

The Parish Record

Spring/Summer 2023

The magazine of
Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Parish Church



Lamentations 3:22-23

*The steadfast love of the Lord never
ceases; his mercies never come to an
end; they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.*

A MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERIM MODERATOR

Dear Friends



Thank you for your warm welcome each time I come to join you on a Sunday morning - it is good to get to know you a little better each time I come along - just keep reminding me of all your names!

It is also encouraging to hear of all the good things you are continuing to do together as God's people in the communities of Skelmorlie and

Wemyss Bay. Kirk Session meetings keep me up to date with all your events and with what you are planning for the days ahead. I thank you for your faithful presence and for your adventuring spirit as you seek to do new things, reaching out with God's love in your congregation and in your area, working also in partnership with Inverkip Church. There have been many conversations and debates and also a degree of uncertainty as we in our Presbytery and our Lower Clyde Cluster have sought to work our way through the Presbytery Mission Planning process. The Presbytery meeting to consider the plan took place on 18th March and we hope that the plan will be approved at the next stages and so allow the congregations of Inverkip and Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay to develop your partnership further and move towards a union in the days to come.

May you be ready to welcome the Easter dawn and the new beginnings God gives and keep journeying on in faith and hope.

With best wishes

Karen Harbison
Interim Moderator

A message from our Pastoral Assistant



At the start of the year my daughter Sarah and I were blessed to meet with the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields. We had a lovely chat and he spoke very encouragingly about women in ministry roles and about needing more young people in the Church. I told him about my role here and the Café church and he sends his best wishes to you all. During his sermon that morning, The Moderator spoke about Jesus

calling the fishermen to put down their nets, stop what they were doing and listen to him. Their lives were about to change completely as they gave up their past, gave up what they were holding on to and instead followed Him. A most inspiring sermon with many commenting they could have listened to him speak all day!

In March we travelled to London for my sister's wedding which was held at the beautiful Grade 1 listed Octagon Room at Orleans House and Gallery which was built in 1721, overlooking the Thames. Sarah started the processional as an elegant bridesmaid in sage green and I played my guitar and sang during the ceremony, then gave the blessing at the end. The day was full of surprises from the rings arriving via drone (!) to the transport from the venue being a red double decker London bus complete with ribbon tied around it.

As my sister said that day: unlike the cake and flowers which will decay, the memories and most importantly the love remains forever.

We find these words in Psalm 136:

To Him who alone does great wonders

His love endures forever

Who by His understanding made the heavens

His love endures forever

Who spread the earth upon the waters

His love endures forever

God bless you. Lynsey Graham (Pastoral Assistant)

OUTREACH SPRING/SUMMER UPDATE

“There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.”

1 Corinthians 12:5

Alex Malcolm a volunteer with Children’s Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS) addressed our congregation on Sunday 18th December and expressed his gratitude for the long running financial support our congregation has provided through offerings made at our annual Watch Night Service.

In addition, CHAS benefited from offerings made at the Skelmorlie Primary School Christmas Service and nativity which was held in our church on the Thursday before Christmas. The Rev. Jonathan Fleming, minister of Greenock’s Lyle Kirk along with his student minister conducted this joyous worship. In total, £566 was raised for CHAS.



At the start of Advent, all the Skelmorlie P2/3 pupils participated in our annual Christmas card competition, with the entries decorating the rear wall of our Church. The winning 2022 image (opposite) was created by Mia Kerr, with notable contributions from Bailey Hamilton, Karam Boparai, Zara Cathcart and their classmate Scott.

Our annual Christmas Gift Service benefited the Inverclyde Food Bank with non-perishable goods suitable for a Christmas dinner.

At the start of February, Rebecca Little of our church audio-visual team spoke of the work of the Inverclyde Family Contact Centre based in Jamaica Street in Greenock, where she is a trustee. Your retiring offerings for the month of February benefited this much needed facility, which was conceived by Greenock Presbytery to support the work of family courts.

As the scale of the devastation became apparent, the congregation were given an opportunity to donate to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Turkey-Syria Earthquake appeal.

We contributed to the ecumenical World Day of Prayer service, written by the women of Taiwan, held in Inverkip Parish Church on the evening of Friday 3rd March. This year's theme was drawn from Ephesians 1:15-19

‘I have heard about your faith’.

St Joseph's and St. Patrick's RC Church in Wemyss Bay will host next years World Day of Prayer, with a prayer service from the women of Palestine.

Alzheimer Scotland is our retiring charity for the month of March. Our worship leader, Dr. Phil Theaker, spoke eloquently from his personal experience of their sterling support work.

Christian Aid week starts on Sunday 14th May. The theme this year is 'Help dreams come true'. Our church's Christian Aid fund raiser will be an afternoon tea at the Skelmorlie Manse on Montgomerie Terrace on Saturday 20th May from 2.30 to 4.30; surely a date for your diary!

Caroline Scott

Outreach Convener

"A wee boy who had chickenpox was seen to be constantly checking his spots. When asked what he was doing, he remarked that he was checking for the feathers"

BLYTHSWOOD CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX APPEAL - ONGOING PROJECT FOR 2023



Its a bit early to be thinking of Christmas but when Blythswood collect the shoeboxes at Christmas, they ensure that each shoebox has a hat and a scarf. We are calling all who knit or crochet or who have odd balls of wool, help us in time for Christmas.

Hand knitted or crocheted items for all age groups including adults, are needed. There are two boxes in the hall, one for completed articles and one for odd balls of wool. Donations of both knitted

articles and wool can be handed in at the pharmacies in Wemyss Bay and Skelmorlie.

INVERCLYDE FOODBANK & INVERCLYDE STARTER PACKS

**Next collection date 31st March, Church Hall
11.00am to 12.30pm**

Although items collected for both Food Bank and Starter Pack have dropped slightly in the months since Christmas we have still made substantial donations to both these worthy causes. All donations are gratefully received both by the Food Bank and Starter Packs and certainly by those who need assistance.

Thank you for caring and supporting.

Anne Organ

ITEMS NEEDED

Tinned ham, corned beef, curry, ravioli and chilli.

Deodorant, shampoo and shower gel, sponges, face cloths

SESSION CLERK

I am most grateful to everyone for your support and assistance since taking on the role of Session Clerk, particularly at this time of change which will continue for the foreseeable future. This support for your church will be even more important in the coming months whether it be at social events, Sunday worship, Session meeting, Soul Searching and the Café Church.

This is where we are at the moment: the Church of Scotland is undergoing a financial crisis as well as a crisis of insufficient ministers. Locally, the presbytery was required to develop a plan which reduced the number of “charges” and buildings as appropriate across the presbytery to forty FTE (full time equivalents) for the Inverclyde area.

The presbytery has consulted widely across all our churches and created a Mission Plan which is based on the philosophy of retaining worshipping communities where at all possible. This draft plan was presented to Clyde Presbytery on Saturday 18th March 2023 and will now be submitted to Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group (PMPIG) and to the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland.

The plan for Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay is that we will retain both the churches of Inverkip and Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay but will form a Union with Inverkip. This will mean that the administration of the churches will reduce from two to one. The really good news is that we should be allowed to call a full time minister.

This plan obviously has to get through the next stage and only then will we be able to proceed further.

I hope this allays any concerns about the survival of our church and we can look forward with renewed hope.

Easter will shortly be here and we will be having a full week of services with Inverkip during Holy Week. The first of these is the Passover meal which is being, hosted this year, by St. Joseph's and St. Patrick's. If you would like to attend, please let me have your name. Over the years numbers at the Meigle Beach sunrise service have dwindled and it would be good to have some new faces. This is followed by breakfast in the church hall: Always welcome after an early start.

Look out for the new Rotas, copies of which will be on the noticeboard in the Church hall and printed copies will be available at the back of the church. Once again thank you. Rita



SOCIAL

The social, fundraising and outreach committees have now joined as one.

We were delighted to welcome the Largs Amateur Operatic Society, who performed a wonderful evening of songs from the shows in the Church Hall.

More recently Clyde Coast, Strathspey and Real Society performed on Saturday 4th March in the Church. Afternoon tea was served during an extremely sociable interval. It was good to see a number of new people at this event. Clyde Coast, Strathspey and Real Society rehearse in the Church Hall on a Saturday morning and this was their way of thanking us for the use of the facilities. The sum of £369 was raised for church funds.

The next event is an outing to see Calendar Girls in Largs, on Sat 25th March followed by a fish tea at the Clyde Kitchen.

An afternoon tea for Christian Aid will be held in the Manse on Saturday 20th May 2.30 - 4.30pm. Donations of home baking, sandwiches, homemade preserves, chutneys would be appreciated. Tickets available shortly.

We hope to have a concert in the church at some point in June. Watch out for details.

There is always plenty of room for more supporters at our events.

Muriel O'May

EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday, 2nd April

Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay Parish Church 11.30am

HOLY WEEK

Monday 3rd April

Joint Passover meal at St. Joseph's & St. Patrick's 7.00pm

Tuesday 4th April

Worship at Inverkip Parish Church 7.00pm

Wednesday 5th April

Worship at Inverkip Parish Church 7.00pm

Maundy Thursday, 6th April

Communion

Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Parish Church 7.00pm

Good Friday, 7th April

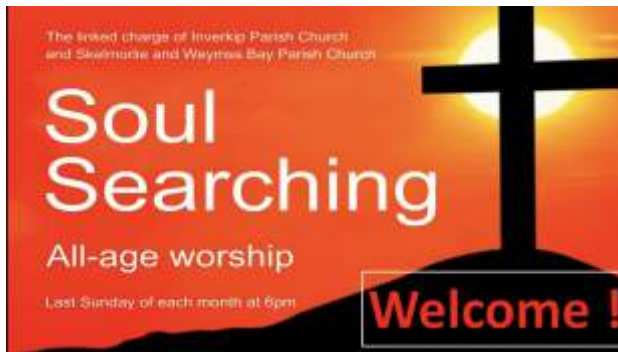
Good Friday Service, Inverkip Parish Church 7.00pm

Easter Sunday 9th April

Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Parish Church Sunrise Service at Meigle Beach 7.00am followed by breakfast in the Church.

Easter Service

at Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Parish Church at 11.30am



Every month when I come home from Soul Searching my daughters ask me (sarcastically) "did you find it"? and my answer is always "YES"! I always come home from these informal services full of joy and my spirit feels revitalised. If you haven't been before, or if you haven't been in a while; please come along and see for yourself. Here is what you've missed over the last few months ...

At the beginning of advent we had a special guest, the prophet Isaiah (played by Graham and pictured here with Muriel, who had baked lovely treats for us all) who gave a very intriguing interview about the One to come. A deliverer! A redeemer! But he was nothing like the interviewer was imagining in his mind. We invited everyone to make a Christingle and sang the first Christmas Carols of the season. We had to have an encore of the first hymn as no-one wanted to leave. Thanks to Val for playing piano for us and it was lovely to have Judy back on violin.



We were back in January after the Christmas break.

There was live music from Siona and Ian and in our skit I was cast as a grumpy teenager; Morag said that she'd ask folk to use their imagination ha,ha.

In February, we were a small group as Morag, Ian and Graham were away but a big thanks to Phil for helping out with our closing prayer. Jennifer sang her solo beautifully. In my sermon I explored what Jesus meant when he said "do not judge" and everyone had a giggle at this image which I shared as it captured the sentiment so well.

Our next service is on 26th March at Inverkip Church hall. Please join us from 6pm for fellowship and tea, coffee and home baking.

Thanks to Graham, Ian, Jennifer, Lynsey, Morag, Siona and Muriel.
Jac Seggie

TREASURER'S UPDATE

Receipts and Payments		2022
Receipts		
Standing Orders	34,220	
Freewill Offering Envelopes	6,982	
Property Maintenance Envelopes	1,582	
Open Plate	1,656	
Donations	2,146	
Donations for Third Parties	136	
Gift Aid tax refunded	0	
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Total Donations		46,722
Fund Raising		1,743
Investment income		3,585
Receipts from General Trustees		9,994
Linkage contributions from Inverkip		1,000
Other receipts		768
		<hr/>
Total receipts		63,812
Payments		
Mission & Ministries	40,345	
Pastoral Assistant	4,679	
Worship and Mission	6,386	
Church building	25,019	
Manse	1,198	
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Total - charitable activities		77,627
Independent Examiner		336
		<hr/>
Total payments		77,963
		<hr/>
Deficit for Year		-14,151

The accounts for the year ending 31st December 2022 show a deficit for the year of £14,151. This is mainly related to an outstanding repayment of £12,700 of Gift Aid, due from HMRC at year end, which we have now received. Otherwise, our income and expenditure were much as forecast.

The main source of our income is member offerings and donations. Total offerings and donations for 2022 were £46,586, down £1,333 or 3%, from 2021. This is mainly due to the loss of several of our generous members over the last couple of years.

Other points worth noting from last year are:

- We spent just under £10,000 on emergency repairs to the church stonework. 80% of this cost was covered by the short-term leasing of the manse following the Minister's retirement in 2021.
- Presbytery funding for our Pastoral Assistant (who we employ jointly with Inverkip) was reduced for 2022, giving us a net cost of £4,679. The session is agreed that this is a vital use of our resources to support our congregation and parish.
- Although not reflected in our accounts, donations collected for third party charities were £9,139, more than in any previous year and more than in 2020 and 2021 combined.

And looking forward to this year:

- Our 2022 electricity costs for the church were not subject to the huge increases which we have all been suffering at home, as the Church of Scotland fixed price contract runs until September 2023. We can expect a big increase from that point.
- The way our contribution to the Church of Scotland is calculated has changed for 2023, with the introduction of a new scheme called Giving to Grow. The result of this for us is a £500 per month reduction in what we send to Edinburgh.

In summary, our Church's finances remain healthy, thanks to the ongoing generosity of our members, not only financially and through volunteer skills, time and effort.

John Scott
Treasurer

Property Maintenance Envelopes

You may have noticed that there isn't a Property Maintenance envelope with this edition of the Parish Record. The Session has decided to stop providing these because:

- The amount raised through the envelopes has been going steadily down.
- Only about 20% of envelopes were returned.
- The envelopes themselves were quite expensive; and labelling, issuing and counting them was a surprisingly big job.

Thank you to all of you who have given to the church in this way over the last 25 years.

Of course, this doesn't mean that we won't be spending money on maintaining our church and manse. Last year we spent around £15,000, although without the work carried out by our volunteer property maintenance team, the cost would have been much higher. Only about 10% of this came from the envelopes.

This year we expect to spend a similar amount on further stonework and roof repairs to the church plus ongoing general maintenance. Please consider adding your property maintenance contribution to however you give to the church; by standing order, by freewill offering envelopes, or simply put it in the plate. Thank You!

John Scott
Treasurer

ADOPT A BIT OF YOUR CHURCH

We all want a neat, tidy and welcoming church. Our cleaner can only cover the basics.

Some "tender loving care" could improve things quite a lot and many of you have signed up to look after a particular area and taking a little time now and again as needed. This will keep the church neat, orderly and free of rubbish. If you have been unable to do this lately, perhaps Spring is the ideal time to reinvigorate your area.

Any need for maintenance, clearing storage areas etc. can be identified to the Property Team. *Please all keep up the good work!*

A key can be signed out to allow you to do this at any time that suits you. (Please don't work alone - have a friend for company and safety).

TIME TO BE STILL...

‘Stay with me, remain with me, watch and pray’

Lord as I wait, my soul reflects quietly on your fullness
And my spirit grows stronger in the hope of your promise
‘Lo I am with you always’

Yes, day by day, through the course of time,
My awareness of your call to come and follow you
and go forth in your name to all the nations, increases,
for you have done great things in me.

You have changed my life—

By your Spirit’s power
you have replaced my fear and doubt with faith.

You have given my life direction—

From the self-centred goals of achievement,
you have spread before me

a vision of life as you would have it lived—

To share in the joys and sorrows of my neighbours

To work for truth and justice

and an equal sharing of the earth’s resources

To be a channel of your healing and reconciliation.

Lord God, fill me anew with your Holy Spirit,
and as I take this tentative first step to share your vision

I gaze and see what you have done—

You have given me life in all it’s fullness—

You died that I might live

And so, I move forward

with renewed faith

and greater expectancy

(Inspired by the Magnificat / Mary’s Song of Praise : Luke 1)

OBITUARIES

Charlotte Hay - 8th February 2023

Agnes Little - 17th February 2023

Elsie Scott - 16th February 2023

Tom Ovens - 17th February 2023

*John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not
give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled
and do not be afraid.”*

PROPERTY REPORT MARCH 2023

Manse

Malcolm Doull is preparing a rough cost for “sprucing up” the kitchen worktops and doors. An estimate for replacing carpets will be sought from 10 percent carpets. Various repairs to the decking area and patio door are needing addressed.

Church Building

The Presbytery Buildings Officer (PBO), Jamie McNamara, has visited the Church and has recommended that we appoint a Project Manager (possibly a McIntosh conservation architect) who will identify all the problem areas, draw up a specification for the work required in order of priority and put the work out to competitive tender. The appointee in conjunction with the PBO would be able to access grants where available

The cellar under the chancel flooded recently, during exceptionally heavy rain, but fortunately we were able to divert the water away before electrical circuits were affected.

Justin Lewis has carried out extensive work clearing gutters, removing ivy and moss from the roof and cutting back vegetation overhanging from the cliff. The roof leaks above the corridor leading to the toilets have been addressed by replacing lead in the area of the skylights outside the former session house.

We are going to try to “dissuade” the crows from nesting again in the bell tower.

Sound and Screen

The number of views of the Service on YouTube varies between 50 and 90 each week. Three Inverkip residents receive a copy on DVD. To date, over 150 Services have been live streamed. We are always looking for new recruits to join the team to share out the burden of work and we are hoping that David Armstrong may decide to become a member of the team.

Car Park

The car park vegetation needs cutting down. There is still knotweed emerging each year and Matthew Kyle will be asked to deal with this at the appropriate time as the access to some of the areas is too tricky.

David Johnston

Property Convenor

MEMORIES PAST



“Who do you recognise from this lineup ?”

Tom Ovens was the Session Clerk at the Church for ten years. On 2nd December 1985, Tom reported to the Session, that members of the congregation were rehearsing a pantomime to be presented on January 10th and 11th.

He later reported on 5th February 1986 that the material of the Pantomime under rehearsal was not suitable and the function had been cancelled.

“I wonder why”.

A collection at Tom’s memorial service raised £1145.30, for cystic fibrosis, which is a charity close to the family. Helen Ovens lost her niece in 2008 at the age of 19 to cystic fibrosis.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

Meetings have continued with laughter resounding round the hall as we try to work out how to play Bingo or listen to corny jokes, of which our esteemed John has an endless supply. We tax ourselves answering quiz questions but mostly we enjoy the chat and friendship of others.

We were delighted to be entertained by the ladies of the Gaelic Choir. It was a most enjoyable afternoon thank you again to the ladies who gave up their afternoon to visit with us.

A warm welcome awaits anyone who has time to visit with us in the Church Hall at 2p.m.on alternate Tuesdays.

Anne Organ

SPRING/ SUMMER NEWSLETTER CAFÉ CHURCH

We met as always in the Wemyss Bay Station café in December and again in February. In December our theme was ‘What God Has Done For Me’ and Phil, and Anne shared some stories of answered prayer and trusting in God. Hollie sang ‘This Little Light of Mine’ before Sheila played us out with ‘To God Be The Glory’, a rousing end to what has been another blessed and special year for Café Church.

In February our theme was Exploring Our Call to Mission. We focused around Jesus calling the Fishermen but also touched on the Asbury Revival going on in the USA and about the Hebrides revival before introducing the book that many of us are currently reading – The Sleeping Giant: A Call to the Church to Awake and Arise! Written by the Rev Tommy MacNeil. In the book the author states:

“The first outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred in the Church and flowed out of the Church.... I’m very aware that many have given up on the Church, but let me assure you that God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have not. Jesus’ Church is still God’s Plan A..”

We spent time thinking about how we can all do our part in God’s plan from the youngest to the oldest! In March I collaborated with a team from New Worshipping Communities on the Weekly Worship Material for the Church of Scotland website for Pentecost Sunday. This will be my second time taking part, last time was as a Worship Leader in a Priority Area.

At the March Café Church we will be filming the second of our promotional videos and interviews for the Church of Scotland’s Faith Action group and this will eventually be available on the Church of Scotland’s YouTube Channel.

We hope to inspire others and be a blessing through this video as more people hear about ideas and opportunities to bring God out into the community.

Everyone is welcome to come along and join us. The team are so supportive and I thank God daily for this ministry and for all involved.

God bless you. Lynsey Graham (Pastoral Assistant)

EDITORIAL

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If you have any special celebrations please let us know.

www.swbchurch.co.uk

Facebook : Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Parish Church



CHURCH SERVICE

On YouTube, search for “Inverkip and Skelmorlie” (make it a favourite or bookmark)

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Session Clerk	Rita Carmichael	529289
Treasurer	John Scott	520259
Property	David Johnston	520775