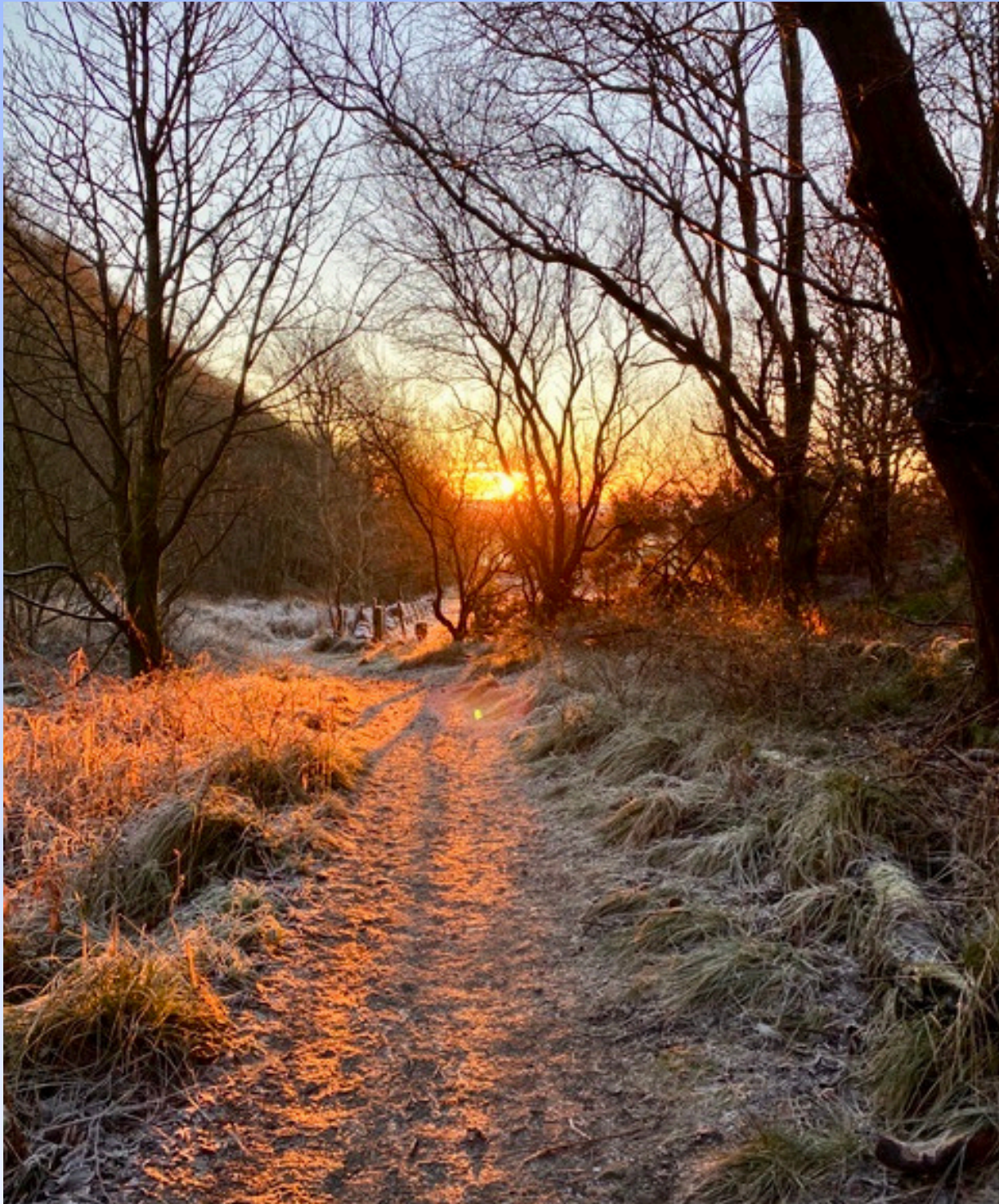


CONTACT

CRAIGIE, DUNDONALD
and SYMINGTON CHURCH



FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026

CRAIGIE, DUNDONALD AND SYMINGTON CHURCH

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026

A MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT



Dear Friends

As I write this short letter to you we are already coming to the end of January and doubtless you will be aware that January is named after the Roman god Janus. Janus had two faces. One looked to the past the other looked to the future. He had two faces, so he could study the past and see into the future. He was seen as the animistic spirit of doorways. Looking back yet looking forward!

At the start of every New Year we naturally all have the habit of looking back over the year past and remembering what happened. As well as looking forward anticipating what is likely to happen. Looking back is not always a bad thing after all who would want to forget the special good and happy times we shared as a Church or with our family and friends?

The Bible is filled with instances where individuals looked back as did the Jewish nation. Their feast days like Passover were celebrated to remind themselves that God had cared for them long ago. So too our celebration of Communion reminds us of the depths of God's love in the past and is a foretaste of the Kingdom to come in the future.

I hope and pray that 2026 will be a year of blessing for you. A wiser man than me declared:

“Faith does not know what the future holds but who holds the future!”

The future is indeed an unknown country. At times future prospects may seem daunting. However, we can draw comfort and strength from knowing that whatever befalls us we will never face life's challenges alone. God is always there with us guiding us, comforting us and celebrating with us in good and the bad times.

God Bless You and I hope you have a wonderful year.

Yours in His Service

Tom McLeod

Interim Moderator and Locum Minister

07596719107 Tmcleod@churchofscotland.org.uk

Catriona Mayes, Family & Pastoral worker - 07305620611 treenieg@gmail.com

PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISM - DUNDONALD

21st December 2025 Arthur Colin Doyle

DEATHS - CRAIGIE SYMINGTON

Mr. Brian Cuthbert, 3 Sandilands, 96 Bentinck Drive, Troon

Mrs Lily Bigham, Dundonald House Care Home, Dundonald

Mrs Betty Thomson, 7 Brewlands Road, Symington

DEATHS - DUNDONALD

31.12.25: Alastair McLaren, Glendower, 7 Ploughlands, Dundonald

12.01.26: Nina Gouck, 15 Cochrane Avenue, Dundonald



*Remembering
family and
friends in our
prayers*

SUNDAY SERVICES

CRAIGIE
SYMINGTON
CHURCH
@ 9.30am



DUNDONALD
CHURCH
@ 11.0am

FEBRUARY & MARCH 2026

- 1st Feb** 9.30am, Gift Service for Food Bank: Craigie Symington - Rev. Tom McLeod
11.00am Gift Service for Food Bank: Dundonald - Rev. Tom McLeod
7.00pm Spirit & Song Service - Catriona Mayes
- 8th Feb** 9.30am Worship: Craigie Symington - Catriona Mayes
11.00am Worship: Dundonald - Catriona Mayes
- 15th Feb** 9.30am Worship: Craigie Symington - Catriona Mayes
11.00am Worship: Dundonald - Catriona Mayes
- 22nd Feb** 9.30am Worship: Craigie Symington - Rev Tom McLeod
11.00am Worship: Dundonald - Rev Tom McLeod

Food items needed: Jars of Pasta Sauce • Instant Mash Potatoes • TINNED Carrots, Chopped Tomatoes, & Meals (Stew, Mince, Chilli, Bolognese, Curry) • TINNED Fruit, Custard & Rice Pudding • 1L UHT Milk • Tea / Coffee • Diluting Juice • Boil in the Bag Rice

Thursday 26th February Service of Union, Dundonald Church 7.00pm

As the new Congregation of Craigie, Dundonald & Symington, we will be celebrating with a Service of Union with refreshments afterwards in the Church Hall. All are welcome!

- 1st March** 9.30am Communion: Craigie Symington - Rev. Tom McLeod
11.00am Communion: Dundonald - Rev. Tom McLeod
7.00pm Spirit and Song Service: Dundonald - Catriona Mayes
- 8th March** 9.30am Worship: Craigie Symington - Graeme Stewart
11.00am Worship: Dundonald - Graeme Stewart
- 15th March** 9.30am Mothering Sunday: Craigie Symington - Rev Tom McLeod
11.00am Mothering Sunday: Dundonald - Rev Tom McLeod
- 22nd March** 9.30am Worship: Craigie Symington - Rev Tom McLeod
11.00am BB Battalion Service: Dundonald - Rev Tom McLeod
- 29th March** 9.30am Palm Sunday Service Craigie Symington - Rev Tom McLeod
11.00am Palm Sunday Service: Dundonald - Rev Tom McLeod
- 5th April** EASTER SUNDAY

Spirit and Song Service, first Sunday of month • Come along & enjoy a service of informal worship • A time of prayer, reflection & music, led by Catriona Mayes. Please use the Church side door entrance. 🙏

CRAIGIE SYMINGTON
COFFEE/TEA AFTER CHURCH

The first Sunday of every month (except July and August), 1st February, 1st March, (in November on Remembrance Sunday and in May on Christian Aid Sunday)

DUNDONALD COFFEE/TEA
AFTER CHURCH

Come over to Hall after the service for coffee/tea and catch up. Please contact Ruth if you are able to take part in one of the teams erutheaston@gmail.com

DUNDONALD CRECHE

A warm welcome to children age 3 and under The Hall is open from 10.45 am.



Thank you for the lovely Church flowers cards and good wishes I received from my Church family. Best wishes to all for a happy and healthy 2026
Jean Gray

Just a little card with a big 'Thank You' for the lovely flowers I received in December. Thank you for the lovely thought and for Frances on delivering to me. I had a bad fall but thankfully on the mend.
Thanks again, Monica Jones

I would like to thank the Church for the beautiful roses, Floyds for their 'afternoon' tea and friends for all their help and good wishes from hospital, all of which were greatly appreciated.
Kate Tweedie

Now that I am feeling a little stronger I would like to thank you for your good wishes and kindness. The flowers have been a beautiful visual in my home and have cheered me up daily.

Love and best wishes from Nancy Armour

A special Thank you to Floyds for the scrumptious box of goodies which was much enjoyed. What a lovely surprise and a real treat.

On my Mother's behalf, I would like to say a Huge Thank you to all the Church Community for all of the cards, flowers and prayers for her speedy recovery. It has meant a great deal to all of the family.

Alison, Alan and Marlene

Many thanks for the beautiful flowers so kindly delivered by Sheila - we had a lovely chit-chat. The flowers were very much appreciated. Lilian Axford

Many thanks for the beautiful birthday flowers in December. Lovely to be remembered and very much appreciated.
Lorna Dewar

I would like express my thanks for the most beautiful Church flowers given to me on my milestone birthday. They meant so much to me. The Good Grief Group gave me a lovely posy of flowers, card and exotic chocolates. The Thursday Prayer Group arranged an incredible surprise party with many gifts, cards and a wonderful birthday cake. Thank you again for all these amazing expressions of love from my dear Church friends. These happy and comforting memories will always remain very special to me. June Shannon.

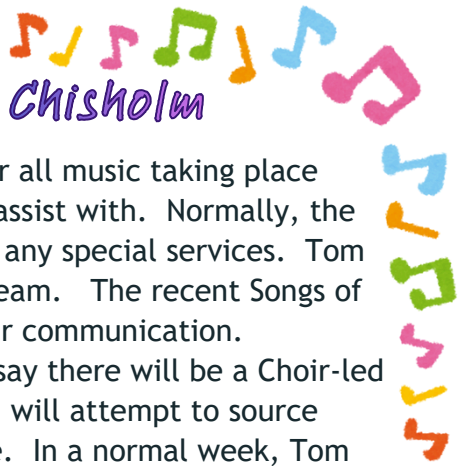
BRIAN TAYLOR'S LADIES FUNDRAISING EVENT

Symington Community Hall
Friday 20th February 2026 at 7pm.
Tickets £5 from Board members or
phone 07944 377837
Lots of fun, stories and
great clothing for sale



MY SUNDAY JOB AT DUNDONALD

Marica Chisholm



My role as organist/choir director at Dundonald makes me responsible for all music taking place during Sunday worship. In addition, there are weddings and funerals to assist with. Normally, the Minister or guest preacher and the organist consult to discuss hymns and any special services. Tom and Catriona are happy to speak with me and we are working well as a team. The recent Songs of Praise service and the Carol Praise in December are good examples of our communication. Now Christmas is behind us we are planning for Easter and I'm happy to say there will be a Choir-led service on Low Sunday (the 1st Sunday after Easter Sunday). During this I will attempt to source music and hymns old and new; my aim is to find 'something for everyone. In a normal week, Tom usually sends me the hymns on a Tuesday, allowing me to decide the ones we know and sing well as a congregation and also the ones we don't like as much.

I still hope to find people to form a Praise Band so anyone who plays guitar, please come forward! During the week I also have to find something suitable for the choir to sing and I try to find a piece that suits the text for that particular week.

For funerals I am happy to find particular music requested by family. This can sometimes be difficult, but the internet is a great help! The same with weddings, offering suggestions if requested.

As I write this I am finalising details for a concert in Church by the Ayrshire Rock Choir on Friday 6th March. **SAVE THE DATE!** The choir will be arranging this and details will follow shortly. Any money raised will be divided between Floyds Cafe and the Night Before Christmas Appeal. Please come along and support us.

As ever, if there is anything you would like to speak to me about, you know where to find me each Sunday or email me at marieamblack@gmail.com.

Do you have any empty hampers left over from Christmas or other occasions? If so, the choir would be delighted to receive them as they will then be filled with goodies and given as raffle prizes on the night of the Ayrshire Rock Choir concert during refreshments at Montgomerie Hall. Please give to any member of the choir. Thank you everyone.

Ayrshire Rock Choir
DUNDONALD PARISH CHURCH
Friday 6th March
@ 7.pm
REFRESHMENTS IN MONTGOMERIE HALL
Tickets £5
Children under 12 free
*In aid of Floyds Community Cafe and
The Night Before Christmas Campaign*



Beautiful flowers in Craigie Symington Church on Sunday 25th January

ONE HUNDRED YEARS YOUNG!



Mrs Dorothy Watson

with Isobel Mactier



As many of you will know, Mrs Dorothy Watson, one of our members in Dundonald celebrated her Hundredth birthday on the 16th October 2025. I met with Dorothy recently at her home and she kindly agreed to answer some questions so that I could share a little of her story with Contact readers.

Where were you born and brought up?

I was born and brought up near Harrogate in Yorkshire, one of two sisters. When I was seven, my father bought a small, mixed farm. I loved life on the farm and had lots of pets including a billy goat, pet lambs and ducks. I was also lucky enough to have a pony and learn to ride. We also got our first motorised van when we went to the farm; before that we had a horse and cart to get around. My sister was not keen on the farm and I was left to do most of the chores!

What did you do when you left school?

I was actually allowed to leave school early when I was aged 15; I was needed at home to help my dad on the farm when WW2 broke out and the farm workers were being called up. I did consider joining the Land Army but I was needed to work at home and did so through out the war years.

When I was 20, I moved to Leeds to do my nurse training at Leeds General Hospital. It was there that I met my husband, Eric, over a "leg of plaster". He was a young doctor in the orthopaedic department and I was sent to help him remove a plaster cast from a patient's leg. Not the most romantic initial encounter but it was the start of a lifelong partnership. I was married at aged 25 and we started a family soon afterwards.

It was not feasible to work as a nurse when I had young children so we had to get by on Eric's salary which was the princely sum of £300 per year. Eric completed his postgraduate training to become an oncologist in Leeds but we moved to Glasgow in 1960 when he was made a Consultant working at the Beatson and Western Infirmary. We bought a house in Milngavie and I had a busy life bringing up my three daughters. Later, when we were settled, I did go back to nursing, training in Family Planning and doing various clinics around Glasgow.

As the children were growing up, we moved to a small holding in Blanefield at the foot of the Campsie hills which allowed us to keep some animals. Our youngest daughter, Sally, was able to have a horse. One year I decided to get back to my farming roots and acquired a flock of about 100

sheep who were in lamb. We had been told that there are usually no problems and the sheep should lamb themselves. Unfortunately, that was one of the coldest winters for years and there were lots of problems! We sadly lost many of the lambs. When our older two daughters had left home, we moved to another small holding in Dunlop where Sally could keep her horses and I enjoyed being her groom. Other hobbies I have enjoyed throughout my life are cooking, baking, dressmaking, crochet and sewing.

Tell us about your family.

I have three daughters. **Christine** was born in 1952, **Lesley** in 1954 and **Sally** in 1960.

Christine lives in Nethy Bridge, north of Aviemore. She has a son and a daughter who are both living in the Highlands.

Lesley now lives in the South of England but she has spent a lot of her married life abroad. She has 3 boys, all of whom live abroad (Singapore, Hong Kong and Fiji) and my 8 great grandchildren are all living abroad.

Sally, my youngest daughter married a Dundonald farmer and lives at Dalkeith, between Dundonald and Symington.

Eric and I moved to Dundonald 30 years ago and enjoyed various village activities such as the craft club (I was one of the early members) and bowling. Since Eric's death, I have continued to live in my house in Kilnford Drive and still enjoy my lovely garden which Sally helps me with.

Have you always been involved with your local Churches?

As a child my Godmother made sure that I was taken to Church each week; she arranged for me to be picked up in her chauffeur driven car and taken to the local Church. Unfortunately after the Service, I had to walk home. As a family we attended Cairns Church in Milngavie and then Dunlop Church. The Rev James Currie was minister at Dunlop at that time and I loved his services which I found very uplifting. He also kept his cows in the field next to our house (he too was brought up on a farm) so we saw quite a lot of him.

In your 100 year life span you must have seen many changes, some good and some bad

Yes. Life is more comfortable now. We have inside toilets (we had a toilet at the bottom of the garden when I was a child). We have hot running water and central heating. However, I feel that life felt safer when I was younger. The roads were quieter and kids were allowed to play outside for hours on end.

It has been a pleasure chatting to Mrs Watson for this article and I would like to thank both her and Sally for giving up their time to answer my questions. I know that her Church Family at CDS was delighted to hear of her birthday celebrations with her family and Dorothy would like to thank everyone who sent her gifts, flowers and cards at that time. They were much appreciated. Isobel



CRAIGIE DUNDONALD AND SYMINGTON SUNDAY CLUB at Symington

Our Sunday Club is fun for all
First at the Church and then in the hall
We make new friends and have lots to share
Bible stories, craft and always a prayer!
Soon watch us hunting for eggs and having our fill
As we remember Lord Jesus is with us still.



We meet every Sunday during term time at 9.30am in Craigie Symington Church then go over to Symington Community Hall around 9.50am and finish there at 10.30am. All Ages are welcome!

For more information email: craigiesymingtonsundayclub@gmail.com



PRAYERS

Debi Dunn

We are conscious that many families have experienced loss recently. As you navigate this difficulty period, this is our prayer for you.

In Times of Loss...

We pray that in this time of loss,
You'll feel God's love much more
And that you'll find your comfort
In the presence of the Lord
We pray God pours upon you,
His sweet amazing grace
And overflow your heart with peace
As you live in His embrace.

M.S. Lowndes

For flowers That Bloom

For flowers that bloom about our feet;
For tender grass, so fresh, so sweet;
For song of bird, and hum of bee;
For all things fair we hear or see,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!

For blue of stream and blue of sky;
For pleasant shade of branches high;
For fragrant air and cooling breeze;
For beauty of the blooming trees,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!

Ralph Waldo Emerson

A Spring Prayer Hymn

Lord, afford a spring to me;
Let me feel like what I see;
Speak, and by thy gracious voice
Make my drooping soul rejoice;
O, beloved Saviour, haste,
Tell me all the storms are past!
On thy garden deign to smile;
Raise the plants, enrich the soil;
Soon thy presence will restore
Life to what seemed dead before.

A SPRING PRAYER from the Psalms

How many are Your works, Lord! In wisdom You made them all;
You make springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the sky nest by the waters; they sing among the branches.

You water the mountains from Your upper chambers; the land is satisfied by the fruit of Your work. You make grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts. The trees of the Lord are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that You planted.

There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the junipers. How many are Your works, Lord! In wisdom You made them all

The Iona Community have a really helpful version of the Lord's Prayer

God in heaven, Your name is to be honoured.
May Your new community of hope be realised on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us today the essentials of life.
Release us from our wrongdoing
as we also release those who wrong us.
Do not test us beyond our enduring; save us from all that is evil.
For You embrace justice, love and peace,
now and to the end of time, Amen.

The Rose Castle Foundation also have a beautiful re-translation of the Lord's Prayer from the original Aramaic.

O Breathing Life, Your Name shines everywhere!
Release a space to plant Your Presence here.
Imagine your possibilities now.
Embody Your desire in every light and form.
Grow through us this moment's bread and wisdom.
Untie the knots of failure binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of others' faults.
Help us not forget our Source,
yet free us from not being in the Present.
From You arises every Vision, Power and Song
from gathering to gathering.
Amen - may our future actions grow from here.

Mindful New Year Prayer

Lord,

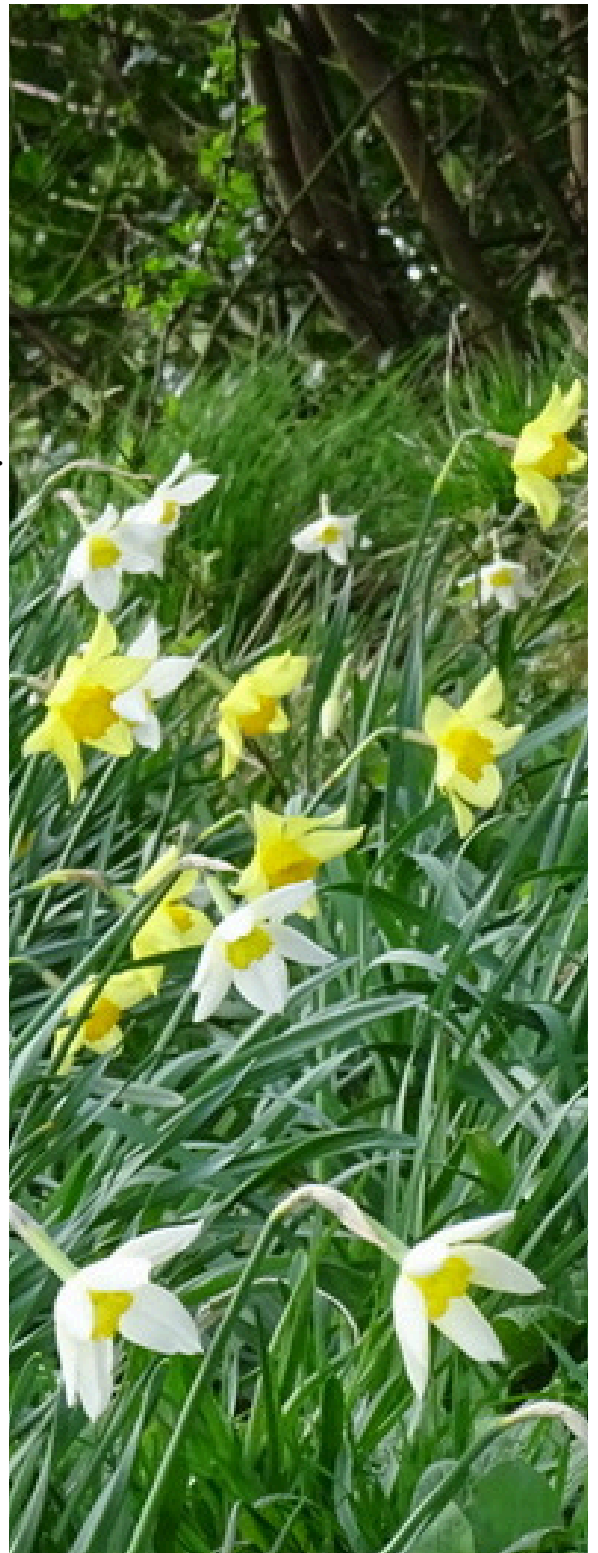
As I step into this new year,
calm the storm of anxious thoughts within me.
Heal the places that still ache from what was lost, and
fill the quiet spaces of grief with Your steady love.

Teach me to release what I cannot control, to breathe
deeply of Your peace, and to trust the hands that hold the
universe, the same hands that hold me.

When fear whispers loud, remind me that faith
speaks softly but stronger. When the path feels
uncertain, let Your presence be my light.

This year, I don't want perfection... I want peace.
I don't need control... I need Christ.

Amen.



The Nominating Committee would appreciate the prayers of the congregation as they continue the work they have been elected to do. This is a huge responsibility. They have been asked by you, the congregation, to discern where God is leading us & to identify the minister that God is calling to serve in this community. Please pray for wisdom, discernment and guidance.





CRAIGIE, DUNDONALD AND SYMINGTON GUILD

DUNDONALD BRANCH - Julie De Simone

1st December

The Crossroads Hub Choir came and entertained us by singing a number of Christmas songs including a lovely rendition of Carol of the Bells. We got to join in a couple of songs and the whole evening really got us into the Christmas spirit.

15th December

Christmas meal at The Auchans. We had a lovely meal which we could choose turkey dinner and Christmas pudding if we wanted to be traditional. The meal was followed by a Dutch Auction presided over by Catriona Mayes and Anne Young. Furious bidding ensued and prizes included candles, chocolate, toiletries and scarves. A good evening was had by all.

5th January

Stephen from The Leprosy Mission came and gave us a very interesting evening, which included some of his own excellent poetry. The Leprosy Mission works all over the world and Stephen's talk made us aware that leprosy is still very much in evidence though there are good and effective treatments nowadays and lots of advice and help for those who have leprosy.

19th January

Scottish Themed Evening. The young people and children of the Church entertained us to stories, poetry and song which was marvellous. They are such a talented group. We then had a Scottish themed quiz which had a number of tricky questions. A good evening was had by all.

DUNDONALD GUILD Monday @ 7pm Church Hall

2nd February
Scams
PC Blair McGarva

16th February
Fashion Show
with Update Boutique, Stewarton

27th February
Afternoon Tea
2-4pm in Church Hall
For Project and Charity

2nd March
Ayrshire Cancer Support
Local Project

16th March
AGM
followed by cardmaking
Beth Griffin

CRAIGIE SYMINGTON GUILD TUESDAY @ 2pm Community Hall

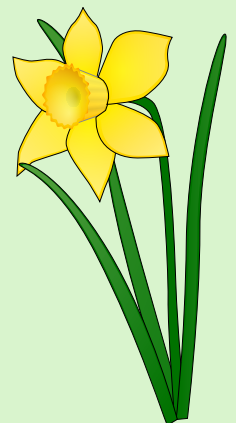
24th February
GUEST AFTERNOON
True Colours Band

24th March
AGM & Business meeting
Afternoon Tea and Quiz

SPRING GATHERING
Thursday 26th February 2026, 2pm
Howard Centre, Kilmarnock
Afternoon Tea with fun and
games

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
Friday 6th March, 2pm

The aim of the Guild is to invite and encourage women and men to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and enable them to express their faith in worship, prayer and action



Alastair McLaren 7/4/50 - 31/12/25

Elder at Dundonald Church

Alastair was born in Rutherglen in 1950, then in 1960 the family moved to Bearsden. Here Alastair attended Bearsden Academy, went to Scouts, found his love of the outdoors and of rugby. He also met his wife Pat, and they married in 1975. After completing qualifications as a computer Data Processor Alastair worked in Glasgow until 1988 when a change of jobs brought the family to Troon.



Alastair played rugby throughout his teens and adult life, including with West of Scotland. After the move to Troon he became a Marr Minis coach and then a referee. While no longer playing rugby he had time for other sports as well - with so many fabulous golf courses on his doorstep he had more time for golf and also took up curling. He continued to enjoy running, hill walking and skiing.

Alastair also had a lifelong love of horses.

The weekends were for family time; both Finley and Kirsten were encouraged to play rugby. And after rugby they'd go off to the stables where both were taught to ride, with Alastair encouraging them.

When moving to Harperland they had land and stables, space for the horses and they also had enough room for Alastair to set up some bee hives when he became involved with the Ayrshire Bee Keepers society.

Alastair was a man with a deep faith. Not a faith that he shouted about, but faith he lived including running a Sunday School so kids could get to Church before they went to rugby. Acting with integrity, serving others. An elder for many years in St Meddan's and on his move to Dundonald he was invited to the Kirk Session. Alastair often spoke with wisdom and challenge, his understanding of the Bible at the very heart of his words. Think of Alastair as the gentleman he was: The friend. The Sportsman. Church Elder and above all the Family man - and of the joy he brought into our lives.



Every once in a while, an ewe will give birth to a lamb and reject it. There are many reasons she may do this. If the lamb is returned to the ewe, the mother may even kick the poor animal away. Once a ewe rejects one of her lambs, she will never change her mind.

These little lambs will hang their heads so low that it looks like something is wrong with their necks. Their spirit is broken.

These lambs are called "Bummer lambs." Unless the shepherd intervenes, that lamb will die, rejected and alone. So, do you know what the shepherd does? He brings the rejected lamb into his dwelling, feeds it by hand, and ensures its warmth near the fireplace. Wrapping it in blankets, he cradles it against his chest, allowing the lamb to sense his heartbeat. When the lamb gains sufficient strength, he reintegrates it into the field alongside the rest of the flock.

But that sheep never forgets how the shepherd cared for him when his mother rejected him.

When the shepherd calls for the flock, guess who runs to him first? That is right, the bummer sheep.

He knows his voice intimately. It is not that the bummer lamb is loved more, it just knows intimately the one who loves it.

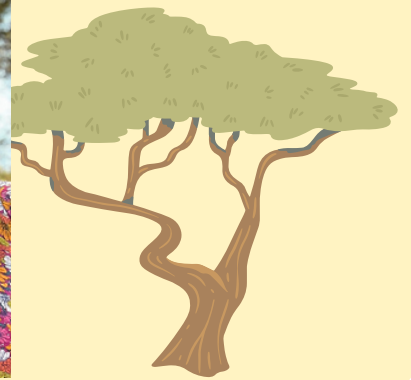
It's not that it is loved more, it just believes it because it has experienced that love one on one.

So many of us are bummer lambs, rejected and broken. But He is the good Shepherd. He cares for our every need and holds us close to His heart so we can hear His heartbeat.

We may be broken but we are deeply loved by the Shepherd.

Author Unknown / Dawnings

Photos by Shirley



Dear Friends,

I've been seeing familiar things a little differently these last few weeks. Seeing the spontaneity of dance among the children at school open days, recognising the wide community of friends we have, taking in the eclectic names of roadside coffin shops, and, this morning, feeling that cool wind that comes ahead of the rain sitting on our back porch. I suppose the difference is we know we're going to miss them. We always knew we were sojourners in Malawi. We signed up for three years and now, seven years later, we're preparing to say goodbye. God willing, we'll be back in Scotland in March 2026 and we look forward to connecting with many of you during a final deputation programme. All the cliches are true - we've learned more, been changed more, gained more than we might consider ourselves to have given to others. And there's time for that. But, for now, we're acutely aware of our dependence on God as we navigate through the next few months: ***And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. - 2 Corinthians 9:8***

I met with colleagues in Lilongwe last week to discuss what "making the most" of my remaining time might look like. It was encouraging to see that some projects were well developed and ready to hand over, like the direction of the tree nursery in Northern Malawi. Also, a number of the congregations that received micro-grants for tree planting have done great work, and we're hoping to support them to scale up their efforts while offering support to another tranche of congregations.

Over the last year, I've worked on the Emerging Leaders Programme to turn it into a workbook format so it can be used for self-paced learning or easily taught by others. If time allows, I'll deliver three more workshops in the remaining weeks before our return to Scotland. I recently visited Zomba Theological University, where work on the postgraduate centre has been disrupted by the contractor's unreasonable demands for additional budget. Helping my fellow committee members find a way forward for the project and dispute settlement is a priority. But it's apparent that I won't see this project through to completion as I had once hoped. We have to accept, as the Apostle Paul did, that it may be our responsibility to plant while God has someone else in mind to water, and that it will be God who gives the growth. A humbling, but important lesson.

It's 30° right now, but there are signs of the festive season. We're in an Advent series at Church. There's tinsel and Christmas music in the supermarket. And, last week, we attended the school production of Dickens' Christmas Carol - where Eilidh was the Ghost of Christmas Past. Morven celebrated her 8th birthday in November, and Eilidh her 12th just last week. They've taken the news of our return to Scotland very well. We know there are bumps and tears to come, we're looking forward to another Christmas in Malawi and the chance to squeeze in more memories.

So, what's ahead? In April 2026, I'll take up the role of Director of Programmes at the Scottish Bible Society. We're excited for what comes next and are grateful for a clear sense of God's guidance. But obedience doesn't get put on hold because there's another opportunity around the corner. We see so many opportunities to testify to God's faithfulness as our time in Malawi draws to a close. We pray that you, too, can testify to God's faithfulness in 2025 and hold some excitement for His plans in 2026.

Gary, Jacqueline, Eilidh, Morven and Caitlin

PO Box 112, Mzuzu, Malawi grough@churchofscotland.org.uk

NEW MINISTER FOR MDYAKA CONGREGATION!

Rev Wanangwa has been the Moderator/Minister for the last year and is now moving on ... he writes: "Hello brethren, in the first place I would like to register my sincere thankful to you for the way we have tried to work together so that the kids ministry at Mdyaka can go smoothly.

I have shifted from Mdyaka congregation ... I have gone to Ekwendeni College of Health Sciences where I'll pursue a diploma in clinic medicine. As I am writing, a new minister has already reported to his duty station. He is Rev MMM Banda, I hope you will work with him the way you did with me. Wishing you all the best as you will continue working for the Lord Jesus Christ in His vineyard. God be with you all there!!"

THE NURSERY FEEDING PARTNERSHIP

The Church has transferred funds of almost £370 to cover the cost of the nutritious 'Likuni Phala' for all the children attending the 2 nursery schools for 11 weeks of this 2nd term. The new Minister, Rev Banda, will be visiting the nurseries soon.



Do you have any old football or rugby boots? An inspirational Scottish couple have set up a charity and arrange to take these boots to South Africa for kids who play games in their bare feet. Any boots you would like to donate can be given to Shirley and she will forward them. Many thanks in anticipation.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - FRIDAY 6TH MARCH

The 2026 World Day of Prayer materials from Nigeria bring us a powerful invitation drawn from Matthew 11:28-30. At a time when people worldwide are carrying heavy burdens, our Nigerian sisters offer profound insights into finding rest in God. Through their exploration of different kinds of burdens - shame, systemic oppression, religious persecution, poverty and despair - the writers help us understand both the weight of human suffering and the depths of divine rest. Their work shows us that true rest isn't just about physical relief, but about transformation through God's grace and community support. They remind us how God meets us in our weariness.



Nigeria is located on the western coast of Africa. The nation's landscape is abundant, offering ample space for agricultural, industrial, and commercial activities. Nigeria's natural resources are vast and varied, including oil, natural gas, and a wealth of solid minerals.

Nigeria's population of over 211 million makes it the most populous country in Africa and the 7th most populous in the world. This rich demographic tapestry is woven from over 250 ethnic groups, each contributing unique cultural threads to the nation's identity.



Quilts for Care Leavers

Providing 'quilted hugs' to care leavers aged between 16 and 25 who are living independently after their time in the local authority care system.

Why Hugs?

Each year more than 11,000 young people over the age of 16 leave the care system and move out into the world with limited support and few possessions. 1 in 5 homeless people have been in care and 1 in 5 care leavers go on to spend time in prison. Once discharged from local authority care, these 16-25 year old young adults are effectively on their own, often with very limited resources.

The project was inspired by the poet Lemn Sissay OBE, who, at the age of 12, returned to local authority care from the long-term foster placement he had been in since he was a baby. Founder, Maggie Lloyd-Jones, was inspired to set up Quilts for Care Leavers to make 'quilted hugs' for young people leaving local authority care after hearing Lemn tell an audience that what he had really wanted during that time was a hug.

Knowing the comfort a quilt can bring Maggie gathered a team together in 2018 to make 120 quilts to be offered to Care Leavers at Christmas Day Dinners run by Gold from the Stone, the charity initiated by Lemn. Q4CL now offers quilts throughout the year via Local Authority care teams, universities and colleges and charities supporting young care leavers. Our Makers gather in our active Facebook group to share information, support and inspiration.

KINDNESS

Ephesians 5:32 - Be kind and tender to one another.

Forgive one another, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done.

The Rev Dr Richard Frazer highlights the value of kindness in communities.

People often 'overhear' the liberating message of the Gospel, not necessarily in Church services but in the public square and in the "quality of mercy that is not strained". So many today hunger for an alternative imagination that is a counter to an increasingly harsh and cruel world.

Those who offer kindness are like "braziers in the cold streets of the city".

When I was a probationer minister at St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh in the 1980s, I found in a storeroom some old white plates. They had a logo on them that intrigued me. The emblem of the Church of Scotland and the inscription "Church of Scotland Huts". "What on earth are these?" I wondered to myself. I did some research and discovered a remarkable story.

Church of Scotland Huts and Canteens, established during the Great War, offered hospitality to soldiers often posted far from home. There was food and friendship available. In an article in Life & Work in 1940, the uplifting stories of soldiers encountering kindness whilst feeling isolated and the inevitable anxiety of imminent posting to the Front was clear. Some attended "Lantern" services held in the evening at the camps. There were stories of men helped to write their will or even to learn to read and write; and of people coming to faith. It all reminds me that kindness is the centre of our faith and I wonder where our nation would be without the work of so many congregations throughout Scotland, and further afield, offering that simple virtue. (From LIFE & WORK)

Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

Proverbs 16

TASTY TREATS



KINLOCH MARMALADE - Sheila Payne

750g Seville oranges
750g other citrus fruits (lemons, sweet orange, or grapefruit)
1.75kg granulated or preserving sugar

Put the fruit in a jam pan with 2.3L water and simmer gently for about 4 hours with pan covered loosely with foil. Remove fruit when cool and cut in half. Remove all the pips and some of the pith and put in a small pan with 300ml water, simmer gently for 20 minutes. Cool then strain this liquid into the large pan with water the fruit was cooked in.

While the pips are simmering put the fruit in a processor till chopped. Add this to the water in the jam pan and then add the sugar. Cook on a low heat, stirring occasionally till sugar has completely dissolved. Then boil furiously and after 10 minutes turn off the heat and test for setting. Do this by dripping a spoon of hot marmalade on to a cold saucer, wait for a few minutes and if the sample wrinkles when you push your finger through it ... you have a set. If it is still runny boil again for 5 minutes and try again. Always remember to turn the heat off each time you test otherwise it may go too far. Pot up while still hot into warmed jars. Seal when completely cold. Makes about 5kg.

GLUTEN FREE LEMON SPONGE CAKE - Margaret Drummond

4oz caster sugar,
4oz soft margarine
5oz Gluten Free self raising flour
1 teaspoon GF baking powder
2 large eggs, zest and juice of 1 Lemon

ICING

4oz softened butter, 8oz icing sugar
Half a teaspoon of vanilla extract.



Preheat oven to 180 Fan. Lightly grease the sides of 8" Sponge tin and line with a circle of baking paper. Beat together margarine and sugar until light and creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well in between. You may need to add a tablespoon of the flour after the first egg to prevent the mixture curdling. Combine the flour and baking powder in a bowl and fold into the creamed mixture. Using a spatula, scrape mixture into the baking tin and level off the top. Bake until well risen and coming away from the sides of tin, approx. 20 mins. Turn out onto a wire rack and carefully peel off the lining paper. Leave to cool.

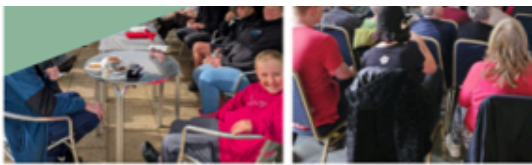
ICING: Beat together butter, icing sugar and vanilla extract. Add as much of the juice of lemon as required to give a smooth butter icing. Spread over top and sides of cake and sprinkle the lemon zest over the top. If you want to make it more lemony, split sponge into 2 layers and sandwich together with lemon curd before icing.

FARMHOUSE CURRANT CAKE- Felicity Pape

170g/6oz butter
225g/8oz self raising flour
170g/6oz currants,
170g/6oz caster sugar
1 large egg, beaten,
100ml/7 fl oz milk
Tablespoon or two of demerara sugar



Grease and line a 9 inch square or 8 inch round cake tin. Preheat oven to 190 C Fan Gas mark 6. Rub butter into flour. Stir in caster sugar. Stir in currants. Stir in egg and milk. Turn mixture into tin, smooth it out, making a slight dip in the centre. Sprinkle the top with the demerara sugar. Bake for 15 minutes, then turn the heat down to 170C, gas mark 3 and bake for about a further 45 minutes. Test with a skewer which should come out clean when the cake is cooked. Cool in the tin.



FRIENDS OF
**DUNDONALD
CASTLE**
www.dundonaldcastle.org.uk | SC031541

COMMUNITY HUB

WWW.DUNDONALDCASTLE.ORG.UK
DUNDONALD | SOUTH AYSRSHIRE | KA2 9HD

KNIT 'N' NATTER

A weekly social group where members gather to knit, chat, and share creative ideas.

Day: Every Monday
Time: 1:00pm

WRITE HERE AT DUNDONALD CASTLE

A creative writing group led by a Writer in Residence. Members work on short stories, poetry, and collaborative projects.

Day: Every other Monday
Time: 6:30pm – 8:00pm

LADY WALKERS

A group of local ladies who like to take a walk and talk, followed by a coffee and treat in the café.

Day: Every Tuesday
Time: 1:30pm

SCRABBLE CLUB

Join our enthusiastic players and challenge your word count.

Every Wednesday
Time: 1:30pm

BOARDOM BUSTERS

A fun and engaging group aimed at reducing boredom and loneliness through games, crafts, and social activities. Open to all ages and especially welcoming to those seeking companionship.

Day: Every Wednesday
Time: 1:00pm

DUNDONALD HISTORICAL AND ARCHIVE GROUP

Friends of Dundonald Castle is taking stewardship of the local village archives, preserving stories and documentation that reflect the rich heritage of Dundonald and surrounding area.

Day: Monthly Talks on a Wednesday evening
Time: 7:00pm

BACK IN TIME CAFÉ

A relaxed Thursday morning dementia café session offering conversation, refreshments, and a welcoming atmosphere for all.

Day: Every Thursday
Time: 11:00am – 12:30pm

CASTLE CRONIES

A friendly social group aimed at older adults, offering regular meetups for conversation, activities, and community connection. It helps reduce isolation and build friendships.

Day: Every Thursday
Time: 2:00pm

SILENT BOOK CLUB

A reflective and inclusive reading group where members read quietly together. Ideal for introverts and book lovers who enjoy a peaceful, communal reading experience.

Day: Every other Thursday
Time: 7:00pm – 8:30pm

CRAZY CASTLE KIDS JUNIOR COMMITTEE

A youth led initiative that empowers children to take part in shaping the future of Dundonald Castle. Members help plan events, learn leadership skills, and engage with heritage in fun and meaningful ways.

Day: Every other Friday
Time: 3:30pm

YOGA AT THE CASTLE

A relaxing yoga session held on the last Saturday of each month, overlooking the village from the castle grounds. Led by a local instructor, it focuses on mindfulness, flexibility, and community wellbeing.

Day: check social media and website for dates and times

YOUNG ARCHAEOLOGISTS' CLUB

A hands on heritage group for 8-16 year olds interested in archaeology and history.

Day: First Sunday of the Month
Time: 2:00pm – 4:00pm



01563 851489



Dundonald Castle Visitor Centre
Winehouse Yett
Dundonald
KA2 9HD



www.dundonaldcastle.org.uk
info@dundonaldcastle.org.uk

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Meets on the second Thursday of the month (apart from January, July & August) to discuss any issues in the Village. All matters addressed. From 7-9 pm in Montgomerie Hall. dcd Dundonald@gmail.com



SMILERS Laughter is the soul's medicine

One cannot help growing old but one can resist being aged.

A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, 'I know what the Bible means!' His father smiled and replied 'What do you mean, you "know" what the Bible means?' The son replied, 'I do know!' 'OK' said his father. So, son, what does the Bible mean?' 'That's easy Daddy. It stands for "Basic Information Before Leaving Earth"!

The other day my wife and I were discussing formal and informal prayer. I said, "I do some of my best praying while I'm driving." And my wife agreed by saying, "I, too, do my best praying while you are driving."

For every problem under the sun, there is a solution or there is none. If there's a solution go and find it, if there isn't then never mind it.



Mother's Day Poem

How do you find the energy Mum, to do all the things you do,
To be a teacher, nurse and counsellor to me like you always do.
How do you do it all Mum, be chauffeur, cook and friend,
Yet find time to be a playmate, I just can't comprehend.
I see now it is love Mum, that makes you come whenever I call,
Your inexhaustible love Mum and I thank you for it all.

Music at Craigie - THE QUIGGS IN CONCERT

in Craigie Village Hall - 7.30pm on Saturday 14 February 2026

Ayrshire-based The Quiggs are a husband-and-wife duo performing on guitars, bodhran, banjo and voice, and are always popular with Craigie audiences. Stephen is well known as a solo performer and a member of the former McCalmans folk band. Together with his wife Pernile, the result is a duo with wonderful harmony singing. They perform a mixture of Scottish traditional and contemporary music. Expect some great singing and humour! Please bring your own refreshments and glasses. Teas, coffees and cakes are available at the interval. Tickets (advance booking preferred) £12 & £6 (under 16), payable by cash only on the night • Lorna Dewar 07899978736



Music at Craigie - IAN WALKER

BAND WITH JOHN GRAHAM

in Craigie Village Hall - 7.30pm on

Saturday 14 March 2026

Singer-songwriter Ian Walker, Jimmy Scott, and Moe Walker are joined by John Graham, specially for this performance. The band play traditional and contemporary music on guitar, bass, fiddle, mandolin, banjo and vocals. An entertaining evening from highly experienced players, who are Scottish-based, but perform throughout the UK and Europe! Please bring your own refreshments and glasses. Teas, coffees and cakes are available at the interval. Tickets (advance booking preferred) £12 & £6 (under 16), payable by cash only on the night Lorna Dewar 07899978736

GOOD GRIEF GROUP

**2nd Tuesday of the month,
1.30pm in The Auchans**

An informal group who meet to chat & support each other over a cuppa. Those who think they might benefit from this are welcome to attend.

Feedback from anyone who has attended in the past year will be very welcome for future meetings. Please share your thoughts with
Anne FitzGerald,
Moira Kerr, John Wilson,
Catriona and Tom.

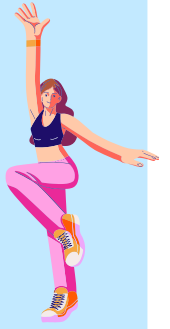
BADMINTON

**Tuesdays/Thursdays
10am -12noon
Dundonald Church Hall
Marie 07847388646**



GENTLE EXERCISE CLASS

Wednesdays 10-11am Dundonald Church Hall
Increase resilience, calm, flexibility and strength. Carolyn
07961 323078
seasonalwellbeing@gmail.com



FELLOWSHIP GROUP

**Every Wednesday in
Symington Community Hall**

from 11.45am until 2.30pm.
All are welcome to come along for a cup of tea/coffee, cakes, biscuits and a good blether!



Dundonald Craft and social club

Tea, coffee & biscuits
Board games
Card Making
Pool

Over 50's

THURSDAYS 2PM-4PM
Montgomerie hall

33 MAIN STREET DUNDONALD SOUTH AYRSHIRE

One off yearly joining fee £20

SWI DUNDONALD
**First Thursday of month,
Montgomerie Hall**

**Feb 5th JESSIE YOUNG
CORONATION OF KING
CHARLES III**
Competitions
Royal Souvenir/ Savoury Scone

**Mar 5th JIM CARRUTH
CHANGE OF RURAL
LANDSCAPES**
Competitions
Ayrshire Photograph
Knitted Baby Hat

**Apr 2nd GUEST EVENING
MAYBOLE CONCERT PARTY**
Competition
Muir Spoon
Favourite Purse

MEN'S CLUB

**Every Thursday 7.30 pm
in Dundonald Church Hall**

An informal group who meet to chat & support each other over a cuppa.

Carpet bowling, fellowship and a cup of tea.

Ladies most welcome!



DUNDONALD BURNS CLUB

Dundonald Burns Club extend a warm welcome to all those who wish to join them.

Dundonald Bowling Club at 7.30pm unless Otherwise Stated
Weds 25th February – Inter-Club Night

Sat 28th February – Senior Citizens Burns' Supper

Wednesday 25th March – Ayrshire Art & Beyond – John Bryson
These events are open to all. No tickets or pre-booking required, except for the St. Andrews and Burns Supper events.

For further info. see <https://www.burnsclub.org/syllabus/>
<https://www.facebook.com/people/Dundonald-Burns-Club/100086497921801/> or Dundonaldburnsclub@gmail.com

**LOCUM MINISTER & INTERIM
MODERATOR**
Rev Tom McLeod

SESSION CLERKS
Bob McMillan & Doreen Tait

TREASURERS
Morag Marriot & Sheila Tannock

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S WORKER
Catriona Mayes

SAFEGUARDING
Ruth Easton (D) & Angela Liggat (CS)

ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER
Mariea Chisholm (D)

CHURCH OFFICER
Hugh Appleby (D)

FABRIC CONVENORS
Doug Grant (D) & Bill Kilpatrick (CS)

PASTORAL CARE
Sheila Payne/Isobel Mactier

PRAYERS
Thursdays 1-2pm
Dundonald Session Room
Debi Dunn 07714 160486

BIBLE READING
Elaine Grant (D) & Doreen Tait (CS)

CAR ROTA
Jane Ritchie 07817040426

FLOWERS & CHURCH DECORATION
Sheila Payne/Maureen Brown (D)
May Steele (CS)

FACEBOOK CDS
Debi Dunn 07714 160486

WEBSITE CDS
Fraser McMillan 07932 397582

DUNDONALD CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS
Katy Purdie 07860 878911

DUNDONALD SESSION ROOM BOOKINGS
Please record your booking request in
advance on forms kept in this room.

SYMINGTON HALL BOOKINGS
Doug Marriot

**CRAIGIE SYMINGTON CHURCH
BOOKINGS**
Doreen Tait

SOCIAL ACTION
Adaline Finlayson (D)

FLOYDS COMMUNITY CAFE
Mondays 9.30-12noon,
Dundonald Church Hall

WATER AID - JARS OF GRACE
Libba Fallows

BIRTHDAY SCHEME
Supporting Mary's Meals in Malawi
Frances Mavor 07985527087

INTIMATIONS
Lorna Dewar 07899978736 (D)
lorna@cultural-connections.co.uk

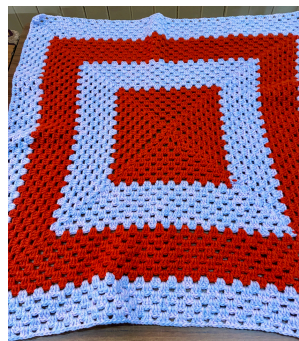
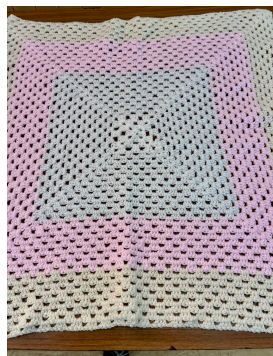
Articles for April/May CONTACT to be submitted by 25th March 2026
However, as the Editor will be away in Canada until 30th March,
CONTACT MAGAZINE will be out a week later next time!
Thank you! - Frances Mavor sandyfrancesm@icloud.com
07985 527087. All articles and news welcomed from both Churches

Floyd's Cafe



Some of Floyd's wonderful volunteers in their new colourful aprons, organised by Moira and given to the cafe by an anonymous donor. We all appreciate the aprons very much as a new year begins at our community hub. Thank you so much to Tash who has served at the cafe from the very beginning (4 years in total) and has now 'retired' but we look forward to seeing her as a visitor at the cafe before too long. 😊

Hats knitted by Maureen T and Ann C and blankets started by Ellen and finished by Roberta (for the Biggart). We have appreciated several generous donations of wool recently which is keeping our knitters very happily busy. Thank you to all who gave wool.



A HUGE thank you to John and Kathleen Morton for their many years of contributions to CONTACT MAGAZINE.

Kathleen has provided numerous articles, poems and smilers for each edition of the magazine which have been so helpful when compiling the content and have blessed all of us.

John, with his diligent proofreading found mistakes, spelling errors, date errors and much more that I had not noticed! I would like to thank them both most sincerely for their willingness, good humour and help from which we all benefitted.

John and Kathleen, we wish you God's richest and many blessings in the years to come. With much love - Frances

SPRING - Another winter is finished, our hearts are full of joy!

The icy frosts diminish, and summer sun's ahoy!

Last summer seems so distant, the autumn leaves long gone,

But now, each passing instant, is full of sunny song.

The seasons flow reminds us, the climbing sinking sun

That death's dread cords won't bind us, our time with Christ will come!

