



March 2023
Newsletter

Old High St Stephen's Church of Scotland

OUR SUNDAY SERVICES

Are recorded and are available via our [website](#) on our [Twitter feed](#) and [Facebook page](#). So you can enjoy these services at a time suitable to you, links are sent to our e-mail list. To go on our e-mail list, please contact our [Church Administrator](#).

SERVICES AT ST STEPHEN'S

Following the closure of the Old High Church for Sunday Worship, all Sunday services are now held at St Stephen's Church at 10.30am

CONTACT US

Church Administrator:

(079 342 85924)

invernesschurch@gmail.com



**If you would like us
to keep in touch –
please send us your
up-to-date e-mail and
address details**

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THOUGHTS FROM REV JAMES

I'm looking forward to Easter. Christmas is a bit too busy with all the external pressures that are placed on us. But Easter is special and often a bit quieter. What do we celebrate at Christmas? A birth. Yes, it's the birth of our saviour, Jesus, but anyone can be born. We all have. But at Easter we celebrate that Jesus didn't just die, but instead defeated death and rose again. And he's waiting there for us all, on the other side to welcome us.

However my busiest Easter took place before I was a Minister. I was finishing my training in 2015 and the church I was working with put on an event for the schools called The Easter Code. It was a half day event which took place in one of our church halls. We set up a village out of garden gazebos, with each gazebo house representing a different event in the Easter Story. Of course, when you have set that sort of event up once, it's just as easy to have a second class later in the day. And when that was done, most of the set was moved to the church where my wife was training, and we did the same thing again three times. Five loads of the Easter story in three days. I didn't know whether I was coming or going at the end of it.

Yet what got me each time was the enthusiasm from the pupils. For many, this was the first time anyone had truly dug into the Easter story and explained it to them, from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. They asked the difficult questions and seriously kept all of us on our toes.

So this year, I'd encourage you to explain the Easter story to the young, and not so young folks in your lives. Easter is for most just a holiday, with chocolate eggs for the children. Schools do not think of putting on Easter plays. Even secular schools put on nativity plays. So this is the chance for you to explain the significance of Easter, and hopefully they too will ask you the difficult questions. Remember, if someone is old enough to ask a question, they deserve an age appropriate answer.

Easter is more than just the chocolate holiday. Easter is truly when we can celebrate the sacrifice of Jesus. And the knowledge that he is waiting for us. So enjoy the chocolate, and happy Easter.

UNION WITH CROWN CHURCH

I thought it might be helpful to bring everyone up to date with where we are in relation to the proposed union with Crown Church.

Both Kirk Sessions held a joint meeting at Crown Church on 1 March and discussed the Basis of Union. A copy of the draft was in our last newsletter.

Presbytery have given us guidance to the effect that we do need to find a new name for the united church and have advised it would be best to avoid the existing names or using combinations of them. The congregations were given the opportunity to suggest suitable names, and in the end over 50 names have been put forward. The two Kirk Sessions were given a copy of the list of names as a voting paper, and by the time you read this I will have met with Bob Forrest, Session Clerk at Crown Church to count the votes, as we have been tasked with doing so and identifying the most popular name. Thereafter both Kirk Sessions need to meet, independently, to agree the Basis of Union, including the new name.

Once this has been done, both churches then require to hold a congregational meeting where the terms of the Draft Basis of Union (including the new name) are put to the congregations for approval. As and when such a proposal is forthcoming, the Presbytery will be advised and steps will then be taken to implement the union.

I will keep you informed how this is progressing through this newsletter and by e-mail. Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk

INTERIM MODERATOR I am sorry to advise you that our Interim Moderator Rev Scott Polworth of Kinmylies Church has stepped down, having taken over the role of Presbytery Property Convener. We are grateful to Scott for the considerable work he has done for us over the last 2.5 years and he will join us one Sunday for coffee after the service, probably in late April, when we can say a formal thank you to him.

If you would like to contribute towards a gift for Scott could you please put it in an envelope marked 'Gift for Scott Polworth' and leave it in the offering bowl. Alternatively you can make a transfer direct to the Church Bank Account:

Sort Code : 82 70 13

Account No : 20497724

Please mark your donation Gift. The closing date for contributions is Sunday 9 April.

VISIT BY MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND At very short notice Inverness Presbytery were asked to arrange visit by the Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields and his wife Linda on Monday 20 March. A coffee morning for Presbytery members was arranged at Ness Bank Church. Members from Crown and Old High St Stephen's were invited to attend. Whilst numbers were fairly low, there was a great atmosphere in the

hall and the Moderator had the opportunity of meeting everyone.

A lunch for the Business Committee of Presbytery was held at Inshes Church, and the Moderator was able to share details of the many visits he has made this year.

Finally, he went to Barn Church who are developing a new car park and the topsoil being removed will be used to create a community garden beside the Church. They also have a community fridge.

The visit went well and we were pleased to note that his parents lived in Inverness for a number of years and were members of West Parish Church. He even proposed to his wife Linda in the Ness Islands, so great to know the connections with Inverness. He also visited the Crossreach facilities in the area, Whinnieknowe Home in Nairn, Cameron House, Cale House and Beechwood House.

His final duty as Moderator will be to attend the King's Coronation and present him with a bible.

Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday 6 April - Maundy Thursday
Meal at Crown Church (Upper Hall) at 6.30 pm
Service with Holy Communion from 7.30 pm

Friday 7 April
Contemporary Tenebrae Service - We Remember
Calvary - Joint Choirs of Old High St Stephen's and
Crown Church at
St Stephen's Church - 7.00 pm

Saturday 8 April
Vigil in Crown Sanctuary 8.00 pm to 12 midnight

Sunday 9 April
Services in Crown Church - 9.30 am and 11.00 am
Service in St Stephen's Church 10.30 am

NEWS FROM THE CONGREGATION

FIT AS A FIDDLE The fortnightly exercise class is taking a break for Easter. There will be **NO class on Wednesday 5 April**. We will **resume on Wednesday 19 April** and we would welcome any new members who would like to join us. It is a very relaxed class with gentle exercises to music and is led by Lorraine O'Brien. Val Cantlay. (01463) 231298

CONGREGATIONAL DAY RETREAT Rosa and I and fourteen others took the opportunity to join the Crown and St Stephen's on a day retreat at Cairngorm Christian Centre in Kincaig on Saturday 18 March. It was lovely to meet familiar and some new faces. It was wet outside but warm and welcoming inside.

Our day started with coffee, of course, then a short talk, praise and prayer. We then divided into groups of four for conversation aided by questions. You might find the questions interesting to think about.

1. Share a story about a time when your relationship with others shaped your journey of faith.
2. Share a story about a time when you were taught or discovered something that changed the way you see God.
3. Talk about something that Jesus said or did which you find easy or natural to apply in your own life.
4. Talk about something that Jesus said or did which you find challenging to apply in your own life.
5. How do you notice other people following Jesus in their everyday life?
6. What have you found valuable from these questions that you will take with you on your life's journey.

After lunch we walked in the soft rain and returned to share communion. It is so encouraging and helpful to hear from others as they journey with Jesus. Rosa and Ruth

OHSS EASTER WALK - WEDNESDAY 12 APRIL We are going to have a short walk (about 1-1½ hours) at Foyers, followed by Afternoon Tea at Cameron's cafe. There is parking at the café, but we will finalise transport plans beforehand, and arrange car-sharing and lifts, as required, for the group. Non walkers are welcome.

We need to confirm numbers with the venue by the Friday afternoon (7 April so please confirm attendance with one of us by then.

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OHSS Cawdor Walk 29 Jan 2023 – Off we go!!



OHSS Cawdor Walk 29 Jan 2023 A Welcome Cup of Tea

**WE REMEMBER
CALVARY**

A Worship Service designed to recreate the passion story using
traditional and contemporary hymns and scripture readings
Joel Ravey

**ST STEPHEN'S
&
CROWN CHURCH
CHOIRS**

COME JOIN US AND PARTICIPATE IN ONE
OF THE OLDEST FORMS OF WORSHIP

**GOOD FRIDAY 7TH APRIL
ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH
AT 7PM**

THANK YOU FROM FLORA I wish to thank my church family for their kindness and support in so many ways, following my cancer operation last July and ongoing treatments. For prayers, church flowers, cards, phone calls, emails, gifts, more flowers and especially to my elder John Clarkson for his uplifting visits, and Jaye Rankine for her nourishing soups and pancakes. I also enjoyed my visit from Rev James on a very bad snowy day. I am thankful for the expert care I am receiving and continue to make progress. With love and blessings. Flora Milne.

SPRINGFEST : MUSIC INVERNESS, APRIL 2023



St Stephen's Church will be home to a series of recitals during the second half of April, a varied programme of music that will hopefully include something that appeals to everyone. We shall be welcoming both local musicians and performers from around the UK and beyond. The details are as follows:

Sunday 16 April at 4pm: Trotovsek Trio (violin, flute, piano) playing Ravel, Prokofiev and Schubert.

Wednesday 19 April at 7.30pm: Christina Lawrie (piano). Programme still to be announced.

Friday 21 April at 1pm: Duo Chaimbeul. Music for pipes, accordion and guitar.

Sunday 23 April at 4pm: Mahler Players Wind Quintet. Comprising the principal wind players from the Highland-based orchestra. Programme tba

Wednesday 26 April at 7.30pm: Fyrish String Quartet. Programme tba

Friday 28 April at 1pm: Trio Doyenne (violin, cello, piano) return after their splendid concert last year to round off the festival with Beethoven and Kreisler.

Suggested donation of £10 at the door for daytime recitals to cover costs. Further details: Andrew Stevenson (242767) or stevenson.ata@btinternet.com

SWEATY CHURCH 25TH MARCH AT ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH

Losing the game without losing your head... This was the theme of our 3rd event and we were delighted to welcome previous and new attendees.

Stewart Robertson welcomed the children with a Bible reading, chat and prayer. Kirstie and Jack Simmons then took charge of team selection and warm up. There was a great buzz in the hall and the church where they played Compassion javelin, Relay noughts and crosses, Dodge ball and Skittles. We talked after the activities about the challenge of being a good winner and a good loser. Also about having compassion and praying for the disadvantaged. Sandwiches and pizza were served by Jill, Karen and Freda along with lots of juice. We hope to hold one more Sweaty Church before the summer holidays. Thanks to all those who helped. Deborah Macrae



YOU ARE INVITED TO
JOIN US FOR
A
BUFFET SUPPER
EVENING
TO
CELEBRATE
The Coronation
SATURDAY 6TH MAY AT 7PM
£15
ENTERTAINMENT TO FOLLOW

RSVP
by 23RD APRIL
To Val Cantlay 231298
Cheques made payable to
Old High St Stephen's or
please put cash in an envelope

OTHER NEWS

GAMBIA PAEDIATRIC CARDIAC SERVICE INITIATIVE IN ASSOCIATION WITH OHSS CHURCH. Dr Deborah Shanks, my former Paediatric colleague involved me into this visionary project and OHSS Church has provided generous funding. I am Dr Reddeppa Thimmarayanagari, Consultant Paediatrician who has been working at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness for 23 years. I always had a passion to work with disadvantaged communities. The Gambia is a small and poor country in Africa and has no access to Paediatric cardiac services in Government hospitals. A significant number of children with heart conditions are undiagnosed and have no access to proper management leading to early death and suffering for the child and family. The total cost of our first visit was around £4000 and Old High St Stephen's kindly provided £2000 towards this. The aim is to teach a local Paediatrician and team to do ECHOs (cardiac scanner) and ECGs with a view to offering diagnostic services to Paediatric cardiac cases in the Gambia.

Work undertaken during 2022 The necessary equipment (ECHO (one) and ECG machines (three) have already been sent and the first visit by myself and an accredited Sonologist has taken place. It was well received by the Management of the Hospital and during this visit we managed to see 76 cardiac patients. We have also provided basic Cardiac scan skill locally.

Current Status Having been on our first visit to Gambia during December 2022, we identified the need for at least one more ECHO machine and at least two ECHO technicians on the next trip in addition to myself. With this, one ECHO machine can be used for service delivery and another machine for training. This will enhance training opportunities. An ECHO machine has been identified and is ready for shipping and there are two volunteer ECHO technicians willing to give their valuable time in supporting this cause. We hope to visit this year and also next year.



We will also hopefully establish a telelink to offer necessary support to the local team between visits. We therefore would very much appreciate if possible further funding to support our visits to Banjul, Gambia from OHSS Church.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS



If you know of any volunteer opportunities and would find it helpful to advertise them here please contact Pat MacLeod invernesschurch@gmail.com with an announcement. Here is what we received for this issue.



The Archie Child Bereavement Service is a relatively new service to the Highlands, supporting bereaved children and young people. We have already been supporting

bereaved children and families through our telephone service, our free book gifting service, and our mentoring service where we give advice and guidance practitioners and professionals to appropriately support bereaved children. Another part of services is our Responder Visits service, where a trained volunteer visit families to provide appropriate grief support and guidance, including some direct work with children or young people involved.

This service is unique to the Highlands as there are no other charities or organisations who offer this type of support to bereaved children, nor offer this volunteering opportunity. We train all our volunteers with a 6 part series as well as providing resources and books for you to use for the children and families. We match volunteers with families in your own community, so we would not expect excessive travel. You will be working as part of a fantastic team who are dedicated to their role of providing support, advice and we know that some families find peace, solace and comfort in religious organisations following a bereavement. With that said we would be very appreciative if you could share this volunteering opportunity with your congregation, giving further support to children and families you already may be supporting and help families in your community who are not yet receiving any help. We cannot provide this service without the time, effort and commitment of our amazing volunteers who will add value to the Responder Visit service we provide and are significant members in the Archie Foundation. Thank you for reading.

Remi Martin, Bereavement Coordinator (Highlands) Raigmore Hospital, Old Perth Road, Inverness, IV2 3UJ
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