

The Parish Record

Winter 2023

Magazine of
Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Parish Church



● AND ●

● HIS NAME ●

● SHALL BE CALLED ●

● WONDERFUL ●

● COUNSELLOR ●

● THE MIGHTY GOD ●

● THE EVERLASTING FATHER ●

● PRINCE OF PEACE ●



ISAIAH 9:6

Message from our Interim Moderator



Dear Friends

Sunday 29th October 2023 was an important day in the life of the congregation of Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Parish Church, as the congregation met to vote on the basis of union which would move us from a linkage with our friends at Inverkip Church, into a union with them. Both congregations voted at the same time on the same day and the result of the votes was overwhelmingly in favour of the union. Thank you for your willingness to take this important step and to become one congregation with a place of worship in both centres. We await a date for the service of union which will mark a new stage in the life of the congregation, celebrating all that has been and looking forward to new possibilities. A lot of discussion, discernment and prayer has already gone on and more of each will be needed as we seek how best to be the church at this time and in this place.

We look forward to Advent, a time of preparation, of wonder and of hope as we come ever closer to the birth of Jesus. So in the midst of winter, through the Season of Advent we hear the words of the prophets and the whispers of angels and look forward to celebrating the gift of the Christ Child.

The Advent call is a call to pilgrimage:
To follow a star wherever it leads,
To wait in suspense for a new revelation,
To journey in hope, confident of God's leading,
To believe that the heavens can open,
To watch for an unlikely birth
And see beauty in the dirt of a stable.
The Advent call is a call to pilgrimage.

In this magazine you will be able to find out about many of the events and activities planned in the church and community over the next weeks. Together may you have a blessed Advent and Christmas.

With best wishes,

Karen

Message from Our Pastoral Assistant



A few weeks ago one of my sisters had a lovely baby boy. The whole family is thrilled to welcome wee Magnus to the fold and I am loving being a proper Auntie at last! Please keep Magnus in prayer and I hope to be able to bring him along one day to visit you all.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Service of Loss and Renewal a success. The feedback was excellent and we welcomed along people from both

our own congregations, our friends at St Joseph's and St Patrick's and people from other churches. We also welcomed visitors who have no church connection at all. It was lovely to welcome back past clergy from our church and see folk who perhaps struggle to get out but who made a very special effort to attend. I'm sure you'll all agree the singing group were absolutely perfect and not to mention the fellowship and cuppa in the hall afterwards. There was just such a great atmosphere and I could really feel the presence of God come down and minister to so many individuals that day. It was very moving to see and I look forward to running another similar event in the future. Our story even made it onto the Life and Work website and social media the next day and will feature in an upcoming edition of the magazine!

Hopefully by now you will have received a gift bag from the day: They contain a bulb to plant in honour of a loved one to let your love for them continue to blossom. There is also a candle for you to light, perhaps on a birthday or other special occasion when you miss someone you love. There is also a scavenger hunt, perhaps if you feel like getting out into nature on a nice dry day, with a list of things to look out for and practise gratitude for. All of the bags themselves are biodegradable too! Lastly there is a lovely bookmark with all the Bible verses that we had read during the service.

It was brilliant to have a chat with some non church-goers that day as that's really what being a missional church is all about. Hopefully it plants the seed for some to delve deeper into their faith and find the love and comfort that we have in knowing Christ.

With Christmas just around the corner, Sarah and I would like to wish you and your families every blessing as we look forward to seeing what 2024 has in store for our new unified congregation!

With Love and God bless,

Lynsey Graham

Your Friend and Pastoral Assistant

"Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your creator and become like Him" Colossians 3:10

COFFEE MORNING



The Children's Hospices Across Scotland, more commonly known as CHAS, for thirty years have been offering a full family support service for babies, children and young people with life-shortening conditions. This includes palliative care, family respite and support, through the hospices, home care services and hospital presence. Emma, who receives respite at Robin House, has been coming to Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay Parish Church for many years with her Gran - Morag Mackintosh. Recently a coffee morning was held in aid of Robin House and an amazing sum of £634.50 was raised in support of the children and families who use Robin House. For a number of years the Christmas Eve retiring offering has been in aid of CHAS, which it will be again this year.

MEET OUR NEW PRESBYTERY CLERK

THE REVD ROBERT A HAMILTON



Robbie is currently minister of The New Wellwynd Parish Church Airdrie and has been there for 22 years. After graduating from New College, Edinburgh in 1993 he served as Probationer Assistant at Hamilton Old after which he took up his first charge in Irvine at the Relief Parish Church, Bourtreehill in 1995. As a parish minister he has continually aspired to giving folk a good experience of church and of faith - as a worship leader and pastor, enabler and encourager. This has extended beyond the immediate congregation with his involvement as a chaplain to two schools and the Air Training Corps as well as bodies such as Airdrie Citizens Advice and Airdrie Savings Bank. He has served in various roles within the Presbyteries where he has served including as Depute Clerk, Ministries Convener and Moderator.



He has also served nationally continuing his support of ministers and ministers in training - the Board of Ministry, the Ministries Council and Faith Nurture. He is currently Convener of the Registration of Ministries Committee. Ongoing training through the Study Leave Scheme has been important to him with a particular interest in Christian nurture.

Robbie grew up in Saltcoats and has been married to Carol for 32 years. They have one son Daniel who is 24 and a crazy but cute dog called Rosie. They enjoy travel both at home and abroad and are getting back into caravanning having bought a new van last year. Robbie counts as a passion music - listening and playing (attempting to play the piano). He is looking forward to getting back to regular concerts in Glasgow and is hoping to get back to choral singing again having been in various choirs since schooldays including the Phoenix for a short time.

Robbie is looking forward to this new chapter and hopes that his experiences of church and community as well as his style of ministry which seeks to encourage and enable will stand him in good stead.

FOR OUR FUTURE

It's now three or four months since I felt God was prompting me to initiate an opportunity for us to pray together with our friends in Inverkip about the union and future of our unified Session and Parish and also for the calling of a new minister.

I had the opportunity to share my thoughts, over which I was brooding (waiting to hatch out), with the pastors of a church in Paisley and also with friends from a church in Dalkeith. In both cases they have taken our future very seriously and promised to pray for us on a regular basis. It was at this point that I realised that we had to start praying ourselves, in an organised way about our future.

We have now held three prayer meetings, not what I call 'heads down' meetings, but an opportunity to praise God, listen to readings from His Word and of course pray. There have been 15 or so people at each one, which I think is excellent, but of course we would welcome many more to come as well.

We have addressed fears and anxieties about praying with others, sung songs that talk about our individual relationship with God and read relevant passages of Scripture. Prayer is one of the ways in which we can be involved in what God is trying to accomplish; I think the very fact that we are able to call a minister for our united parishes is an indication that God has great plans for our future.

Phil Theaker

**“In the Name and Spirit of Jesus, we commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share our time, our talent and our material gifts as an outward sign of the treasure we hold in Jesus.”
Amen.**

John Greenleaf Whittier

CAFÉ CHURCH

As always, we continued to meet for Café Church over the summer months and it was great to see some folks come along who are usually at other activities and organisations on a Thursday night.

In June we were joined by the Clydeside Singers who led us in praising God for a full hour with modern worship songs, well-known hymns and a medley of gospel favourites. We expanded out into the station and lots of passers-by stopped to join in.

In July it was back inside our cosy café venue for a nautical themed night of all-age worship. I spoke about the Tower of Refuge in the Isle of Man and the links with the RNLi and Dr Phil Theaker spoke about the Lighthouse church in Fuerteventura. It is official – ‘Will Your Anchor Hold?’ is such a great hymn whether played on the piano, organ or indeed the accordion!

In August we were joined by our guest speaker Linda Fox who spoke about God calling her to mission work in Peru at the age of 67! Linda was an excellent speaker and everyone is looking forward to hearing Part 2 of her story in the near future.

In September we welcomed Alison Blair who talked about the importance of understanding the truth in God’s word. Gloria read for us from the book of James and we reflected on how we are called to be ‘do-ers’ of the word, not just ‘hear-ers’ of the word. Alison gifted me with her book that she has written all about her own walk with God and it’s an inspiring read!

In October we focused on the theme of ‘Love’ and Gloria read us her beautiful new poem ‘The Twinkling of an Eye’, inspired by the service of Loss and Renewal. In addition, Ewen sang ‘To God Be The Glory’. There is a brilliant line in that song: ‘so loved He the world that He gave us His son’. What better thought to ponder as we approach Christmas? With so much unrest in the world, we must hold on to the promise of God’s unfailing love and the gift of our saviour Jesus Christ.

Our promotional video is now ready to be viewed and is available on the Church of Scotland’s YouTube channel. Thank you to Rob Rawson at Faith Action for making this possible. Everyone is welcome to Café Church, whether its been a while since you attended or if you have never been before, there’s always room for more folk! Thank you and God bless you,

Lynsey Graham Pastoral Assistant

“Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

FUND RAISING



The recent coffee morning raised £360 for Gillian's Saltire Appeal. Thanks to all who helped raise this sum.



Christmas Fayre will be held on Saturday 18th November 10-12. Donations for the various stalls will be gratefully received. Home baking, home made jams or chutney's, unwanted/unused **new** gifts, raffle prizes, can be handed into the hall on Friday 17th November 2.30PM AND 3.30PM

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

The new season began with the now traditional afternoon tea and chat. It was good to see a great turnout with our regular friends although we were sorry to see some missing faces due to illness and wish them well.

Our second afternoon began on a noisy level as we raised our voices and sang along with the Karaoke machine, ably run by Keith and we were as usual led by our resident conductor John, belting out the lyrics.

Then at the next meeting we flexed our inner self with the guidance of Tai Chi master James, whose serene face as he takes us through the movements, I so envy.

An afternoon of board games helped us to use our minds and there are definitely some keen domino players amongst our friends .

An exciting programme of various activities is set for the rest of the season and will end with a Christmas Karaoke, can't wait for that one. All are welcome to these gatherings and a gentle reminder we meet on alternate Tuesday afternoons in the Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay Parish Church Hall at 2 pm.

We look forward to seeing some new faces.

Anne Organ

"James (age 4) Was listening to a Bible Story read by his Dad. His Dad read " The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city but his wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt"

Concerned James asked "What happened to the flea?"

PROPERTY REPORT

MANSE

Caroline has been carrying out regular checks of the manse, continuing in my absence. Matthew continues to cut the grass regularly. Various work has been completed but there are few items still requiring attention:

All the lights have now been replaced with LEDs except the down-lighters. The under-cabinet lights in the kitchen need to be replaced. John has all the electrical work in hand.

An Energy Performance Certificate is required and a qualified surveyor has been contacted. Prior to the Manse being occupied, electrical testing of all the appliances will be required.

The downstairs bath tap is dripping intermittently and requires a new cartridge. Replacement of the flooring in the kitchen, utility room and the three bathrooms should be considered a priority.

Some of the roof downpipes are blocked.

The first 2m of ivy from ground level up has been removed from the large sycamore tree at the gate, although Matthew says the tree is dying and will have to be cut down before it becomes dangerous.

A repair to one of the dining room patio doors is needed, the decking balustrade needs refinished and decking support beams will need replacing at some point.

Some of the fence posts for the boundary fence need replaced.

CHURCH

The lights in all ancillary areas have now been replaced with LEDs and everywhere seems much brighter. The light at the top of the stair has been repaired and can again be switched on from the top or bottom of the stairs.

In the Sanctuary, the five front windows and two of the rear windows now have open/close vents fitted. Consideration will be given as to when they should be opened and when closed bearing in mind winter is approaching. We think the quality of the air in the Sanctuary has improved and hope that this will reduce dampness in the air.

The fan in the kitchen needs replaced but may be left as the kitchen is no longer used for cooking and a lot of work would be involved. The stair fan will be replaced by a humidity-controlled fan which hopefully should address the mould problem with the walls.

The external doors have been repaired, where necessary, and repainted.

The dishwasher started up in “phantom mode” on one occasion. After use it is **absolutely essential** that it is **TURNED OFF AT THE MAIN SWITCH IN THE LITTLE HALLWAY.**

We are still awaiting the Report from the Conservation Architect (Rebecca Cadie) on improving ventilation and dealing with damp but we are anticipating that substantial excavation and installation of new drains may be required along the cliff bottom.

LONG HILL WALL

The repair saga continues with a further section of wall being knocked down, possibly intentionally. The burden of repairing this may have to be borne by the Church. The stonemason has placed barriers across the gap, the cones having been thrown down the cliff. He intends to start the work later in November.

SOUND AND SCREEN

The broadcasting of Services on YouTube continues.

CAR PARK

The vegetation surrounding the car park has been sprayed. Thank you everyone who has been helping around the Church grounds and car park and a huge thank you to John and Caroline for all their hard work over the summer.

Unfortunately, we did not manage to start clearing the garden at the South end of the Church.

David Johnston

CHURCH FLOWERS



Many thanks to all of the generous members who donate flowers to beautify the Sanctuary each Sunday.

Many in the congregation have expressed pleasure at the lovely arrangements prepared by the ladies who form our little flower group and to whom we are indebted for their time, thoughtfulness and skill.

At the close of service each Sunday, the flowers are distributed to those of our people who need a little love and cheerfulness at a difficult time and they are always received with great appreciation and happiness.

If you know of someone who could benefit from a bouquet please let one of the flower group know.

Can I also mention that there is a flower box located on the table in the vestibule where any donations can also be made.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

3rd December	1st Sunday in Advent
11.30am	Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay
	Jac Seggie
	The Christmas tree will be lit for the beginning of the Christmas Season
10.00am	Inverkip
10th December	2nd Sunday in Advent Communion
11.30am	Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay
	Rev Liz Geddes
10.00am	Inverkip
17th December	3rd Sunday in Advent
11.30am	Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay
	Phil Theaker
10.00am	Inverkip
24th December	4th Sunday in Advent Gift Service
11.30am	Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay
	Morag Cowe
24th December	Christmas Eve
10.30pm Evening	Tea/coffee Mince pies
11.30pm Evening	Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay
	Phil Theaker
25th December	Christmas Day Service
10.00am	Inverkip

“DON’T GO TO CHURCH”

The following article appeared in the Church of Scotland newsletter Balfron in 2014 when they were going through a similar change as ourselves. It makes interesting reading.

“It was a few years ago in London that I walked towards a group of teenagers wearing T-shirts with the words “Don’t go to Church” printed in large letters on the front of their tops. I must admit, my thoughts went something along the lines of, ‘Here we go again, more young people who are disillusioned about Christianity and churches, and who have turned their backs on it all.’

But it got me thinking, about this sight, so much so that I turned around when they walked past me, to follow these nice - looking youngsters with my eyes, wondering whether to talk to them. To my great amazement and delight I saw that the back of their shirts read ‘Be the Church!’ So much for jumping to conclusions! Now they really had me thinking – and smiling at the wisdom and truth of that statement:

‘Don’t go to church – be the church!’

Today, most western Christian churches live with the reality that much fewer people are in any way involved with the church. This fact brings with it the need for those who are members of churches to be ever more aware that we are all needed for the task of being the church.

It has always been true that the life of a church will be affected by the level of commitment of their members. The more people feel that by being part of the work of their church they are serving God and their neighbour, the more that congregation will be able to offer to their members and to the communities they serve.

If we don’t roll up our sleeves, no one else will. If we don’t have a vision of what it means to be God’s church in our part of the world, nobody else will. If we don’t join the discussion about what we should be doing, who will? Who will shape the life of our congregation? Who will offer their time, their talents, their money, their ideas?

We are all needed. We all have gifts to offer, according to what God has given us. At different times of our lives, we will have different things to offer. Maybe when we are 99 years old, we don’t want to paint the Session House walls any more. Maybe when we have small children, we don’t have that much spare time on our hands. But then there will be other things we can bring. For example, never underestimate the power and importance of prayer!

What is needed for our church to continue to offer God’s love to those around us, to go on serving those who are our neighbours, to be a place of hospitality and friendship where faith can grow, in that we all have a sense that we are the Church together. The Church will not survive if we treat it as a place where we just turn up occasionally when it suits us. The Church, that’s us. And together we can do

God's work.

At the beginning of a new season, when our organisations are starting their work again, let us give thanks for on-going work and look for new ideas, let us celebrate the commitment of the many folk connected with our church and invite new people to share our life and faith. Offering our gifts and our dreams towards our common life will enable us to make our church a place which is alive with laughter, joy and love for all God's children. Let's continue to be the church in ever new ways!"

Our thanks to Sigrid Marten for this article

BLYTHSWOOD SHOE BOX APPEAL 2023

The Shoe Box appeal are celebrating their 30 year Anniversary this year. They have sent more than 2.5 million boxes to places like Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

Having volunteered to help sort boxes in Glasgow last year I realised the importance of including hats, scarves and gloves in each box.



With that in mind our Church decided to ask the Congregation if they would start knitting for the boxes this year. What a response we received! We were overwhelmed with items from not only our Church members but many in the community. It was so well supported with many people saying it got them back into knitting and gave them something positive to do in the evening. We provided wool, needles and patterns to help recycle items and cut down costs for folk. Transporting the boxes incurs a cost and to help with this we have been able to

sell some of the items to raise further funds. This raised approx £500.

“Your help is needed”. The amount of knitting which was received could have filled a considerable number of boxes. It has therefore been decided that we will continue to knit scarves, hats and mittens. These should fit easily into a shoe box. In addition throughout the year we will collect small items, e.g. tooth paste. By next October we should be able to fill even more boxes. Of course we need the shoe boxes and it would be appreciated if you could start collecting these. At this time of year they get very scarce.



A huge thank you to all who helped make this such a success. We know these items will make a huge difference to those who will receive them.

Margaret Spence on behalf of the Outreach Team.

Hello from Marion

A favourite Bible verse in recent years has been '*for such a time as this*' from the Book of Esther.

For 'such a time as this' in 2020 I retired to Skelmorlie , and soon found myself at home in my new surroundings and getting to know my neighbours along with being involved in the life of the local church, making new friends .

Little did I know that this would indeed be a 'God send' when I was diagnosed with breast cancer at the beginning on 2023.

I am indebted to the my faithful drivers from Church ... A BIG THANK YOU to them and to everyone for all the cards and messages of love, support and prayers during my treatment for breast cancer.

I had my operation in July and everything went well . There will be 5 days Radiotherapy at the beginning of Oct and more treatments will follow.

Many of you have experienced cancer and know the treatments and all that is involved.

Another verse that pops up when I am feeling down and lifts my spirit, comes from Jeremiah 29:11.. where God speaks encouraging words to him as his country is about to be invaded...

'I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring about prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future full of hope'

Yes "Our God is a Great Big God, who holds up in his hands " and his faithfulness endures forever.

I try to watch the Sunday Service on line at Church time, of a Sunday morning , failing that I catch up later on .

So from the old we travel to a new future full of hope.

MONY A MICKLE MAKS A MUCKLE



Thank you to everyone who has been saving their pennies for Christian Aid. So far this year £199.80 has been collected. Every penny counts!

House Rules

**“If it’s open Close It, If it’s on the floor Pick It Up, If it’s dirty Clean It,
If it’s hungry Feed It, If it’s sad Love It.”**

TEA ROTA

Nov	19	Jean McAnna	Rosemary Johnston	Iain Jackson
	26	Mairi Spiers	Liz Grant	Lesley Gurton
Dec	3	Caroline Scott	Jean McAnna	Sheila Kerr
	10	Janet Hope	Morag Mackintosh	Rita Hollywood
	17	Anne Organ	Gladys Black	Lyn Wilson
	24	Margaret Spence	Irene Dick	Caroline Brown
	31	Barbara Dunn	Sheila McIntosh	Wilma Craig
Jan	7	Caroline Scott	Jean McAnna	Sheila Kerr
	14	Anne Organ	Gladys Black	Lyn Wilson
	21	Janet Hope	Morag Mackintosh	Rita Hollywood
	28	Margaret Spence	Irene Dick	Caroline Brown
Feb	5	Barbara Dunn	Sheila McIntosh	Wilma Craig
	12	Gwen Mackenzie	Francis Nicol	Mary Dunlop
	19	Gloria MacDonald	Rosemary Johnston	Iain Jackson
	26	Betty Bichard	Alice Smith	M McGinn

AN INVITATION TO BIBLE STUDY

This is now run by Phil Theaker, every Wednesday afternoon at 2.00pm in Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay Church hall. This session, the group will be discussing the Apostle Peter.

Everyone is welcome.

CHURCH NEWS

We warmly welcome two adherents, Catherine Campbell and Maureen Black.. We also warmly welcome Rita Hollywood and Phil Theaker as Elders.

DOOR DUTY				READER		
Nov	19	Ella Wright	Sheila Kerr		19	Caroline Scott
	26	Mary McGinn	Alice Smith		26	John Nugent
Dec	3	Muriel O'May	Iain Jackson	Dec	7	Gladys Black
	10	Jean McAnna	Gladys Black		14	Graham Harron
	17	John Nugent	Morag Mackintosh		21	Graham Harron
	24	Rita Carmichael	Brian Spence		28	Frances Nicol
	31	Anne Organ	Margaret Spence		31	Morag Mackintosh
Jan	7	Wilma Craig	Jean McAnna	Jan	7	Gladys Black
	14	Frances Nicol	Betty Bichard		14	Frances Nicol
	21	Sheila McIntosh	Barbara Dunn		21	John Nugent
	28	Liz Grant	Rita Hollywood		28	Graham Harron
Feb	4	Jean Stewart	Gwen Mackenzie	Feb	4	Shona Pew
	11	Ella Wright	Sheila Kerr		11	Erika Diffenthal
	18	Mary McGinn	Alice Smith		18	Caroline Scott
	25	Muriel O'May	Iain Jackson		25	Phil Theaker

**SHOULD YOU BE UNABLE TO DO YOUR DUTY ON YOUR ALLOCATED DATE,
IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU ARRANGE A SUBSTITUTE**

EDITORIAL

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If you have any special celebrations please let us know.



<http://www.swbchurch.co.uk>

Facebook : Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Parish Church

Church Service : On YouTube, search for "Inverkipp and Skelmorlie" (make it a favourite or bookmark).

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Treasurer : John Scott 520259

Property : David Johnston 520775