



October 2025  
Newsletter

# Old High St Stephen's Church of Scotland

## SUNDAY SERVICES

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

OHSS website:

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

Youtube:

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

OHSS Facebook page:

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

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

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

## CONTACT US

Church Administrator:

(079 342 85924)

[invernesschurch@gmail.com](mailto:invernesschurch@gmail.com)



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

Registered Charity No.  
SC035073

## THOUGHTS FROM REV JAMES

As I mentioned in the church on Sunday, on the 24th or 25th of September the Rapture was supposed to happen. This was proposed by a South African pastor, and through the use of social media, their prophesy spread around the world.

So what exactly is The Rapture?

The Rapture is an concept believed by some Christians, particularly those in North America, consisting of an end-time event when all dead Christian believers will be resurrected and, joined with Christians who are still alive, together will rise "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" The whole idea of the rapture didn't really come about until the 1830's, but it got a bit more promotion in the mid 90's with the Left Behind series of books and films.

There's two verses used to support the theology behind the Rapture. The first talks about people being taken.

### **Matthew 24:37-40**

The coming of the Son of Man will be like what happened in the time of Noah. In the days before the flood people ate and drank, men and women married, up to the very day Noah went into the boat; yet they did not realize what was happening until the flood came and swept them all away. That is how it will be when the Son of Man comes. At that time two men will be working in a field: one will be taken away, the other will be left behind.

The second talks about rising up into the clouds.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**

There will be the shout of command, the archangel's voice, the sound of God's trumpet, and the Lord himself will come down from heaven. Those who have died believing in Christ will rise to life first; then we who are living at that time will be gathered up along with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.

Now I'm going to spare you some heavy theology here, because I'm trying to keep this under 500\* words, and I don't like casually throwing around phrases like "Midtribulation premillennialism" in polite conversation. The edited version is that, over the years, many people have proposed that the day of the coming of the Lord is not just a concept, but is an actual date in the calendar. And over the years, there's been at least one prediction per year of the end times. Some people have taken it so seriously they give away all their possessions, only to find the day doesn't come.

I feel sorry for anyone who was taken in by this false prophesy, especially those who have been persuaded to give away their goods. At the same time though, those who believe these prophecies are truly living like that day will be their last. Perhaps it's a reminder to us that we never know when it's our own last day and to live accordingly. So live a good Christian life, and don't worry about false claims -Jesus will come when he's good and ready.

## NEWS FROM THE CONGREGATION

**CONGRATULATIONS** to our Interim Moderator Aileen Binner on completing her final training assessment to become an Ordained Local Minister. A lot of hard work, and on Saturday 1 November she will be ordained in Oban and become Rev Aileen Binner. Well done to Aileen.

James has also completed his final assessment and is now a Minister of Word and Sacrament. Again, his transition from Ordained Local Minister to Minister of Word and Sacrament has been lots of hard work, being our locum and studying and attending conferences etc. Well done to James and Aileen as they start a new chapter in their lives. Our prayers are with you. Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk.

**PRESBYTERY PLAN - CONFIRMATION OF UNION** Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Last month (September) your Kirk Session voted to approve the Basis of Union with Crown Church, however, the congregation voted against the Basis of Union. This, however, does not prevent the union. What will happen now, is that Presbytery will enact clause 13.3 in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act. Here is what the clause states

*13.3 Notwithstanding the provisions of this section 13, while it shall be the duty of the Presbytery to make every effort to secure approval of the office bearers and congregations involved, the right of the Presbytery to effect Adjustment in terms of this Act is hereby affirmed, subject to the written consent of any minister or ministers whose rights would be adversely affected (save where the charge has been designated an Insolvent Charge in terms of section 10.5 of this Act).*

As the Rev. Douglas Robertson has informed presbytery of his intention to demit his charge on 31<sup>st</sup> December, presbytery can act 'to effect the adjustment', i.e. the union.

Therefore, at the next presbytery meeting (28<sup>th</sup> October), presbytery will be asked to confirm the union as agreed in the presbytery plan. As the plan has already been agreed by presbytery on more than one occasion it is most likely that it will, once again, be approved.

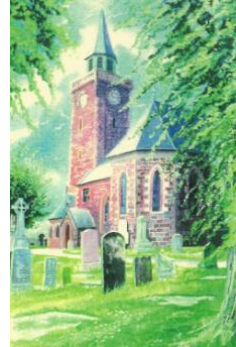
I want to reassure you, that other than Sunday worship, which will be in Crown Church from January 2026, all current activities which take place in the OHSS building will continue until the new, Midmills Parish Kirk Session carry out a full review of the buildings with the support of the Presbytery Buildings Officer and the Presbytery Finance officer. Everyone will be kept up to date with what is happening. The journey ahead may feel uncertain and even difficult at times, yet, within this transition lies a profound opportunity — to grow in faith, expand our

mission, and deepen our discipleship as one body in Christ. I am reminded of a verse from Isaiah,

*"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19*

A powerful reminder to us that God is always working in the midst of change to bring new life and purpose. Though the path ahead may have its challenges, please know that God is at work amongst us, shaping a new future where our shared gifts can flourish and His love can be shared more widely in our community. I pray you will commit to share this journey. Blessings

Aileen Binner (Interim Moderator)



**OLD HIGH CHURCH** An update for you on Old High buildings. We had hoped to conclude the sale of the Old High Church last Thursday 25 September, but there is a slight delay due to something going back to about 1929! Both lawyers are working to find a solution and I am assured that funds are in place. Hopefully this will be concluded within the next few weeks.

Sally Robertson who rents the Old High Hall for TFX has applied for and been granted planning permission to convert the former union offices on Shore Street to a dance studio. I would imagine this will take some time to complete. The hall is marked for disposal in the Presbytery Plan. Christine Mackenzie, Session Clerk.

## PRAYER DIARY

**Cale House, Inverness (CrossReach)** Homeless accommodation for up to two years for adults preparing for their own tenancies.

\* For the work of CrossReach may its people be blessed by God's encouragement, inspiration and strength.

\* Thanks for the gift of today, may all that is achieved be pleasing to God and benefits those served by the CrossReach team at Cale House

\* For hope and blessing on the people who use CrossReach services and on the wider community

\* For wisdom on how to live in this fragile world may staff know God's protection as they work to support others.

\* Thanks for God's grace and blessing, may these gifts be used for His glory as the team work with the people who attend the service.

\* For strength and wisdom to find the best solutions to daily challenges.

**SERVICE AT SOUTHSIDE NURSING HOME** there will be a short service in Southside Nursing Home on Sunday 5 October after our morning service. All welcome to attend.



**OHSS HARVEST THANKSGIVING** This year our Service is slightly later - Sunday 26 October (the same day as the congregational meeting). Please see within the newsletter items required for the Foodbank. All donations received will be split between Highland Foodbank (Blythwood) and 1668 Cafe. I hope you can support this request. If anyone needs to make a donation and can't make it to the service that day, please contact Pat Macleod on 07934 285 924 and arrangements will be made to collect your donation.



Highland Foodbank  
Together with Trussell

Harvest 2025

Can you help by donating an item or two from the list below?

- Tins of corned beef
- Jars of pasta sauce
- Long life juice/diluting
- Small jars of coffee
- Tins of potatoes
- Tins of tomatoes
- Toothpaste/deodorant

Highland Foodbank provides emergency food packages with enough food to make 3 meals over 3 days to people in crisis.

People are referred to food bank by a variety of different organisations including CAB and Social Work Teams.



"My wife recently gave birth to our daughter, very prematurely. My employer wasn't able to give me extended time off work to support my young family through many hospital visits, so I had to give up my job as we have no local family support. Navigating the benefit system was new to me, and quite complicated, resulting in me not getting a payment until three weeks after my last pay from work. I don't know how we would have managed without food bank."

01463 717630

foodbank.admin@blythwood.org

Registered Charity in Scotland 048001  
Company Number 583493



**VISIT BY MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND** The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Rosie Frew and her husband Dave made their second 5 days visit to Cleir an Eilean I (Presbytery of the Highlands and Hebrides) from Sunday 7 September to Thursday 12 September. She was accompanied by the Presbytery Moderator Rev Janet Mackellar.

On Sunday 7 September Rosie was guest preacher at Crathie Church (Rosie and Dave stayed overnight at Balmoral Castle). Guests at the church included the King and Queen, Prime Minister and his wife and Actress Joanna

Lumley. After the service she made her way to Kingussie Parish Church where the linked congregations of Kingussie, Laggan and Newtonmore gathered to celebrate 100 years since the rebuilding of the church following a fire in 1924. On Monday 8 September Rosie visited Highland Hospice and was welcomed by the Chaplain Rev Norma Higgott and toured the facility and met members of staff. They were particularly impressed with the gardens.

Ness Bank Church (through Inverness Foodstuffs) provided a lunch where they met some members of the congregation.

An afternoon tea was arranged at St Stephen's Church and although the attendance was disappointing everyone met Rosie and enjoyed a lovely tea and cakes. There is a photo in the newsletter taken inside St Stephen's Church with some of those who attended.

The party moved on to Beechwood House (CrossReach) and were shown the recently opened Nevis House which provides an extra 22 placements for those on their recovery journey. The facility expands on existing work carried out at Beechwood House, located next door, offering residential rehabilitation, community outreach and social care to people affected by substance use.

Highland Council generously provided a Civic Reception in the Town House and the Moderator was warmly welcomed by the Provost and other members of the Council. Members of Presbytery, local charities, ecumenical partners, those who hosted visits and a very limited number from local congregations had all been invited and it was a very enjoyable evening with a superb buffet included. It was an opportunity to say 'thank you' to all who serve the local community in elected office and by volunteering.

On Tuesday the Moderator visited Nairn Old Parish Church and St Ninian's Church to learn more about two new outreach projects. One addresses food waste through the Foodnest, a store with a fridge for surplus produce which can be accessed by the community anytime between 8am and 8pm. The second is a community garden being developed in the extensive church grounds with a learning space for sharing and teaching skills.

A visit to West Moray Church in Moray to hear about a union of eight churches into a new team ministry with an urban and a rural minister along with mission churches. She preached a service at Strathpeffer Church in the evening. On Wednesday she attended the Presbytery Conference in Strathpeffer together with online participation and the guest speaker was Rev Tommy MacNeil, minister of Martin's Memorial Church in Stornoway, who used the story of Jairus to inspire, challenge and encourage members. Rev Ken Ross, a Church of Scotland mission partner assigned to Clèir Eilean Ì and based at Zomba Theological University in Malawi where he serves as Professor of Theology and Dean of Postgraduate Studies, was a guest on-line speaker.



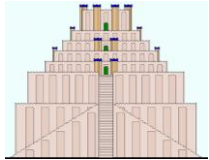
The presbytery has raised £3,000 to sponsor a theology student in Zomba and he talked of the importance of training transformative leaders for the church and wider society and how financial support will allow the student to focus fully on their studies.

On Thursday in Lochcarron members from as far afield as Caithness, Skye, Dingwall, Alness and Dornoch gathered for fellowship, food and worship.

The two Moderators, Rosie and Janet spoke about their respective paths to ministry and experiences on the way. Christine MacKenzie, Session Clerk



## SWEATY CHURCH 27 SEPTEMBER 2025 - THE TOWER OF BABEL



Jackie started our session with the story of the Tower of Babel, and the theme for the rest of the time was reinforced about the importance of God, friends and community rather than things. There was a game of

"Climbing the Ladder to the Tower" and Dodge Ball 'Knocking the Jenga Tower down!' There was lots of energy and noise followed by a quiet reflection and prayer just before the food. We had 30 children ranging from 3 to 12 with some brothers and sisters included. Our next **Sweaty Church** is on **15th November** in **St Stephen's Hall 4pm to 6pm**. *Additional Pictures in our Picture Gallery at the end of the Newsletter*



**WEDDING AT ST STEPHEN'S** lovely photo of Rebekah and Otoo who were married at St Stephen's on 13 September 2025.



## OTHER NEWS

**THE LEPROSY MISSION'S INVERNESS AREA FUNDRAISING GROUP** are holding an Afternoon Tea on Saturday 18 October 2025 from 2:00-4:00pm at Crown Church (enter by garden path). Parking at Crown School car park. There will be a bring-and-buy stall and a stall with Leprosy Mission products. Please come and support the work to restore the Danna hospital building in Niger. Donations at the door. We look forward to seeing you.

**OLD HIGH INVERNESS** There has been much going on behind the scenes since our offer for the building was accepted. Most of this has been of a legal nature and business strategy consultation. It's getting closer, but we are not ready to open the doors to the public just yet. In the meantime we are still raising funds and grants for running costs, via our GoFundMe page and a fantastic upcoming fundraiser event at the Drumossie Hotel on 1st November. The attached News Update gives the details. We want to say another massive thank you to all who have got us this far, and we'll let you know what's happening next as soon as possible. Look forward to catching up with some of you at the Drumossie Hotel on Saturday 1st November. The Old High Inverness Team.





NEWS UPDATE #1

## Help us to give the Old High the future it deserves!

A fun evening for all at the Drumossie Hotel on Saturday 1st November.

Enjoy dinner, auction, raffle and games at a fun-filled evening at the Drumossie Hotel in aid of raising funds to move forward with preserving the Old High as a visitor, heritage, and community centre for locals and tourists alike.

Our musician for the event is rising star Wee James.

When you buy your ticket, you will see the choice of Hunters Chicken or Vegetable Wellington. Please advise us

which you and your guests would like, or if there are any allergy issues at:

[oldhighinvernessevents@gmail.com](mailto:oldhighinvernessevents@gmail.com)

Scan the TicketTailor QR code to buy your tickets for the fun fundraiser with lots of prizes, great music, and the delicious two-course meal.

**TicketTailor**

OLD HIGH  
Inverness  
for the community

Time: 6:30pm for 7.00pm • Meal at 7:30pm

We look forward to seeing you there!

Charity No: SC054234

23 September 2025

# THANK you

On behalf of the residents and staff and Circle of Friends of Cameron House along with the pastoral Care Groups of Crown and OHSS can I say a huge thank you to all you wonderful bakers, tablet makers, sandwich makers, tea and

coffee makers, clever crafters, everyone who donated to the lucky squares and Harry Gow for the sausage rolls. Thank you to all the willing helpers on the day and to all of you generous folk who turned out and supported us. We are indebted to the Crown Church for the use of the Church and amenities. The super amount of £1,650 has been raised for Cameron House - we are truly blessed by people's generosity and willingness to support the Home. Kay MacDonald.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - YOUNG CROWN (SCO45082)** As we look back on the past year, I am pleased to report that Young Crown continues to thrive as a stand-alone charity with a clear Christian message and a valued link to the **local churches**, including Crown Church and Old High St Stephen's. We remain focused on providing a safe, welcoming space where **children, young people, and families** can grow, explore faith, and feel part of a caring community.

Interesting times lie ahead with the imminent union of Crown Church and Old High St Stephen's, forming the new **Midmills Parish Church** from 1st January. This is a significant moment for the church in Inverness, and it will

no doubt shape how we work together in the years ahead. While Young Crown is independent, our connection to the churches is an important part of who we are, and we look forward to exploring new opportunities for partnership as the new parish begins its journey.

It is also worth noting that the **9:30 service continues to thrive**, thanks to the dedicated work of those who faithfully lead these services.

We are encouraged to see the number of young families attending continue to grow. Their involvement brings fresh energy and innovative ideas, which in turn help shape the direction of our work with children and families in the community.

One of our challenges this year came when our funding application to **Seeds for Growth** was unsuccessful. There appeared to be some concern or confusion over our relationship with the church, which may have contributed to this outcome. However, we were deeply encouraged when an anonymous sponsor stepped forward and offered to match pound for pound any money we could raise through donations and fundraising activities, up to a maximum of £7,000. I am delighted to report that we raised **£6,126**, and with Gift Aid added we are in a strong financial position heading into 2026.

Our Youth Worker, Jackie, continues to deliver outstanding work. Her toddler group remains a valued resource for parents and carers, and her work at Crown Primary School is flourishing, with growing numbers attending the Scripture Union group. Jackie also provides **support at Millburn Academy**, helping to strengthen links with young people as they move through secondary school. She has been linking with **Old High St Stephen's** through their **Sweaty Church** programme and is collaborating with the Kinmylies Church Youth Worker, helping her build confidence, knowledge, and experience.

**Saturday Night At Crown (SNAC)**, which runs monthly, continues to be a popular event for our younger members, offering a fun and safe environment with a positive Christian message.

This year we were sorry to lose one of our board members due to ill health. In addition, our long-serving treasurer has decided to step down. We are very grateful for the commitment and expertise both brought to Young Crown and wish them well. I am delighted to report that we now have **two willing volunteers ready to step into the vacant roles**, which gives us confidence and stability as we plan for the future. Looking forward, we are excited by the opportunities that the formation of Midmills Parish Church and our ongoing partnerships with local churches will bring.

With Jackie's dedication, the commitment of our volunteers, and the generosity of our supporters, Young Crown is well placed to continue our mission of serving the children, young people, and families of our community.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us — through prayer, volunteering, donations, and encouragement. Your partnership makes all the difference and allows us to keep building something that impacts lives in a lasting way.  
**Charles Forbes**, Chairperson, Young Crown.

**SING TO BREATHE** A new group has started in Inverness for people experiencing long-term breathlessness. The group will be run by The Cheyne Gang in partnership with Chest Heart Stroke Scotland. The group offers practical breathing exercises and the "feel good factor" of singing with others to help manage breathlessness. There is no charge for the group.



## Managing a respiratory condition or struggling with breathlessness?

Join your local Sing to Breathe Group!

Singing with other people is fun and can help control breathlessness and improve wellbeing.

### Inverness

Raigmore Community Centre  
125 Ashton Road, Raigmore, IV2 3UY

**1pm–2:30pm Alternate Wednesdays**

- 24th September 2025
- 8th & 22nd October 2025
- 5th & 19th November 2025
- 3rd & 17th December 2025



Please contact Jane Pamerter on **07788130594** to check dates and find out more.

*No singing experience needed. Just come along and enjoy the music, the laughter and the company.*

Registered with and regulated by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (no SC018763). Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is a wholly Scottish charity. It also operates as CHSS and is registered in Scotland as a company limited by guarantee, no SC129114.

CC0008205

## SERVICE MARKING BABY LOSS AWARENESS WEEK

### Carried

A gentle Christian service for those who have experienced baby loss, whether in pregnancy or infancy, and for those grieving a baby they never had

**Barn Church**  
**7pm, Fri 10<sup>th</sup> October**

All are welcome in this safe space, whether your loss is in the past or more recent, and whether you are familiar with church services or not

Stay for a cuppa afterwards or slip away



This service is for people whose experience of loss was many years ago (sometimes they have not been able to grieve for a whole host of reasons, not least that there was less care available), as well as for people whose experience is more recent. It is for those whose loss was during pregnancy, at birth or in infancy. It is for men as well as women. It is for people who have lived with the pain of infertility. It is for people who made a decision to end a pregnancy in the past and have to live with a whole range of complex emotions, often in secret. People supporting someone else to come along are also very welcome. The service will be explicitly Christian, but nobody will be asked to stand and sing, and while there will be the opportunity to light a candle there will be no pressure to do so. There will be some resources available to browse and the opportunity to stay for a warm drink afterwards, or to talk or receive prayer, again all completely optional.

## SWEATY CHURCH PICTURE GALLERY



Sweaty Church



Sweaty Church

