

INVERKIP CHURCH NEWSLETTER SPRING 2024



INVERKIP, SKELMORLIE & WEMYSS BAY CHURCH - EASTER SERVICES



- 24 March – Palm Sunday led by Phil Theaker
Inverkip Church – 10 am
Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Church – 11.30 am
- 25 March – Passover meal at Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Church
Hall with friends from St Joseph's & St Patrick's
Church - 7 pm
- 26 March – Service Led by Rev Liz Geddes
Inverkip Church – 7 pm
- 27 March – Service Led by Lynsey Graham
Inverkip Church – 7 pm
- 28 March – Maundy Thursday service: led by Ref Liz Geddes
Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Church – 7 pm
- 29 March – Good Friday service: Led by Jac Seggie
Inverkip Church – 7 pm
- 31 March – Easter Sunday
Sunrise Service outside Inverkip Church - 7 am
followed by bacon rolls in the Hall
- Family Easter Sunday service: Led by the Worship
Group
Inverkip Church – 10 am
Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Church – 11.30 am



INTERIM MODERATOR

Karen Harbison

Dear Friends

In the west end of Greenock and Gourock, six Church of Scotland congregations work together under the name 'CONNECT – a new way of living faith and being church'. We try to provide opportunities and ways for people across the congregations to connect with God, to connect with each other and to connect with our community.

This season of Lent we are meeting together for Lent lunchtime services followed by lunch, we are having a mid week mid Lent evening event 'A Pause in the Pilgrimage' and we have produced a Lent devotional booklet.

Not only in this season of Lent, but in the journey we now undertake together as Inverkip, Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Church, we are trying to make connections as people in our congregations get to know each other better and seek to serve our villages and reach out to support others through our charity collections and more.

It is an exciting time for the congregation as we look forward in due course to electing a Nominating Committee and searching for a new minister. There are various procedural matters that have to be attended to, to enable this process to happen. The Kirk Session is working hard on these matters and on bringing structures and people together. Please offer them your support and prayers over the next weeks and months.

After Lent and Holy Week, we celebrate the life, light and hope in the dawn of Easter Sunday. May you know that life, light and hope in your hearts.

With best wishes

Karen

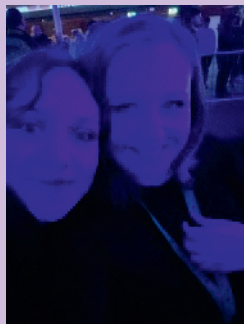
PASTORAL ASSISTANT

Lynsey Graham

What an exciting 2024 it's been already - starting the year as one united church and with our Service of Union a great success. It was an honour to lead the prayers on the night on behalf of the Worship Team and mention all the work that has gone into the years of linkage.



I am forever telling my patients to make time to do things other than work so this year I am going to follow my own advice! With that in mind, in January Sarah and I travelled to London, exploring Eton and going to the theatre in Richmond. We enjoyed Sunday brunch in Royal Windsor after attending a service at the United Reformed Church there. The congregation there have been through a union of several churches and all agreed we were very blessed to have 2 churches so close by joining together and they promised to keep us in prayer going forward.



In February it was off to Belfast, Bangor and Derry-Londonderry for more sightseeing. I had planned to write a sermon on the ferry but one thing led to another and somehow booked myself into the onboard Spa instead. Folks, this is now officially the only way to travel anywhere!

Closer to home, we enjoyed a fantastic night of worship seeing Northern Ireland's own Christian band The Rend Collective at the O2 Academy in Edinburgh. God was really glorified as a huge crowd of good natured Scots cheered, sang in fine voice (many with a tear of emotion in the eye), all looking out for one another and with a common interest. The whole thing put us in mind of the Six Nations which is also keeping us entertained at the moment!

Throughout the tournament in our house there have been moments of hoarseness – particularly when it comes to referee's decisions (!) but thankfully for Scotland rugby fans the Bible teaches us to remain the same despite our circumstances. Whether we feel like we 'win' or 'lose' in life God has the ultimate victory.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” John 16:33

God bless you
Lynsey

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Another lovely Christmas Eve Nativity service took place in December with all the children and parents helping out. It was lovely to see so many visitors, some of my family from London and Denmark came along and Abigail was back home from Spain!

Jennifer sang a solo It Was on a Starry Night and Jimmy read a poem The Gifts I'd Leave Beneath Your Tree, while our fantastic Sunday School delivered their lines with humour and enthusiasm. The best one-liner of the night goes to Mary (played by Ellie) 'I knew we should have booked in advance Joseph, this is all your fault!' Praise God for having a Mary with a wee bit of attitude!

In the reflection I had to apologise for promising that my baby nephew would play Jesus

as when my sister heard I had cast him in the role: well, lets just say she wasn't too keen! In the end, Jesus was played by Lucy's sister's doll 'Noah' and we heard how ALL the children played the part of Jesus – the narrator because He is The Word of God, the angels because He brings us peace, Mary and Joseph because He is a loving parent, the innkeepers because He goes to prepare a 'stable' place just for us, the star because He is the light in the dark who shows us the way, the wisemen because Jesus is king, the shepherds because He is the good shepherd and last but not least the donkey (played by Mikey) because Jesus carries us on the journey through life, particularly when we are too weak to carry ourselves.

In January the children requested to do some crafts and learn some new songs so we have been making stained glass windows and painting wooden crosses and stones to 'hide' on the beach. We are learning some new worship songs, using actions to help remember the words.

Please can I just say a special thank you to our anonymous donor who gave us money for Christmas treats for the children. They all received a selection box and the older children a Bible Society Christmas book and the younger ones a Bible Verse colouring book and crayons, all of which were very much appreciated. **Lynsey**



SESSION CLERK - Ewen Cameron

It has been a very busy start to the year, and we have been blessed by the worship group continuing to provide excellent services Sunday after Sunday.

We had a very well attended Service of Union in Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay Church on 16th January and it was great to see many people from the Churches and from out with our congregation attending and providing support.



By the end of April, we will have a Nominating Committee, who will be in the process of completing the Parish Profile and then we will be able to call a Minister.

The previous two Sessions have come together and have had two joint Session meetings and several of the groups have met to discuss and plan for the future of our Union.

We now have one Facebook page and one Church website, details of which will be in the newsletter. It is planned to have one newsletter going forward with details of Skelmorlie, Wemyss Bay and Inverkip all included.

If you would like to assist with any of the Church groups, please contact either myself or your Elder to discuss how you can provide your time and talents to the Church. We will certainly be able to offer our skills to Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay and vice versa.

This year we have several weddings booked which is great and something to look forward to.

It seems that this year we have lots to look forward to and with Spring comes new life and longer days.

On a personal note, Abigail is going to be travelling in Peru for a month when her school year in Pamplona is finished in June. Such a fantastic trip planned with a climb to Machu Pichu. Abigail will be back in August for her final year at Strathclyde University and then is planning on going away once she graduates for a year teaching English in France.

Thanks again for all your support and I hope you have a wonderful Spring.

Kind regards

Ewen

LIGHT NIGHT

We held the popular Light Night again within the Church grounds on Sunday 3rd December, celebrating the Light that came into the world at Christmas. There was an opportunity to add a prayer disc to our Christmas tree and to light a candle in memory of a loved one. There was mulled wine and hot drinks on offer and gifts of toys for our annual appeal for the Salvation Army were brought along.



TOP TEAM COMPETITION

Congratulations to the Inverkip Country Dancers who retained their trophy after a closely fought battle with the Skelmorlie Scout Leaders. Thanks to everyone who participated.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Jacqueline Seggie



It turns out that the winter newsletter was my last official post as treasurer. John Scott has kindly agreed to be the official treasurer for Inverkip, Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay Church (at least initially). I'm not off the hook though and will continue to be part of the finance group.

In the first couple of months of 2024 I've been busy preparing the 2023 accounts for Inverkip church. They are in good shape but I can't share my report yet as I'm waiting on feedback from the independent examiner. I'll share in the Annual Stated Meeting in due course and publish in summer newsletter.

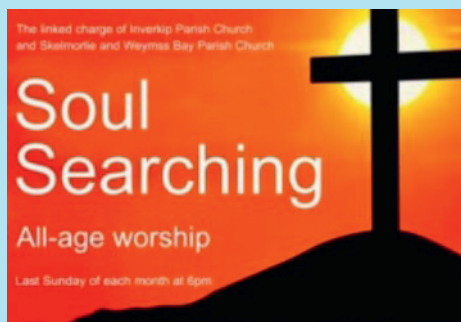
The finance group is in the process of combining the finances of the two churches. There is quite a bit of work involved but we had a good initial meeting to agree on steps to be taken and will keep you updated on our progress. If anyone is interested in joining the finance group then please let me or John know. We can provide training if needed.

Thank you.

Jac

SOUL SEARCHING

Soul searching returned after the Christmas break on 8th February. Outside the weather was dreich but there were a few hardy souls that made it and we enjoyed a wonderful evening of Scottish poems and songs in celebration of both our faith and culture.



After sharing fellowship/welcome from Morag, Ian read “To a Mouse” by Robert Burns and then Graham read the parable of the rich fool from Luke’s gospel. Lynsey’s reflection tied the two together so well and then Jennifer beautifully sang “A man’s a man for a that” with the group joining in for last verse. Of course we had to end the evening with “Auld Lang Syne” but spoilsport Morag wouldn’t let us run in and out of the circle lol. Probably for the best!

A special thanks to the Stewardship Committee for giving us inspiration for this month’s theme and sharing their devotional. And to Keith on sound and screen.

Our next meeting is on 14th March at Inverkip church hall. Hopefully the weather will be kinder to us. All welcome! We promise it will be a fun evening and is suitable for all ages.

Jac, Ian, Morag, Siona, Lynsey, Graham, Muriel, Jennifer, Phil



On 1 January 2024 our churches became the united charge of Inverkip Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Church with permission to call a minister.

Both church buildings will be retained and services held at 10 am in Inverkip Church and 11.30 am in Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay church.

A wonderful Service of Union took place on the evening of 16 January 2024 in Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Church. The service was led on behalf of the Church of Scotland Presbytery of Clyde by Rev David Burt, Moderator and Minister of Old Gourrock & Ashton, linked with Greenock St Ninian's, Rev Robbie Hamilton, Presbytery Clerk and Rev Teri Peterson, Minister of Gourrock St John's. There were also many representatives present from Presbytery. Our pastoral assistant Lynsey Graham led us in prayer, and readings were by Ewen Cameron and Rita Carmichael, session clerks of both churches. There was a great attendance from both congregations who enjoyed a very moving and uplifting service full of inspirational guidance and beautiful hymns. Following the service there was an opportunity to further our fellowship with lovely refreshments in the church hall.

The service can still be viewed on the church's Youtube channel using the following link-

https://www.youtube.com/live/c_M3xfIQzbg?si=hdd0tPFWJ_pUKaXy



SENIORS KEEP FIT

It's the start of a new era for our church, could it be one for you too? For those of you who don't know about it, our Fitness class is on every Friday from 10 till 11am. Rather than me write about the class, here are some comments from Grace Gilchrist (our instructor) and several group members...

There is a strong community feel before, during, and after, each session allowing you meet new people that, in turn, improves your health and well-being. ... *Grace*

Our members don't just stay with us, they encourage their friends to come along too.

Age is no barrier.

I love the mix of routines and Grace provides a great selection of music.

You are NOT too old to join.

I enjoy the company every week.

Although you don't think you move much, the muscles do get lots of exercise.

As the previously sole male attending, I am delighted to welcome a new male recruit: Just shows how welcoming the group is.

Class numbers are quite high at the moment, however if you are interested to see what we do, please come along on a Friday morning. Try-outs are free! These photographs are from different years!

Anne Skedd



FOODBANK AND STARTER PACK COLLECTION

Your continued support for these wonderful organisations is even more important with rising costs which will hit the poor harder than ever.

Here are the dates for March-June collections at the Church Hall

Tuesday 19 Mar, 16 Apr, 14 May, 18 June 6 - 7 pm

Wednesday 20 Mar, 17 Apr, 15 May, 19 June 1 - 3 pm

On these dates we can also take **Newspapers/magazines/envelopes** for recycling by White House Products, plus **Old Spectacles** and **Stamps**. We received a cheque for £190.35 from White House



Foodbank- Tinned Fruit and Meat, Rice Pudding, Custard, UHT Milk, Breakfast Cereals, Soup, Rice, Pasta Sauce, Tinned Veg, Beans, Coffee, Tea Bags, Sugar, Biscuits and Snacks.

Starter Packs - Ladies, Gents and Children's Toiletries, Kitchen and Bathroom Cleaners, Kitchen and Toilet Rolls, Dish Cloths and Scourers. Good quality bedding and towels but only new duvets. Dishes, pots and pans.

EASTER EGGS WOULD BE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED FOR THE CHILDREN





**KEEP
CALM**

AND

DO NOT TOUCH THE
THERMOSTAT

CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS

Can all scheduled hall users please notify me when they are not meeting. Thank you.

Joyce Brown - 01475 521215/07800816164

joycekbrown@hotmail.com

If you experience any problems with the heating in the Church Halls please contact-
Jim Brown - 07399449094



CHURCH FLOWERS

Once again, thanks to all who contribute to putting flowers in the Church, Sunday by Sunday, and to all who help deliver them. If you would like to help by putting flowers in the Church please let me know as they are always greatly appreciated by anyone who receives them.

COUNTRY DANCING

It seems amazing that our class will soon be finishing for the summer. We have two new members this year (including a man) During the summer break some of us travel to Troon every Monday to Summer Dancing. Some people also go to the Greenock Ball. Others just enjoy a Thursday night, so there is no pressure to go to these things. Just come for fun and enjoyment. Our last night this session is Thursday 21st of March, when we invite the Skelmorlie group to join us.

We start back in September and would love to see new faces. Come and join us. Country Dancing is good exercise for both body and mind.

Kathleen



FAMILY NEWS

Special Birthday

Ann McIntosh

Happy Retirement

**Aileen & George
Darroch**

New Arrival Ben Hanley

**Mum & Dad, Stephen &
Jennifer**

**Grandparents, Willie &
Norma Hanley
Hugh & Carmen Boyd**



Newly Weds



**Steven & Jennifer
Roche**

New Arrival

**Ember, Mum & Dad
Myles & Shannon**

**Nanna Linda Murphy &
Gran Lisa O'Neil**

The following Church Member has sadly passed away since the last newsletter:

Congratulations on your Retirement -

Catherine Docherty

FAMILY NEWS CONTD

Congratulations to all New Arrivals



Rory O'Donnell, Mum & Dad Katie & Anthony
Grandparents Jan & Alan Clark, Teresa O'Donnell

Luna Mae Morrison, Mum & Dad Sheena & Craig

Grandparents Alan & Christine Houston

Great Grandparents the late Norma & Alex Houston



Blake Anderson, Mum & Dad Lynn & Jonny
Grandparents, Billy & Jean Anderson and
Iain & Kay Anderson

Congratulations to Dr Lauren Gillies Walker who completed her phd Viva in November 2023. Lauren studied an Undergraduate and Masters in psychology before going on to achieve her phd in psychology/computer engineering. Lauren is due to graduate June 2024.

THE SCOUTS

The Scouts spent a few evenings before and after Christmas working on the Astronomer Badge which was kindly laid on by the Inverclyde Skywatchers Astronomy Group. They covered some of the main constellations and facts about the night sky, and made their own telescopes to use at home.

They also had a visit from Alfie Ingram of Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance who gave them a fascinating insight into the workings of the air ambulance service in our country.

And groups of the Scouts gave their time to help Inverclyde Foodbank at their food collection at Tesco Greenock in December.



More recently, they have taken over the waterfront training pool for two swimming assessment sessions where they gained different levels of the swimmers badge.

And the adrenalin pumped again when they visited Scotkart in Clydebank for race sessions. Well done to Austin and Nicholas who put in the fastest times in their groups.

For part of their World Challenge badge, they visited Glasgow Central Mosque to learn about another faith.

Their host Amir met them in the courtyard during evening prayers and told them about the history of the building, before going on a tour. They talked about the people who raised funds to build it, to its ongoing role as a vaccination centre for Glasgow following the recent pandemic.

A huge thanks to Inverclyde Skywatchers, Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance, Inverclyde Foodbank and customers and staff at Tesco Greenock and Amir from Glasgow Mosque who was a fantastic host and kept the Scouts captivated throughout.



Andy Yarr

I. Scout @ 85th G&D

Mob: +44 7747 457 320

THE CUBS

The Cubs recently visited the Greenock Police Station as part of our Personal Safety Badge and celebrated Burns Night and Chinese New Year and also researched Charities like Unicef as part of the Global Issues badge. The next few months up to the end of Term is going to be a busy time for the Cub Sections. We will be attending Inverclyde Leisure for Ice Skating, participating in our usual litter picks, a Spring Camp at South Newton, Powerboating, our Group Camp at Everton, a sleepover at the Sea Life Centre at Loch Lomond and to top that off we have decided to run a Summer Camp in July to an adventure camp at Fordell Firs in Dunfermline. All of these exciting activities are part of the Cubs badgework.



Some of our Leader, parents and supporters will be taking part in the Glasgow Kiltwalk to raise funds for the Group so checkout our Facebook page for further information on how to support us.

More exciting news: the Group are starting a Squirrel Section for 4-6 year olds at Inverkip. So if anyone is interested then please email Heather at 85thsquirrels@gmail.com for further information. Thank you to Inverkip Church for their continued support.

If you are interested in finding out more about our Cub Pack and getting involved with any of our Sections, then please contact Janice at the contact details below.

Yours in Scouting
Janice McAdam
GSL/CSL/ADC (Cubs)
85th Inverkip Cubs -
85thinverkipcubs@gmail.com

Heather Lenno
Cub and Squirrel Section Leader
85th Wemyss Bay Cubs - 85thWemyssbaycubs@gmail.com



85th GREENOCK & DISTRICT BEAVERS

This edition is the turn of our Wemyss Bay Colony to share our adventures.



We have been exploring our culture by working on the 'Scottish Thistle Challenge'. We have been learning traditional songs, acting out the legends of the Kelpies and the Fairy Flag of Dunvegan, tasting traditional food and drink and planning menus which showcase Scottish produce.



We have celebrated Lunar New Year and the start of the year of the dragon. We learnt to use chopsticks and found out our fortunes for the year ahead.

We have just completed our Emergency Aid badges. We found out the best people to contact in different situations. We reassured our casualties and learned how to help with minor injuries until help arrives.



After Easter we will be spending as much of the summer term as possible outdoors exploring the local area and using the fantastic natural resources on our doorstep. This has become our annual tradition and is always a highlight of our year.

Beavers is open to children aged 6-8. We have a small number of spaces across Inverkip and Wemyss Bay. If your child is interested in joining us, please get in touch.

Ilona Buckley
DGSL/ BSL (Wemyss Bay)
85thwemyssbaybeavers@gmail.com

PROPERTY GROUP

Now that the two churches are one, the Property Group has begun to merge with our counterpart at Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay - a process that will take some time. There have been previous instances where the respective groups have shared resources and experience but, going forward, we are starting to do so as a matter of course. It is giving us fresh ideas and interest!



The manse has been vacated by the long-term tenants and a decision regarding its future is to be made by the Kirk Session. Most obviously, it could be sold or re-let, but there are other potential options for consideration. If you are good at thinking outside the box, please let us know of your suggestions! Meantime, the Property Group has been

obtaining information that will help with the decision-making process.

Regular readers of the Newsletter will know that a warm welcome is always promised to anyone wishing to join the Property Group, be it on a regular or ad hoc basis. It is an opportunity to give of time and talents (Luke 6:38), and learn new skills. You can be assured your contribution will be recognised and appreciated. On that score, may I thank all members of the Property Group (including those at Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay, of course!), for their splendid work and pleasant company.

Susie Gemmill

Property Convenor

This is the last Newsletter in the present format and the next issue will be a combined Newsletter for the united churches - Inverkip, Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay. Thank you for all of your contributions and please continue to send any news or photos to the email address below

inverkipchurchnewsletter@gmail.com



**SAT.
23RD MARCH**

7.30PM, LYLE KIRK,
UNION ST, GREENOCK

GREENOCK PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

presents

MOZART REQUIEM

Conductor - Nicholas Wilks
with Glasgow Chamber Orchestra



Soloists: Sarah Power,
Sarah Shorter, Connor
Smith & Colin Murray

Tickets £15 (under 18s free) - refreshments
included.

For tickets, contact - 07847 250529 or 01475
673574, or info@greenockphilharmonic.co.uk

www.greenockphilharmonic.co.uk

Registered Charity: SCO31326

THE GUILD

We have had a variety of speakers who have come to share their experiences and travels with us over the last session. We had a Bell Ringing group who came to entertain us and gave us the opportunity to try bell ringing for ourselves. It was fun.



We had our Guilds Together meeting here at Christmas. It was lovely to have so many Guild members join us from other Guilds. It was an afternoon of carols and Christmas readings and poems. A representative of the Waterfront Centre , Erskine came to collect a cheque from the combined Guilds. Our church had a special collection to go to this project, where we donated £174.

The Guild World Day of Prayer will be held this year in St Patrick's and St Joseph's church. Speakers from all three churches will take part.

We donated £100 to each of our three charities- Pioneers, Beat and UNIDA.

We had a lovely Christmas lunch at Clyde Kitchen and are hoping to go back to the new venue for our end of session lunch.

It's amazing where the time goes as there are only two meeting left.

We will be back in October and would love to see some new faces come to join us.

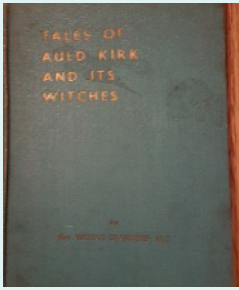
Kathleen



SWI are now in final two meetings of this session, our speaker for March is Frances Dunlop about Auchindrain township museum, and our AGM is in April.

We hope everyone has a lovely summer and look forward to seeing you in September.

Kate MacPhail
Secretary



TALES OF AULD KIRK AND ITS WITCHES

By Rev William Crawford. MC

Continued from the previous issue:

The Good Old Days Contd

Today we are much concerned with the question of housing and the need of homes for the people. What kind of houses did they have then? Well, they were built of rough stones loosely held together with no mortar. The holes were stuffed with straw or bracken. The floor was the bare earth. Many were one roomed cottages where the cattle, in winter, were housed at one end and the family at the other with no partition between. For heat, there was a peat fire burning at the centre. The acrid peat smoke filled the whole place and escaped lazily at a whole cut in the thatched roof.

If we paid a visit at mealtime we would see a rough table draw near to the fire. In the centre of the table would be a big bowl full of porridge, kail or sowans. That latter was a dish made principally from the husks of corn. Potatoes did not enter into general use till late in the century.

The family seat themselves round the table, A blessing is asked. Each then, with a horn spoon, helps Himself or herself out of the common dish, which is replenished from the pot on the fire. On rare occasions there may have been mutton or meat of some sort, and then fingers and teeth were used to make up for the absence of knife or fork.

When the simple meal was over, the table was moved back to its place and the members of the family gathered round the peat fire, their toes almost touching one another. In in one corner stood spinning wheel, while the mother busied herself with needle and shears “*garin auld claes look maist as weel’s the new.*”

Little thought was given in those days to the need of sanitation and cleanliness. The science of hygiene, such as we know it today, was undreamt of. In fact cleanliness was, on the whole, suspect. Dirt was not considered an enemy but a friend. The current expressions such as “the clartier the easier,” and “the more muck, the more luck” give an indication of wide popular belief. A bath was risky adventure and a rare occurrence, indulged only in the homes of a few

“they lived above the foulest drains, They breathed the foulest air.”

In the cities, matters we're not much better. It was the habit, in the proud city of Edinburgh, to wait until darkness had fallen before the householder opened the window to pour forth the off-scourings and dirty water into the street. Scavengers swept it clean again in the early morning. The cry of "Gardez Loo" from the French *gardez l'eau* – mind the water was first supposed to be shouted as a warning. It was not always effective, for many a fine gallant, hurrying home late, was angered, and many drunken roysterer suddenly sobered, when they found themselves drenched in a cataract of filth!

It is no surprise to learn that, as a result of such conditions, the health of the people should greatly suffer. Complaints of all kinds were rife, sickness very common and rheumatism, fever and ague claimed many victims and cut short their lives

At stated periods disease and plague spread with amazing swiftness throughout the countryside. Smallpox under still more dreaded scourge of cholera or card many times throughout the century (once as late as a year 1847); and there were instances, in the county of Renfrew Shire, when, as a result of its dread visitation, one third of the population were swept away, the rate of mortality being highest among the children.

It did not help to lessen these evils Nora rose a spirit to overcome them to know David accepted without murmur. Nothing could be done about it. "What had to be, just had to be" it was God's will so why rebel against it. It is pitiful to think of it! God's will was not the cause of it but their ignorance of the rudimentary laws of health and the easy tolerance with which they viewed the presence of dirt.

The social conditions that existed were greatly influenced by the use of liquor. This. Of Scottish social life was marked by its excessive use. Drink was the curse of the century. It was partaking at all times, present on every table under, in communal gatherings, ale and whiskey were consumed in large quantities. No function was complete without it. This applied specially to christenings, marriages and funerals, particularly the funerals. A burial was a great occasion. It never took place without a bountiful supply of ale and tobacco. More was regularly spent on the liquor provided than on the obsequies themselves. "It was" as one sagely remarks, "a dangerous thing then to live, an expensive thing to die but a ruinous thing to be buried." All had to conform to the custom. The current session, who are responsible for the burial of every poor person, had always to set aside a sum 4 drink and tobacco. The day of mourning was turned into a day of feasting. It was, indeed, not an unusual thing for many of the mourners to arrive at the place of Interment in a more or less maudlin condition. In the case of the burial of the mother of Forbes of Culloden, we're told, the whole company, after a lavish entertainment, arrived at the graveyard only to find that they had left the body behind!

The regular custom was, in those old days and it persists still in many parts of Scotland, always to carry the body, and relays, to the graveyard. At a highland funeral The Beatles had marched along in silence for an hour in the hot sun. There was still some distance to go. The body they were carrying was that of a garrulous old woman who, during her lifetime, had seldom been heard to speak a good word of anybody. They trump on some further distance in silence. At length the leader turned round and wiping the sweat from his brow with one hand, said," pit her doon lads; pit her doon. There's nae use makin 'a toil o' a pleasure."

Another imposition, which our fathers suffered was the Press Gang. The country was at war with the French. The Navy could not get enough men to mine the ships; under law was passed by the Government giving power to impress men into the Service. Authorities were asked for their assistance.

At first the press gang worked openly, in towns like Greenock, seaman proceeding to their merchant vessels, would find themselves suddenly surrounded, their resistance overcome and impounded for service in the Navy. In time, however the press gang became most unpopular. Whenever they appeared, the fierce anger of the population was aroused against them; and the authorities found it more and more difficult to prevent the intense feelings of resentment from breaking out into a riot.

The press gang had perforce to seek quieter scenes for its activities; and Inverkip Bay offered an ideal situation. There is no record of how many suddenly found themselves thus seized and carried off. Perhaps a lover walking out with his intended bride, or the father of a young family taking a quiet stroll after a day's work, or the young lad the only support of his widowed mother. It was all the same. They all likewise disappeared, and nothing made ever be heard of them for years once taken there was no escape the punishment for a deserter was very severe, he was stripped to the waist and flogged, before the whole ship's company" to within an inch of his life." Years ago, there was pointed out to me an old stone in the churchyard. It had sunk so deep that the name carved on it was no longer visible what the story as it was told to me, I have never forgotten. The man in question was at work near the shore. With a hayfork, he was turning over some newly mown hay. The sound of a boat crunching on the gravel of the beach made him stop and turn his head. The sight of a number of men in naval dress hurriedly landing and making their way towards him galvanised him in action. Carrying the hayfork, he began the race of his life. The sailors slowly gained on him, but he reached the friendly shelter of a house near the gardens. There was no time to open the door. So, facing his pursuers he fiercely defended himself with the hay fork the noise of the scuffle quickly brought others to his assistance and the press gang were compelled to beat a hasty retreat.

In a corner of the old churchyard, there stands an old shed used as the present day, to hold tools for the grave diggers. It was really built, in the early days of the last century for another purpose and an interesting story is attached to it.

Towards the end of the 18th century, there began a series of graveyard robberies committed by a body of men who came to be known by the name of resurrectionists.

Undisturbed by any feeling of respect for the dead, anxious only to enrich themselves - a dead body would bring £10 and upwards - They went from graveyard to graveyard on their gruesome business. Waiting till the darkness had fallen, they worked swiftly and silently hardly daring to show the light of a solitary candle frequently the body would be lifted and taken away On the same day as Interment; And the body snatchers seldom left any trace behind.

Search happenings created widespread feelings of indignation mingled with horror. Societies sprung up everywhere to put a stop to them and guard the sanctity and peace of the grave. In the year 1828 the inner cap burial committee was formed, and it would be the duty of its members to appoint a watch every night after a big deal in the churchyard for this purpose the watch house was built and is still there today.

The trade in dead bodies went on for many a long year until the notorious Burke and Hare exposures brought it two ahead and so inflamed public opinion that the scandalous traffic was shortly thereafter brought to an end.

I do not doubt that many of the descriptions given of the social life in Scotland in the 18th century will come as a surprise to many; but the facts are well authenticated. The Lord of our forefathers, in those times was a hard one. They loved laborious days. Life to them was often a stern and grim struggle against poverty, hunger on sickness. The injured impatience, every ill that human flesh is heir to. Of the comforts that we take for granted today they had none.

In spite of these privations, It might be because of them, Other fathers gained a reputation and achieve the character for honesty, independence and thrift, which, in the great days of immigration, they carried with them into every quarter of the world. Their religion may seem to us shrouded in gloom, it's discipline stabbing and severe, under faith not oh unlimited; yet it gained for them an imposing and inspiring dignity which is so lacking in the laxity that prevails today.

The good old days we call them. They were not good old days. They were bad old days, and everywhere to wake up among them, we would speedily wish ourselves back again in the days in which we live, our nation has just come through a long and terrible war. We are facing now a crisis in our history and are engaged in a struggle for survival. Strict and jet stricter rationing is in force. Dark on perilous days still lie ahead, yet if we pull together and keep the spirit animated in the days of war, we will win through to better and brighter times.

Thanks to Jim Brown for transcribing the text from the original publication.



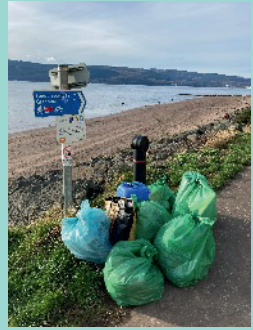
BADMINTON

If you fancy a game of Badminton just come along on Mondays at 7.45 pm to Inverkip Church Hall. Everyone 15 years and over will be most welcome, no experience necessary, and some rackets available. The aim is to get a wee bit of exercise and have fun. £2 per night.

Carole Gordon 7967846449

ECO GROUP

It's hard to believe it is springtime already, it seems no time since we were celebrating Christmas! The eco group had a month off litter picking in December but resumed once again in the New Year. In 2023 the LitterKippers collected a total of **178** bin bags of litter from around our community, 65 of which were sorted for recycling, and does not include all the larger fly tipped items unable to be bagged. Later this month we will be taking part in the Spring Clean Scotland



campaign with Keep Scotland Beautiful and are delighted that the Beavers and Cubs of the 85th Scout Group will be helping out once again! As part of the KSB campaign running from 15th March until 28th April, our local Literati Guide To Inverclyde is organising The Big Clyde Beach Clean with volunteer groups attempting to clean as much of our Clyde coastline as possible from Parklea down to Wemyss Bay!

Our thanks go to all the volunteers who have turned out in all weathers to help to make a difference to our community and local environment, and to staff from Inverclyde Council for the provision of litter picking equipment, bags and for the collection of the rubbish afterwards.

Our newspaper and magazine collection has continued throughout the year and delivered regularly to White House Products in Port Glasgow, who shred them and use to package their products. A small donation is made per kilo, and over the past year, the accumulated total was 1903.5kg (nearly 2 metric tonnes!) with a projected donation of £190.35 which will be used to replace litter picking equipment.

The church continues to have monthly collections for Inverclyde Foodbank and Starter Packs Inverclyde.

Over the past year the group continues to promote local fair trade events and global issues through social media. It is hoped that a monthly fair trade stall will be able to resume in the coming months.

The Eco group will also use this opportunity again to offer refills of eco friendly washing up liquid, previously popular with many members.

Refills and many other eco and plastic free products can be purchased at local shop Invereco, in Greenock and members are encouraged to give this great wee business our support.

Our thanks go to all those who continue to support our eco initiatives, and we look forward to being able to continue and develop over the year to come. **Lynne McBain**

What is Christian Unity?

As a number of you know, I spend quite a bit of time with my daughter in Fuerteventura. While I am there, I attend the services and Bible study of the local Anglican Chaplaincy. I am intrigued with the unity and fellowship between the members of this group, as they come from a wide range of denominational backgrounds, but display a real brotherhood and sisterhood between each other. Since I am writing from there at the moment, and mindful of the process we are currently working through back home, I thought it would be useful to look at what the Bible says about unity.

In Psalm 133: 1 we read: *How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!* There's probably not a better starting point than this, but where does the idea of unity with each other and with God come from? Going back further to the book of Deuteronomy (11: 13) we have an example of one of the many times God told the Children of Israel about how to live in unity with Him: *So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.....* that they would be blessed, but if they didn't, the opposite would result. Jesus said something very similar in John 15: 10: *If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.* It is still if, but Jesus doesn't give an alternative, thus for Jesus' followers, the expectation was complete, there could be no buts.

God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, expect us to follow the commands laid out in the Bible and by doing that, we will be in unity with them, and also with each other. I know there are times when we do disagree with each other, have different ideas about how to manage the church, our family relationships, our dealings with people we necessarily have contact with.

As I read on the Biblestudytools.com website: *Life is messy, relationships are messy. Times of stress can strain relationships and we end up hurting each other and destroying the unity we have worked hard for. Satan's goal is to destroy our unity. Let's fight together toward living in peace and harmony. God has given us the ability to be patient, kind, and loving through actions and words.* We do need to be aware that Satan's goal is to destroy our unity. Keeping unity is a spiritual battle; we don't have to try and get it right by ourselves; Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus: (4:3) *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.* The New Testament writers give us many excellent examples and tips to help us:

What is Christian Unity ? Contd

Paul wrote to the Philippians (2: 1-4) *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

Keeping unity was of great importance to Paul, since for his fledgling churches to have division within their numbers, meant that Satan was getting a foothold and consequently diluting the Holy Spirit's power in these churches. He wrote to the church in Colossae: (3: 13) *Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

John then wrote sometime later: (1 John 4: 12) *No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.* And Peter wrote: (1 Peter 3: 8) *Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.* I feel I need write no more, do look the passages up and see the wider context. Unity is something that God expects from us as Christians.

Phil Theaker

**Monday Lunches continue
until 25 March 12.00-13.30
Inverkip Church Hall**



**Christian Aid Event - 19 May
More details soon**



Kip Fest 7th, 8th, 9th June



Inverkip War Memorial Project

Since the last newsletter, there has been a lot of promotional activity, mainly via social media and some exciting developments!

The first phase of the website was launched in December which was a momentous event in the timeline of the research project. This involved a significant amount of work and careful planning of the design to ensure it was both respectful and informative. The first phase includes biographies, photographs and documents relating to the 29 men on the war memorial, as well as testimonials and some information regarding the background to the project. Future phased releases are planned to include other Inverkip-related servicemen, information on the memorial itself, including its unveiling and other relevant areas of research.

Please visit: <https://www.theiwm.co.uk/> and take a look at the site and sign up to the mailing list where registered users will be the first to hear about new information published on the site and a forum where comments/new information can be added. Feel free to get involved!

Following the website launch, there has been activity to promote the site and visitors to the site in the first few months include those in America, South Africa and Vietnam which is very exciting!

The website has been featured in the March edition of Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine which will hopefully generate additional interest. The website is now also listed in the following groups:

Inverclyde Heritage Network

Scottish Local History Forum

Community Archives & Heritage Group

Society for One Place Studies



In addition, Inverclyde Council have kindly added the website link to their own webpage on the war memorials in the area. The link has also been added to War Memorials Online, run by the War Memorials Trust. A recent article in the Greenock Telegraph on the website launch was also very much appreciated to help publicise the project and hopefully encourage contributions.

In January, the war memorial was shown briefly on an episode of Channel 4's property programme 'Love It or List It' where a couple who lived in Strathaven went to view a property at Kip Marina.



Visits have taken place recently to Dunkeld, the birthplace of the Private George McIntosh and Burntisland, where Private George Wales (formerly of Inverkip Cottage) is also remembered on the war memorial in the town and Liberton Cemetery in Edinburgh where he is listed on the war memorial, as well as the Wales family headstone.



The project is hoping to attend the Inverclyde Heritage Fair in Greenock on Saturday 18th May – we would love to welcome anyone who wants to find out more and hear about the latest research findings. Recently, there has also been interest from British Forces Radio with potential to be interviewed for one of their programmes – a very exciting development!

Please keep an eye on the Facebook page, our Instagram and X (Twitter) accounts for updates.

Hilary Fyfe

theiwm@outlook.com

AT THE BIRD TABLE

Ten years ago (can you believe I've been doing these articles for such a while?) I began my epistle with a joke that an album by the late Michael Jackson was called "Bad" because he couldn't spell "Atrocious" – apologies to all Michael Jackson fans but "atrocious" just about sums up the weather over the last few months. I know we shouldn't complain as most parts of the country have really suffered badly because of blizzards, ice, storm force winds and rain and the effects will take weeks, if not months, to be remedied. I think we've been very fortunate in this area but who can tell what may come our way before the summer because of climate change.

Europe has, like the British Isles, been affected by the same extremes of weather and consequently I don't think that we have had the influx of birds seeking better conditions and food supplies normally associated with harsh winters on the Continent. I'll have to wait until the RSPB publishes its next magazine to see the larger picture.

Due to the bad weather, I haven't been out a great deal but I've been keeping watch on the bird feeders in the garden. I have a couple of fat-ball feeders, a Niger seed feeder, a seed feeder, a fat-cake feeder and of course water dishes. There have been fewer species at the feeders but Avian flu may have been the reason. No Siskins, Greenfinches, or Thrushes. However, the usual garden birds, Goldfinches, Blue, Coal, Great and Long-Tailed Tits, Robins and Dunnocks etc. were there in reasonable numbers, vying with Crows, Magpies, Rooks, and squirrels.

It was all very normal until, while in the garden, I spotted a small bird flitting about in the Rowan Tree. Too early for Warblers I thought so hurried back indoors and got the binoculars handy. I also asked my wife to keep a lookout and to give me a shout if she saw anything unusual. I had another sighting that day but was unable to confirm the identity however I set up a camera and kept an eye on the seed feeder.

Next morning I saw the bird on the feeder and ran towards the kitchen shouting "GOLDCREST" and met my wife coming out of the kitchen also yelling "GOLDCREST."



During the next couple of days I managed to get a decent photograph of the Goldcrest when it was in the feeder. I had only seen a Goldcrest in the garden once before, many years ago, and I'm really delighted that I got a photograph, through double glazing, of such an iconic little bird.

About a week later I spotted a Wren on top of the hedge, "so what" you may ask. Well, up until a few years ago the Wren was thought to be the smallest British bird, however it has been trumped by the Goldcrest which just happens to be – "flourish of trumpets ta-ra" the smallest bird, not only in Britain but also in Europe.

You might be thinking "this guy needs to get out more, fancy getting excited about wee birds!" Well for what it's worth, I believe that, when our T.V. screens seem to be filled with images of death and destruction around the globe it's important to be able to take stock of some of the simple things mentioned in the Louis Armstrong song "What a wonderful World," wee birds included.

Enjoy your bird watching, Dunnock.

P.S. Listen out for Woodpeckers "Drumming" high up in the trees in the woodland around the village, even close to houses! There are a few about.



The fundraising 'BOOK BASKET' is still being well supported and thanks to Joyce Brown for keeping it well stocked and organised.

All funds raised so far have gone to the Butterfly project which supported young carers. A new initiative called My Grief Matters has been set up in its place.

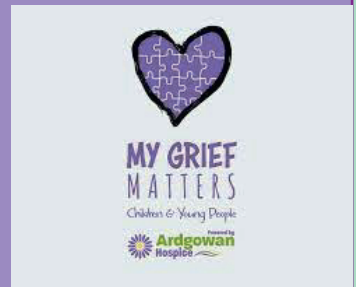
My Grief Matters is a valuable, free service provided by Ardgowan Hospice, dedicated to offering awareness sessions on effectively supporting and responding to bereaved children and young adults.

Training is available to schools, churches and all community organisations.

Hopefully everyone will be happy to give their continued support to this excellent service. If anyone wants further information about this service, contact Wellbeing at the Hospice 01475 305401.

Thank you

Joyce and Anne



Praying for Our Future

Heavenly Father, orchestrator of our future, we thank you for the success of our recent Service of Union. We thank you that we are now officially one parish, one congregation, although we have two places of worship. We ask that as the weeks pass, the importance of this service may stay in our minds a long time as we continue to plan for our future.

Forgiving Father, we know that we have not always done things your way in the past. We ask that you would forgive us and help us to seek your guidance as we move forward. We know your ways are best, but we struggle to follow them sometimes, thinking that we know better or are more comfortable sticking to what we know. We are part of Your Son's Body, the Church, help us to work with Him and in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about your plans for this beautiful area in which we live.

Lord Jesus, we thank you that the enlarged and united Session has already been meeting and is progressing through the list of tasks that have to be completed before moving on to establishing the Nominating Committee. We ask that you would guide each elder as they clarify their own thoughts as to what their role should be. We ask that they may strive to be true to your Word, yet realistic at this time of great social upheaval.

Holy Spirit, we ask that as we consider whom we believe would be best to represent us on the Nominating Committee, that you would guide us to select wise and faithful members of the congregation to represent us at this time and pray that you would bless them. We also ask that you would guide each one of us, recognising that each of us have our role to play. We pray all these things in Jesus' Name, **Amen.**



The Church of Scotland



Firmly Planted -
collect your
stamps to
support Malawi
project



Help the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) improve nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, create youth employment and mitigate the impact of the climate crisis. The CCAP project, Firmly Planted, aims to establish self-sustaining tree nurseries to nurture and protect the environment and protect livelihoods for households and communities.

Please pass on your used stamps to Joyce Brown,
leave them at Church Door, or in the Church Hall.

Scottish Charity Number: SC011353

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Interim Moderator:	Rev. Karen Harbison	721048
Session Clerk:	Ewen Cameron	07394 970150
Depute Clerk:	Morag Cowe	521455
Treasurer:	Jac Seggie	529614

SERVICES

Sunday - 10am

Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday in February, June and October.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Sunday: Creche - 10am
Sunday School - 10am

Monday: Badminton
SWI (monthly)
Guild (monthly)

Tuesday: Property Group

Wednesday: Scouts
Cubs & Beavers

Thursday: Country Dancing
Cafe Church (monthly in Wemyss Bay Station Cafe)
Soul Searching - (monthly, with S&WB Church)

PLEASE FOLLOW, LIKE & SHARE

Inverkip, Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Church

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www.youtube.com/channel/UCKUCQtaP_ywS3usR4LqWU8Q

 The Church of Scotland

Charity No. SC001079