

Newsletter

Crown Church, Inverness

APRIL 2024: No. 799

Parish Minister: Rev Douglas Robertson



We have two Sunday Morning Services and Douglas is continuing to broadcast the service on Sunday mornings at 11.00 am. To watch these and previous recordings please go to the Crown Church Facebook page (a Facebook account is not required to see the service).

Sunday 7th April

Morning Worship at 9.30 am and 11.00am followed by special prayers

Sunday 14th April

Morning Worship at 9.30am and 11.00am

Sunday 21st April

Morning Worship at 9.30am and 11.00am

Sunday 28th April

Morning Worship at 9.30am and 11.00am

Sunday 5th May

Morning Worship at 9.30 am and 11.00am followed by special prayers



'And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever'

Isaiah 32:17

From the Minister

Dear Members and Friends of Crown Church,

As I write, Easter is finished for another year. But it really isn't, is it? A bit like puppies and Christmas, we need to restate and reemphasise that the Resurrection is not just for Easter. Every Sunday is Resurrection Sunday.

During my probationary year (1990-91) I remember speaking to the late Rev Stewart Jeffries, who was my supervising minister in the parish of Tillydrone in Aberdeen, about choosing hymns for the weekly service of worship. He said that ideally there should be at least one Christmas and one Easter hymn in every service, every week – our Christian faith is perpetually about the Incarnation and the Resurrection every week, every day, all the time.



Church services don't always work out like that, of course, and even Stewart admitted that it was a principle to keep in mind though it was not always practical to implement. There are many wonderful hymns that we want to include in the broad scope of our worship repertoire, covering many parts of the life of Jesus and the rich and varied life of his church, exclaiming the wonder and majesty of God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, and expressing our praise and adoration, confession and supplication, love and devotion to a wonderful Saviour.

Yet, somewhat more than 30 years later, I reflect on that early advice frequently, and some of you may even have heard me mention it.

Maybe someday I'll have the courage to start an Easter service with "Once in Royal David's City", or close a Christmas service with "Thine be the Glory", but for the moment I just ask you to reflect on the fullness of God's glory and grace in Jesus Christ. The story began long before the birth, with God's plan of salvation since the very beginning of the world, and it doesn't end with the resurrection either, it goes on, every day, in the hearts of believers who marvel at God's love and in the hearts of people who discover it for the first time.

But the plan came to fruition in that special life that we celebrate at Christmas and Easter and every day in between.

May God bless you this perpetual Easter day!

Douglas

An Easter Reflection from our Moderator, Rev Doug McRoberts



CRUCIFIED, RISEN... AND DEEPLY, DEEPLY PERSONAL...

Because she took time at the tomb, Mary Magdalene experienced the power of God in ways the other disciples missed.

The tomb was empty! She rushed back to tell the other disciples. Peter and John, as ever, were the most competitive in the race to see for themselves... and John can't resist telling us he got there first. But it was Peter, seconds later, who ran past him right into the rock tomb, and saw the emptiness for himself.

Then, John says, "The disciples went back to their homes..." Bewildered. Not knowing what to think. To a locked upper room. And **there's** the explanation. They were terrified! For all they knew either the Romans or the Jewish leaders had removed the body to further humiliate Jesus and his followers.

But Mary stayed...

Just as mystified as Peter and John. Probably just as afraid, confused, and grief-stricken. But they left and she stayed. And so, she experienced something that no one else did. She must have spoken of this precious moment, years later, to John. So we know that she was crying – so hard she couldn't actually see Jesus, at first, through the tears. We shouldn't miss **the mourning**.

Of course, Peter and John had looked into the empty tomb. But, John says, "*They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.*" They didn't get it. Yet.

Mary stays – and she *does* get it. She is first to discover **the meaning** of the empty tomb. The resurrection is God's "Yes" to the world's "No." And she's the first to discover just how intensely personal this resurrection is.

"Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus simply calls her name. "*Mary,*" he says, as he must have done a hundred times before. And then she **knows...**



Not only is he alive, he is there for those who love him. As real, as close, and as personal as the embrace they share, before Jesus, gently but firmly, urges her not to keep clinging to him – but to take what she now knows with all her mind and heart and soul to everyone else in her life... to touch them as Jesus has so touched her.

And Jesus gives her a personal mission: *"Go to my brothers and sisters and tell them, 'I'm going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"*

And so Mary, the first herald of the Resurrection of *Sar-Shalom*, the Prince of Peace, becomes the first Christian missionary – the herald also of the Ascension... *"So Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord; and spoke to them of what he had told her."* That's our call too. Each and every one of us.

The power of the risen Christ be with you, and all you are called to know and love, this Easter and for all your time here on Earth.

Doug McRoberts

Aig deireadh Di-dòmhaich na Pailme, fàilte ribh a chàirdean!

Celebrating Palm Sunday at my home church of Dunvegan in the parish of Bracadale, Duirinish & Snizort on the Isle of Skye was encouraging. Why? Because the last time I worshipped here the building was half empty, whereas today it was full. And there was the happy sound of children playing, where before there were none. Indeed, it was announced that Boys Brigade would be starting up again and something for the girls too. Hope was in the air.

Now I know that between Palm Sunday and Easter comes Good Friday. The crowd that welcomed Jesus into the city with cheers changed its tune to jeers, once everyone realised that Jesus wasn't about to submit to their expectations, which they had confused with God's greater purposes. We too succumb to anger when people fail to live up to our expectations. Eventually those closest to Jesus would understand that God has a bigger agenda than making one nation great again. His purpose is to redeem the whole of creation!

In the afternoon there was an inter-church gathering in the community hall. This too was a novelty. Instead of competing for the diminishing constituency of church-goers, we were all rallying around to support each other in our quest to make new disciples and to marvel at the power of God to transform lives. A local farmer spoke compellingly, yet with great humility, about what it means to be a Christian, weaving his personal story into the message.

Holy Week invites us all to reassess our lives and what following Jesus means to us. Everyone's story is unique but we are all called to weave our journey into those of myriad others on the same path. How we do that will shape Clèir Eilean Ì: Highlands & Hebrides. Like Holy Week our new presbytery will have its ups and downs and also like Holy Week it is a means to an end: resurrection...

Fellow presbyters, despite evidence to the contrary, we are not in the decline management business. We are about hope and faith and progress and growth. And grace and reconciliation. Gone is church life as we knew it. Instead we are confronted with a window of opportunity. There will be mourning and regret and we should face these squarely, grateful for those cherished practices and places that we are leaving behind.

And then we must get on with the business of harnessing fresh resources of people and expertise and technology, applying them to the gifts we've brought with us – of scripture and prayer – in order discern how to be faithful and fruitful here and now and tomorrow.

How shall we reverse decades of decline? How shall we maintain intimacy across such a vast area? Where are all these extra resources we were promised? What can be done to recover the lost generations? Can we be salt and light in communities which no longer notice or care? I don't know. But God does. Let us seek him together and get in step with how he is already answering our deepest questions, fulfilling our profounder desires, making all things new...

From your clerk and fellow pilgrim, Rory

"Thigibh thugamsa, sibhse uile a tha ri saothair agus fo throm-eallaich, agus bheir mise fois dhuibh..." Mata 11.28

Rory MacLeod

Clerk, Clèir Eilean Ì

On Palm Sunday, we marked the retiral of two Crown Church stalwarts

Gloria MacKintosh has been our Church Secretary since 2016, but had also been in that post for many years earlier starting in 1988.

Her knowledge of the congregation and the discretion with which she used it has been invaluable. Gloria was given flowers and presented with a monetary gift donated by members of the congregation who wished to express their gratitude for her work.



Then Douglas Wilson, who has brought so much joy to so many as he nurtured those wonderful flowers in the Church garden was presented with framed photos of his flowers and a voucher to enjoy dinner with Jane in the Kingsmills Hotel. Jane was also presented with a bouquet.

We look forward to their continuing presence at worship in Crown Church and know they will generously share their advice when asked.



125 Years of Crown Church

If you take part in any of our church groups, you may already have heard that the 125th anniversary of the founding of Crown Church will be celebrated on the 19th September 2024. While not of the same significance perhaps as Dornoch Cathedral's 800th anniversary currently being celebrated, it is none the less a good time to look back with thankfulness at what has gone before, and particularly to add a record of the past 25 years to what we have in Bill and Dorothy Mein's book "Crown Church, 100 years of Worship and Witness".

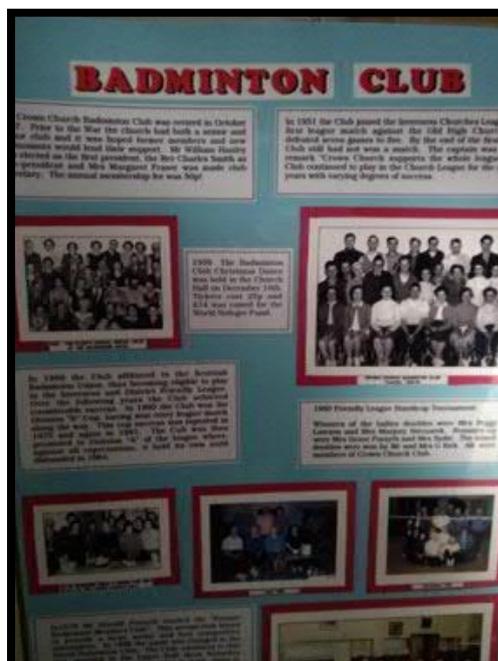
While the current groups can prepare another 'panel' (see sample picture) for an exhibition to do just that we know that there are some groups or initiatives from the last twenty five years which are no longer in existence but which were at the time important to our Church's outreach.

If you were involved in something like that, would you be able to provide information for a panel for an exhibition, or even to prepare one?

Appropriate card is available from the office and you should also record your proposed topic there. Or leave your information with Fiona for a panel to be prepared. Thinking of aspects such as Cygnet, 'Joseph', the musical, retreats at Kincaig, the ETs, indoor bowling, Budapest, North Street Church, Malawi, Shallowford, highlights of Peter Donald's ministry and of Willis Jones - - - what comes to mind for you?

We are also looking forward to the variety of initiatives which church groups and others who use our premises regularly are now considering – things like children's competitions, afternoon teas, songs of praise, quizzes or a film. Let's see how much we can encourage all those who pass our doors to actually come in. Or even better devise interesting outreach initiatives to take out to our local community.

If your group would like to see the relevant panels from the Centenary Exhibition prior to preparing an updated one, this can be done **on Friday 19th April from 10am – 12 noon in the Sanctuary.**



Prayer Diary

April 2024

This prayer diary has been prepared by the Discipleship Team. We hope that you will find it useful. You may like to detach it from the newsletter and use it to pray for our church and community

April 7-13

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace.

We pray for all the people of the middle East who are caught up in this horrible ongoing conflict. We pray for an end of this war.

We pray for all those who are afraid and being tormented by this conflict; May Your everlasting arms hold them in this time of great fear. We pray Lord knowing that only You have the power over life and death; We pray that all people can have the life you have given, and life in all its fullness.

We remember and pray for all those killed in this and other conflicts; we pray also for the people of Haiti and Sudan.

We pray for the leaders on the world stage; that they be inspired and strengthened by the wisdom and courage of Christ, and work together for peace in the world.

Pray John 1:5; "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it"

April 14-20

Give thanks to God for the new season, for brighter weather and the reminder of renewal and fresh life; For all the goodness and beauty of His creation.

Loving God, we ask for your healing over every part of our lives – physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. We pray that you would make us strong and resilient for the days ahead. We know that you have great purpose for those who believe in your name. Help us not to allow the distractions and struggles of our days, wear us down to the point of exhaustion.

Father, thank You for sending Jesus into the world so that we could have a relationship with You. Help us to be part of sharing the gospel with the world. Amen.

Pray Romans 8:38-39 "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[k] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

April 21-27

Remember and pray for those who are experiencing everyday life challenges with great difficulties and whose spirits are weakened; may they find support and comfort through relationships and appreciation of life's daily triumph.

On this day 22nd April, Earth Day, praise God today for the earth that He has gifted to us, and all the beautiful plants and animals He has created for us to enjoy. Commit to caring for every part of God's creation, and ask Him to prompt us to be a good steward of the earth. Pray for the advancement of conservation and renewable energy and that our governments will prioritise looking after our earth.

Pray for those who are struggling with loneliness and ill health, asking for His healing care and comfort. May the Lord be with them and bless them.

In times of stress, hardship and pain may those who offer comfort be blessed with Lord's guidance, taking strength from knowing that they do His work: bringing hope, charity and love to all they meet.

April 28 – May 4

Gracious God, when the clouds hide Your light, and the darkness unsteadies our faith with fear, help us to hold on to You by the thread of one thankful prayer at a time: thankful for air to breathe, for memories of goodness, for people who care, for the promises You have made and for the plans You have for us to give us a future and a hope. Amen

Pray for those who are grieving, those whose lives have changed through loss, that they will know the peace of God that passes all understanding. May they know that they are helped in the palm of God's hand.

Pray for those who are suffering from stigma and discrimination; may they be shown compassion and understanding.

Pray for those who are suffering from the effects of alcohol and substance abuse; may God guide them to the right support and services for healing and recovery. Pray for their families who are also affected.

If you have particular prayer requests for May 2024 please do send them to our *church secretary, Fiona* who will pass them on, or e-mail Jude Madeleine; judedmond@yahoo.co.uk





We believe in life before death

Christian Aid Week 2024 – 12-18 May
Seven days, so many ways to make a difference

Every Christian Aid Week, people across Britain and Ireland raise funds, act and pray for their global neighbours in a celebration of hope for a fairer world. Inverness people play their part and have a good record of fundraising.

This year's appeal runs from 12–18 May and is focussing on the organisation's work in Burundi, one of the most densely populated and poorest countries in Africa. Heavily reliant on agriculture, it's also one of the least prepared to combat the effects of climate change, including droughts, floods and landslides. The global cost of living crisis has intensified the challenges: more than 70 per cent of the population live in poverty and more than half of children are chronically malnourished.

Christian Aid has been working in Burundi since 1995 when it first offered humanitarian assistance to people surviving the civil conflict. Now, alongside local partners, the organisation helps establish Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). These community-led groups mean people can save and borrow money, making small businesses possible, offering reliable and diverse incomes so families can eat regularly, get medicine when they need it, and build safer homes.



Thirty-five-year-old Aline Nibogora is the chairperson of a VSLA which supports some 25 families in a remote village, in Makamba Province. Aline escaped an abusive marriage only to find herself on the streets begging for a place to stay. Her life changed when she went to a three-day, Christian Aid-funded community workshop. With a small start-up loan, Aline began trading avocados and peanuts locally. She's now a grocery wholesaler and living on her own plot of land where she's building a home for her family. In the next five years she hopes to expand, so that one day she can buy a mill. This will provide a source of income without the need to transport heavy goods over long distances.

"I don't want my children to have a painful life like mine, remembering it makes me weep. I could never have dreamed I would one day have a brick house and be a successful businesswoman, able to feed and clothe my children. "

This Christian Aid Week – from 12-18 May – supporters are once more stepping up, knowing that every prayer, every gift, every action helps transforms lives.

There are **seven days and so many ways** to make a difference. There will be more details about what we will be doing in Crown in the May newsletter.

Our new Administrator Mrs Fiona Gordon

For several weeks Gloria has been handing over in the office to Fiona. This is a new post which Fiona is taking up, but much of the secretarial side of the work will run more smoothly for her having the benefit of Gloria's knowledge of Crown Church.

Fiona is an Invernessian born and bred, and has worked with BT for 34 years since she left school. She has been married to Martin for 26 years, and they have two children. Abby is currently travelling and working in Australia, and Ross is an apprentice alarm engineer.



Fiona enjoys walking Bodhi (the family dog), meeting friends, running, going to the gym and playing golf. Golf is a new hobby – only taken up in the past year after having avoided it for until now. But at least she can now join Martin and Ross on the golf course.

Fiona will be in the office from 9.30 am until 12.30pm each weekday. If you have not met her before, it will not be long before you establish a number of shared acquaintances – particularly if you too have a long Inverness connection. Please however note that there will be a number of deadlines Fiona needs to meet on Fridays and it would be helpful if members of the congregation try to visit the office on other days of the week.



Gloria handing over to Fiona.



We are delighted to report that Jackie MacKenzie was appointed as the Youth and Family Coordinator for Young Crown and started her role on the 4th of March. She will be familiar to many of us as she is one of our choir members and can be seen at most Church services on Sundays.

Jackie was a staff member with The Crown Corner Club in the Upper Hall before taking on this role and she also currently spends occasional weekends as a Street Pastor around the Inverness Area.

She has great enthusiasm for the role and already been to visit the Head Teacher at Crown primary School and has a planned meeting with Douglas our minister to visit Millburn Academy. One of her main duties is to build relationships with children and young people and families, initiating and maintaining contact with them.

Anyone wishing to chat to Jackie can catch her in the office most days where she will be based.





'Many thanks to the congregation of Crown for the gift of money, beautiful flowers and all the good wishes I have received. Much appreciated!'

Gloria



Thank you for your kind words and generous gifts presented to Jane and I on Sunday 24th March. It was my pleasure looking after the garden to the benefit of our own church members and the wider community.

I would like to add a special Thank you to James, Mary Ann, Anne B, Pat, Jude, Donald McK and Jane S who assisted in the Manse garden.

Kind regards

Douglas

Daily Bible Readings for April

Sunday, April 7, 2024, Acts 1:1-14, You Shall Be My Witnesses

Monday, April 8, 2024, Acts 1:15-26 Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

Tuesday, April 9, 2024, Acts 2:1-13 The Coming of the Holy Spirit

Wednesday, April 10, 2024, Acts 2:14-36 Peter Addresses the Crowd

Thursday, April 11, 2024, Acts 2:37-42 The First Converts

Friday, April 12, 2024, Acts 2:43-47 Life among the Believers

Saturday, April 13, 2024, Acts 3:11-26 Peter Speaks in Solomon's Portico

Sunday, April 14, 2024, Acts 3:1-10, Peter Heals in Jerusalem

Monday, April 15, 2024, Acts 4:1-22 Peter and John before the Council

Tuesday, April 16, 2024, Acts 4:23-31 The Believers Prayer for Boldness

Wednesday, April 17, 2024, Acts 4:32-37 The Believers Share Their Possessions

Thursday, April 18, 2024, Acts 5:1-11 Ananias and Sapphira

Friday, April 19, 2024, Acts 5:12-16 The Apostles Heal Many

Saturday, April 20, 2024, Acts 5:17-42 The Apostles Are Persecuted

Sunday, April 21, 2024, Acts 17:1-9, Church at Thessalonica

Monday, April 22, 2024, 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 Thanks to Thessalonica

Tuesday, April 23, 2024, Acts 6:1-7 Seven Chosen to Serve

Wednesday, April 24, 2024, Acts 6:8-15 The Arrest of Stephen

Thursday, April 25, 2024, Acts 7:1-53 Stephen's Speech to the Council

Friday, April 26, 2024, Acts 7:54-8:1a The Stoning of Stephen

Saturday, April 27, 2024, Acts 8:1b-3 Saul Persecutes the Church

Sunday, April 28, 2024, Acts 18:1-4, Church at Corinth

Monday, April 29, 2024, 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 Factions in the Corinthian Church

Tuesday, April 30, 2024, Acts 8:4-25 Philip Preaches in Samaria

Wednesday, May 1, 2024, Acts 8:26-40 Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Thursday, May 2, 2024, Acts 9:1-19a The Conversion of Saul

Friday, May 3, 2024, Acts 9:19b-22 Saul Preaches in Damascus

Saturday, May 4, 2024, Acts 9:23-31 Saul in Jerusalem

Sunday, May 5, 2024, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Faith, Hope, and Love

Monday, May 6, 2024, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 Proclaiming Christ Crucified

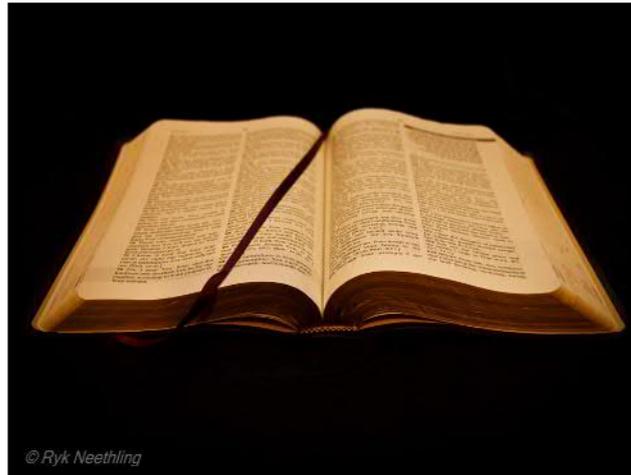
Tuesday, May 7, 2024, 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 The True Wisdom of God

Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 1 Corinthians 3:1-23 On Divisions in the Church

Thursday, May 9, 2024, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 Spiritual Gifts

Friday, May 10, 2024, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 One Body with Many Members

Saturday, May 11, 2024, 1 Corinthians 14:1-25 Gifts of Prophecy and Tongues



**Highland Foodbank
Items Needed for March/April**

- 1kg bags of rice
- Microwave packets of rice
- Tins of custard
- Cartons of log life juice
- UHT milk
- Tins of ham/corned beef
- Tins of macaroni cheese
- Washing up liquid
- Cat food





FLOWERS IN CHURCH ON SUNDAY

We are very grateful to those who have donated money so that we can arrange flowers for our Sunday Services in April.

There is a new flower chart for 2024 in the Midmills corridor. If you would like to donate flowers on a particular Sunday please add your name to the list and Ruby will then be in touch with you to discuss what you would like. **Ruby Coe (225467)**

NEW FLOWER CONVENER

At the end of May, after many years, Ruby Coe will be standing down as Crown Church Flower Convener, and we are looking for someone to take on this post.

A flower team is in place so what is required is someone to administer things such as the rota, income and liaison between donors of monies and those arranging the flowers. This person need not necessarily be a flower arranger.

It is not an onerous position and is enjoyable, so it is hoped that someone will step up to take over.



SHORTBREAD SHOWDOWN



The final of the Highland Shortbread Showdown took place at Eden Court on Sunday the 17th of March and our very own shortbread star Dorothy Morrison was awarded the People's Choice Award.

It has been a hectic few weeks for Dorothy since she made it to the final, not only having to bake hundreds of pieces of shortbread, but also finding time to be interviewed by the Sunday Post!



It was an amazing event, great atmosphere so well supported. Thank You to everyone at Crown for the enormous support given to me on entering this competition from the outset, to all who came along to the Final and supported me and to our family company R MacDonald & Son (my cousin) who was my sponsor. Love and Best wishes to you all.

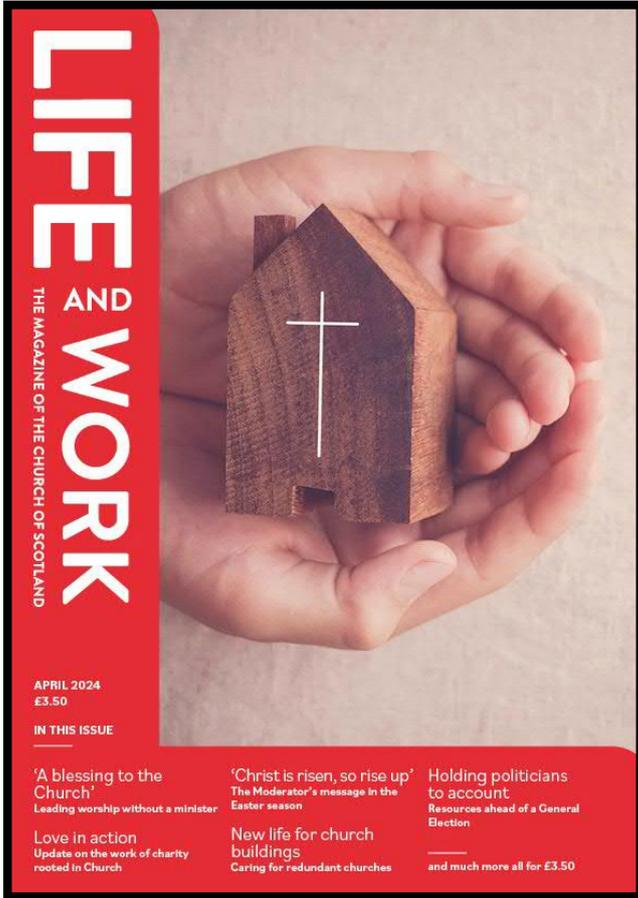
Dorothy Morrison

WELL DONE DOROTHY!



LIFE AND WORK

APRIL



A Blessing to the Church

Churches taking on worship without a minister

Love in Action

An update on the work of the charity Scottish Love in Action, which has its roots in the Church of Scotland

New Life for Church Buildings

How redundant church buildings are being repurposed

Our Presbyteries

Focus on the Presbytery of Clyde

View from the Pulpit

The Rev Scott Rennie on the challenges and differences of ministry in London

God's Original Cathedral

The Rev Roddy Hamilton says outdoor worship 'invites a whole range of new experiences'

Regulars

The Very Rev Dr Martin Fair on ministry recruitment

Reflection by the Rev Dr Richard Frazer

The Rev Ruth Kennedy on digital church

Bible Study by the Very Rev Dr Colin Sinclair

My Church: Alan Blair of St Columba's Church, Jersey

Youth: New elder Grant Henderson shares his journey of faith

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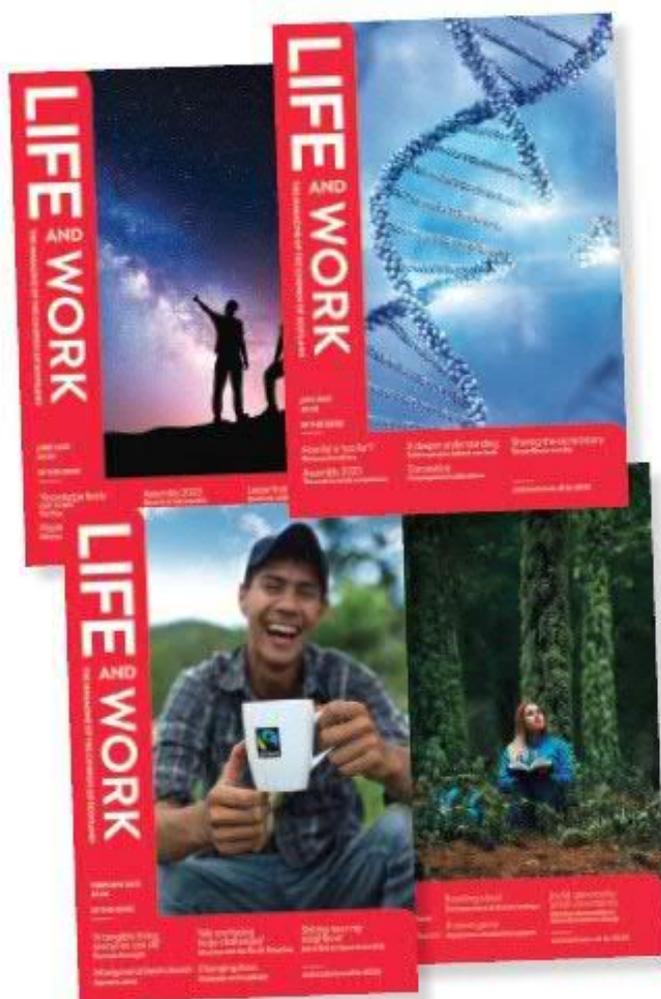
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Welcome Team

April 7th Lena Clarke, Sheena Ferguson, Sheona & Brian MacKenzie
April 14th Lena Clarke, Sheona & Brian MacKenzie & Margot Tuley
April 21st Lena Clarke, Sheena Ferguson, Sheona & Brian MacKenzie
April 28th Lena Clarke, Brian Macgill, Sheona & Brian MacKenzie

As we enjoy our newly refurbished premises, perhaps now more so than ever it is important that we can offer a friendly presence at our doorways. If you feel you could help, even if it is just one Sunday, please do contact Fiona at the Church Office.

Readers

April 7 Douglas Taylor
April 14 Lena Clarke
April 21st Alastair Macleod
April 28th Helen Boynton

*****Items for the May newsletter by Sunday 28th April please!**

*****Please note our new email address*****

Please send any articles, photographs or news to :

newsletter@[crowns-church.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@crowns-church.co.uk)

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Published by Crown Church, Inverness (Church of Scotland)

Registered charity SC 018159

The Church website is to be found at www.crowns-church.co.uk