

July 2025
Newsletter

Old High St Stephen's Church of Scotland

SUNDAY SERVICES

Following the closure of the Old High Church for Sunday Worship, all Sunday services are now held at St Stephen's Church at 10.30am. Services are recorded and are available via:

OHSS website:

www.oldhighststephens.com

Youtube:

www.youtube.com (type in Old High St Stephens)

OHSS Facebook page:

www.facebook/oldhighststephens

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

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

CONTACT US

Church Administrator:

(079 342 85924)

invernesschurch@gmail.com



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

Registered Charity No.
SC035073

THOUGHTS FROM REV JAMES

Gardeners would probably hate our garden, or would at the very least try to do something with it. The house has nothing but grass in the back garden, with the exception of a blackcurrant bush by the kitchen window, and some potatoes that I planted in a planter made out of a leftover pallet. The rest is grass.

Oh, at least it used to be grass. The back garden last got fully cut at the start of May, and with the exception of a strip cut under where the washing line goes some time in early June, we have let it run wild.

It's lovely.

There's a lot of clover, and the bees are making good use of the clover flowers. There's a surprising amount of types of bees, mostly differentiated by the colour of their tails. At the back of the garden there are thistles, and some other wild flowers poking through.

And with the insects there's a range of birds, some going for the bugs on the ground, some going for the bird feeders. It's a busy place to sit and watch. But it's a reminder that there's always somewhere to sit and contemplate God's creation.

In the monasteries, gardens were part of monastic life, where they prepared food for the kitchens, but also grew herbs for use within medicines. Some orders of monks had communal gardens, while others, like Mount Grace Priory in Yorkshire, had individual cells with gardens for the monks where they would pray and tend to their individual garden. Monks would have been concerned far more about the contemplative, and spiritual qualities of the garden which they would have related to a biblical paradise. Gardens and plants for them would have been full of spiritual symbolism that has been largely lost to the modern gardener.

Now I'm not about to suggest that you run off to a monastery, as tempting as that may be sometimes, but even if you're not a gardener, do you have a quiet place where you can slip off to so you may draw closer to God and appreciate his creation and your place in it? In the uncertain times we live in, perhaps it's more important than ever to step back and refocus ourselves and our place in creation.

Now if you'll excuse me, I need to water the strawberries. James

NEWS FROM THE CONGREGATION

MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERIM MODERATOR

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive;
built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

(CH4 198 - author Marty Haugen)

As we look around the world today, where division seems to grow by the hour, these words become so important. Division is not just in far flung places such as Israel/Palestine, but even here in the UK, politics is becoming more about blaming 'the other'. Even in our own local communities, we don't need to look hard to see the seeds of division.

It was, therefore, with a heavy heart, I decided to postpone our planned Mission Development Workshop. Unfortunately a number of people who would have wished to attend were away on that weekend. However, as there was virtually 100% support from folks at our last congregational meeting, I do hope we can schedule a date, perhaps in September or October.

Meanwhile, can I urge you to keep in mind the Five Marks of Mission. Consider how, whatever you do, as a church, a community or an individual, how does it fit with these holistic goals?

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

Sharing the message of Jesus Christ and God's love.

To teach, baptize, and nurture new believers

Discipling and supporting people in their Christian faith and growth.

To respond to human need by loving service

Demonstrating compassion through practical help and care.

To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation

Advocating for justice, human rights, and social transformation.

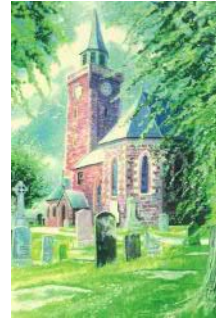
To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Caring for the environment and promoting sustainable living.

Blessings

Aileen Binner (Interim Moderator)

SERVICE AT SOUTHSIDE NURSING HOME there will be a short service in Southside Nursing Home on Sunday 6 July after our morning service. All welcome to attend.



SALE OF OLD HIGH CHURCH I was advised recently that there are now six expressions of interest in the purchase of the Old High Church. Four firm offers are on the table although two have conditions attached (survey/change of use). 121 have urged us to go to a closing date. This has been agreed by our Kirk Session (Trustees)

and I confirmed this to 121 on 24 June. The likely closing date is Friday 1 August.

This has been an incredibly difficult time, there have been many viewings which take up considerable time and most come to nothing in the end. There has also been a lot of press interest in the sale.

Hopefully we will get a satisfactory outcome soon. I am very grateful to Donald MacLellan for the support he has given in showing people round the church. Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk

YOUR DATA - YOUR CONSENT Your Elder will have given you a form to complete consenting to OHSS holding your contact details on our church roll. Thank you to all who have returned their completed forms. If you haven't already done so, please complete and sign the form and forward to our Church Administrator, or leave it at the church for collection. If you have not received the form, please contact our Church Administrator.

MEMORABLE MELODIES We had our last Session, before taking a Summer break, of Memorable Melodies last Friday when we had a very happy afternoon of Scottish music with Ronnie Shaw. We were very pleased to welcome some of the residents of Isobel Fraser Care Home with their carers. We all enjoyed strawberry tarts with our tea and coffee as a special Summer treat.

With donations, we have purchased and installed a new garden seat in the Southside Road garden. This seat is often used by people passing by and quite often residents from the nearby Care homes enjoy a peaceful seat in our garden.

For some time people will have noticed and admired our Church garden. Lately a small group from the congregation has been meeting on a Tuesday morning to help tidy the garden and this has been much appreciated by us all. Lots of work has to go on in the background to maintain our buildings and gardens and this is all done mainly by members of our congregation. Val Cantlay

OHSS WALK This June's walk was arranged to coincide with the kind invitation of Stuart and Ruth MacKenzie to visit their beautiful home and garden and have afternoon tea with them. Our group of over 20 first met at the atmospheric Reelig Glen and enjoyed the short walk along the Moniack Burn, giving the opportunity to see the spectacularly tall coniferous trees.

Some of these are amongst the tallest in Britain thanks to being located in the sheltered gorge through which the Burn passes.



Going on to the MacKenzies' Lentrane home we were able to enjoy their magnificent garden which has been lovingly

developed from a farmer's field over several decades of hard work and expert planting.



We were also treated to a veritable feast of home baking skillfully served by the hosts. Conversation, as ever, was wide ranging and entertaining and the afternoon was greatly enjoyed by all. Warmest thanks are due to our hosts. Malcolm Steven

Please see the Picture Gallery on the back page where you'll find more photos of the afternoon outing to Stuart and Ruth's garden.

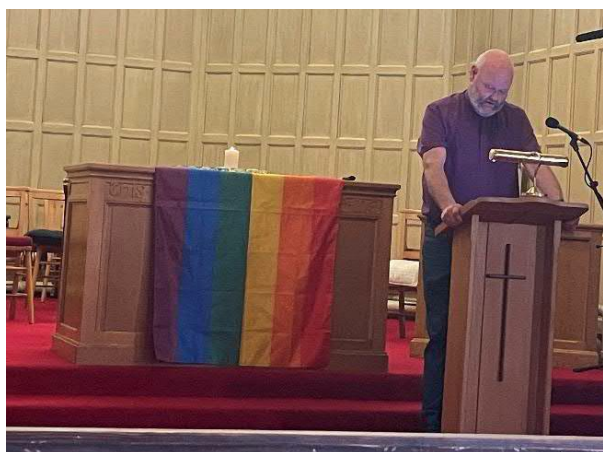
DATE FOR THE DIARY The joint Pastoral Care Teams at Old High St Stephen's and Crown Church along with the Friends of Cameron House, are planning a special Afternoon Tea in Crown Church on Saturday 20 September from 1 - 3pm. There will be a Baking Stall and a Craft Stall, so if you have time to do some crafting in the summer your goods will be willingly accepted for the stall. Remember to save the date- **Saturday 20 September**. Val Cantlay

CROSSREACH PRAYER DIARY Crossreach - The Church of Scotland's Social Care Council recently held a workshop at Inverness to present their five-year strategy. They aim to demonstrate Christ's love in action by offering high quality care and support which will empower people, across Scotland to live a full and fulfilling life. Crossreach provide many services, for all ages, throughout Scotland. One of the booklets handed out on the day was a prayer diary and I thought it might be useful to share the prayers for the facilities in our own area. For this month we focus on Cameron House, Inverness - Home to 30 people who are at various stages in their journey with dementia

1. May each service user always have a deep sense of being loved and valued
2. May families who are supporting their loved one's transition into the home experience wisdom, strength and peace

3. For job applicants to be well suited to the positions and to be filled with a spirit of loving service. May new staff quickly settle into the team.
4. For the love of Jesus to be experienced by everyone visiting, living or working at the home.
5. Thanks for the Friends of Cameron House group as it continues to support service users and staff in many different, and often invaluable ways.

PRIDE MONTH INVERNESS A service of reflection and remembrance entitled *A Light Shines in the Darkness*, was held in St Stephen's on 1 June.



GERMAN CHOIR We were treated to a beautiful and memorable choral evening at St Stephen's on 17 June, when the Degerlocher Kantorei Choir from near Stuttgart in Germany came and sang for us. Choral Music from the 17th to the 21st century is their forte and they sang pieces by Henry Purcell, Heinrich Schütz, Joseph Gabriel Rheinberger, Ola Gjeilo, John Rutter and more. There was a retiring collection which raised £86 for The Highland Hospice.



SWEATY CHURCH AND SNAC GAMES AND BBQ PARISH EVENT 28 JUNE 2025 Around 100 children and adults gathered in the grounds of Crown Primary School on a sunny but windy afternoon for some games, chat and a BBQ. It was lovely to see the children all having fun and then sharing in with the food with their parents and members of Crown Church and OHSS church. We planned

the event to coincide with the end of term celebrating the fun we have had together this year and looking forward to the summer holidays. There are a few photos below.



The next *Sweaty Church* will be back at St Stephen's church in its usual format in the next school term. Much thanks to Jack Simmons for his excellent activities with the children, to those who brought food and to Crown church for hosting everyone. Deborah Macrae.



Guild Malawi Appeal I would like to thank all the ladies who gave buttons, zips, threads etc. Rosa McDermid.

GARDEN SPACE I have space available in my vegetable plot which could be used by somebody else. If you are interested, please contact me and we can discuss details. Margaret Lorrain-Smith (01463) 231889.



FUNERALS

7 July 2025 Mrs Alison Burgess, Darnaway Road



THE OLIVE GROVE
Customers are attracted to the Olive Grove for a variety of reasons. For some it is a handy small café on their way going into or coming home from the centre of Inverness. For others it is a stopover for a lunch of homemade soup, homemade fresh bread, scones and cakes, at very affordable prices. Many

are regulars who have their lunch in the Olive Grove, every week, others are visitors who are drawn in by the sign outside; some of these are tourists, including from overseas.
For all who use the Olive Grove, one of the biggest attractions is the atmosphere created by the friendly volunteers that staff the café. The rapport between the customers and staff creates a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere.
There is a cross section in the age levels of the customer base, from the more mature, to young families, some from the Toddlers Group in the church. The young mothers or fathers often appreciate a bit of assistance especially if there is more than one youngster looking to be fed. Here, when time allows, a staff member can act as 'grandparent' helping feed one of the children to ease the pressure on a

busy parent. This all adds to the informal family feeling around the tables.
Adults come in in groups of twos or threes, or singly which also allows cross table conversations. At other times, a few minutes conversation with a solo guest may make all the difference in a sometimes lonely society.
At the moment, team Olive Grove needs additional volunteers to maintain this hugely appreciated service at its current level. The menu is simple, the cooking quite routine, a friendly disposition is key to this equal opportunity. It is amazing how quickly people fit in and new friendships form. **Come on, give it a go, you will enjoy it.**

OTHER NEWS

VACANCIES - BLYTHSWOOD
Shop Manager - Muir of Ord
Contract type: Part-time, 24 hours per week
Contact: HR Department on 01349 830777
Email: personnel@blythswood.org
Closing date: Wednesday 25th June 2025
Shop Manager - Dingwall
Contract type: Full-time, 37.5 hours per week
Contact: HR Department on 01349 830777
Email: personnel@blythswood.org
Closing date: Wednesday 25th June 2025
Shop Manager Designate - Inverness (with regular travel)
Contract type: Full-time, 37.5 hours per week
Contact: HR Department on 01349 830777
Email: personnel@blythswood.org
Closing date: Wednesday 2nd July 2025
Marina MacRae
HR Office Administrator | Blythswood
☎ 01349 830 777
@ marina.macrae@blythswood.org
▼ Highland Deephaven, Evanton, ROSS-SHIRE, IV16 9XJ
Working Week: Monday, Wednesday - Friday
www.blythswood.org



AND FINALLY ...
The next edition of our Newsletter will be published at the **end of August**. Thank you to all who have contributed items and photos throughout the year. Enjoy your summer.

PICTURE GALLERY

