

# KIRK NEWS

November 2023  
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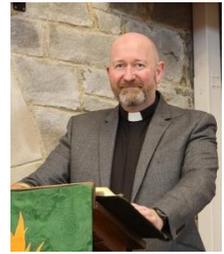


BLACKHALL  
ST. COLUMBA'S  
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

To Glorify God.....To Proclaim Christ.....and To Serve Others



**November 2023**



### **'Merry Xmas!'**

As we approach Christmas there are an increasing number of adverts, signs and notices about what some are now referring to as 'the holiday season'. Often, where notices do mention Christmas, they abbreviate 'Christmas' to 'Xmas'. I am aware that this habit can annoy some people. Recently, I saw a Facebook post by one of my colleagues who had written about how a Scouting colleague of his got *'a hard time from a Christian family after he sent out an invitation to his group to a 'Xmas fun day'. The family concerned objected to the word 'Xmas' (rather than Christmas)'*. I know, when I lived in Glasgow, there was also a furore when one of the local councils put up a 'Merry Xmas' sign which some Christian groups complained about due to the removal of the word 'Christ'. In addition, many of you probably will have seen the phrase "Keep Christ in Christmas" on a church sign or even on a social media post. You may even have already heard it this year as we get nearer to Christmas once more. The argument is always the same: people perceive that by saying "Xmas" instead of Christmas, the religious aspect of the holiday is being removed. There are people who really, earnestly believe that this is deeply important. For instance, Franklin Graham, the son of Billy Graham, wrote: *"For us as Christians, Christmas is one of the most holy of the holidays, the birth of our saviour Jesus Christ. And for people to take Christ out of Christmas. They're happy to say merry Xmas. Let's just take Jesus out. And really, I think, a war against the name of Jesus Christ."*

Let me tell you why I think many of these people have missed the point and the mark. Words change over time. The meaning, the usage and even the spelling of words evolve. The very word 'Christmas' itself has evolved and is derived from the combination of the words 'Christ' and 'mass.'

## From the Minister

Where then did the 'X' in Xmas come from and what does it mean?

In Greek, which was the language in which the New Testament was written, the word *Christos* (Christ) begins with the letter "X" or *chi*. This is what it looks like in Greek: *Χριστός*. So, in the Greek alphabet, X is the symbol for the letter 'chi' and Chi (or X), this is the first letter in the Greek word for Christ. In the early days of the Christian church, Christians frequently used the letter X as a secret symbol to indicate to others their membership in the church. Given this explanation, 'X'mas is literally the same as Christ + mas.

'Xmas' is not a recent version of 'Christmas'. It was in the early fourth century that Constantine the Great, Roman Emperor from 306-337, popularized 'X' as a shorthand for 'Christ'. According to legend, on the eve of his great battle against Maxentius, Constantine had a vision that led him to create a military banner emblazoned with the first two letters of Christ on it: *chi* and *rho*.



The Chi Rho Symbol

These two letters, then, became a shorthand for naming Jesus Christ. The combination of these two letters is a symbol we often see now on stain glass windows, communion silver, lecterns and other church ornamentation.

Most scholars agree that the first appearance of this abbreviation of an 'X' for the 'Christ' in Christmas dates back to 1021, "when an Anglo-Saxon scribe saved himself space by writing Xpmas." As parchment paper was quite expensive back then, any techniques for saving space were welcome. The abbreviation stuck and eventually was shortened to 'Xmas'.

So, this year, as we approach Christmas and you see cards, banners and the like wishing people a Merry Xmas, don't be saddened or depressed at the secularisation of Christmas. Instead, see it as an opportunity to explain to someone the true meaning of Christmas and the fact that God loved the world so much, he gave it a gift of his only son!

God bless all and Merry Xmas!

Fergus



# Baptisms at Blackhall St Columba's



**Our font**



**Mabel with Fergus on her Christening**



**Ophelia Morrison-Smith on her Christening**



# The Session Clerk's Report

## The Kirk Session

The Kirk Session met on Tuesdays 5 September and 3 October 2023

### Building For the Future II

It was agreed that the monies (circa £80,000) held for BFTF II, be set aside in a restricted fund specifically earmarked for a future fabric project in the Blackhall St Columba's halls.

### Correspondence

A letter of thanks was received from Mary's Meals in respect of £425.90 from the June Communion retiral collection.

### Defibrillator

The Public Access Defibrillator has now been installed and is available to the public. Instructions are on the casing and, once the access code has been obtained, the Machine itself will provide instructions on how to use it. An approach to St John's Ambulance Service / Scottish Ambulances is to be made to see if there is any other training for those who might be interested in learning how to use it.

### Elder Retiral

Sandy Horn has intimated his retiral as an Elder. The Clerk paid tribute to Sandy who has put in a tremendous amount of work, not only here in Blackhall St Columba's but helping out in the past at Drylaw Parish Church as Fabric Convener.

### Health & Safety

Lindsay Duguid, who recently took on the role of Congregational Health & Safety Administrator, presented to Kirk Session regarding Health and Safety in the Church and buildings. Lindsay had prepared the following documents, all of which were agreed by Kirk Session and have been posted on the Church website: -

- The Health and Safety Policy Document
- Fire Action Plan Document
- Fire Risk Assessment – Updated annually.
- Health and Safety Food Safety Legislation

# The Session Clerk's Report

## Roll

The Kirk Session was pleased to admit to membership: -

### **By certificate of Transference:**

- Mrs Graizella Smith, Craigrook Road, Edinburgh
- Mrs Anna McFadden, Corbiehill Place
- Laura J Stewart, Queen's Road

### **By Resolution:**

- Hugh Henney, Davis Terrace, Edinburgh

## Social Events

The Moderator advised that this is something covered by the Outreach Group, however, a sub-group has been formed to include Drylaw so that any future events cover both congregations. The Moderator also advised that as the age group within our Church is so wide, it is difficult to find one event that would bring them all together at one time. Suggestions made include Picnics and other activities as well as possibly trips to the Zoo or Science Museum. It was also suggested that the children are asked what they would want.

## Soup 'n' Chat

Michael Cockburn updated Elders on the Soup & Chat event held each fortnight. There are approx. 30 volunteers assisting with this which includes a "Kitchen Team", and while attendance is varied, there have been up to 40 participants turning up. The event is well advertised within the church area. While no charge is made, there have been approx. £300 in donations against costs of £680. However, due to the Grant of £500 received, no church funds have been needed.

Michael also asked for an apprentice or volunteer to allow him to develop this further. It is intended to stop Soup n Chat over the Christmas period and to restart on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2024. The Session Clerk advised that a further application for another grant could be made in the New Year as it is an annual grant.

### **Special Collection**

Special Collection for North Africa - Morocco & Libya. An amount of £950 was collected for this disaster area.

### **Wi Fi across the halls**

Jonny Coy has taken responsibility for looking at how Wi Fi across the halls can be improved.

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The **Drylaw Blackhall Steering Group** continues to meet to plan for the Union of Blackhall St Columba's and Drylaw.

The Basis of Union document involves a large amount of work and requires approval at various levels of the Church, including both Kirk Sessions and congregations. In summary, a standard Basis of Union encompasses (amongst other matters)

- The name of the united charge.
- The charity number.
- The places of worship.
- Who will be the minister.
- Which manse will be retained.

To move matters forward, a subgroup has been formed of three members from each congregation to begin the process. Blackhall St Columba's will be represented by Fiona Cooke, Jim Logan and the writer. This group will report to the Steering Group (which consists of six members of each congregation) who will in turn report to the respective Kirk Sessions.

### **Social Gatherings**

A subgroup has been set up to look at ways to bring both congregations together in a social setting. It is planned to have some events for everyone to join in and get to know each other and have some fellowship and fun.

### **Eddie Thorn**

### **Session Clerk**

# Harvest Thanksgiving



**Our Harvest Table**

HARVEST  
THANKSGIVING

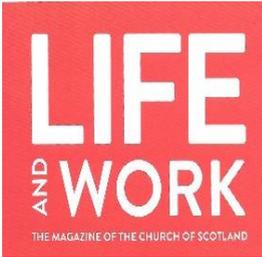


**Fergus gives the address.**



**Pumpkin floral display**

## LIFE and WORK MAGAZINE



As you may know Life and Work is the official **Church of Scotland** magazine which publishes news of what is happening.

The Subscription to a paper copy of Life and Work is still available through the Church bulk order and will continue to be as long as people wish to order a copy. The cost of a yearly subscription is £42 a year. It has not gone up this year.

Everyone who receives a paper copy at present will be asked in January to pay for the 2024 subscription unless they tell me beforehand that they no longer wish to take the magazine. I must order next year's subscription in early November, so it would be helpful to let me know.

There is a digital Subscription available for those who would like to read it online. People must subscribe to this personally. (The subscription of a Digital version is £20.99 a year.)

For those of you who do not read it and who would like to borrow a copy please say and I can lend you one. It's an interesting publication about the Church of Scotland keeping us up to date with events. If you wish to order a paper copy, please let me know.

Alison Hewat

## HARVEST CEILIDH 2023

Over 40 people (from aged 3 to 83 years) attended the ceilidh on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> of September. The Outreach Team organised this much delayed ceilidh. Our last ceilidh was in March 2019, so it was an occasion to celebrate and those in attendance did just that!

Amy Donaldson and members of the Quern Ceilidh Band provided the music. Amy also kept us right in the dances too. Anne Morrison (fiddler in the picture) brought with her six young and talented fiddle players to entertain us and that they did!

It was a very successful social event and the raffle on the night raised £130 for Hopscotch, the W.A.T.C.H Committee's 2023 charity.

Many thanks to Lynn Bunney and her kitchen team who ensured that we were all well fed and watered on the night and fuelled up for the dancing.

The event was so enjoyed by all. We do not want to wait 4½ years until the next ceilidh - roll on the next one!

Michael Cockburn

Former Outreach Team Member



Amy and the Quern Ceilidh Band

# Defibrillator at Blackhall St Columba's

## NEW PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATOR

We are happy to report that a lifesaving defibrillator has been installed in the yellow cabinet located on the outside wall of the church hall, beside the War Memorial. It faces the Queensferry Road and is clearly visible from the road.

The defibrillator has been registered on The Circuit, i.e., The National Defibrillator Network as being available 24/7, seven days a week, so that 999 call handlers can direct anyone responding to a cardiac arrest, to their nearest accessible defibrillator.

Instructions on how to access the defibrillator in an emergency are detailed on the plaque beside the yellow cabinet.

The defibrillator has been provided by St John Scotland Community Defibrillator Scheme. They work with community groups, charities or individuals looking for support to install a defibrillator in their area.

See the link below for more details of this scheme in the city, provided by St John.

<https://www.stjohnscotland.org.uk/home/defibrillators/st-john-and-the-city>

Every week in Scotland around 70 people have a cardiac arrest in a public place, at home or at work. Starting CPR as soon as possible will give the best chance of survival, but being able to use the defibrillator within the first few minutes of collapse increases that chance even further.

Currently, enquiries are being made through St John on how to access CPR training as well as a demonstration online. Training sessions will be advertised locally in the Kirk News, Blackhall Bulletin and on the Church website when they become available.

Betty Watt

# Defibrillator

The defibrillator mounted on the Large Hall by the War Memorial.



The cover instructions for the defibrillator.



# Pilgrimage to Inchcolm the “Isle of Columba”

## INCHCOLM PILGRIMAGE, AUGUST 2023



Following an enjoyable, though wet visit, in October 2021 to the island of Inchcolm and its Abbey ruins to recognise the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of St Columba, we thought we'd go again and hope we'd get better weather! We did, despite forecasts to the contrary, and a party of nineteen boarded “The Maid of the Forth” ferry to enjoy a wonderful afternoon outing to Inchcolm. We thoroughly enjoyed the voyages to the island and back, which took us under all three bridges of the Forth. It was a trip open to all and it was a special delight to welcome non church members including Ukrainian nationals currently resident with us.

The Abbey buildings, cared for by Historic Environment Scotland and very welcoming staff, are ruins but many retain roofs and provide shelter if needed. They provide a fascinating story about early Christianity and its development in Scotland, but you need to be there to feel it. Our feelings were enhanced and concentrated by a brief Communion service led by Fergus in the roofed refectory (dining hall). This is where historically the monks used to gather to eat and be preached to - as the stone pulpit there testifies.

The remainder of our time was spent viewing the various buildings which have developed over centuries, including the top of the bell tower, if you fancied it, as well as enjoying the natural beauty all around the island. There was a myriad of birds, Avian flu notwithstanding.

# Pilgrimage to Inchcolm the Isle of Columba

On the land and at sea, we were viewed by the young gulls preserving “their” space on the grass with disinterest if not disdain! They also tried to monopolise the little beach where a paddle could be tried but, to be fair, they left us in peace – or is it piece? – to enjoy any snack we might have taken with us!

Apart from the abundant natural life, there are superb photographic opportunities with views to Edinburgh and to the coastlines to the north and south. A visit to Inchcolm is highly recommended. There is no schedule for a church revisit however, it’s very simple to go when you fancy it. The ferry is easily accessible from South Queensferry and there is good, paved walking ground on Inchcolm Island.

Sandy Weir

## Some pilgrIMAGES!



## Nativity Trail – Follow the Star

A date for your diaries.

A stylized illustration of a nativity scene. In the foreground, two camels with riders are silhouetted against a bright, glowing path that leads towards a stable. The stable is a simple wooden structure with a thatched roof, where the figures of Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus are visible. The background is a dark purple and blue sky with a bright star shining in the upper right corner. The overall scene is set on a rolling hill.

**All welcome to follow  
the star on the  
Nativity Story Trail**  
at  
**Blackhall st Columba's**

**Friday 22nd December  
12.30-3pm & 5-7pm**

**Fun for all the family**  
crafts, activities, story  
telling, escape room  
refreshments

Entrance Free

Made with PosterMyWall.com

## Follow the Star - Nativity Trail



Our Nativity Trail is on **FRIDAY the 22<sup>ND</sup> of DECEMBER 2023** from **9.30-11.00am, 12.30-3.00pm and 5.00-7.00pm** at **Blackhall St. Columba's Church.**

This Christmas something very special is happening at Blackhall St Columba's. Many members of the congregation are working very hard to produce our first community Nativity Trail and we can't contain our excitement. Come along, bring your children, grandchildren and friends and support this event. You won't want to miss it! Get your diaries out and note down the details.

Our doors will be open wide on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December to welcome everyone, young and not so young, to our church at the heart of the Blackhall community and experience for themselves our "Follow the Star: Nativity Trail".

On the last Friday before Christmas, throughout the day and early evening, we will spread the Good News by hosting this interactive exploration of the Greatest Story Ever Told using the church sanctuary and halls. We want members of our community to join us in finding out the true meaning of Christmas in a novel and exciting way. They will hear the Angel Gabriel's message and go on their own journey to follow the star to find the shepherds, King Herod and some wise women on their way, until they finally reach the stable and discover the most wonderful gift we have ever been given.

## Nativity Trail

As if that wasn't enough, we are also planning to offer a Christmas Nativity Escape Room for the older children who come along. There may even be a more advanced one for the adults! 🕒

In addition, we will be serving Christmas treats along with teas, coffees and juice in the small hall. Our little visitors can enjoy making crafts in our craft area before taking home a small gift from their visit to the trail. Add to all that some carol singing and you have a truly special event.

P7 at Blackhall Primary are coming in the morning but there is no reason why some older members (unaccompanied by any children) shouldn't come along in the afternoon or evening. Come and see the fantastic scenery created, enjoy hearing the Christmas story acted out by our cast and generally join in the fun. So don't let age be a barrier to coming along.

I would like to express my thanks to all those involved with this project. Thank you to those who said "yes" when asked to do something specific or whether you have volunteered your services, supplied props, materials or monetary donations. Your willingness to help has been a wonderful example of what can be achieved when we all work together. If you have agreed to lend us an item, we will be in touch about making arrangements for receiving it.

There are a few more things that we are still needing to ensure the experience is the best we can make it. Please have a look at the list below and, if you could donate or lend any of these, that would be brilliant. Please let Shona Cook know how you can help by emailing her at ([shonacook505@gmail.com](mailto:shonacook505@gmail.com)) or by calling her on 07981 970054.

## Nativity Trail

If you don't have any of the things on the list but would like to contribute, a small monetary donation would help us to buy any of the things we can't source.

Friends from a church in Glasgow hosted their own nativity trail last Christmas and they welcomed over 200 people from the community through their doors in an hour and a half! If they can have that kind of response, then so can we. So come on Blackhall, let's show them what we can do to spread the Good News this Christmas, "to glorify God...to proclaim Christ....to serve others".



### **WISHLIST**

- Several sets of battery-operated fairy lights
- Lots of white card and cardboard
- Battery operated tea lights
- Large beanbags for sitting on
- Old white sheets
- Sellotape
- Yellow card- lots
- Colourful string- lots
- Christmas wrapping paper
- Silver shiny cardboard- lots

Thank you,  
Shona

## WATCH COMMITTEE COIN COLLECTION

It's November already, where has this year gone? The WATCH Committee have been hard at work. We have had a very successful coin collection during the summer months, everyone has been so generous and skipped along happily to fill up our bucket on a Sunday Morning, while singing our collection song. This song was written especially for us by Amy Donaldson. A very special thanks to our young helpers Emma, Sarah, Lucas, Daniel and Tilda who did a great job. Thanks guys!



Emma and Sarah collect our coins for Hopscotch.

## CRAFT COFFEE MORNING

What a turn out we had for the Craft Coffee Morning, despite the torrential rain. Thank you everyone for coming along to support us, we raised over £1,300 for our charity HOPSCOTCH. The beautiful patchwork cushion, which was raffled, was won by none other than our Session Clerk. Congratulations Eddie! Look out for the matching Patchwork Quilt which we will be raffling at the Christmas Fair.

A massive thanks to everyone who helped with the Coffee Morning. A special thank you is sent to the 23rd Craigmmond Scout Group who set up the tables on Friday evening. Thank you also to all the bakers who produced such delicious and varied baking - you are all amazing! To those who helped serve, sell, dish wash, make banners and bunting we are so grateful for your support. The beautiful flower arrangements which were donated by the "flower ladies", who made time to do them and decorate the church for Harvest thanksgiving as well – were very much appreciated - thank you all!

The WATCH Committee is now planning the next fundraising event!



Plans are now well underway to organise **the Christmas Fair**. We look forward to seeing you all there on **Saturday 2nd December 2023 at 2pm in the Large Hall.**

Lynn Bunney, WATCH Committee



# Christmas Fair

2pm Saturday

2nd December

Blackhall St Columba's  
Church Halls (Queensferry Road)

Baking Books Bric a Brac Craft  
Fashion Accessories Hampers  
Santa's Grotto Teas Tombola Toys

(Cash Only)

Entrance £1 per Adult

Proceeds to children's charity

**HOPSCOTCH**

Charity No. SC028660

# Christmas Fair

## THE CHRISTMAS FAIR

### Saturday 2nd December 2023 at 2pm in the Large Hall.

This year is the pearl anniversary of the Christmas Fair (thirty years!). With this in mind, let's make this a fair to remember. We will have the usual stalls (see table below) and Santa is coming, taking time out of his very busy schedule. The teas will be served this year in the Sanctuary, to the accompaniment of Christmas Music.

<b>Stall</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
Books	Senior Choir	Alison Hewatt Elspeth Williamson
Bottle	Badminton Club	Linda Finnie
Bric-a-brac Large and Small CDs and DVDs	Kirk Session	Dorothea Mair Fiona Cook Marge Whiteside
Cakes	Cameo Club	Fiona Drinnan Margaret Brown
Children's Books	Brownies	Nicole Harland
Craft	Watch Committee	Ishbel Robertson
Fashion Accessories (as good as new)	Kirk Session	Christine Denham
Hampers	Congregation	Ann Wood
Sweets	Mother and Toddlers Tuesday Topics	Kirsty Taylor and Louise Harney
Santa's Grotto	Pugh Family	Anne Pugh
Teas	Watch committee	Anna Hamilton
Tombola	Watch Committee	Rosie Watt
Toys, Electronic and board games, jigsaws	Scouts and Choir	Diane Ross, Donald and Libby Cameron

## **DONATIONS TO THE CHRISTMAS FAIR**

All Donations to the stalls will be gratefully received at the church halls on: -

**FRIDAY 1st DECEMBER - 10am - 12pm, 2pm - 4pm, 7pm - 9pm**

**SATURDAY 2nd DECEMBER - 10am to 12pm.**

The “Hampers” will be delighted with any donations before these dates to plan the hampers. Donations of tinned goods, bottles, jars, chocolates, biscuits, cakes, napkins etc. can be dropped off at the Church Office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, between 9.15am and 12pm or at church on Sunday mornings.

The envelopes for the Hamper Draw will be available from the Church Office. The filled and completed envelopes for the Hamper Draw should be placed in the box provided in the Church Office.

We will be very grateful to have any new items for the Tombola stall, such as any unwanted gifts or unused purchases. Once again, we will be having the “*Envelope Draw*”. We will be asking for a £5 donation with the chance of winning one of three excellent prizes. One of them will be a £100 voucher for a meal at “Forage & Chatter” in Alva Street. Envelopes will be available from the Church Office and on the shelf at the entrance to the halls.

We look forward to seeing you all at our Christmas fair so that we can share our Christmas spirit and raise money for HOPSCOTCH, and please remember that all stalls are **cash** only!

We would also be delighted if anyone wishes to volunteer their time to help with refreshments or the stalls on the day.

Please contact Lynn Bunney or Rosi Watt via Church Office.

## FASHION ACCESSORIES STALL



### Christmas Fair - Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2023

Just a reminder to you all that the Fashion Accessories Stall are looking for donations of jewellery, bags and purses, scarves, gloves etc. These can be new items which you may regret having bought, unwanted gifts or items you no longer wear and which you are willing to donate in support

of this year's charity, Hopscotch.

All items must be clean and in good condition or, sadly, we will be unable to use them.

Please help if you can. Hopscotch needs your support. Donations can be given to -

Christine Denham, Pat Macleod, Kirsty Cassidy and Mary Dee, the Fashion Accessories team.

Thanking you in anticipation.

## SOUP n CHAT



## Christmas Shoebox Appeal



The **Christmas Shoebox Appeal** has begun once again. Members of the congregation are invited to help bring joy and hope into the lives of underprivileged children, with the gift of a Christmas Shoebox. Flat packed 'Go Boxes', and instructions for filling them, are now available to collect from the back of the church on Sundays. During the week they will be available from the Church Officers in the Church buildings.

A list of items to include in your shoebox will be provided along with packing and drop off instructions. The organisers request gifts of small toys, personal care items, school supplies and a prayer for the child who will receive your gift. A donation of £5 per box is also sought to cover the shipping and project costs.

Packed shoeboxes can be returned any Sunday or handed in to the church halls during the week. **The boxes must be returned to the church by Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> of November, or they will miss the collection.** Thanking you in anticipation of another year of your generous support.

Adrian Johnston, Co-ordinator

### **Pastoral and Prayer Working Team**

A previous edition of Kirk News highlighted some of the Kirk Session's working teams. Since then, there has been an Elders' Conference about pastoral care. As a congregation we worship together but we are also called to support and care for one another. Pastoral care is essentially "being with". This could be in times of physical or mental illness, bereavement, hardship or in joyful times such as the birth of a child or a family celebration. It has been said that the best handbook for pastoral care is the New Testament.

During lockdown when we couldn't worship together in person, Elders kept in touch with the members in their district by delivering weekly worship sheets and keeping in phone contact. If someone was admitted to hospital, moving to a nursing home or was ill at home their Elder, the first point of contact, would let the pastoral and prayer team know. The team would keep in touch and let the Minister know if the member wished to talk to him.

Having moved on to meeting in person, the Pastoral and Prayer Team still depends on Elders to refer members in their district who have been admitted to hospital and might appreciate a visit. Elders can refer those ill at home who might wish a phone call or to be referred to the prayer circle. Members who have moved to a nursing home and would like to see a familiar face from church whilst they settle in or the housebound who might like to have a pastoral visitor can also be referred. We work behind the scenes to try to care for members. Don't hesitate to get in touch with your Elder or Minister if you feel you would like some pastoral support.

I have been meeting with the pastoral representatives of the cluster churches on a regular basis. We discuss issues which have an impact on members such as loneliness, funeral poverty, difficulties with pharmacies and prescriptions, patient transport and stress for carers, to name a few. We also share what events and activities are happening in the other churches so that these can be highlighted as appropriate.

Fiona Cooke

## Wedding News



Fergus officiated at the wedding of Jayne Stirling, daughter of Donald & Fay Stirling, and Fraser Kingan at Cairns Farm Estate, on Wednesday 18th October. The wedding was a day of joy and fun, and a wonderful time was had by all.

## Remembrance



### Act of Remembrance

There will be a short service of Remembrance on  
**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2023** at  
Blackhall St Columba's War Memorial at 10.45am  
**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2023**  
Service of Remembrance in the church at 10.30am  
and on Live Stream at  
[www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk](http://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk)

# Church Family News



## **New Members**

We welcome a new member admitted by Resolution of the Kirk Session - Mr Hugh Henney

New members admitted by Certificate of Transference - Mrs Anna McFadden, Mrs Graizella Smith and Ms Laura Stewart

## **Baptisms**

6<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Mabel Anesu Mpunzwana daughter of Marlon Mpunzwana and Lucy Drennan.

15<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Ophelia Morrison Smith daughter of Natalie and Alistair Morrison Smith.

## **Weddings**

7<sup>th</sup> August 2023 Leonne Bisset to Andrew Lints

18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 Jayne Stirling to Fraser Kingan

## **Deaths**

Sadly, the following members have passed away. Our thoughts and prayers are with their family members and friends.

### **July**

27<sup>th</sup> Mr David Thomson

### **August**

8<sup>th</sup> Mrs Jean Donald

### **September**

1<sup>st</sup> Mr Fred Underwood

### **October**

14<sup>th</sup> Mrs Enid Harrower

# Church Diary

## November 2023

11th	10.45am	<b>Saturday Morning Short Service of Remembrance at Blackhall St. Columba's Church War Memorial</b>
12th	10.30am	Service of <b>Remembrance</b>
19 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Worship
26th	10.30am	<b>Joint Service with Drylaw at DRYLAW Parish Church</b>

## December 2023

3rd	10.30am	<b>Gift Service</b> (You are invited to donate a Christmas Gift to a child in need).
10th	10.30am	Joint Service with Drylaw Parish Church at Blackhall St. Columba's Church featuring <b>St. David's Brass Band</b> .
17th	10.30am	Nine Lessons and Carols with the Choir
	4.00pm	Blue Christmas Service
22nd	12.30 and 5pm	Nativity Trail – Friday at Blackhall St. Columba's
24th	10.30am	Christmas Service
	6.00pm	Christingle Service
	11.30pm	Watch Night Service
25th	10.30am	Christmas Day Service
31st	10.30am	Favourite Christmas Carols

## January 2024

7 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Worship
14 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Worship
21 <sup>st</sup>	10.30am	Morning worship
28th	10.30am	Joint Sunday Worship at <b>DRYLAW Parish Church</b>

## February 2024

4th	10.30am	Sacrament of Holy Communion
	3.00pm	Short service of Communion for those who struggle to attend the 10.30am service.

### Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo



On Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> of October, the Junior Singers performed 'Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo' in front of their families, friends and church members. Their exuberant and joyful performance was there for all to see, and every child had the chance to sing solo or in a small group. The performance was described by some of those who were present as 'Brilliant', 'A super afternoon', 'They looked and sounded so happy', 'Wonderful'.

Able accompanied by Malcolm Wood on piano, and led by Amy Donaldson, the singers put on their most ambitious performance yet - and surpassed themselves. Well done everyone!



**The Junior Singers.**

## Around St. Columba's

### **ATTENTION! ATTENTION!**

We all enjoy a wee night out with friends old and new doing something fun and yet we sometimes miss out on what's going on by not keeping up to date with what is happening.

### **OUTREACH**

From January 2024, a programme of outreach events for the next quarter year will be posted in advance on the church website (under events) and in the Kirk News, as well as being advertised by other means nearer the time. It is hoped that this will allow our members to put dates in their diaries and not miss out on what is happening. As leadership of the Outreach group has just changed, please bear with us as we get this system up and running.

### **BLACKHALL BOOK CLUB**

We have a book club in the church which meets roughly every five or six weeks. We discuss a book read by everyone and then we socialise more generally. We meet in the Church Sanctuary at 7.30pm and vary the day of the week that we meet to suit those attending. If anyone is interested in joining the group or finding out more about it, please contact Shona Cook (07981 970054).



**Time to socialise!**

## PEACE Service

The PEACE Service takes place every other Wednesday at 12 noon in the Small Hall. Everyone is welcome to come.

### Peace Service Syllabus 2023-2024

#### 2023

8<sup>th</sup> November - Remembrance – Monte Casino (Eva Klyszewska-Daly)

22<sup>nd</sup> November - Horatio's Garden (Claire Mackay)

6<sup>th</sup> December - Practical Christianity, General Assembly (Ruth Laidlaw)

20<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Celebration (Shona Cook)

#### 2024

17<sup>th</sup> January - Practical Christianity - Fair Trade and Support (Maha Campbell)

31<sup>st</sup> January - Practical Christianity - Old Testament example (Rev Elizabeth Spence)

14<sup>th</sup> February- Practical Christianity -Persecuted Christians (Harriet Martin)

28<sup>th</sup> February - Practical Christianity - Street Pastors (Fiona Beveridge)

13<sup>th</sup> March -Practical Christianity - Child of the Manse (Norah Summers)

27<sup>th</sup> March - Easter (The Very Rev. Martin Fair)

10<sup>th</sup> April -Practical Christianity - New Testament Example (Helen Homewood)

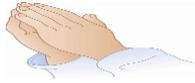
24<sup>th</sup> April - Christian Aid (Charity Speaker)

8<sup>th</sup> May - Review of the Year (Shona Cook)

22<sup>nd</sup> May - Communion (Fergus Cook)

We are always looking for additional drivers to bring people to the PEACE service. You don't need to commit to every fortnight, we would be glad of any time you can spare.

If you can help (even on an ad hoc basis) then please contact Ruth Laidlaw 07513 967974 or [ruthlaidlaw@gmail.com](mailto:ruthlaidlaw@gmail.com)



## 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. We are also happy to accept prayer requests giving thanks for a happy event or asking for God's help with any forthcoming personal endeavour or challenge. Please contact Prayer Circle secretary Betty Watt at [lbthwatt@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lbthwatt@yahoo.co.uk) or Fergus Cook at [Fcook@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:Fcook@churchofscotland.org.uk) or 0131 466 7503. Alternatively, please put your request slip in the locked wooden box on the table at the back of the Sanctuary.

## PICTURE FRAMES



**Design 1 - Designer**



**Design 2 - Traditional**

When our pews were removed from the church some of the oak was used to make picture frames in two different styles. I have a few left so if you are interested in acquiring one, please let me know. A donation of your choice can be made to the church.

Ruth Laidlaw [ruthlaidlaw@gmail.com](mailto:ruthlaidlaw@gmail.com) or 07513 967974

### **CAMEO CLUB**

Cameo will meet on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November at 10.30am when we will have one of our popular entertainers with a programme of songs. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of November, we will be welcoming The Rock Choir, who are visiting us for the first time. If you would like to come along to one of our meetings you will be very welcome, whether as a member or a volunteer.

During September we celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with some guitar-led contemporary songs performed by a young music student, which brought us right up to date! We were gifted two large tubs of chocolates, and there were balloons and celebration cakes to enjoy. A great time was had by all.

Our only meeting in December will be our Christmas Lunch out, but we will be back with our usual fortnightly slots from January 12<sup>th</sup>.

Margaret Brown 0131 332 5957 or Fiona Drinnan 0131 343 6762

### **CROSS REACH**

CrossReach Christmas Cards will be available to purchase in the Sanctuary at the close of morning worship on Sunday's 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th November 2023. Over the years the Congregation has been most supportive of this vital section of the Church's work.

Please come and browse through our selection of Christmas cards as you leave the church. Please note only cash purchases can be made. The cards cost £3.80/£3.85/£3.95 per pack of ten.

Alternatively, if you would prefer you can order online at the following link: - [shop.crossreach.org.uk](https://shop.crossreach.org.uk)

Margaret Brown CrossReach Link

# Blackhall St Columba's in Pictures



**Our Communion Table**



**Ceilidh dancing in the hall**



**Junior Singers sing the Rainbow Song**



**The Welcome Team**



**Floral Art**

## TUESDAY TOPICS

We are delighted to say that Tuesday Topics is still going. We started with a most interesting discussion and demonstration on how to UPCYCLE your old furniture!

Over twenty ladies attended but we hope to welcome far more than that over the next few weeks. We also welcome gentlemen if they are interested. Here is a taste of what is to come:

### **Tuesday Topics Syllabus 2023**

31<sup>st</sup> of October - My journey with God and the Railway Man  
(Charmaine McMeekin)

14<sup>th</sup> of November - The story of Fresh Start (Ryan Strachan)

28<sup>th</sup> of November - Davidsons Mains Now and Then (Neil McIntosh)

2<sup>nd</sup> of December - Sweet Stall at the Christmas Fair

12<sup>th</sup> of December - Craft night with Festive refreshments (Debbie Pearce)

Our Christmas lunch out will be on the 16th of January 2024 to Howie's in Waterloo Place.

We meet at 7.30pm in the Small Hall in St Columba's Church and would be delighted to welcome new members or if you just fancy an occasional meeting, it's only £3 for visitors. Membership is £20 for the year, a great bargain, and after an interesting talk you will be able to meet friends, old and new, and share a chat over a cup of coffee or tea.

If you want any other details, please phone Lyndy Paton (Secretary) 0131 332 7377 or Shiela Mackintosh on 0131 336 1357

## **A Big “Thank You” from FreshStart**

Following the Harvest Service on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> of October a carload of fruit, vegetables and dry goods, which were donated and displayed in the church, were delivered to The Pantry at FreshStart. The staff and volunteers were delighted by the scale of the donations and very grateful to place them on their shelves. The Pantry and Finance Office were also delighted to receive £60 in cash which was donated at Harvest by some of our members instead of goods. The cash will be used to purchase items that are rarely donated but always in demand by the Pantry Members. The Pantry Manager Denise and Hub Manager Abi are grateful that Blackhall St. Columba’s Church is so generous to FreshStart and they send a big thank you!

The Pantry has been running for around two years and the demand has grown significantly in the last year. There are now around 300 members. Local residents on low incomes can apply to become members of The Pantry. Membership entitles them to come once a week, pay the weekly subscription of £4.50 and then select food and other items to a value of around £20. Unlike a “Foodbank” this is shopping “with dignity” and provides choice. With many different nationalities and cultures in the area that is very important. The Pantry is also a social space where staff and volunteers get to know the members and often help them to source other help through FreshStart or their partner organisations. We regret to say that our Harvest Service donations will be soon used up as this is a 52-week service, supporting 300 households.

Blackhall St. Columba’s Church has in the past (and hopefully going forward), been generous at donating household goods but please remember The Pantry too. You can put a few extra items in your weekly shop and then drop them off either on Friday, 10 to 11.30am, the collection time in the church halls, or alternatively please drop the items into the FreshStart box as you enter the church on a Sunday. Many thanks for your support and please keep the donations coming!

Lilian and Michael Cockburn (FreshStart Co-ordinators)

# Church Flowers

## CHURCH FLOWERS

We are looking for Volunteers to deliver Church flowers after Sunday Services. After the Service, the Church flowers are taken down and bunches are made up to deliver to people in the Parish who are perhaps ill or celebrating an occasion. There is a rota for this task which needs some extra bodies. Ideally two people or two families deliver the flowers for a month in the year. If that's not always possible, people on the rota swap as they need. At present there are some months where there is only one family or one person delivering. All the people who do this job find it very rewarding and say how much they enjoy meeting the people who get the flowers. Do join us. Please get in touch if you want more information either at [rajahewat1@btinternet.com](mailto:rajahewat1@btinternet.com) or by ringing the Church office.

The pictures here are of our recent Harvest Festival event. The Flower Team was a combined Drylaw and Blackhall one. The first perhaps of many such joint occasions to decorate the Church. Our next foray into decorating the Church will be for Christmas. Do join us. The date will be sometime in mid-December, and you would be most welcome.



## Organ Recital



**An organ recital will be performed by Michal Szostak on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2023 in the Sanctuary at 6.00pm.** Michał Szostak (born 1980), is an international concert organist. He holds a Doctorate in Music Arts from the Fryderyk Chopin Music University in Warsaw.

He also studied at The Royal College of Organists in London and The Pontificio Istituto Ambrosiano di Musica Sacra in Milan.

While he plays the traditional organ repertoire, he also specialises in improvisation and arranges full symphonic works like Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> for the organ. This will be a very special event and you are not likely to come across someone of this calibre in Scotland, so I would encourage everyone to come along for the hour and be amazed.

## Piano Recital



**Jia Ning Ng will perform for us on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 in the Sanctuary at 7pm.**

Jia Ning NG (known to us as Ning) has a duet concert planned for us and this is what she says about it. She will play with a flatmate pianist doing some new piano duets with a

mix of classical and Christmas music. It will start at 7.00pm and end around 8.30pm, with an interval and refreshments. Tickets are free but donations will be gratefully received.

Donald Cameron, Director of Music @ Blackhall St Columba's

# Remembering C S Lewis

It was 60 years ago this month, on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, that the famous writer C S Lewis died. This Irish-born British academic, novelist and literary critic is best known for his novels on *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and his books on Christian apologetics.

Clive Staples Lewis was born in Belfast November 1898. He arrived in Oxford in 1917 as a student and stayed on as a fellow and tutor at Magdalen College for 29 years. In 1954 he moved to Cambridge University's Magdalene College, until his death in 1963.

C S Lewis's books include *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *the Space Trilogy*, *Mere Christianity*, *Miracles*, and *the Problem of Pain*.

Lewis was a close friend of JRR Tolkien, who also taught at Oxford. They were both active in the informal Oxford literary group known as The Inklings. Lewis had been baptised in the Church of Ireland, but then had abandoned his faith as a young man. He was converted to Christianity and became an Anglican at the age of 32, influenced by Tolkien and others. Lewis' faith had a profound effect on his work and writings, and his wartime radio broadcasts on Christianity made him famous.

In all, Lewis wrote more than 30 books, which have sold millions of copies. His *Chronicles of Narnia* was televised and filmed, and his Christian apologetical writings are still widely used today.

In 1956 Lewis married American writer, Joy Davidman, who died of cancer four years later, aged only 45. Lewis died on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1963 from kidney failure. In 2013, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, Lewis was honoured with a memorial in Poets' Corner, in Westminster Abbey.

# Sunday Club

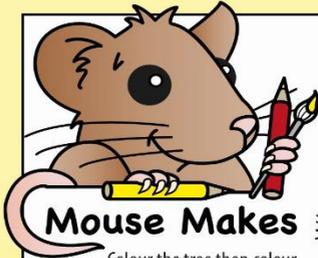


# Sunday Club

Attention all Children!

Come and join us on Sunday Mornings. We join the church service at 10.30am until after the Children's Address when we leave during the service and go down to the Small Hall. After some activities especially tailored for us, we return to the church at the end of the service.

See you there!!!



Colour the tree then colour in one star each day until Christmas. Leave the large star at the top of the tree to colour in on Christmas day!

What's on the Christmas Tree?



**A STAR**  
shows the way  
to Jesus  
Read  
Matthew 2:1-12



**ANGELS**  
bring messages from God

Read about  
Gabriel's message in  
Luke 1:26-38

Read the  
shepherd's story in  
Luke 1:26-38



**LIGHTS  
AND CANDLES**  
remind us that Jesus  
lights our way to God  
Read Luke 2:29-32



**PRESENTS**  
remind us of God's  
special gift to us ... **JESUS!**

**"For God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life!" John 3:16**

Presents at Christmas  
under the tree,  
A red Christmas stocking  
waiting for me,  
But what really is Christmas,  
What is it about?  
Just look and the Bible  
and you will find out!  
It's about **JESUS**  
- the best present of all,  
**JESUS** our **Saviour**,  
God's gift to us all!

 <p><b>BLACKHALL ST. COLUMBA'S</b> CHURCH OF SCOTLAND</p>	 <p>@ BStCC_EH</p>
<p>Website</p> <p><a href="https://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk/">https://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk/</a></p>	 <p>Blackhall St Columba's Church</p>

<p><b>Minister</b> Rev Fergus Cook 5 Blinkbonny Cres. Edinburgh EH4 3NB Tel: 0131 466 7503 <a href="mailto:fcCook@churchofscotland.org.uk">fcCook@churchofscotland.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Session Clerk</b> Eddie Thorn Tel: 0131 332 5702 <a href="mailto:sessionclerk@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk">sessionclerk@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Church Secretary</b> Joy McGonigal-Paget Office: T/W/Th 9.15 -12 Home: Mon/Fri 9.15 -12 Tel : 0131 332 4431 <a href="mailto:secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk">secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk</a></p>
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## Publication deadlines

**For contributions to the Blackhall Bulletin:**

[bulletin@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk](mailto:bulletin@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk))

December 2023 issue                      23<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2023 (you may just have missed this)

March 2024 issue                            29<sup>th</sup> January 2024

September 2024 issue                    30<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**For contributions to the Kirk News:**

[Judith.mair@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Judith.mair@hotmail.co.uk)) or via the Church Office

February 2024 issue                        19<sup>th</sup> January 2024

May 2023 issue                                19<sup>th</sup> April 2023

We are happy to take articles on any relevant subjects.

Thank you to James Burr our Church Photographer.

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