the above courses, please contact me at jbellcoltd@yahoo.co.uk

Jeanette Ferguson,
Safeguarding Coordinator.

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds.” *Romans 10: 24*

Care Home Worship

Services this month will be as noted below. Any help at these is much appreciated.

ASHGROVE - Tuesday, March 10th at 11.00am.

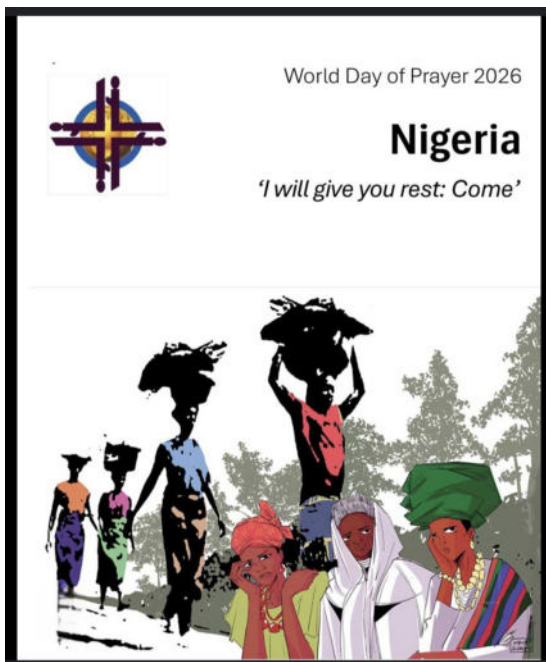
ARDENLEE - Tuesday, March 17th at 2.30pm.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This years theme is: **"I Will Give You Rest: Come"** and is based on Matthew Chapter 11, verses 28-30. It has been written by Christian women in Nigeria, and the service explores finding rest from burdens like poverty and injustice.

This year the service will be held at 2pm on **Friday, 6th March**, in Holy Trinity Scottish Episcopal Church, Kilbride Road, Dunoon.

A minibus service will be available in Glenmorag car park at 1.15pm.



➤ Pray for eyes to see people who might feel left out or unseen.

➤ Ask God to help you show kindness that includes and uplifts everyone.

➤ Thank Him that His love reaches every person and never leaves anyone behind.

FOUNDERS DAY

On Sunday, 22nd February, the church was full to bursting with the members of the 26th Argyll (Sandbank) Scout Group and the 2nd Dunoon Guide Group as they paraded their standards as part of the celebration of Lord and Lady Baden-Powells' birthdays (they shared the same day, so no excuses for forgetting!) The day is known in Guiding as Thinking Day and for the Scouts as Founders Day.

The Church service allowed current and former members of both the Scout and Guide Movements to reaffirm their Promise with the realisation that they are part of a movement that ranges from a 6-year-old Beaver Scout throughout to a very sprightly 82-year-old former Akela, who was very proudly wearing his Wood Badge and a 60-year-old woggle. Even Everisto managed to aquire a neckie and join the 26th for the day!

Both Groups would like to offer their thanks to the congregation of Cowal Kirk for accommodating the large numbers of young people and families who attended an event that many see as outdated but which is to us a very important day in our Guide/Scout Groups calendar. It retains the golden thread of the movements and reaffirms our striving to the be the best we can be.





And still on the subject of our uniformed organisations, the 26th (Sandbank) Scout group made use of both of the church minibuses to go to the



Kelvingrove museum and art gallery, and then along to the laser quest at Grid, Braehead, on

February 21st.

On another occasion, eXp also made use of one of the minibuses, but we'll have to wait till next month to hear more about that, but it's good to know that our minibuses are proving to be of such good service.

A small boy went to church with his grandmother and joined her when she quietly slipped off the pew to kneel and pray. He even copied her example of burying her face in her hands.

But after a few seconds, his curiosity got the better of him, and he whispered: "Who are we hiding from, Granny?"



"When the minister said 'Come to our service for an uplift,' I'm quite sure this is NOT what he had in mind!"

Definitions from Church Life

AMEN: The only part of a prayer that everyone knows.

ORDER OF SERVICE: Your receipt for attending the service.

HYMN: A song of praise, usually sung in a key an octave higher than that of the congregation's range.

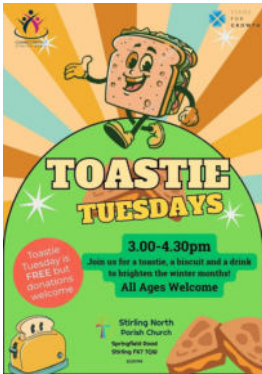
JONAH: The original 'Jaws' story.

PEW: A medieval torture device still found in some churches.

TOASTIE TUESDAY

~ A Wee Visit To Stirling ~

On Tuesday of this week, Everisto, Sharon, Moira and I took a little road trip to visit our new friends in Stirling North Parish Church where, on every Tuesday during term-time, the church run their "Toastie Tuesday." Yes! the humble cheese toastie - who knew it could have such an impact on a community?



Run by a small and dedicated team of volunteers from the church, each week they joyfully serve around 200 toasties, drinks and biscuits (aplenty!) to their local community. The event brings children, parents, church volunteers and Kirk ministers together, and meaningful connections have been made.

From the toastie makers and servers, to the school teachers, parents, children and childminders, friendships have been made and communities strengthened in the process. What a joy it was for us to witness and be a part of.

From 1pm onwards tables are set up, toasties (and everything in between) are prepped, and everything got ready to welcome the influx of hungry families at the end of the school day. At 3 o'clock, as the church opened its doors, "Mr Toastie" begins ringing his bell,

welcoming everyone in with the friendliest of smiles. Groups of older children rushed in, desperate to be first in line to get their toastie of choice. Queues were right to the door and the buzz and excitement of Toastie Tuesday could not be missed. When chatting with Scott, the parish Minister, his lovely wife, Alison, and their team of wonderful volunteers, it was so evident that they all truly value this





ministry and their role in serving their local community. They are passionate about the church showing hospitality in this way and welcoming friends and strangers as one.

Conversation around the tables with some of the local mums and children, it was evident that this community feel loved and welcomed by their church.

At Pizza church last month, we were looking at how much of Jesus' ministry took place around a table, or beside a fire on the beach, or even in a fishing boat! Jesus was right

there amongst the people, meeting them where they were and chatting and teaching as they shared their own stories and their meals together with Him.

I couldn't help but smile, witnessing the church so full and bustling with life, happy bellies and real life conversations. I am sure Jesus would be smiling right there amongst it all.

Our car was buzzing with conversation, admiration, and inspiration as we made the journey back to Dunoon. This is a wonderful ministry and it has given us, quite literally, a lot of food for thought!

If you would be interested in joining with us to explore where these ideas could take us within our own Cowal Kirk community, please get in touch, as we would love to hear from you. There is huge need out there - and I think we have the vision to meet it.

We truly want to do all we can to serve and bless our community.

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



For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in

Matthew 25: 35



CYBER AWARENESS

Online Safety awareness is critical, but at what age should we introduce it into the lives of our children and young people?

There can be no doubt that access to technology and the associated well-being of children and young people is crucial as they grow up online.

The online environment is of course a fantastic resource for learning and socialising, and is advancing, technically, at an increased pace. However, there are

many influences online which can impact us including, users adopting behaviours either endorsed or modelled by strong influencers, through to peer influence of friends, colleagues or online criminals that can affect choices, and disproportionally alter a person's behaviour, mind-set and thought process.

Across many age groups, strong influences can affect the lifelong dynamic process of cognitive development, especially from early childhood.

So, as we become more involved and dependant with being online, it is vitally important we continue to improve our own awareness online but also to introduce online learning and awareness for those in their early years' development.

The Scottish Government created the **Parent Club Scotland**, informed by evidence and insight, recognising that when parents and carers need somewhere to turn for help, they had a space which would provide support.

The Parent Club have fantastic resources to support parents and carers of young people from early years through to pre-teen and teenagers. Their resource for keeping children safe online cover aspects from setting parental controls, screen time, strong passwords, through to supporting parents and carers on more sensitive online issues.



What to Give Up for Lent:

- Give up complaining—focus on gratitude
- Give up pessimism—become an optimist
- Give up judging—think kindly thoughts
- Give up worry—trust in divine providence
- Give up discouragement—be full of hope
- Give up bitterness—turn to forgiveness
- Give up hatred—return good for evil
- Give up negativity—be positive
- Give up anger—be more patient
- Give up pettiness—become mature
- Give up gloom—enjoy the beauty that is all around you
- Give up jealousy—pray for trust
- Give up gossiping—control your tongue
- Give up sin—turn to virtue
- Give up giving up—hang in there!

Flower Rota for March

	Kirn & Sandbank	St. John's
MARCH		
1st	Mrs L. Croucher	Mrs Margaret Turnbull
8th	Mrs Lilian	Mr Lindsay Hunter
15th	Mrs Moira McDonald	Mrs Linda Murry
22nd	Dr & Mrs J. B. Hamilton	Mr Ronnie Oliphant
Contacts:	Mrs Maureen Robinson 702903	Mrs Linda Murry 830022
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Please note: **Last day for April Newsletter contributions : 22nd March**

Please email these to EDITOR as above – thank you.