

COWAL KIRK NEWS



**CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SCOTTISH CHARITY No. SC001976
ISSUE No. 53 ~ JULY/AUGUST, 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

JOLLY JULY

July gets its name from the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar, who was born this month. Before his calendar reforms, it was called Quintillis as it was originally the fifth month of the ancient Roman calendar.

Other famous people born in July: Alexander the Great, Frida Kahlo, Emilia Earhart, Nelson Mandela, Beatrix Potter, Princess Diana, Tom Cruise and Emily Brontë.

July is unusual in that it never starts on the same day of the week as any other month in a given year.

The month is represented by two completely different flowers, the bright colourful Larkspur and the serene Water Lily; and the birthstone is the ruby, historically prized as the “king of gems” symbolizing love and passion.

A few of the more unusual celebratory days in July are: **1st**: National Gingersnap Day, **2nd**: I forgot day, **5th**: National Workaholics Day, **6th**: International Kissing Day, **7th**: World Chocolate Day, **12th**: Paper Bag Day, **14th**: National Cow Appreciation Day, **20th**: World Emoji Day, **23rd**: Gorgeous Grandma Day, **27th**: Take your Houseplants for a Walk Day, **30th**: International Day of Friendship.

FROM THE MANSE

~ When Heaven Seems Silent ~

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are seasons in every believer's life when heaven seems quiet. We pray, we wait, and yet answers do not come as quickly or as clearly as we hope. There are moments when we wonder, "**Lord,**

where are You?" It is not a new question. The faithful have asked it throughout the ages. The psalmists cried out, "**How long, O Lord?"** Even our Lord Jesus, in His suffering, experienced the anguish of feeling forsaken.

Many of us know these seasons personally. We pray for healing, but illness lingers. We seek employment, yet opportunities close. We make decisions with sincere intentions, but outcomes seem to work against us. We ask God to remove a burden, and instead, more challenges appear. In such moments, God's silence can feel heavy and bewildering.

These experiences are not limited to our personal lives. Families, too, encounter periods of deep uncertainty. Relationships become strained. Financial pressures mount. Parents worry about their children, and children grieve for aging parents. There are households carrying private sorrows that few others know about. Some families feel exhausted from carrying one difficulty after another.

As a church community, we are not immune either. We long to see growth, renewed commitment, and fresh expressions of faith. Yet there are times when ministry feels demanding and resources seem limited. We grieve when beloved members suffer, when divisions arise, or when enthusiasm wanes. We may wonder why God's purposes do not unfold according to our expectations.

Beyond our church walls, our communities and our wider society are



also struggling. We see conflict, loneliness, economic uncertainty, and increasing anxiety. Many feel disconnected and weary. Values that once seemed firmly rooted appear to be shifting rapidly. The burdens facing our communities can leave us asking whether hope is becoming harder to find.

In all these circumstances, we must remember an important truth:

God's silence is not God's absence.

Throughout Scripture, God's people repeatedly endured seasons of waiting. Abraham waited many years for God's promise to be fulfilled. Joseph endured betrayal and imprisonment before seeing God's purposes revealed. David spent long periods in hardship before becoming king. The people of God cried out in slavery for generations before deliverance came. Time and again, God appeared to be silent, yet He was faithfully at work.

The same is true for us. We often cannot see what God is doing during our trials. Yet our inability to perceive His work does not mean that He has stopped working. God remains faithful even when our circumstances are difficult and our hearts are weary.

For this reason, I encourage you: do not give up on your faith.

Do not abandon prayer because answers seem delayed. Prayer is not merely a means of obtaining what we desire; it is our lifeline to the One who holds us securely. Prayer keeps our hearts open to God's presence and strengthens us to endure what we cannot yet understand.

Do not give up on gathering together. In difficult seasons, the temptation is often to withdraw, to isolate ourselves, and to carry our burdens alone. Yet God has given us one another precisely for such times as these. The tradition of coming together in worship, fellowship, and mutual care is not simply a habit of the church—it is one of God's gifts to sustain us. When our faith feels weak, we are strengthened by the faith of our brothers and sisters. When we struggle to pray, others pray for us. When hope feels distant, the community of faith reminds us that Christ remains present among His people.

Continue to worship. Continue to pray. Continue to encourage one another. Continue to bear one another's burdens. Continue to come together around God's Word and His promises.

Beloved, we belong to a God who has always come through for His people. Not always according to our preferred timing, and not always in the ways we expect, but always according to His perfect wisdom and steadfast love. The God who raised Christ from the dead, and who has carried the Church through centuries of trial has not changed. Let us hold fast to our faith even when we cannot hear God's voice clearly. Let us remain faithful in prayer.

Everisto

ANIMATED AUGUST

August is the eighth month of the year, originally named Sextillis (meaning sixth) and being only 30 days in length. It was emperor Augustus Caesar after whom it was later renamed who extended it to 31, purely so it wouldn't have fewer days than the month named after Julius Caesar — how petty!

Some of the famous people born in August are: Alexander Fleming, Napoleon Bonaparte, Mother Theresa, Neil Armstrong, Barack Obama, Alfred Hitchcock and J.K. Rowling.

August is famous among stargazers for the Perseid meteor shower which puts on its brightest display between August 11th and 13th.

The month is represented by three birthstones: the olive-green Peridot, the red and white banded Sardonyx, and Spinel. The flowers for the month are the Gladiolus, symbolizing strength and integrity, and the Poppy.

It also marks the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius on August 24th, 79 CE, which destroyed Pompeii.

A few of the more unusual celebratory days are: **3rd**: National Watermelon Day, **4th**: International Forgiveness Day, **6th**: Wiggle Your Toes Day, **9th**: Book Lover's Day, **13th**: International Left-Hander's Day, **16th**: National Tell a Joke Day, **18th**: Bad Poetry Day, **22nd**: Be an Angel Day, **26th**: Women's Equality Day, and **31st**: National Eat Outside Day.

Summer Suns are Glowing

*Summer suns are glowing over land and sea;
happy light is flowing, bountiful and free.
Everything rejoices in the mellow rays;
all earth's thousand voices swell the psalm of praise.*

*See God's mercy streaming over all the world,
and his banner gleaming, everywhere unfurled.
Broad and deep and glorious, as the heaven above,
shines in might victorious his eternal love.*

*Lord, upon our blindness your pure radiance pour;
for your loving-kindness make us love you more.
And, when clouds are drifting dark across the sky,
then, the veil uplifting, Father, still be nigh.*

*We will never doubt you, though you veil your light;
life is dark without you, death with you is bright.
Light of light, shine o'er us on our pilgrim way;
still go on before us, to the endless day.*

William Walsham How (1823-1897)

I have always just liked this hymn, without really giving much thought to the deeper meaning behind its words.

So it has taken a greater hold of me now that I can see how the author has illustrated God's love symbolised by his creation of the sun and flowing light, prompting all of nature to praise him.

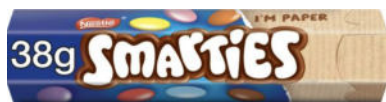
At the same time, the lifting of our human 'blindness' signifies our spiritual awakening and the removal of ignorance or sin.

So that, even when the "clouds are drifting dark across the sky," we are reminded of life's trials and tragedies, and are comforted that God is present and will bring peace and comfort.

The closing lines affirm that believers will never doubt God, even when his light feels hidden. It expresses an understanding that without God's presence, life is dark, but with Him, even death holds no fear. *Ed*

FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

This month has just flown by. Our fundraising has mostly focused on the Christian Aid appeal and, while there will be a final total in due course from our Treasurer, I can confirm that, on their own, the 'SMARTIES' raised an amazing £928.70p — A huge thankyou to



everyone who participated in this much-needed fund-raising event.

Another fund-raising event was our "Toy Sale" week. We had read that the BEFRIENDERS, and other

groups, had (allegedly) had their funding cut by A&B; so we filled our window with cuddly toys, games, etc. and informed our customers that the proceeds from every toy purchased during the week would be donated to the Befrienders ... we raised £125. As I said when I handed over the money: "It's not a great amount, but it proves that the community is behind you and you are truly appreciated.

We all know someone who relies on the Befrienders for transport, days out for lunch, the singing group, etc., and it is sad to think that these social activities may have to stop.

Another item worth mentioning is that we received a beautiful 'Royal' donation from a lady who lives in Innellan. Within the group of figurines there was Princess Diana in her wedding dress, HM Queen Elizabeth, also in her



wedding attire, Princess Margaret, Queen Elizabeth marking her 25th anniversary, and Queen Victoria. They are all a mix of Doulton and Coulport. But I'm afraid we have to disappoint you, if you had been interested, as we no longer have these; in fact THEY DIDN'T LAST THE WEEK! but see the photos of them over the page.

And we do still have at least 6 other "ladies", my favourite being the Land Army Girl (not pictured), but if they go as fast, you'd better come and get them while you can.

../..

../.. Today I was having a pretty infuriating time ... laptop had a mind of its own, rota was due, article for the Newsletter was due (actually it was late!) and I was beyond patient. Then I met a lady who said: "Gosh, you look tired!" (understatement). But she then asked if I had put the request for help into the Newsletter on purpose, as I had asked her most times when she came in if she would like to join us. However, because I was smiling, laughing, and generally being ME, she thought it was just conversation. SO ... what started out as a "joke" ended up as a new volunteer! But this made me think: I AM NOT JOKING. It is reaching critical stage, if there is NO HELP ... then shop hours will have to be CUT. It could be as little as one 3-hour shift, once a month, to step in as back up. PLEASE.

On a lighter note ... a wee reminder that our next **Meet and Greet** will be on Monday, September 7th. We look forward to seeing all our regulars, and possibly a few more. Everyone is welcome.

Yours aye,

*Lawther,
Fund-raising Co-ordinator.*



The other day I was walking along pulling a piece of rope behind me. A chap asked me why I was pulling a piece of rope, so I said to him, "You try pushing it!"

Children & Families — GOOD NEWS

As the country enjoys some of the heat we've had toward the end of last month, and that we hope will continue; it also feels like things are hotting up around here, too, in the lead into Summer.

With 4 kids in my house as we approach the end of any term, but specifically the Summer term, there is an excitement in the air in a bid for "FREEDOM"

"FREEDOM" from the routine.

"FREEDOM" from the norm.

A more carefree approach to life where we're not dictated to by time schedules, schoolwork and all the clubs.

When summer days can take us wherever they like; where shoes are optional and more ice cream is allowed even at times encouraged!



In May's Pizza Church we explored together the notion of **FREEDOM**.

What does FREEDOM look like, or feel like, to us?

PIZZA CHURCH
Takeaway!

★ ★

"IT IS FOR
FREEDOM
THAT CHRIST HAS SET US
FREE"
Galatians 5:1

Q: WHAT DOES TRUE FREEDOM
LOOK / FEEL LIKE TO YOU?

PRAY:
• FOR FREEDOM -
"FOR YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED TO
LIVE IN FREEDOM." GALATIANS 13:3

**MADE
for
MORE**

**I'M FREE
& FORGIVEN** **29 MAY 2026**

FUN FACT:
WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS
THERE IS FREEDOM.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU - DON'T EVER HESITATE TO REACH OUT!
LORNA : FAMILIESWORKER@COWALKIRK.ORG.UK / 07967191238

***"It was for Freedom
that Christ set us free."***
(Galatians 5:1)

I thank God that I serve the church under a Minister like Everisto, who constantly reminds us that this is God's church and that we are only playing our part.

We are partnering with Him and His plan. What a sense of liberation, what real freedom we have simply in knowing this?

As we make our plans, for all the end of term and Summer activities (of which there are many) it is so freeing to know that these plans aren't ours. This mission isn't ours. The book, or even a chapter of it, isn't ours to hold on to so tightly.



God loves a Multi-tasker 😊

We are not the author.
It all belongs to God.

Embracing my smallness within His majestic plans is probably the most freeing thing I can do. It doesn't diminish my role or the part I play, but it reminds me that what we are building here is something bigger than any of us. It is for now as well as for future generations.

Enjoy a wonderful summer.
Embrace the Freedom knowing
Christ has set us free.

Lorna McGinigal
familiesworker@cowalkirk.org.uk
07967 191238

Please pray for:

- Our children, families and school staff, that they have a wonderful, refreshing summer.
- Our Deep Sea Divers Holiday Club, the plans and preparations and especially the children who will join us.
- Exp SummerCamp, for the leaders and young people to find more of this freedom and fun in Arran this summer.

And don't forget to pray for each other ... Always!

We are still looking for any Volunteers who could help with the Catering and/or Hospitality at our Summer Holiday Club.

If you are able to spare a few hours on any day from 3rd to 7th August — or even provide some home baking? We would be delighted to hear from you. Contact me as above.

Lorna x.

Some photos from recent Kirk Café days; other Good Foundations activities, and details of the forthcoming Holiday Club.





**Saying thank you for dads ➤
on Father's Day**

◀ **First attempts at making
conversation — and
how to be friends**



▲ **Donating play equipment ➤
to all the local Primary
Schools.**



THE HAVEN @ COWAL HIGHLAND GATHERING

On Saturday, 29th August, Cowal Churches Together will once again be serving teas, coffees and soft drinks in a Marquee on the top field.

This is an amazing opportunity to welcome people from near and far, to provide seating and to offer prayer support and encouragement to any visitors.

A **Rota** of shifts will soon be circulated, and as many volunteers as possible are invited to take part for each two hour slot, and to serve the community in a missional capacity.

All proceeds from this event will go to the Cowal Hospice Trust, providing palliative care and transport for all those folk needing special care. **Please sign up!**



IN THE BIBLE : WHO SAID IT?

(Match the bible characters to the description)

- | | | |
|---|-------|--------------|
| 1. I built an ark when no-one believed. | _____ | A. Solomon |
| 2. I dreamed of fat cows and thin cows. | _____ | B. Elisha |
| 3. I was stoned, but lived to preach again. | _____ | C. Widow |
| 4. baptized a man from Ethiopia. | _____ | D. Peter |
| 5. I asked God for wisdom, not riches. | _____ | E. Silas |
| 6. wept over Jerusalem. | _____ | F. Joseph |
| 7. I walked on water but started to sink. | _____ | G. Elijah |
| 8. I ate scrolls in my vision. | _____ | H. John |
| 9. I saw a chariot of fire take my mentor. | _____ | I. Philip |
| 10. I gave birth at 90. | _____ | J. Jesus |
| 11. I fought Goliath with a sling. | _____ | K. Ezekiel |
| 12. I led an army of just 300 men. | _____ | L. Gideon |
| 13. I sang in prison at midnight. | _____ | M. Paul |
| 14. I saw the heavens open on Patmos. | _____ | N. David |
| 15. I challenged prophets of Baal with fire. | _____ | O. Noah |
| 16. I gave my last two coins as an offering. | _____ | P. Peter |
| 17. I climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus. | _____ | Q. Sarah |
| 18. I denied him 3 times before the cock crowed | _____ | R. Zacchaeus |

Celebrating Another Successful Year at 1st Cowal Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association



The 2025/26 session at 1st Cowal Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association came to a wonderful close on 24th June with a fantastic Awards Night, bringing together members, families, leaders and supporters to celebrate a year of achievement, growth and friendship.

Throughout the session, our young people have demonstrated dedication, enthusiasm and commitment across all sections of the organisation. We are delighted to recognise the remarkable accomplishments of our members this year.

A total of 51 young people successfully completed their session, while an impressive 191 individual awards were earned across the various sections. In addition, more than 30 special awards were presented during the Awards Night celebrations.

These achievements reflect not only the hard work and perseverance of the young people themselves, but also the encouragement and support provided by their families, friends and volunteer leaders. Every young person should be immensely proud of what they have accomplished this year.

Special Recognition

The evening also included the presentation of two of the group's most prestigious awards:

- **Best Anchor Award – Ian**
- **High Kirk Trophy – Anders** (pictured above 🏆)



Both recipients have shown outstanding commitment, excellent character and significant personal growth throughout the year, making them worthy recipients of these special honours.

A Thank You to Our Leaders and Supporters

A very special thank you must also go to our dedicated team of leaders, who have given up over 800 hours of their time this year alone to plan, prepare, and deliver engaging activities for our young people.

Their commitment, energy and care are the foundation of everything we do, and we are deeply grateful for their continued service.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to Cowal Kirk for their ongoing support, encouragement, and partnership throughout the year. The continued backing of the Kirk plays a vital role in enabling our group to thrive and provide a safe, welcoming and enriching environment for all our members.



Summer Continues the Work Behind the Scenes

Although the formal programme has now paused for the summer, the work behind the scenes certainly does not stop. While we are currently on a short break until 2nd September, preparations for the new session have already begun in earnest.

Jamie and Sam have already been hard at work planning for the year ahead, including filling the now vacant spaces in Anchors following recent promotions, as well as working through the waiting list of 16 young people eager to join the group. This ensure that we are ready to welcome both returning and new members in September with everything in place for another exciting year.

This continued commitment has not gone unnoticed by our families. Following Awards Night, a number of kind messages were shared on social media, reflecting the impact of the group on our community:

- *“You are all blummin brilliant! You're the biggest youth organisation in Cowal I'm sure of it and what's more you're the most inclusive!! I'm so grateful to you all and what you have done for us”*
- *“Had the best evening!! Well done to all! See you all in September! Enjoy the well deserved break leaders! Thank you for everything”*
- *“Great night thankyou to all of you and well done to all the children”*

Could You Spare a Little Time? – Volunteers Needed

As we look ahead to another busy and exciting session, we are also

If we were able to welcome just a few more volunteers, we could increase capacity in our sections and clear that waiting list much more quickly.

Full support, guidance, and training are provided, and no previous experience is necessary - just a willingness to get involved and make a difference. You would be joining a welcoming, supportive, and dedicated team who work hard to provide the best possible experience for our young people.

As we move into the summer months, we give thanks to God for His continued guidance, provision, and blessing throughout the year. We are grateful for all that has been achieved, for every young person who has taken part, and for all who support the life and work of the organisation. We look forward with faith and hope to welcoming everyone back in September for another year of growth, fellowship, and service within 1st Cowal Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association.

Care Home Worship

ASHGROVE - Tuesday, July 7th, and
- Tuesday, August 11th @ 11am on both days

ARDENLEE - Tuesday, July 14th, and
- Tuesday, August 18th @ 2.30pm on both days

MID - WEEK WORSHIP

There will be a short service at 11am in the High Kirk Hall on two Wednesdays in July, and one later in August. The service in early August will be in St. John's Hall as the Holiday Club will be making use of our usual venue. Everyone is welcome at any of these worship events.

July 1st — Simon Wallace

July 15th — Ann McGilp

August 5th — Rev. Jim McFarlane (St. John's Hall)

August 19th — Donald Manson



STARTER PACKS

A huge thankyou to everyone who supports Starter Packs by donating cash or items for our packs.

Since last month we have had a further 4 requests, which brings the total so far to 22 (that includes 13 children whose parents have sought our help). This outreach provides dignity for people who need it at often the lowest point of their lives, and it is always gratefully received.

This month we are looking in particular for donations of tea towels, kitchen utensils and toilet rolls. As always, all donations are very much appreciated.

Fiona Anderson, Starter Packs Convener.

PREACHING ROTA FOR JULY & AUGUST

JULY	5th	- Toward & Innellan
	12th	- Kirn & Sandbank
	19th	- St. John's
	26th	- Toward & Innellan
AUGUST	2nd	- Kirn & Sandbank
	9th	- St. John's
	16th	- Toward & Innellan Communion
	23rd	- Kirn & Sandbank
	30th	- St. John's



What made Adam and Eve good at maths ... they were told to go forth and multiply.



Summer Holiday Cyber Safety

Protecting your devices and online accounts, while travelling, is an essential to ensure your personal data remains secure.

Mobile phones, laptops and tablets will top the list of things to pack as we all want to stay connected while on holiday, but devices can be lost and be an easy target for thieves.

This link, to the NCSC, will [highlight the importance of setting up 2SV and MFA to your devices and important accounts](#) to prevent unauthorised access to your devices – if lost or stolen – but also unauthorised access to your accounts and personal data.

It is also essential that you have done your data backups, not just of emails and other important information but also your treasured photographs. This link to the NCSC will support you with [how to back up your data](#) along with detailed backup instructions for Google, Microsoft and Apple platforms.

You can also [save data backups to removable media](#), by doing this you will have two backups of your most important data.

Public Wi Fi can be convenient but there are considerations we have to be aware of, such as connecting to a [fake Wi Fi](#) created by a cyber criminal, by doing so they will have access to your online activity.

Instead, connect online using your data plan from your network provider, which will have built-in security or, if you must use public Wi Fi, do so using a VPN (Virtual Private Network).

A VPN encrypts your internet connection and enhances your online security. Our partners at Getsafeonline have also produced this informative article to support you with [VPN guidance](#).

We want you to enjoy your holiday and also to be able to enjoy your online experience seamlessly and safely while you're away. The practical tips in this Cyber Byte will support you with this.

If you have been a victim of crime, and it is not an ongoing emergency, you can report this to Police Scotland on 101.

At a recent Church service, the Cowal Kirk thanked the members of the Flower Committee who were retiring after a combined service of over 200 years.

In recognition of their excellent service, the following ladies were presented with volunteer certificates. Our thanks go to:

Maureen Robinson, Rosemary Benn, Lidya Hook, (the late) Senga Wilson, Kristine Cowieson, Mary Lansburgh, Morag Smith and Pat Evans.

Cowal Kirk will still deliver flowers to those who are ill or for special occasions; so if you would like to donate towards their purchase, or continue to do so, you can place your contribution in an envelope marked “flowers” and place this in the offering plate at Toward and Innellan or St.John’s. Alternatively, you can use the flower box at the entrance to Kirn and Sandbank Church. For any queries please contact the Session Clerk.



July & August Flower Rota for St. John's

JULY

- “ 5th Mrs Moira Ross
- “ 12th -
- “ 19th Mrs Linda Murry
- “ 26th Mrs Cathy Burgess

AUGUST

- “ 2nd -
- “ 9th Mrs Louise Cannon
- “ 16th Mrs Ann Cooper
- “ 23rd Mrs Ishbel Henderson
- “ 30th -

Contact: Mrs Linda Murry

Tel: **(01369) 830022**

Mobile: **07779131257**



SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Just another reminder about the
compulsory Safeguarding
Training for Trustees
on Saturday, 6th September,
at 2.30pm
in Kirn & Sandbank Church.

Why is it that saying, “Have a nice day” sounds friendly, but saying, “Enjoy your next 24 hours” sounds threatening?



You can do something extraordinary, by doing the ordinary shopping online. No extra time, no extra effort, no extra cost.

It's a while since I mentioned anything about this amazing fund-raising system. It's a very straightforward process.

When you shop online with participating retailers, of which there are over 8,000! they will donate a small percentage (sometimes as little as 0.5% but often more) of what you spend to your chosen cause. In my case that is Cowal Kirk, but it can be any registered charity.

Whether you shop on your phone, laptop or tablet, you can earn free donations for your cause. The retailer just needs to know you are an easyfundraiser to make their donation, and they know this if you visit them via their website, app or Donation Reminder.

Once you've made your purchase, you will be notified that this has been recognized. You may receive an email thanking you and telling you how much has been donated as a result. It's as simple as that. So why not sign up to the app today?



I saw a man running along the street with a cape on.

I asked him if he was a Superhero.

“No,” he replied, “It’s just I haven’t paid for my haircut!”

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Please note: **Last day for September Newsletter contributions : 23rd August**

Please email these to EDITOR as above – thank you.