

to glorify God ... to proclaim Christ ... and to serve others

MAY 2022

No. 833



A beautiful gift

A beautiful lectern designed in the form of the Cross on the wall of the Apse in our church.

Generously gifted by our Minister Rev Fergus Cook and his family, it was carved from the wood of pews removed from the church during the refurbishment.

Minister

Rev Fergus Cook
5 Blinkbonny Crescent
Edinburgh EH4 3NB
Tel. 466 7503

Session Clerk

Mr Eddie Thorn
Tel. 332 5702

Church Secretary

Mrs Joy McGonigal-Paget
Home Working
Mon - Frid, a.m.
secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Message from Christine Denham, Kirk News Editor

After 11 years of editing Kirk News, the last three of them spent waiting for my successor to be appointed, Fay Stirling has agreed to take on the role. This is the last issue I will edit and ironically it's been one of the most difficult to get together. On the whole it has been interesting and satisfying, becoming more difficult when I now have to compete with at least one of our twin grandsons when he (just short of 5 years old) wants to use the computer. Now he can have it to himself.

Thank you so much to all those of you who have supported me with magazine contributions - there really are too many of you and not enough space to mention you all.

Thank you for taking on the job, Fay. You'll do it brilliantly. I hope you enjoy it.

Thank you all. Christine

From Hamish Mair, Communications Team Leader

Kirk News is a vital means by which Blackhall St Columba's keeps in touch with its members. For nearly 12 years the important role of Editor has been filled by Christine Denham. The encouragement, selection and compilation of articles and the production of the magazine is a substantial task which recurs throughout the year and it is one which Christine has embraced with dedication and enthusiasm. Christine has been a contributor to the magazine on many occasions rounding out each edition nicely.

After many years in this role Christine is now handing over to a new Editor, Fay Stirling. Fay is a well known and highly active member of the congregation and Kirk Session and she will continue to build on the work which Christine has done for the Church over the years. Editing Kirk News is an important part of the Church's mission and Christine has approached the task with remarkable energy and great competence. The whole congregation would like to record its deep thanks to Christine for her outstanding service in this vital role.

From the Minister



‘Happy to Chat’

Recently, at Blackhall St Columba’s, we have obtained a bench for outside the front of the Church (facing the Queensferry Road) and, later in this edition, you will be able to read an article all about the bench and its purpose. Without spoiling the essence of that article, it can be said that at the core of our humanity is the fact that we are designed to be creatures of community. We are not meant to live in isolation but are designed to live in a society. An essential part of living in a society is the ability to communicate and to chat with others.

If I’m not going to steal the thunder of the writer of the article about the bench, what then am I going to talk about when I entitle my reflection ‘Happy to Chat’? Well, we have another group within our Church who are ‘happy to chat’ but they do so in a very special way.

We are blessed, in Blackhall St Columba’s, to have a dedicated Prayer Circle. If you haven’t heard of the Prayer Circle, let me explain that it is a small number of members who have undertaken to pray, on behalf of others, for their needs.

Prayer is an important part of our Christian worship. It is an opportunity to ‘chat’ with God. We, each of us have an open invitation to ‘chat with God’. Indeed, we are encouraged to speak to God with confidence, ‘[And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him.](#)’ (1 John 5:14-15)

The Prayer Circle, now run by Betty Watt, operates by request. The members of the Circle will pray, confidentially, for whomsoever they are asked to pray and they will pray about whatever is requested. Frequently, the requests that are made are about people’s health but that is not all that can be prayed about. Do you know someone who is about to get married or baptised? A prayer of blessing may be in order. Do you know someone who is worrying about changes in their life, a new job, a new house, perhaps? A prayer for peace and calm may be the appropriate thing. In short, there is little that can’t be prayed for. ‘[Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.](#)’ (Ephesians 6:18) / continued

From the Minister continued

It is already easy to make a prayer request and it has just got easier. Members have always been able to make a request for prayer through their elder and contact details for both Betty Watt and the minister are also available on the Church website at:

<https://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk/contact-us/>

In addition, if you were able to see the Sunday service on 24 April 2022, then you would have seen our new Prayer Request Box being introduced and dedicated. The box sits in the sanctuary and beside it are 'prayer request slips'. Anyone who wishes to can fill in a few brief details on one of these slips, post it in the box, and make a request. As stated previously, all requests are confidential and the locked box is only accessible by the minister and members of the Prayer Circle who check it weekly. If a prayer is felt to be more urgent, then a 'phone call or email also still works.

We are blessed with a God who is 'happy to chat'. Indeed, we are encouraged to talk and we are told, ['Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'](#) (Philippians 4:6-7)

God bless all,

Fergus

The Prayer Circle

Do you know someone in need of prayer? A friend or relative perhaps who is unwell, grieving or find themselves in a position where they don't know where to turn? Blackhall St Columba's Prayer Circle is a small team of people who will pray frequently for anyone in need of help in complete confidence.



Please contact:

Prayer Circle Secretary, Betty Watt, at lzbthwatt@yahoo.co.uk

or Minister, Fergus Cook at Fcook@churchofscotland.org.uk

or Tel. 0131 466 7503

Alternatively, please put your request slip into the locked box on the table in the Sanctuary.



Family News

New members admitted by Certificate of Transference:

Mr John (Ian) Hutchison

Mrs Debbie Pearce

Mrs Sally Foster

Mr Ian White and Mrs Velendia (Villy) White

Mrs Anne Nicol

Christine Robb



Baptisms

April

3 Miles Kenji Finlay and Felix Kenzo Charles, sons of Whitney and Gordon Marshall

24 Hamish Felix Roberts, son of Emma and Roland Reid

Deaths

April

5 Mr Alan Begg Ramage

12 Mr John Milne Pettigrew

John Milne Pettigrew

Sadly we mark the passing of one of our most senior members, John Pettigrew. Born on 11 February 1924, John died peacefully on 12 April 2022. John was a highly respected and much loved member of Blackhall St Columba's, serving faithfully as an elder and as Session Clerk from 1988 till 1994.



Due tribute will be paid to John in the next edition of Kirk News. Our thoughts and prayers are with Anne, Ruth, David and their families at this time.

Suffer the Little Children to come unto Me



Miles Kenji Finlay and Felix Kenzo Charles, sons of Gordon and Whitney Marshall were baptised on Sunday 3 April 2022

Hamish Felix Roberts, son of Roland and Emma Reid was baptised on Sunday 24 April 2022



Youth Service Sunday 6 March 2022



Kirk Session Report

The Kirk Session met on Tuesdays 8 February, 1 March and 5 April 2022.

Correspondence

Communications were received from:-

- FreshStart – acknowledgement of £294.20 as a result of Christmas retiring collections.
- Christian Aid – acknowledgement of £1,657.50 for the Christian Aid DEC Appeal for Ukraine.
- Christian Aid – acknowledgement of £100 collected for the Afghanistan Crisis Appeal.

Notification of a legacy of £500 from the Estate of the late Fiona Laughlin.

Installation of bicycle rack (outside the Church Buildings)

It has been recognised that there is nowhere for bicycle users to park their bicycles and it was considered that a bicycle rail would be an obvious solution. It was concluded that it would be helpful to have a rail installed and it was agreed that a small sub group would look further into this.

Presbytery Consultative Document - see page 9

Presbytery Elder

It was agreed that the Session Clerk would continue as the nominated Elder to The Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian.

Roll

The Kirk Session was pleased to admit the following as members:-

John (Ian) Hutchison, Drylaw Crescent

Mrs Debbie Pearce

Mrs Sally Foster

Mr Ian White and Mrs Velendia (Villy) White, c/o Strachan House

Mrs Anne Nicol, House o' Hill Road

Christine Robb, Corbiehill Terrace

Transport

It was noted that the rota of volunteer drivers and passengers was operational once again. There were 9 passengers and 8 drivers split into teams with the drivers uplifting their passenger(s) once per month. There was however a shortage of drivers so Les Oliver would welcome more volunteers from within Session or the Districts. Anyone interested should get in touch with Les.

Window Covering

Over recent months it has become evident that for members sitting at the front of the Sanctuary the light from the large windows behind the Choir gallery can shine on the projection screen detracting from its effectiveness. A number of solutions had been explored and agreement has been given to install 'sail type blinds' on the Choir Gallery windows.

Eddie Thorn, Session Clerk

Presbytery Consultative Document

A Special Meeting of the Congregation had been held on Sunday 27 February to ascertain the views and comments of the Congregation on the proposals within the Presbytery Consultative document. Embodied within the document was the reduction in ministerial posts for Edinburgh from 78.2 down to 48.5 and the proposed union of Blackhall St Columba, Davidson's Mains and St Stephen's Comely Bank where there would be only two full time Ministers of Words and Sacrament and "local staff" as necessary. (local staff would be funded directly by the congregations whereas minister stipends are paid from 121 George Street Church office funded from the Ministry & Mission contributions paid by each congregation).

It was felt that the suggested union with these two congregations is less than ideal. It was considered that the previous West Forth Cluster Group with Cramond, Davidson's Mains, Drylaw, Granton and Old Kirk Muirhouse was a much better fit. It was considered that the geographical grounds used for the proposed union misses an opportunity to offer assistance to more "struggling" churches and that we should substitute one of our proposed partners for either Drylaw or Old Kirk Muirhouse.

In summary, if a union did come to pass:-

- There would only be one Kirk Session, one Session Clerk and Treasurer and, of the two ministers, only one can be Moderator. This means the sharing of finances between the churches in the proposed union.
- It was considered that this is a time for Blackhall St Columba to put forward ideas of a different union (possibly more in line with the earlier Cluster).
- Further opinion raised was that any merger/union would work best if all parties wanted the union. There is likely to be some resentment in some areas that in turn would lead to a reduction in numbers. These must be "happy marriages" or they won't work.

Kirk Session Report continued

- As we were already collaborating with other partners in the West Forth Cluster, there was a merger of thought and moves together on different topics.
- The proposed Mission District does not stop us from working outwith our area even if it is confirmed as the way forward

It should be noted that all three Churches have ministers on unrestricted tenure which means that to achieve the reduction needed, it would be reliant on one of the ministers moving on or retiring.

From the various comments and views, the Moderator and Session Clerk compiled a response to Presbytery.

Eddie Thorn, Session Clerk

Church of Scotland General Assembly

The 2022 General Assembly will take place from Saturday 21 May until Thursday 26 May. It will once again be a hybrid event, with some attending Assembly Hall and others participating online. The proceedings will also be livestreamed on the Church of Scotland's website.

Rev Iain Greenshields, minister of St Margaret's Community Church in Dunfermline, Fife, will serve as the Moderator of the General Assembly in 2022-23. He will begin his year-long role of ambassador for the Church of Scotland in May 2022, succeeding the 2021-22 Moderator, The Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness QC (Jim Wallace).



The Lord High Commissioner is the Sovereign's personal representative to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The Lord High Commissioner's role is to maintain the relationship between the State and the Church. The appointee attends the General Assembly as an observer, makes an address, and reports to Her Majesty on its proceedings. Rt Hon Lord Hodge the Deputy President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, has been appointed Lord High Commissioner to this year's General Assembly.



Happy to Chat Bench

Could you do with a bit of company? – we have just the place

Loneliness can affect all of us, and sometimes just a few minutes chat with someone makes all the difference. Even busy people can be lonely, and often find it difficult to take time to really have a good talk.

Loneliness isn't something particular to any type, age or group of people, it can affect anyone at any time, and The Marmalade Trust is holding UK National Loneliness Week from 13 - 17 June.

The ITV programme Good Morning Britain's '1 Million Minutes' campaign to tackle loneliness resulted in six 'listening benches' being installed in UK towns – with one of these on the Royal Mile here in Edinburgh. Kelly Williams, from Yorkshire, is encouraging people to set up 'happy benches' to encourage people to sit down and chat with strangers. She has received interest from people all over the globe.

This year the Kirk Session decided to install a "Happy to Chat" bench to provide a space for people to chat and ease loneliness. The Happy to Chat bench seeks to break down barriers and allow us all to say 'hello'.

Located in the garden area between the Church and Queensferry Road, if you fancy a chat, please take a seat and hopefully someone will join you. By sitting on the bench, people will know that you're open to a friendly talk. If you see someone sitting there, why not consider approaching them and have a chat. You might learn something new, make a new friend, or simply brighten someone's day!



As
Christians,
let's all
take that
few
moments
to brighten
someone's
day.

Holy Week @ BStC's

We have
a King
who
rides a
donkey.

Praise
Him!



At 8 am on Easter Sunday morning thirty eight people and five dogs gathered in Ravelston Park. The weather was kind and the birds were singing lustily as we celebrated the Risen Christ. On conclusion of the short service led by our minister Rev Fergus Cook we headed up to the church halls for a very welcome coffee and bacon roll. After a two year gap (due to Covid-19) it was great to be back in this way.



Fergus uses 3
Easter eggs,
some red
ribbon,
2 volunteers
and magic to
explain the
Easter story

Happy Easter!



A very big thank you to everyone who has contributed to the emergency appeal for starter packs items for Ukrainian families and also the upsurge in local referrals. These items are always welcomed and in addition personal toiletries and non perishable food items for emergency packs are particularly in short supply at the moment.

We have restarted the Friday morning manned collection point in the church halls so if you have items to donate our volunteers will be happy to accept them between 10 and 11.30 a.m. most Fridays. Items can be brought in at other times and the church officer will direct you to the FreshStart Cupboard.

Further to Fiona Cooke's final article in the last Kirk News we now have a Pantry food collection box for the new "Pantry Shop" project in the entrance to the halls and it is hoped that the whole community will donate non perishable items to this. It should be noted that the pantry shop is not a food bank but as FreshStart say for low income families this is affordable food with dignity. Low income families become members of the pantry shop and pay a weekly subscription of £4.50 which allows them to purchase quality food approx up to £20 worth. FreshStart ,via partnerships, offers a basic range of goods but does rely on donations of tinned or packaged items to help low income families eat better. This is another way for the church and community to further support the good work carried out by FreshStart.

After seven years as FreshStart co-ordinator Fiona Cooke has stepped down and we thank her for all her hard work during this time

Thank you, Fiona

Lilian & Michael Cockburn
FreshStart Co-ordinators



Hope does not disappoint. Hope lives in you.

Hope is in the hands of the local charity worker in Hungary, delivering emergency food to hungry refugees.

Hope is in the eyes of Jessica in rural Zimbabwe, knowing her little ones won't go hungry thanks to fresh water and drought-resistant seeds.

Hope is in the heart of Natalia in a shelter in Ukraine, as her children sleep peacefully for the first time after nights of relentless bombing.

Hope is in the homes of all who welcome the fleeing.

Hope lives in you.

donate.christianaid.org.uk

Remember the STAGW 50th Book Sale

14, 16-20 May at St Andrew's and St George's West Church,
George Street, Edinburgh.

If you would like to donate but prefer not to do so online contact
Sheila Mackintosh on 0131 336 1357

Christian Aid Scotland Registered Scottish Charity SC039150

Jessica Mwedzi smiles with love for her children as she stirs a single bowl of porridge for them...

...But she knows they're hungry for more. This one bowl of

porridge is all she and her family can eat today: 'My children crave a decent meal, but I can't provide. We often go to bed on an empty stomach. It pains me to send them to bed hungry.'

'Women are at the mercy of climate change and hunger.'- Jessica



'So painful and disheartening'

For Jessica, drought means every day is a struggle for survival.

Like many women in rural Zimbabwe - 7 out of 10 rely on farming for income and food - she toils on her farm, but nothing can grow on her ashen, dry land.

Drought starves. Intensified by the climate crisis, and the effects of war in Ukraine on global food production, it drives families into hunger.

Jessica recalls that 'One year, we had no rain. The scorching sun burnt my crops just as they were about to bloom. It was so painful and disheartening.'

You can help this loving mum turn hunger into hope

It's unjust that drought - exacerbated by the effects of conflict and the global pandemic - robs Jessica of the power to provide for her family. Her husband is unwell, so she's the only breadwinner. Her children look up to her, but she has nothing left to give.

Once before, when things were desperate, Jessica asked her neighbours for food but she came home with nothing.

Jessica is anything but helpless. In the face of drought, her love for her family gives her courage to stand strong - and we stand with Jessica.

Timeline Project

In the late summer of 2020, as work on the refurbishment of the sanctuary of Blackhall St. Columba's was reaching its conclusion, the Building For The Future team commissioned a timeline of the church to be designed and created by a group of volunteers from within the congregation. This group of seven ladies, headed by the new minister's wife, met over the course of the following year to research and design the timeline.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, their meetings took various forms from discussions via Zoom, to socially distanced gatherings in back gardens and, eventually, indoor meetings at the manse and also the church itself. The team gathered information from members of the congregation, from back issues of the Kirk News and the Blackhall Bulletin, from Kirk Session records and from the invaluable "Blackhall St. Columba's Church - The First Hundred Years 1900-2000" book by Margaret McArthur as well as from the personal knowledge of some of the congregation.

By definition, a timeline is a chronological arrangement of events in the order of their occurrence. While trying to remain true to the brief and not err into the territory of an history of the church, it was decided that the timeline should not be of the usual, linear design but should take the form of an art installation showing chronologically significant events in the life of Blackhall St. Columba's using mixed-media.

It was decided that each twenty year period in the life of the church would be represented on its own panel. This would enable different styles and techniques to be employed to make the timeline more interesting, informative and unusual and it also would mean that, in years to come, it would be relatively simple to add further panels to the timeline.

Therefore, the Blackhall St. Columba's Timeline presently comprises six completed panels collectively representing the years 1900-2019 and one 'living panel' which will represent, ultimately, the years 2020-2039. It was felt important to have a seventh panel which would enable the very significant events of the years 2020-2022 to be included in the timeline when it was first installed even although the seventh panel would not be completed for many years yet as, obviously, not all the events that the seventh panel will eventually depict have yet taken place.

The panels making up the timeline are of different sizes and shapes as well as being different in style and employing different mediums. The reason for this was to allow each panel to best represent the period it was depicting whether that be the Art Deco style of the 1920s/30s or the 'make do and mend' attitude of the war years. As much as possible has been included on the relevant panels but, sometimes, to avoid over-crowding of the panel, decisions were taken to limit what was being represented. However, the panels do all have certain common features as well in order to help establish and maintain the continuity of the timeline from one panel to the next. / continued



They each clearly depict the time period that they cover at the top of the panel, they each contain the name and starting date of the minister who was called to Blackhall St. Columba's during that time and they are all framed in the same wooden frame chosen to compliment the wood used in the refurbishment of the sanctuary.

After general agreement was reached on what each panel's style and content should be, the individual members of the Timeline team were each allocated a specific panel to design. After the team had agreed on the designs, although the original intention had been to ask others to help in the actual creation of the panels, it was felt that each member of the team had invested so much in their own panel and had a sense of ownership of that panel that each member then needed to see it through to the end and physically create their own panel. It was a courageous and daunting decision to make and has stretched each member of the team over the past year as the panels have been lovingly brought to life.

The result is a truly unique representation of the life of Blackhall St. Columba's Church from 1900 to the present day telling the story of the family of God here in Blackhall for the congregation and, most importantly, by the congregation.

(The completed Timeline is now permanently on display in the sanctuary for all to view at their leisure. An accompanying booklet about the panels is available nearby for reference. If anyone would like a copy of the booklet to read at their own convenience, please contact Shona Cook at the manse.)

Shona Cook

Outreach Team

It was regrettable that we had to cancel the Spring Ceilidh on 2 April but when the date was set in February 2021 who would have thought Covid-19 would still be making people reluctant to be at such an event. The Team understand where we are but have received many messages that hopefully we can have a ceilidh soon if not harvest time then spring 2023.

However, on the flip side, the following week on Saturday 9 April under the banner Music@ St Columba's the Team hosted in the sanctuary a concert featuring pianist Miss Jia Ning and 'Resol' a string quartet, student and former students respectively of the Glasgow Conservatoire. See the concert article in this issue of the Kirk News for more details/photos.

Outreach Team have three events coming up in June namely a celebration of the Queens Platinum Jubilee on Friday 3 June and the long awaited members' picnic to Cauty Bay on Sunday 5 June. More details will be given shortly as matters are finalised.

The Team is also pleased to announce that with the Blackhall Children Sports Day returning this year to a face to face event on Saturday 11 June (been online last two years) we will have our stall there so are looking for members of the congregation to assist in manning this important community outreach. Always a great buzz at this event in Ravelston Park so please get in touch if you can help.

Another date for your diary is the concert on Saturday 18 June by music students and staff from Fettes College. Again more details will be provided via our web site, Facebook and intimations on Sundays.

Lastly, not an event but have managed to find a source to recycle old specs. Looking to install a place in the halls to collect these but meantime if you have some old specs bring them on a Sunday morning and give them to the welcome team who will deliver them to me. Any questions on the above give me a call on 07875 558977.

Michael Cockburn.
Outreach Team

Music @ St Columba's

On Saturday 9 April we were treated to a concert by the pianist Jia Ning Ng and the Resol string quartet of Mozart's Piano Concerto in D minor K466.

The stage in St Columba's Church, Edinburgh lent itself to allowing the event to be a genuine chamber concert, given the front row seats were just a couple of metres from the players.

The intimacy of the venue and the intuitive playing of all the performers made this a memorable interpretation of one of the best loved of Mozart's compositions. The Allegro starts with the arresting run from the cello, repeated and echoed by the piano making it the interesting theme of that section. In the Romanze, Ning demonstrated her remarkable technical skills while maintaining the lyrical form and allowing the melodic nature of the music to tell us of the harmony and "romance" that perhaps underlies the theme. The Allegro moves effortlessly through many keys but all without any notice being given of an impending shift. Just suddenly there you are and again the cadenza left the audience amazed yet brought back to a happy state in a major key with the quartet working in perfect harmony with the piano.



It might have been easy for the players to feel they had done the hard yards in the first half and could settle back to a nice melody and pretty tunes but now they went for Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.4 in G Major Op 58, one of the most demanding of the concerto repertoire. The Allegro opens with an exciting piano solo section setting out the theme which is then taken up by the strings. The theme enters and vanishes like a mist with repeated hints throughout the many key shifts. The well know passage of triplets, quavers, semiquavers and sextuplets requires a connection between piano and



orchestra that can tend towards separation in less accomplished players. Here they played as one, with both sections agreeing on the detailed interpretation apparently completely intuitively. The Andante contrasts the loud staccato quartet playing with the rich melodic harmonic piano with its unusual repeated trills which ultimately brought a gentler melody to the fore. /contd

Music @ St Columba's continued

The music moves to the final movement without the customary pause and that left a few wondering if we still have the third movement to come! But there it was. A very rhythmic Rondo started by the quartet then taking a brief rest as the piano flourished once more.

The whole evening concluded with an arrangement of "The Old Rugged Cross" and the audience joined in with two verses. A fitting end to a Palm Sunday weekend concert and one which reminded us all that the creator of the world is the creator of the beauty of music which touches the soul and causes us to give thanks for the many blessings we enjoyed this evening.

Donald Cameron OBE LLCM
Director of Music Blackhall St Columba's Church of Scotland

Music @ St Columba's
Saturday 18 June 2022
(Check church website for time)

Concert presented by music students and staff of Fettes College

Tuesday Topics

After almost two years Tuesday Topics finally returned in January. We have enjoyed excellent speakers, with good attendances and several visitors.

Unfortunately at the AGM on 12 April we were unable to get sufficient volunteers to join the Committee which may mean this popular group is no longer able to continue.

This is very sad as it was established about 35 years ago.

We have one more meeting on 26 April when Fred Daniels will be entertaining us with more of his adventures in America and on 10 May we are heading to Howie's in Waterloo Place for a farewell lunch.

Many thanks and best wishes to all our members and friends.

Eleanor Lowrie, President
Jacky Cowie, Secretary

WATCH COMMITTEE

After two years of enforced inaction the WATCH Committee, on behalf of Blackhall St. Columba's Church, plan to restart fundraising in line with our remit of supporting and raising awareness of local charities.

As yet, no decision has been made on the choice of charity for this year, but it will be locally based and requiring funds for local projects.

We intend to follow the usual program of a Summer Coin Collection, an October Craft Coffee Morning and the Christmas Fair on 26 November. More details will be published in future editions of Kirk News and the Blackhall Bulletin and through intimations at church services.

The WATCH Committee has had great support from the congregation and the local community since it was formed in 1991, raising more than £275,000 for good causes in that time. We hope this year to get back to normality!

George Millar
WATCH Committee Convener

Cameo Club (Come And Meet Each Other)

We are enjoying our programme and being able to socialise again with the relaxation of Covid restrictions. You are welcome to join our next meeting on May 6 from 10.30-12 noon, when we have musical guests Mairi and Robin Leach. There will be a change to the programme pattern on 20 May when we will miss this Friday, as we are having our annual Summer Outing by bus on 27 May. The usual programme will resume on 3 June.

On 26 August there will also be a different occasion when we go for coffee to the bistro at Northcare Suites on Telford Road instead of meeting in the halls. We have been invited here before and were impressed. We have been promised a chance to view a film that day in their cinema.

Currently we have an average of thirty attending meetings which includes volunteers and members. We would be pleased to increase that number. The format is coffee and tea till 11.00 followed usually by an hour of entertainment.

We depend on our valuable volunteers to run the Club. As we can provide transport to and from Cameo more drivers would be helpful. If you feel you could collect a member and bring them to the church hall for 10.30 and take them home at 12.00, that would be appreciated. Drivers do not have to stay for the morning. Contact the number below if you would like to help.

Fiona Drinnan 343 6762



Service of Rededication of the Sanctuary and Celebration of the Ordination and Induction of Rev Fergus Cook

Sunday 20 March 2022

On Sunday 20 March 2022 there was a special afternoon Service to formally rededicate our refurbished Sanctuary and to celebrate two years since the Ordination and Induction of our Minister. (Part 1)

Rededication Service Reflection by Fay Stirling, Project Manager

20 March 2022, a date that seemed like it was never coming. We'd been back in the Sanctuary since December 2020, albeit in limited, but gradually increasing numbers. And we'd had our "new" minister for almost exactly two years.

Constraints in line with Covid guidance had prevented us celebrating either event. So when we were able to celebrate, we did it in style!

Around 250 people came together on the afternoon of 20 March in the church, with at least the same number of lilies providing beautiful decoration! It was great to see the place looking at its best and feeling so vibrant. It was also fantastic that the new flexibility we have enabled a number of those who are less physically able to join the service using whatever type of seating they needed. And for those not able to attend in person, our new AV set up streamed the whole proceedings to the world.



The celebrations were meaningful, entertaining and engaging. Summing up the transformation of the Sanctuary took a little time as I tried to give a feel for the complexities and extent of the work completed, and make sure that all of those involved were suitably acknowledged. I didn't expect to feel so emotional about it, but when the video ended with the crescendo of

"Highland Cathedral", it just tipped me over! It has been a fantastic project to be involved in and the results speak for themselves. / continued

Rededication Service Reflection continued

The Rev Julia Wiley, Moderator of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian did a fine job in unveiling the commemorative plaque which is set on a piece of oak from one of our former pews.



We moved on to accept the gift of a beautiful new lectern donated to Blackhall St Columba's by our minister Fergus Cook and his family. Again, this has been made from wood salvaged from the pews removed from the church. Fashioned in the shape of the St Columba cross, it is a beautiful and contemporary addition to the Apse furniture. Eddie Thorn, our Session Clerk, thanked the Cook family on behalf of the congregation.



The day had a dual purpose as this was also an opportunity to celebrate the Ordination and Induction of our minister. Eddie Thorn shares his comments on that aspect of the day elsewhere in what follows.

It was lovely to welcome so many friends of the congregation past and present and, in particular, friends of the Cooks from the West of Scotland joining with the family at this special service. Feedback tells me they felt very welcome and were mightily impressed with our beautiful church.

Elsbeth Williamson and her small battalion of helpers, together with what must have been a full army of bakers, put on a fantastic spread which was appreciated by everyone.... I think most of us were eating cake for many days afterwards!

All in all it was a day of joy, at a time when on a number of fronts things were quite bleak, and we give thanks that we were able to come together for this very special afternoon.





Ordination and Induction - Eddie Thorn

The following is a transcript of the address by me, and a message from the Rev Dr Richard Frazer, who presided over the Ordination and Induction back in 2020

Fergus Cook preached as nominee on Sunday 16 February 2020 and every one of the 228 members present voted to accept him as our new minister. It had all been arranged to have the Ordination and Induction of Fergus on 22 March 2020. However, we all remember well what unfolded at that time – the UK went into lockdown and all the planning went out the window, so to speak.

Notwithstanding that we had gone into lockdown it was necessary to have Fergus both ordained and inducted otherwise he would not have been able to take up the charge of minister here at Blackhall St Columba's.

It was therefore decided that the Ordination and Induction would take place at Cramond Kirk, our mother church, on the evening of Sunday 22 March with only a very limited attendance, namely the Rev Dr Richard Frazer, Moderator of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Rev Marjorie McPherson, Presbytery Clerk, Rev Martin Ritchie, Greenbank, the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr, Cramond Kirk, Eddie Thorn, Session Clerk Blackhall St Columba's Church and, of course, Mrs Shona and Mr Fergus Cook. Despite the limited attendance and all that was happening out in the wide world this was a joyous occasion that formally ordained Fergus and inducted him as the minister of Blackhall St Columba's Church.



To redress the balance and give the Cook family and the congregation an opportunity to more publicly mark the Ordination and Induction, a celebration was incorporated into the Rededication Service on 20 March 2022, only 2 years late!

As Fergus was soon to go into his third year of ministry it would only be reasonable to acknowledge that the past two years had not been an easy time for a minister let alone one having gone into his first charge.

There had been many challenges:

- The obvious issue of the prevailing and changing Covid restrictions. /

Ordination and Induction continued

- Delivering a Sunday Service when no one could attend in person and missing the interaction with the Congregation.
- Grappling with technology to deliver a Service on You Tube and via live stream.
- And most of all getting to know the members of the Congregation.

Yet Fergus rose to those challenges and with the assistance of the Elders it was considered that we all did a good job in maintaining contact with our members throughout a very difficult time.

Addressing Fergus directly, I noted that this was his first charge and he came into it knowing that he had the full and complete support of the Congregation. Like any other congregation there are very real challenges but he knows that the Kirk Session and members are there to work with him and support in his work. He added that we can never do enough to spread and share the word of Jesus Christ and if we all work together we can achieve a lot. The good Lord would be with us.

I presented Fergus with a travelling Communion set as a gift from the members of the Congregation.



Rev Dr Richard Frazer who officiated at the Ordination and Induction was unable to join us, however, he had sent the following message which was read out at the Service.

A Message for Blackhall St Columba's from the Rev Dr Richard Frazer – Minister at Greyfriars Kirk and Moderator of Presbytery 2020

I am sorry I cannot be with you on this special occasion when the congregation of St Columba's Blackhall marks this double celebration. The completion of the restoration of the building and the much postponed celebration of Fergus's ordination and induction.

It was a very odd moment as we gathered at Cramond Kirk almost exactly 2 years ago to ordain and introduce Fergus. There were only a handful of us there and we were filled with a grave uncertainty about the nature of the Pandemic that was sweeping over us and what the consequences might be.

As we arrived, Russell Barr, the minister at Cramond, sent us, one by one, to wash our hands before we did anything else.

As we gathered to mark this moment in Fergus's life as well as a significant moment in the life of St Columba's Blackhall, we were acutely aware of who was not present. / continued

Ordination and Induction continued

It was my second act as Moderator of Edinburgh Presbytery, and even with clean hands, we hesitated about the traditional 'laying on of hands' that accompanies an ordination. But there was something profoundly moving about engaging in this act of hope, even in the face of all that might have put us off.

There is an old Arabic proverb that I like '*February weather, with its sad, cold blasts of wind, with the smell of summer in it*'. In that moment of Fergus's ordination, we were people of hope in spite of all that might have made us hold back. It was the great Archie Craig, a pioneering minister of the Church of Scotland in the 20th century who heard that proverb in India in 1928. There was plenty of ground for pessimism in 1928 with a war not long ended and another looming; and the great economic crash just around the corner. And, there is plenty of ground for pessimism in current events and in the challenges facing the world and the church today. Who'd have thought the decade of the 2020s could be quite so grim?

But the mission of God in the world is not the same thing as the mission of the church. Are we the sort of people who can smell the promise of summer, even in the thick of winter? It is good to remind ourselves that we are not so much people of cheery optimism, but people of Divine Hope. Whatever fortunes human institutions might experience, the Spirit of the Living Christ is at work and at loose in the world. It is our task to find out where the new shoots are emerging, where summer is coming and get involved.

Tim Dearborn a writer about mission has said 'It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a church in the world.' That perspective invites us to be nimble, to let go of some settled and even treasured habits and structures and re-imagine the church's role in the community. As you embark on this new chapter, may you rejoice in the living hope of the Spirit, who is alive and at work, leading us into new beginnings, fresh adventures and the promise of summer. We are not managing decline we are exploring new frontiers!

Also contributing to this special service were Rev Gordon Farquharson and the Church Choir under the leadership of Donald Cameron, our Director of Music.

Work continues in the Church Garden



The Gardening Team have been busy creating a stumpery from the tree stumps left in the ground after major clearance helped by the Scouts. With a few more ferns yet to be added it is beginning to take shape. Tubs placed along the front of the Church have been much admired.

Our thanks go to Pat Mcleod and Lyndy Paton for improving very hard ground.

Any person wishing to join the Team over the summer will be most welcome.

Frances Douglas
07795 204646

Edinburgh Floral Art Club

On Friday 13 May
Esther Kuck, a florist from
Portobello, will demonstrate
"Wild and Wonderful May".

On Friday 10 June Louise
Littlejohn from Dunfermline will
demonstrate
"It's a Jungle Out There".

Our meetings are at 2pm in the
Church hall.

This will be the end of our
session.

Isabel Ingram



Football & Faith

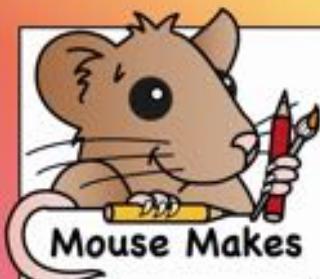
On the evening of Saturday 5 March 2022 former Scottish football internationalist, Brian Irvine, came to Blackhall St Columba's. In an interview with our Minister, Rev Fergus Cook, he gave an interesting insight into his life of football, a shattering diagnosis of multiple sclerosis and the strong faith which pulled him through.

Another date for your diaries

Blackhall St Columba's Art Club Exhibition

11 to 15 May in the Church Hall

Supporting the charity Scran, a local social enterprise which helps young people between the ages of 15 and 19 who face barriers to mainstream learning to develop vocational and interpersonal skills in the catering industry through work experience in their cafe, food truck and hospitality events.



Mouse Makes

"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His love endures forever"
Psalm 136:1



I praise you Lord for...

Jesus said,
"This, then, is how you should pray:

Our

in _____
hallowed be your

your

come,
your _____ be
done, on

_____ as it
is in _____.

Give us this day our
daily _____.

And

_____ us our _____,
as we also have
forgiven our debtors.

And _____ us
not into
temptation, but

_____ us from the
_____ one."

Read Matthew 6:9-13
to fill in the words.



I thank you Lord for...



I pray for the Church and world



I pray for my family and friends

"Never stop praying."
1 Thessalonians 5:17



I am sorry for...



I ask for...

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."
Philippians 4:6



**BLACKHALL
ST. COLUMBA'S**
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Keep up with news of
the Blackhall St Columba's Church community -
in-Church services
our Live Stream services
the various Zoom meetings
Coronavirus updates
and 'live' events -
by regularly checking
our website
www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

our Facebook page -
search for 'Blackhall St Columba's Church'

Follow us on



@BStCC_EH

DEADLINES

**Kirk News - Sunday
17 July 2022**

Please send all items to the Editor:
Fay Stirling c/o Church Office
Mob: 07518 203076 or email
fay@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

**Blackhall Bulletin - Deadline for
June issue was Sunday
1 May 2022**

All items, including advertising
enquiries, should be sent to the
Editor, Barbara Wilson
c/o Church Office
Home tel: 312 6035 or email
bulletin@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Christian Aid Sale

The 2022 Christian Aid Book Sale returns to
St Andrew's and St George's West
Saturday 14 May 10am – 4pm
Monday 16 May – Friday 20 May 10am – 3.30pm
late opening Thursday 19 May until 7pm

BOOK SALE

at St Andrew's and St George's West Church
13 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PA

Saturday 14 May 2022 10am - 4pm
Monday 16 May to Friday 20 May 10am - 3.30pm
Antiques, Toys & Records will close at 1.30pm on Friday 20th May
Thursday 19 May late opening until 7pm

Undercroft Café open all day

The Art Sale will take place in the church
on 28, 21 & 22 October

- Books of every kind
antiquarian, out of print, many languages, paperbacks
- Antiques • Collectables • Linen • Household Goods
- Printed Ephemera • Maps
- Stamps and Postcards
- Sheet Music
- Records - CDs - DVDs
- Toys - Games • Jigsaws
- Baking • Cakes • Preserves

christian aid



Also

Check out Holy Corner Book Sale

Holy Corner Book Sale returns for 14
and 15 May at the Morningside
United Church, Edinburgh

Christian Aid Scotland Quiz

Back by popular demand: Martin Fair's Christian Aid Week Quiz!

14 May at 7.30 pm via Facebook Live:

[Facebook.com/martin.fair](https://www.facebook.com/martin.fair)

Rev Dr Martin Fair – Christian Aid supporter, friend and ardent quizzier – will be hosting an online quiz to kick off Christian Aid Week.

Join Martin for quirky questions and lots of laughs. No entry fee, but please donate generously to

[Martin's JustGiving page.](#)