



February 2025  
Newsletter

# Old High St Stephen's Church of Scotland

## SUNDAY SERVICES

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. Services are recorded and are available via:

OHSS website:

[www.oldhighststephens.com](http://www.oldhighststephens.com)

Youtube:

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) (type in Old High St Stephens)

OHSS Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/oldhighststephens](https://www.facebook.com/oldhighststephens)

Links are also sent to our e-mail list following the service.

To go on our e-mail list, please contact our [Church Administrator](#).

## CONTACT US

Church Administrator:

(079 342 85924)

[invernesschurch@gmail.com](mailto: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

In a change to my usual office, I'm writing this in a garden centre cafe near Dunfermline where I've just polished off a bacon roll. Back in my youth (doesn't that make me sound old) the garden centres near me were large greenhouses with plants, compost and the odd tool. Not much else. This garden centre is a massive place and is more of a lifestyle store than something which is strictly a garden centre and there seems to be more space devoted to their cafe than to plants.

But it's the variety of plants which is amazing. It was the plant hunters of the Victorian era that radically transformed British gardens, and helped turn them from places where food was grown, to somewhere to relax and enjoy. The rhododendron, camellias and azaleas all owe their existence in our gardens to those who would cross the world looking for new plants.

Many of these plant hunters were missionaries, taking the Gospel in one direction and sending home interesting species of plants in the other, partly to fund their work

However there's other things to think about in the garden. The reason your bulbs are popping out of the ground earlier and earlier is because of the climate emergency we live in. While it might be nice to have a longer growing season, and to have warmer, more pleasant evenings, the fires in California in January were caused by drier weather from the Pacific.

As we look out on our own gardens, perhaps we never think of the work undertaken to bring a bit of variety to our gardens, and we might not think of the missionaries who made it possible. So please remember the missionaries past and present who work to take the Good News to the world. And we also need to remember the effect of our actions on the climate which cause harm to people on the other side of the world.

Now enjoy the garden, and remember February is a good time to plant the tomatoes. James

## NEWS FROM THE CONGREGATION

### SERVICES OF HOLY COMMUNION IN 2025

Sunday 28 January

Sunday 25 May

Sunday 31 August

Sunday 30 November

## LETTER FRM INTERIM MODERATOR – PARISH GROUPING

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I pray that the storm has not caused too much damage or disruption. I am in the fortunate position of writing to you from the home of my daughter and her family in Australia. While you are suffering with very cold weather, I am struggling with the heat!!

I want to thank everyone who attended our congregational meeting in January. It was helpful for me to meet more than just the members of the Kirk Session. I will leave any reports on finance to those who have a better understanding than me. I would, however, like to share some thoughts and information for those who could not be at the meeting. It was useful to have Rev Monika Redman with us, as she has much more in-depth knowledge of the Presbytery plan than anyone else in Presbytery, I believe.

It is clear that there are some real concerns about the proposed union with Crown church, but the meeting in January was to formalise a joint working arrangement between Old High St Stephen's and Crown Church. I am pleased to report the vote to proceed with the Parish Grouping was approved by a majority of those at the meeting. Crown Church voted on the same document on 26 January and they approved the Grouping unanimously.

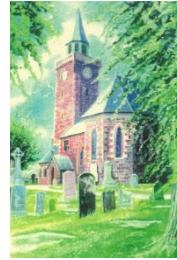
We are still two separate entities, but we have identified areas in which we can work together for the benefit of our congregations and our communities. I understand that there is still some areas where the folks of OHSS feel quite differently to Crown Church, this concern was expressed very eloquently by Joan Darcy when she referred to the vote last year on the union of the two congregations. My hope and prayer for both congregations is that by working together, we may find we have more commonality than differences, and that where we differ there may be some compromise on both sides. Those who were at the meeting will be familiar with my hope of 'changing hearts and minds', that change will be needed from both congregations, it will not be one-sided.

A request was made that there might be more congregational meetings to ensure that everyone is kept abreast of what is happening and I'm pleased to say that the Kirk Session have approved the suggestion and we will have another congregational meeting in March. This meeting will be in the evening to ensure that we don't exclude the same people each time we meet. Obviously, there will always be some people for whom the day and time don't suit, but we will do our best to accommodate as many people as we can. Meanwhile, if you have any questions about how the Parish Grouping will work, please speak to your elder or feel free to get in touch with me (I will be back in Scotland from 6 February).

I also understand that you may well have questions that you believe should be raised in public and that is not a problem for me, but if I don't know the question in advance, I cannot promise to be able to offer a definite answer at the meeting, but I will get an answer as soon as possible following the meeting.

I pray that you will know the power of the Holy Spirit guiding you in this next phase of your life of faith. Blessings to each and everyone of you. Aileen

[ABinner@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:ABinner@churchofscotland.org.uk) 0770 882 860



**Sale of Old High Church** As you are aware the sale of the Old High Church was not concluded and it has been placed back on the market. To date we have had three enquiries - one viewing, one cancelled viewing and the third a request for more information from overseas.

The Inverness Courier ran a full page article on the Church in their Tuesday 14th January edition. The BBC have an article on line on 26 January regarding the curfew bell. I will keep you informed of developments. Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk

**BURNS NIGHT CELEBRATION** Tickets were sold out for the celebration of all things Burns held in the Hall last Saturday, and it was nice to be joined by several members of Crown Church who came along to enjoy the event. Haggis, neeps and tatties followed by a beautiful dessert were served and the usual toasts to the Haggis and the Bard were made. The Address to the Haggis was ably performed by Andy Pyott and the haggis was piped in by Struan Charters. Music was provided by the Colin Donaldson Trio and the guests took to the floor to dance the Dashing White Sargeant, Canadian Barn Dance and many other well-known dances.



**FOOD FOR FAMILIES** Many thanks to those who cooked mince for Gateway's (formerly Highland Homeless Trust) Food for Families project. I know there was a slight hiccup in that they didn't give me the containers for the cooked food but everyone rallied round and sorted it themselves - getting around everyone was slightly difficult with the snow!

It's a great project and I am sure some needy families have enjoyed the mince you have cooked. Christine MacKenzie.

**OHSS CHRISTMAS APPEAL** We had a very successful Appeal raising a grand total of £1,330. The money was divided between three local charities:

1668 Cafe    £440  
 Gateway - Highland Homeless Trust    £440  
 Prisoners' Children's Fund    £450

The Pastoral Care Team would like to thank everyone for their generosity. All three charities were very grateful for the donations.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### OHSS AND CROWN CHURCH COLLABORATION

**A time for quiet reflection** The village hall and kitchen at North Kessock has been booked for **Saturday 8 March 2025**. The idea is to hold a day of quiet reflection, fellowship, prayer and praise but not a time for any formal church business.

This is a joint venture between Crown and OHSS and is open to anyone in the congregation who wishes to attend. Final arrangements have still to be made and will be communicated to you by e-mail/ newsletter. Please keep the date free if you wish to attend. Christine.

**SWEATY CHURCH** returned again on Saturday 18 January. We were delighted to welcome 25 children. Jackie MacKenzie (Crown Church Youth Worker) joined us and brought along a super board with pictures representing the theme of 'In the Beginning'.

All the children seemed to have a great time and certainly seemed tired out by the end of the games. Thanks to Jack and Sylvia for leading each group. Thanks to everyone for making this happen including helping with the food which was enjoyed by the children - there was no pizza left!



The next event will be held on Saturday 29 March from 4pm to 6pm.

## BEE CRAFTY





**WHATS ON AT ST STEPHEN'S**  
 FOR INFORMATION  
 PLEASE CONTACT  
 invernesschurch@gmail.com

<p><b>MONDAY</b></p> <p>Toddler Group - 10.00 - 11.30          Yoga - 13.45 - 15.45          Violin Classes</p>	<p><b>TUESDAY</b></p> <p>Rainbows - 17.15 - 18.30          Yoga - 19.00 - 21.00</p>
<p><b>WEDNESDAY</b></p> <p>Zen Class - 10.00 - 11.00 Saturday 10-11          Fit As A Fiddle Every two weeks          14.00 - 15.00          Bee Crafty Every Alternative Week          14.00 - 16.00          Inverness Singers          19.00-21.00</p>	<p><b>THURSDAY</b></p> <p>Pilates 9.00 - 12.00          Yoga - 13.45 - 15.45          Choir - 19.00 - 20.00          Community Choir - 20.00 - 21.30</p>
<p><b>FRIDAY</b></p> <p>Magic Movers 11.00 - 12.00          Memorable Memories 14.00 - 16.00 -          Once a Month          Expressive Dance Monthly          18.15 - 20.00          Violin Classes</p>	<p><b>SUNDAY</b></p> <p>Morning Worship 10.30 - 11.15am          Argentine Tango          13.45 - 17.45 - Every two weeks          Yoga 18.00 - 21.00</p>

**SCAN ME!** 

**FUNERALS**



**2024 HIGHLIGHTS**

The OHSS Church and Community Choir again had a very successful concert in the run-up to Christmas. Pam's Coat of Many Lights was a big surprise!!



We were thrilled to present cheques of £3,000 each to [Highland and Islands Blood Bikes](#) which is a registered charity (SC049345) whose sole purpose is to courier vital medical supplies and samples free of charge for the NHS. The second charity to benefit from the concert held at St Stephen's Church in December. is the [Highland Hospice](#) an independent local charity reliant on the local community.



Singing Around the Christmas Tree attracted a good turnout and the evening rounded off with Mulled wine and Hot chocolate



**ST STEPHEN'S TODDLERS GROUP**



One of our Young Toddlers celebrated his first birthday with a party in the Hall in early January.



See more pics from events including our recent Burns Night Celebration

## OUR PICTURE GALLERY



Church and Community Choir - two musical sisters



Church and Community Choir - A Charity Elf!!



Church and Community Choir - The Candles are Lit



Blood Bikes Representatives arrive at St Stephen's for the Cheque Presentation



The Colin Donaldson Trio at the Burns Night Celebration







*The Dashing White Sargeant*



*Andy Pyott addresses the Haggis*

## OTHER NEWS

**BOOK SALE** Crown Church Launchpad Group are holding a big book sale on **Saturday 22 February** from 10.30 until 3.30pm. Books can be dropped off at the Crown Church during the day on Wednesday 19 February and Thursday 20 February, and on Friday 21 February from 6.30 to 8pm. Launchpad is a charity which provides small grants in kind for unemployed people and has been operating from Crown Church for almost 40 years. Book prices from £1 - books for adults and children, fiction and non-fiction. A card reader will be available but payment by cash will be very much appreciated. The Crown School car park will be open. For further information, please contact Sandy Cumming on 078459089 or [sandy.cumming@btopenworld.com](mailto:sandy.cumming@btopenworld.com).

**YOUNG CROWN APPEAL - INVESTING IN PEOPLE** Young Crown relies totally on your support to fund their outreach work. Their biggest outlay is employing their Youth and Families worker, Jackie Mackenzie, who is working hard in church and in schools. Jackie assists with Sweaty Church. We are in urgent need of your financial support and prayers. Can you please help us by making a donation: by standing order or 'one off' payment. More information can be obtained from Sandie Craig who is one of the Trustees. Christine Mackenzie.



*The Top Table*

