

# KIRK NEWS

FEBRUARY 2023

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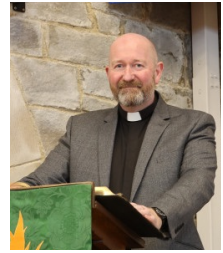
BLACKHALL  
ST. COLUMBA'S  
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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



World Day of Prayer  
Blackhall St Columba's Church

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023  
2.30 pm



As this article is being published, in the February edition of the Kirk News, we are approaching, what I think is an important anniversary. It was on February 24<sup>th</sup> 2022 that Vladimir Putin ordered the Russian military to invade Ukraine, once again plunging Europe into war. Whilst, thankfully, the war did not physically drag other nations into direct conflict, the implications of that invasion have been felt throughout the world. The loss of the Ukraine's exports of grain had the potential to cause a worldwide food crisis the worst effects of which would have been felt by the poorest of nations, especially Africa. Although negotiated arrangements have mitigated some of the worst effects, food price increases have been felt by everyone and, again, especially by the poorest in societies. In addition to the direct impact on food production, there has been a direct impact on the availability, and consequently, the price of fuel. Again, this has caused real hardship for many people even in this country which is relatively insulated from the direct consequences of the conflict.

Sometimes, it can feel that such events are too big for us as individuals, or even collectively as a congregation, to be able to do anything about. These world events can seem so far removed from our own spheres of influence that we fall into the trap of believing that there is nothing that we can do to make a difference. There is a famous, probably apocryphal story, about starfish being washed up on a beach:

*A young girl was walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up, and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement. She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, "Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!" The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied "Well, I made a difference for that one!"*

The essence of this story is one in which I greatly believe. We, as individuals or even as a congregation, can do little to resolve the whole situation but we can, as individuals or as a congregation, make a difference to some people. If enough individuals or groups come together to make these small differences to individual people, then those differences can have a much greater cumulative effect.

So, what can we do? One of the first and most obvious things we can do, as Christians, is to pray. One of the most dangerous things that can happen in any crisis is that people forget about the actual enormity of the situation. After the initial shock of any tragedy comes an acceptance and then, unless we are directly affected, a dismissal into memory. Prayer is a powerful way of keeping our focus on matters which deserve to be kept at the forefront of our minds, on matters which should not be consigned to acceptance and distant memory. Another thing we can do is to find ways of supporting the Ukrainian refugees who have successfully found their way to this country. There are a number now staying in Scotland and whilst, realistically speaking, they would far rather be back in the Ukraine, we can do what we can to welcome them and to make their lives here as comfortable and enjoyable as possible.

What about a real and practical way to help those still in the Ukraine? On Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023, we will be holding a Youth Service to mark Founders and Thinking Day for the Scouts and Guides respectively. Jesus' ministry here on earth has been described as a preaching, teaching and healing ministry. As it is so close to the anniversary of the Russian invasion, it is my intention, during the service, to focus both on the invasion and the healing element of our calling as Christians.

In order to do this, I have enlisted the help of a former colleague of mine, Craig Borthwick. Craig worked with a number of departments such as firearms, mountain rescue and public order in his Police career. During that time, he picked up an expertise in first aid, especially trauma based first aid. On retiring from the Police, Craig put this knowledge to good use with the creation of a company called Venture Medical.

Since the start of the war, Craig has been financing trips out to the Ukraine where he, along with others, trains Ukrainians in trauma-based emergency first aid. Prior to these trips, Craig fundraises to pay for medical supplies and equipment which he donates to the Ukrainians after teaching them how to use it most effectively.

During our service, Craig will speak about some of the work he has done and, at its conclusion, we will be having a retiring offering which will be used to purchase medical equipment and supplies which will be of direct benefit to numerous Ukrainians. I believe this will be a real and practical way of exercising our Christian calling of serving others by offering healing to those most at need.

In this way, through us, people will see the words of Jeremiah lived out; "[But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,](#)' declares the LORD" Jeremiah 30:17

## World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer is a global, ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. A service is held annually on or near the first Friday in March.

The World Day of Prayer is for everyone, men, women and young people.

Locally this year, Blackhall St Columba's will be hosting on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 2.30pm.**

A warm welcome awaits you at the service and you are invited to share your faith, joy and hopes.

Contact Margaret Brown for more information, if required.



# Sunday Worship

There are many people involved in our Sunday Worship.... Not just Fergus!



Rev Douglas Nicol and Rev Hazel Hastie have provided cover for Fergus's holidays



Donald Cameron, our Musical Director, leads the Choir in their contributions to worship



The Beadle, Reader and Audio Visual Teams also have very important parts to play

# Kirk Session Reports

The Kirk Session met on Tuesdays 22 November 2022 and 10 January 2023.

## **Building for the Future (Phase 2)**

It was agreed to defer further discussion in this regard until June 2023. This proposal was made in light of the fact that Presbytery is unlikely to agree to any changes to Church buildings prior to the acceptance of the Presbytery Consultation Document.

## **Communion Convener**

It was noted that James Burr had agreed to take over this role from Jim Laing who had retired from that position. The Session Clerk, on behalf of Session Members, thanked Jim for his contribution to this role.

## **Correspondence**

Acknowledgements were received from:

- Fresh Start for £673.07 (50% of Christmas Services retiring collections).
- Bethany Christian Trust for £881.35 from the October Communion retiring offering. Also a note of thanks for £146.21 collected at Carol Singing held at the Ross Band Stand, Princes Street Gardens.

## **Finance**

At the January meeting Adrian Johnston, Congregational Treasurer, reported on the draft Accounts for the 12 months to 31 December 2022. In summary:

- Overall Congregational Giving was £5,466 ahead of 2021.
- Income exceeded expenditure by £8,720. Excluding legacies, we would have had a smaller surplus of £2,216, which compares favourably with the forecast deficit of £14,671.
- Our overall reserves stand at £165,552.

## **Mission Partner**

Bill and Maha Campbell have agreed to take on the role of mission partners with The Church of Scotland presence in both Jerusalem and Tiberias.

### Retiring Offerings

It was agreed to support the following charities from the 2023 retiring offerings.

February Communion	The Yard
Easter Services	Drylaw Rainbow Club Day Centre
June Communion	Mary's Meals
October Communion	Mission Aviation Fellowship
Christmas Services	Scottish Bible Society and Fresh Start

### Stated Annual Meeting

The Stated Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday 19 March immediately after morning worship. *The relevant reports will be posted online but paper copies can be obtained in due course from the District Elder.*

### Warm Spaces

Given the general economic situation, not least the cost of heat and light, it was agreed that the Small Hall would be open on Wednesday and Friday (at published times) to all across the local communities for companionship and fellowship. This would provide a warm environment and allow people to save on energy costs.

### Presbytery Consultation Document

The Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian met on Tuesday 15 November and approved the Presbytery Consultation Document. This document has been passed to various committees at 121 George Street (the Church administration offices) for approval. As has been previously reported, the document proposes a Union of Blackhall St Columba's and Drylaw Parish Church.

Once all approvals have been forthcoming, we can work towards the Union but the earliest we should expect this to happen would be into 2024.

Meantime a Steering Group has been established with six members from each congregation looking at ways that we can all work together

## Mrs Phyllis King

Phyllis was born in Lerwick, Shetland on 19 April 1931. She was christened Ophelia Catherine but the family always called her Phyllis. She left school at 16 and started work in the North of Scotland Bank. A year later her father died suddenly which had a profound effect on her. She was brought up in the Methodist tradition like him and taught in the Sunday School as well as representing Shetland at the Methodist Conference.

Phyllis had a great interest in amateur dramatics and through that interest she was introduced to a professional stage manager who was looking for someone to knit him a Fair Isle jumper! An association developed and in 1961 she married Iain. Initially home was in Glasgow and in due course here in Edinburgh when they both joined Blackhall St Columba's (in Iain's case re-joined). Phyllis was soon into the thick of it, playing badminton, joining the Dramatic Society, the Floral Art Club and teaching in the Sunday School.

In 1991 Phyllis enrolled at Edinburgh University Divinity Faculty to study for the Bachelor of Divinity. Four years later she graduated BD Hons at the age of 63 and did another year, obtaining an MTh (Master of Theology). She also was given a place to do her PhD but, sadly, was advised not to spend her money as her age would mean she was unemployable and would not be able to recoup her money. This was a great disappointment to her, but the then incumbent Minister of St Columba's encouraged her to contribute to Services by writing and presenting the prayers and later even taking whole Services by herself. She was one of the first group of women in St Columba's to be ordained an Elder and she also represented St Columba's as Presbytery Elder.

In 2017 Phyllis had a bad fall which seriously damaged her spine, and she gradually became less mobile which, together with her other health problems, reduced her enjoyment of life. In September of last year, she was taken to the Western General Hospital on her 61<sup>st</sup> Wedding Anniversary. When the doctor said there was nothing more could be done for her medically, she went home for end-of-life care where she was lovingly looked after by Iain and daughter Helen. Phyllis had to go back into hospital and sadly passed away on Tuesday 15 November.

Phyllis was a good Christian lady who will be fondly remembered.

Eddie Thorn, Session Clerk

## Watch Committee

After two years of enforced inactivity, the committee were concerned that there might not be the same level of support for our fundraising in 2022. However, the established programme of the Summer Coin Collection, Craft Coffee Morning and Christmas Fair was particularly well supported and attended by members of the congregation, the local community and businesses.

The Pilton Equalities Project, providing a range of services to the residents of Pilton and beyond, proved to be a very popular choice of charity and now have a link with both Drylaw Parish Church and the Cameo club at Blackhall St Columba's.

We were pleased to be able to deliver a cheque to Helen Tait, Manager of P.E.P. for £9,200 to help them in their future work.

George Millar, Convener, WATCH Committee



The Watch Committee and Fergus with the cheque ready to go to P.E.P.

On the last Saturday in November, the Halls and Church were abuzz with activity as our (normally annual) Christmas Fair took place. Due to Covid, we have not held a Fair in the last two years, so this was Fergus's first experience of the event too. The Main Hall and Upper Hall were packed with stalls offering everything from sweets and home baking to books and crafts. The Small Hall was full of folk enjoying a cuppa and some lovely baking, while there was musical entertainment in the Church. The fantastic sum of just over £7000 was raised and included in the cheque donated to PEP.



The crowds in the Main Hall looking for a bargain

Fergus and Shona announce the hamper winners



The Suzuki Violin Group entertain in the Church

## Cameo Club

We are pleased to be meeting up again and will welcome any new ladies or gentlemen who might like to join us.

We meet every second Friday in the large church hall. Coffee and tea are served between 10.30 – 11.00 with entertainment following for around an hour. The meetings are free and you will be well looked after by a team of volunteers who can also provide local car transport if required.

Our guests on Friday February 10 are the Currie Kirk Singers. On 24 February Douglas Anderson will be returning to play the accordion and sing traditional Scottish and Irish songs.

Further details can be given by contacting the numbers below.

Margaret Brown 332 5957

Fiona Drinnan 343 6762

The photo was taken at our enjoyable Christmas Lunch held at Northcare Suites on Telford Road.





## Tuesday Topics

The Tuesday Topics Committee wish all our members and friends a very Happy New Year! We have had an enjoyable first session with excellent speakers and good attendance.

Our session for 2023 started with a lovely late Christmas lunch at Howie's in Waterloo Place, and we've had a talk from John Barrett about his life following his years as a Member of Parliament.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> February we have a speaker from Edinburgh Zoo discussing Giraffe Conservation then on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Helen Watson, Podiatrist will give us advice regarding "Happy Feet".

We are delighted to welcome two members from our own congregation in March. Brian Duffin will give a talk on "The Irish Perspective" and Alison Hewat will give us advice about arranging flowers at home.

A warm welcome is extended to all members and visitors to any meeting.

Eleanor Lowrie, President  
Lindy Paton, Secretary

## Junior Singers

The Christmas period has been a very busy but enjoyable time for Junior Singers. They sang with the Blackhall St Columba's Senior Choir in the Edinburgh Nativity Service in Princes Street Gardens then quickly followed this up by singing in the church Gift Service.

Now that Covid restrictions have been lifted, the children were able to take part in the short carol service held in Strachan House, the first time most of the children had visited the home to sing, and then they entertained the residents of Queen's Court with a short carol concert.

They finally finished the year by taking part in the church Christingle Service. A busy time, but the children enjoyed all their outings – and thoroughly enjoyed the juice, crisps and sweets at the end of their performances.

Junior Singers is open to all children who enjoy singing and are in P3 -P7. We meet during term time in the Upper Hall of Blackhall St Columba's on Thursdays between 3.45pm and 4.30pm. New members are always welcome.

For more info, please phone Amy on 0131 332 1354



## Prayer Circle

Do you know someone in need of prayer? A friend or relative perhaps who is unwell, grieving or find themselves in a position where they don't know where to turn? Blackhall St Columba's Prayer Circle is a small team of people who will pray regularly for anyone in need of help in complete confidence.

To request support from the Prayer Circle, you can contact Betty Watt at [lzbthwatt@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lzbthwatt@yahoo.co.uk). You can also get in touch via the Minister, Fergus Cook at [Fcook@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:Fcook@churchofscotland.org.uk) or 0131 466 7503, or through your elder. There is also a locked box on the table at the back of the Church where requests can be posted.

If you would like to be involved in this key area of our ministry and pastoral care, the Prayer Circle would welcome any new members who feel they could include the needs of others in their prayers.

## Sunday Club

Sunday Club has started up again after the Christmas break. Before Christmas, the children were busy making Christmas cards for the church Pastoral Visitors to take to the people they visit, (see photo below) as well as doing Christmas related crafts but for the next few weeks, they'll be taking part in a variety of new activities.

In the group, we have some children who come almost every week, some who come now and again and some who come as a one-off when visiting relatives in the area. Whichever category your child / relative fits into, they will be very welcome to join us when we leave the morning service to go to the small hall, returning to the church as the service comes to an end.



## Congregational Changes

Unfortunately, since the last magazine, the following members have passed away. Our prayers are with their families and friends.

### **November**

15 Mrs Phyllis King (see obituary on page 7)

### **January**

10 Mrs Maureen Cross

## Special Services

Some of the special services we've held over the last few months.



The McMorris Family from Ratho brought baby, Imogen Jane, to be baptised on 23<sup>rd</sup> October by Rev Gordon Farquharson

Remembrance Services were held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November at the War memorial, and on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November in the Church when we were joined by the local Scout and Guide companies.



In early December, the St David's Brass Band led the musical accompaniment to worship.



## Celebrating Epiphany in Barcelona

Epiphany - also known as Three Kings' Day - is a Christian celebration which falls on 6 January.

It is a special date for many Christians as it's when people celebrate how a star led the Magi - also known as the Three Kings or the Wise Men - to visit the baby Jesus after he had been born.

'Epiphany' comes from the Greek word meaning 'to reveal', as it is when the baby Jesus was 'revealed' to the world.

In the UK, Epiphany sometimes goes a little unnoticed, other than as the day by which your Christmas decorations should come down. However, in other parts of the world, Epiphany is a time for much celebration and has its own traditions.

This year I was fortunate to spend a few days in Barcelona with our daughter, over Epiphany, and to join in the celebrations there.

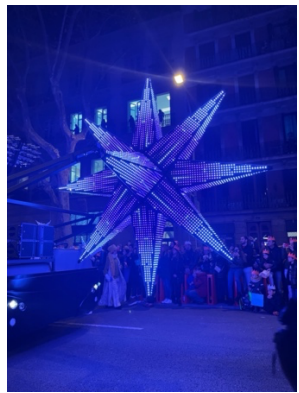
On 6<sup>th</sup> January, the Three Kings, Melchior, Gaspar and Balthazar, arrive in the port of Barcelona in a galleon where they are greeted by the mayor, given bread and salt as a symbol of hospitality and welcome, together with the keys to the city so they can enter every house. They then process through the city on floats accompanied by dancers and music. Thousands of locals and tourists line the length of the parade which takes almost an hour to pass by! It was great to see so many families out enjoying this on the streets and on their balconies overlooking the spectacle.

The procession tells the story whereby the children send their letters to the Kings (in much the same way as our children send theirs to Santa Claus). The letters were collected by dancers in the parade, then the children are encouraged by another float to go to bed early and sleep. One float represented the star and celestial beings the Kings were following on their journey. Then each King had a float, preceded by their personal entourage of dancers, giant puppets and musicians.

# Celebrating Epiphany in Barcelona

Towards the end are the floats for the children who've been good, and those who haven't! The first represents a coal mine with fire, and brimstone, then the children who have been good are rewarded with gifts from the Kings in the form of wrapped sweets which come shooting out of cannons on top of the final float.

It is a fabulous spectacle and one I'd highly recommend. Here are a few tasters:





# Flowers

## Church Flowers

This a huge thankyou to Volunteers who give generously of their time to bring pleasure to so many.

People who deliver the flowers after our Sunday Services. Thank you



People who choose and arrange the flowers for the Service. Thank you



People who give money for the Flowers. Thank you.



If you would like to join their ranks please let me know as there is always space for more volunteers.

## Edinburgh Floral Art Club

The Club re-starts its Programme on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February at 2pm in the Large hall. This is an occasion when we entertain our Visitors in a different way. There is no Demonstrator in February as we often have very bad weather at this time of year. Do come and bring scissors for cutting plant material.

From March to June we have booked Demonstrators to show their skills in Flower Arranging and teach us things along the way. We have a full programme and meet at 2pm on the second Friday of the month from February to June. We provide a Newsletter every month with up to date details of what is happening in Edinburgh Floral Art Club, the Scottish Flower Arranging scene and beyond. If you are not a Member but are interested in coming, do come as a Guest. You would be most welcome.

Alison Hewat



## Outreach and Mission

We continue to develop links with Blackhall Primary School. Before Christmas Fergus was asked to speak to both the P4 classes about 'Christian Values and where they come from?'. Fergus had a wonderful time speaking with all the children who already had a good grounding in the subject.

He said afterwards, "It's always good to be tested by the straight questions that children ask. It also keeps you on your toes theologically. I really had to think hard about the question of using a time machine to go back in time to stop people from killing Jesus!"



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A big thank you to all who supported the sale of Christmas Cards for CrossReach. From the sales, plus donations, the sum raised was £411. Well done Blackhall!

## New Mission Partner



It has been agreed that Blackhall St Columba's should take on a new Mission Partner after some years without, and we are pleased and honoured to take on the role of correspondents with him. He is **Rev Stewart Gillan**, and he has already taken up his appointment at St Andrews Church of Scotland Jerusalem and Tiberias, where he will be assisted by Rev Muriel Pearson, who is already in post.

We were able to meet him in November last year when we attended a moving service of commissioning at St Michael's, Linlithgow, with a powerful sermon preached by Rev Norman Shanks, who may be known to some of us from his stay in the Murrayfield area. Although Stewart was translated to Israel/Palestine in May 2022, delays in his obtaining an Israeli visa prevented his departure until very recently, but it is reassuring that he has now taken up his position.

He is married with teenage children and was previously parish minister at St Michael's Linlithgow and latterly at St John's Renfield in Glasgow. He obtained his Master of Divinity from the University of Toronto and spent time in South Africa undertaking research into land rights. One of his favourite proverbs comes from his time there, where local people advise that we should try not to be like the hippo, which has a big mouth and small ears, but to emulate the elephant which has large ears and a small mouth; we suspect he will be doing a lot of listening in his first few months in Israel/Palestine.

St Andrew's Jerusalem was built shortly after General Allenby entered the Old City of Jerusalem in 1917, thereby ending 400 years of Ottoman occupation and beginning the short-lived British Mandate of Palestine, which was ignominiously abandoned in 1948, following which the State of Israel was declared. The injustices resulting from the forced displacement of people remain with us seventy-four years later, and there will be daily reminders to Stewart that there is still no "peace in Jerusalem", as Psalm 122 advises us to pray for. Previous incumbents of St Andrews, one of whom was subsequently a dear member of our congregation, used their good offices to ameliorate the worst consequences of the ongoing occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank and established St Andrews Church as a beacon where the different parties and faiths can meet together to find common ground; it seems clear to us that Stewart has all the qualities to be able to follow in their footsteps.

We look forward to keeping in touch with our new Mission Partner and to informing the congregation of his progress in this challenging situation. It is to be hoped that contacts from our congregation will provide him with some support in his work.

Bill and Maha Campbell



St Andrew's Church  
Jerusalem

## In other news.....

### FreshStart

Firstly, on behalf of FreshStart, thank you for all your support in 2022 with your donations of household items and food for the Pantry Shop. These donations have made a big difference to many families and formerly homeless people.

Secondly, FreshStart are seeing the demand for their services continue to increase and the “cost of living crisis” will only escalate this further. We hope that you can continue to support us with your donations in 2023, in what will be a very challenging year for all.

The usual Friday morning (10 to 11.30am) collection of donations in the halls has restarted after the festive season break and there is also a box just inside the front door of sanctuary for donations on a Sunday. Please check the FreshStart notice board in the hall’s corridor for details of the most needed items and news.

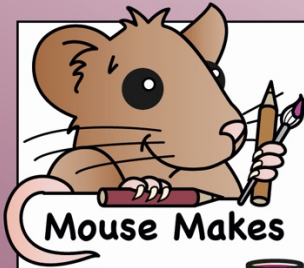
If you would like to know more about volunteering to work in FreshStart or just want to keep up to date with what they are doing, please check their website ( [www.freshstartweb.org.uk](http://www.freshstartweb.org.uk) ).

Lilian and Michael Cockburn, FreshStart Co-ordinators.

### Volunteer Opportunities

The impending departure of our Health and Safety Officer for pastures new presents an opportunity for someone to get involved in this essential role within the Fabric Team. The role is not onerous, but the work is important. Clear guidance is provided in the Church of Scotland H&S Manual, and duties include the annual Fire Risk Assessment and provision of advice to building users as required. No special knowledge is needed, and more information can be obtained from Donald Stirling.

If you’re handy with a camera, could you be our official photographer? Get in touch with Donald Stirling to find out more about how you could contribute to the magazines, website and records of the church.



**Mouse Makes**

What did Jesus give thanks for and share?

Matthew 26:27

What did Jesus say this represented?

His \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 26:27-28

What was the special meal Jesus was preparing to eat?

Matthew 26:18



What did Jesus take, bless and break?

Matthew 26:26

What did Jesus say this represented?

His \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 26:26



Jesus instructed his disciples to continue to break bread and share the cup "in

of me."

1 Corinthians 11:24-25



- SUPPER
- LAMB • LORD
- DISCIPLES
- TOGETHER
- EVENING
- ROOM • JAR
- WATER • TWELVE
- JESUS • CHRIST
- NIGHT • TOOK
- THANKS
- BLESSING
- BROKE • GIVEN
- COVENANT
- DRINK • EAT
- FORGIVENESS
- SINS • HOLY
- COMMUNION
- EUCCHARIST

O R F B R O K E J H O L Y C  
 R O O M B C U P T O O K E H  
 L O R D R U B A W G D J A R  
 T E G J E S U S E E R E T I  
 M U I N A N E S L V I S O S  
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 E T D I S C I P L E S I N S  
 B S T O G E T H E R W N A  
 T H A N K S K L A M B G



Find the words from the questions too!

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

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## Publication deadlines

**For contributions to Blackhall Bulletin:**

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

September 2023 issue                      30<sup>th</sup> July 2023

**For contributions to Kirk News:**

Submission address to be confirmed

May 2023 issue                              14<sup>th</sup> April 2023

We are happy to take articles on any relevant subject from anyone, so don't be shy!