

BLACKHALL BULLETIN

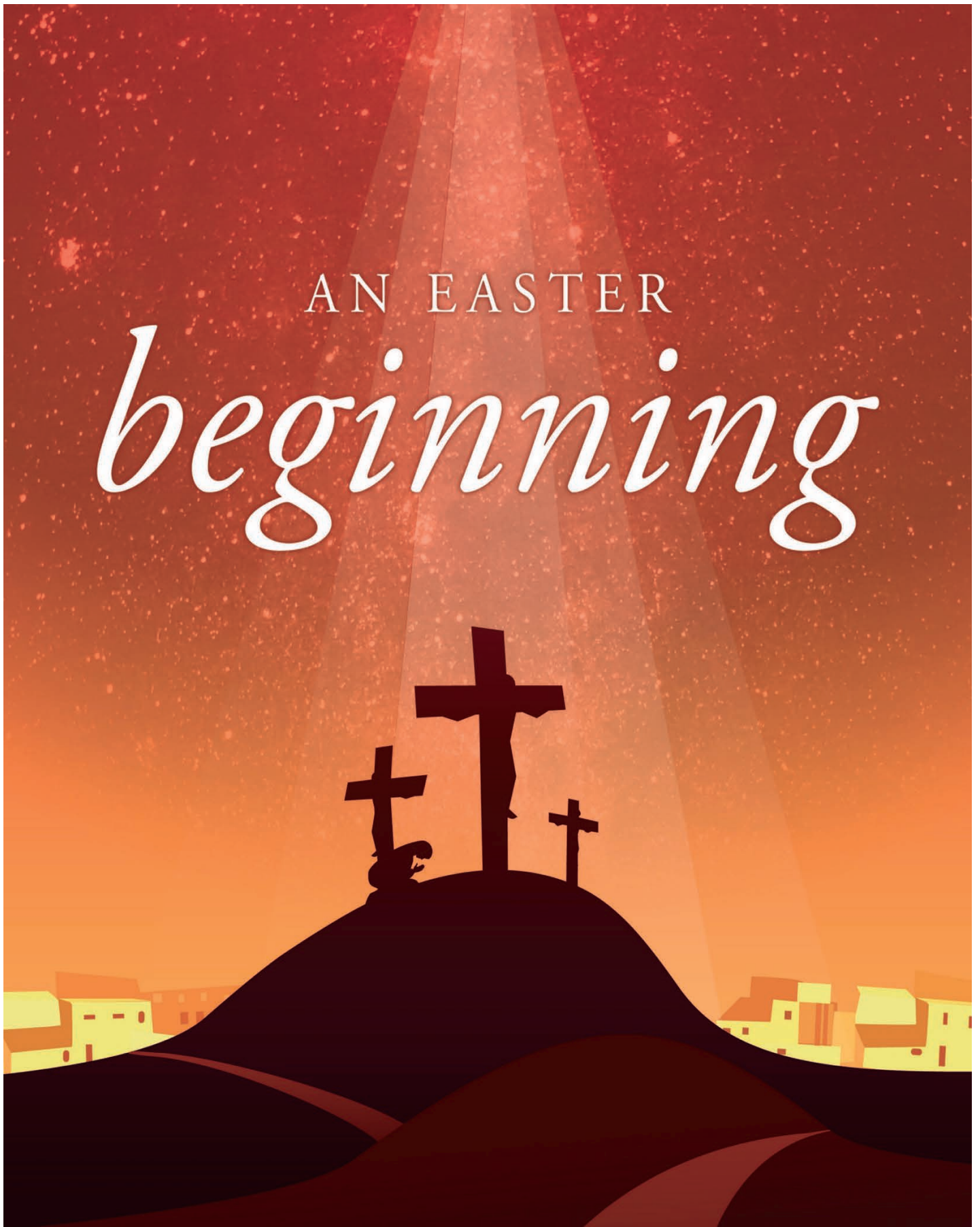
March 2025

PRODUCED BY BLACKHALL ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH FOR THE COMMUNITY

No. 177

AN EASTER

beginning





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WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR?

As those who attend Blackhall St Columba's Church know, we enjoy humour and especially so if it comes with a message. The other day I read a joke about 'gratitude'.

A little old lady sold pretzels on the street corner for fifty cents each. Every day, a young lawyer would exit his office building at lunch and, as he passed her pretzel stand, he'd leave two quarters. However, he never took a pretzel.

This went on for nearly five years. Even though they never spoke, every day he'd leave fifty cents. They'd make eye contact, and she would nod her gratitude as he walked away without a pretzel. Finally, one day, as the lawyer passed her stand and laid down his two quarters, the pretzel woman spoke to him. "Sir, I appreciate your business. You are my best customer, but you need to know something. The price of pretzels has gone up to seventy-five cents."



This joke speaks volumes for how we, as humans, can often react. We very quickly take things for granted. We accept what we have as the normal state of affairs and become 'entitled'.

As you can tell, I think humour is important. Quite apart from the fun and enjoyment it can bring, it can also teach us important lessons by pointing out the absurdity of some of our positions. I like a variety of comedians, but not all of their jokes are suitable for a Sunday morning. One comedian who tells a lot of risqué jokes is Jimmy Carr. Although it is true that most of his humour would not be suitable for these pages, Jimmy Carr is also something of a philosopher. He has made a number of short video clips in which he shares his wisdom with those listening.

One of those clips related to the subject of gratitude and I have tried to quote him as accurately as I can. Jimmy said, *"I don't know if you could be in a better place than you are right now. You have heard of body dysmorphia (dysmorphia = a deformity or abnormality in the shape or size of a specified part of the body) well some people have life dysmorphia."*

A lot of people think their life is terrible because there is a hedonic (hedonic = pleasant) treadmill, you get used to how great your life is. No one had a hot shower until 50 years ago. I try to do this thing when you stand in a hot shower, just take a moment to realise that no one that you admire from 100 years ago had this simple pleasure in life and, when you look at the world we live in where there's been 100 billion people living ever, we are in the top, top percentile in terms of the luck we have had with luxuries."

Whatever you think of Jimmy Carr as a comedian, I think that he has that spot on. Even in my own lifetime, we have seen things like central heating and double glazing come into being. We take hot and cold running water for granted. We have seen the advent of television which has been enhanced first by videos, then DVDs, which have now led on to streaming services. We have seen calculators become computers and laptops. Our telephones have become mobile and include cameras and have the ability to video chat with others over different platforms. Our phones are also now able to be used as compasses, satellite navigation devices, notepads, calculators and even for shopping.

Honestly, as a society we have never had it so good and yet, also as a society, we have never had so many people who find themselves depressed and so many people who struggle with their mental health. Jimmy Carr, after his comments about people who are feeling bad, went on to quote Friedrich Nietzsche who commented on resentment. Nietzsche said, *'If you think someone's ruined your life, you're right. It's you.'* Carr's observation on this was that *'gratitude is the cure for that'*.

This attitude of gratitude has been known to Christians since the beginning of the Church. It was Paul who wrote to the Philippians saying; *"Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:4-7)

As we approach Easter, Christians have something even more important to be grateful for. We celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ as God's gift to the world, Emmanuel, God with us. However, at Easter, we mark the reason that God gave us that gift. We remember the life, death and, most importantly, the resurrection of Jesus. It was that resurrection that brought God's plan for the world into being. That plan is encapsulated in John's Gospel when we are told *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."* (John 3:16)

This Easter, it is important that we remind ourselves of just how lucky we are. We have lived at peace for so long that things like Church and God are just taken for granted along with our hot water and other material luxuries. If we take these for granted, then there is a good chance we just don't think about them and then we don't actually appreciate how lucky we are, how lucky we are to have a God who invites all of humanity to have a relationship with him through Christ.

God bless all
Fergus

Blackhall Children's Sports Committee News

SPORTS AWARDS 2024 are almost open

Are you a local community group helping kids get into sport and stay active, or an individual under 18 looking for financial support for sport?

If so, BCSC Sports Awards could be for you.

Please follow us on social media for more details and application window.

<https://www.facebook.com/BlackhallChildrensSC>

<https://www.instagram.com/blackhall.sports.committee>

Awards are made at the discretion of BCSC.

About Blackhall Children's Sports Committee

The BCSC was formed in 1909. We have 3 roles:

1. Sports Awards: we make annual donations to individuals, projects, clubs or organisations
2. Sports Day: we organise, fund and run the annual Blackhall Children's Sports Day in Ravelston Park
3. Events: we organise various events throughout the year to raise money in order to fund the Sports Awards and Sports Day



OUTREACH EVENTS OPEN TO ALL THE COMMUNITY

March (date To Be Confirmed): *"Community Conversations"* This event is a new venture for St Columba's which we hope will bring members of the congregation together with others from the wider community to hear about and discuss matters of common interest and social concern. **WATCH THIS SPACE FOR DETAILS**

Saturday 22nd March: *Music@St.Columba's "Heart and Soul Swing Band"*

Please join us in the sanctuary at 7.00pm to hear the Church of Scotland's own jazz band. Gospel, spirituals and favourite hymns are all given the Big Band treatments. They come together to raise fund for the Church of Scotland AIDS Fund. Come and bring a friend. Refreshments will be served and while there is no charge for the event and no tickets are required, donations towards the CofS AIDS fund will be gratefully received.

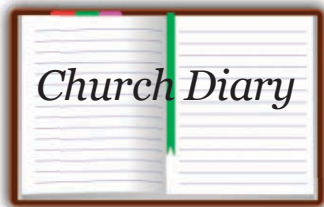
Sunday 6th April: *Sunday Lunch at the Toby Carvery*

We have booked lunch at the Lauriston Toby at 1.00pm at a cost of £14.49. If you would like to come along, enjoy a delicious lunch and spend time with friends old and new, contact Barbara Duguid on baduguid@gmail.com (07773 884556) or Libby Cameron on libbyd21@hotmail.co.uk (07889 676418). A deposit of £10 is required by 13th March.

Saturday 12th April: *Dessert Island Discs*

Please join us in the sanctuary at 7.30pm to be whisked away to a desert island to meet with our latest shipwrecked adventurer who will share their choice of music and chat about their life. This will be followed by the sharing of some delicious sweet treats and a time of fellowship. Tickets are not required and there is no charge for this event.

For further details of these and other events please see the Church website www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk



MARCH

2 nd	10.30 am	Morning Worship
9 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
16 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
23 rd	10.30 am	Morning Worship
30 th	10.30 am	Mothering Sunday

APRIL

6 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
13 th	10.30 am	Palm Sunday
17 th	7.00pm	Maundy Thurs Communion
18 th	7.00 pm	Good Friday
20 th	8.00 am	Easter Sunday early rise
Cramond Foreshore – see website for further details		
	10.30 am	Easter Sunday Service
27 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship

MAY

Sat 3 rd	4.00 pm	Monte Cassino Service
4 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
11 th	10.30 am	Start of Christian Aid Week
18 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
25 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship

JUNE

1 st	10.30 am	Service of Holy Communion
	3.00 pm	Service of Holy Communion
8 th	10.30 am	Penetcost
	3.00.pm	Pentecost service
9 th		St Columba's Feast Day
15 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
22 nd	10.30 am	Morning Worship
29 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship

JULY

6 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
13 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
20 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
27 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship

AUGUST

3 rd	10.30 am	Morning Worship
10 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
17 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
24 th	10.30 am	Morning Worship
31 st	10.30 am	Morning Worship

The 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 frequently for anyone in need of help in complete confidence. We are also happy to accept prayer requests giving thanks for a happy event or asking for God's help with any forthcoming personal endeavour or challenge.

Please contact Prayer Circle secretary Betty Watt at lbthwatt@yahoo.co.uk or Fergus Cook at Fcook@churchofscotland.org.uk or 0131 466 7503.

Alternatively, please put your request slip into the locked box marked "Prayer Requests" on the table at the back of the Church.



PEACE SERVICES

Peace Services meet every two weeks in the small hall at 12 noon. We start with a short act of worship and then enjoy a lunch of home-made soup. This is followed by a speaker as noted below :

5th March -Alpha – Donald Cameron

19th March – Chaplain to the Lodging House Mission - Deacon Claire Herbert

2nd April – Chaplaincy at St Columba's Hospice – Rev Suzie Stark

16th April – Chaplaincy in the Royal Novy – Rev. Fergus Cook

30th April – Prospects Across Scotland – Ivy Blair

14th May – Review of the Year – Shona Cook

28th May – Communion – Rev. Fergus Cook.

We are always looking for volunteers to make and serve the lunch and extra drivers to add to our pool. If you think you might be able to help in either capacity please contact Ruth Laidlaw on ruthlaidlaw@gmail.com or 07513967974

We look forward to welcoming you.

Shona Cook & Ruth Laidlaw



BURNS SUPPER 25th JANUARY 2025



The pictures show that an assembly of nearly 80 enjoyed a wonderful evening enjoying each other's company. They met in the large hall of St Columba's church which was draped for the occasion as indeed were many of those attending in celebrating all things Scottish!

The traditional recipe for a Burns Supper was followed with piper, Address to a Haggis then the Selkirk Grace preceding a lovely three course meal, with your own alcoholic or soft drink if wanted, followed by a hot drink and shortbread.

As if that wasn't enough guests were subsequently entertained both humorously and informatively by a toast to the Immortal Memory of the bard, an Address and toast to the Lassies, a Reply and toast from the Lassies and an excellent musical interlude featuring beautiful solo singing accompanied by piano. The grand finale was a performance of Tam O' Shanter which was simply glorious.

Those attending were all delighted and if you missed it the good news is that there will be a chance to experience and enjoy it for yourself. This annual top event in Scotland's calendar is scheduled in Blackhall for 24th January 2026, same place and open to all. So mark your diaries now and tell others!

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JUNIOR SINGERS

The Junior Singers had quite a busy Christmas Season, singing first of all in church during the Gift Service when they sang “Christ the King of Christmas” – a song about our Christmas trees and decorations. The attached photos show the children in action. Next up was a concert for the residents of Queen’s Court, followed by leading the singing in Strachan House’s Carol Service. They then brought the term to an end by participating in the Christingle Service. As usual, they gave of their best and, according to the comments afterwards, were much appreciated by the various residents and congregations.

On our return after the Christmas break, we were delighted to welcome several new members. Junior Singers is open to all children (girls and boys) in P3 – P7. We meet in the upstairs hall of Blackhall St Columba’s on Thursdays from 3.45pm till 4.30pm and we are always happy to welcome new singers to the group. There is no charge and no audition – we only ask that the children enjoy singing.

If your child is interested, come along any Thursday during term time or phone Amy Donaldson (0131 332 1354) for more information.



PRAISE BAND

At Blackhall St Columba's we use a variety of musical styles in our worship. Some of the newer songs really do not go easily with a pipe organ so we have a small Praise Band with singers who lead the new songs.

We have recently expanded the band to include 3 violins and if anyone is interested in participating in this either singing or playing an instrument about 4 or 5 times a year please contact Donald on 07957573695 or donaldcameron2010@gmail.com and we will provide music and have an opportunity to rehearse with you a week before we play.

Donald Cameron



TUESDAY TOPICS

We are nearly at the end of our 'year' with Tuesday Topics though I'm writing this in January ! This has been the first year of our new monthly Topics and it seems to have been quite a success. We have had some excellent speakers (as usual) and this month, on 25th March, by popular demand, we have Rebecca from Edinburgh Zoo who gave us such a wonderful evening with her Giraffes, coming to tell us about the Wildcats and the work of RZSS to reinstate them in Scotland.

The last Tuesday of April is our Social Evening so please do come and see what we have in store for you.

We welcome everyone to our meetings at 7.30 in the small hall, usually on the last Tuesday of the month, from October to April. Visitors pay £3 per visit, but members pay £20 for the year which is quite a bargain.

Put us in your diary for next year if you haven't tried us yet. We look forward to meeting you.

For any enquiries contact Lyndy Paton 0131 3332 7377 or 07460 212 174



The art club is now back in full swing for 2025.

We had a busy lead up to Christmas with artists making hand painted box decorations for the Christmas Tree festival. We also enjoyed a Christmas lunch at the Toby Carvery. I mentioned in a previous article we were hoping to have a model along, for us to do some figurative drawing. We did indeed end our term with a male model coming to sit for us and enjoy our mince pies at coffee time.

Some artists also contributed to the popular 'Lessons and Carols' Service with paintings helping to depict the Nativity story. These were incorporated during the service and displayed afterwards within the church for folk to chat over.

This year's exhibition will be held on 13th - 18th May in the small hall at Blackhall St Columba's Church. Hand painted cards will also be available. This year the chosen charity for us to support is Erskine Care Homes.

We look forward to preparing paintings for the exhibition and look forward to seeing you there.

Marge Whiteside.

Joyce Whytock, Secretary, at family.whytock@bluevonder.co

NORTH WEST HERITAGE

North West Heritage is a local history group which meets in Davidson's Mains Parish Church North Hall at 7.30 pm on the following dates. There is good parking available. Contact Charlotte Cowe on 336 2494 or charlotte@dmains.co.uk if you would like further information

CAMEO CLUB

If you are in the community and would like to meet others socially, why not come along to Blackhall St Columba's church halls every second Friday? Meetings start at 10.30 with tea/coffee followed by – usually musical entertainment – from 11-12. On **March 7th** we will have singer/guitarist Calum Anderson, and **March 21st** we have a "Sing For Fun" group. It is free to join. Dates are every second week after that, when we have a varied programme. You can find out when our meetings are, online at blackhallstcolumba.org.uk under "calendar".

Our forty plus members, both men and women, are generally retired and enjoy their morning with us. If you are younger, you are welcome to do volunteering with us. We always need car drivers, servers for coffee and people to butter pancakes!

More information can be given by phoning the number below or speaking to someone you know who is a volunteer. You will be welcome whether as a visiting member or potential volunteer.

Fiona Drinnan 343 6762

KNIT AND NATTER

In the last edition I showed a photograph of a selection of knitted parts, the use of which would be revealed at a Christmas service. This was the Christingle service on Christmas Eve.

We also took part in the Christmas festival, choosing the carol Ding Dong Merrily On High. I'm not sure any of us ever want to knit bells again. I should have counted how many.

Along side these special projects we continue to knit for Pregnancy Counselling and Care. We are always happy to welcome new members to our group. If you would like to join us we meet in the Sanctuary of St.Columba's Blackhall on Monday evenings at 7.30pm. New or would like to be knitters are welcome.

For further details please contact stcknitnatter@gmail.com



Wednesday 19th March 2025 **The History of the Innocent Railway** (Built to carry coal from the Dalkeith Area to Edinburgh) Speaker: James Waugh

Wednesday 23rd April 2025 **Trains and Trams in Edinburgh's Southside** Speaker: Kenneth Williamson. Followed by AGM

BLACKHALL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

With Christmas and New Year behind us we can look forward to longer days and hopefully warmer weather, although as I write this I am listening to the powerful winds of Storm Eowyn. My young trees seem to be surviving and anything that could have blown away was put away! I hope your gardens were not damaged. On a very positive note, I am delighted to see snowdrops in the garden and the tips of spring bulbs starting to show.



The 24/25 season continued in November with a workshop on garden tool sharpening. Our members brought along many pairs of secateurs, shears and even a very old scythe. We were all very pleased with the results of our efforts to sharpen them once more.

The Social Event in December was a great success with members creating Christmas table decorations whilst enjoying refreshments. There was also a quiz and a raffle. Our January meeting gave us an introduction to Permaculture, and as we listened to the talk I think we came to realise that, with a more relaxed way of gardening and caring for the wildlife in our gardens, many of us are already beginning to practise this.

The programme continues as shown below with some very interesting talks:

10 th February	- Cacti & Succulents
10 th March	- Rhododendrons
14 th April	- Dahlias
13 th May	- AGM and Seed to Vase

The group meets at 7.45pm on the second Monday of the month from September to May in the small hall at Blackhall St Columba's Church. Look out for each month's poster displayed locally in Tesco's and Sainsburys and on the church notice boards. You can also check out our facebook page which can be found at www.facebook.com/groups/211472892232483.

Talks are open to members and non members, we look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings. If you would like more information please email Louise, Horti President, at blackhall.horti@hotmail.com.

EDINBURGH FLORAL ART CLUB



Visitors are always most welcome at our meetings, held in the large hall at Blackhall St Columba's Church - we meet on the second Friday of the month, from 2pm - 4pm. Please do come and join us (£10 for a visitor) and enjoy our activities and demonstrations. This is a lovely way to spend a Friday afternoon in the company of others who love working with flowers and watching talented demonstrators, and who enjoy a chat and cuppa afterwards! For more information, please call our Chairman, Suzie Stark, 07888 942561 or just come along to the large hall at Blackhall St Columba's Church - we meet on the second Friday of the month, from 2pm - 4pm (dates below).

14 March: Julia Loudon on tour from Redpath, Earlston. Title "Tales of the Unexpected"

11 April: Steve Ludlum from Dundee. Title "Spring has Sprung"

9 May: AGM and speaker (tbc)

14 June: Summer Coffee Morning at St Columba's (this is a Saturday event)

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING - DAFFODIL TEA DANCE

After the fun of the Christmas Party, mid-December, we had a few weeks' break before our first class of 2025. It was good to welcome back the new members from the previous term and to continue with four sets of dancers each night.



As well as the usual Thursday evenings together, we held our first charity event – a Daffodil Tea Dance in aid of Blood Cancer UK.

On the afternoon of Wednesday 5th February we were delighted to have over 80 people fill the tables for a programme of music, dancing and singing accompanied by Quern, a traditional ceilidh band led by Blackhall St Columba's elder, Amy Donaldson.

With Gay Gordons, St Bernard's Waltz and Virginia Reel, there were opportunities for all who wanted to take part; and it was great to see the large hall filled with dancers. Also, Quern's two musical interludes, with solos both instrumental and vocal, were much appreciated by those who had come along just to listen.



Country dancers from both Blackhall and the U3A group at Inverleith St. Serf's later performed a couple of reels they have enjoyed this term; and encouraged some of the guests to partner them for two of the easier set dances.



The Afternoon Tea – the key element of the event -was organised by Lynn Bunney and provided by a generous team of ladies from the church fellowship. Vol-au-vents, sausage rolls, tasty sandwiches and a wide selection of delicious home-made cakes, each in perfectly miniature proportions, were much appreciated by the guests and there was very little left for the takeaway boxes they had thoughtfully provided. Lynn's group of volunteers worked non-stop throughout the afternoon, preparing the traditional cake stands, then serving and clearing the feast.



With a picture quiz and Scottish place name clues to solve, and a raffle of items donated by the dancers and friends, there was much to chat about at the tables and, by the time we all came together for Auld Lang Syne, it was clear that dancers and guests alike had made new friends – while making £772 for a very worthwhile charity. With the agreement of the dancers who were at the class the following evening, we have added £28 from our own funds to bring the total up to £800.

Thanks SO much to all who gave of their time freely to make that possible.

Muriel Stenhouse

NATIVITY TRAIL - FOLLOW THE STAR - MARY'S JOURNEY

After the success of last year's Nativity Trail, we decided to think bigger and better this year and we produced our second trail at Blackhall St Columba's on Thursday 19th and Friday 20th December 2024. This extended run enabled us to welcome the pupils of Primary 7 from both Ferryhill Primary and Blackhall Primary to experience "Mary's Journey" which was different from the previous year in many ways.

It was an unmitigated success, and we received a tremendous amount of very positive feedback. Well over four hundred members of the Blackhall community took a moment or two on those days to be reminded of the Good News of Christmas amid all the hurly burly of Advent and let themselves relax and enjoy what Christmas is really about.



The Nativity Trail was an interactive exploration of the Greatest Story Ever Told using the church itself and all its halls and buildings. Our visitors were encouraged to find out the true meaning of Christmas in a novel and exciting way as they heard the



Angel Gabriel's message and went on their own journey to experience what the long, hard journey to Bethlehem must have been like for Mary and Joseph. They discovered the shepherds, King Herod and, in Bethlehem itself, the harassed innkeepers until they finally reached the stable with Mary and Joseph and found the most wonderful gift we have ever been given.



On top of that, we also offered a new Christmas Nativity Escape Room for the older children who came along and in the sanctuary, there were lots of Christmas crafts, some seasonal, musical entertainment and, of course, plenty of Christmas treats and refreshments as well as a spectacular Christmas Tree Festival.

For those who couldn't make it along this time, we hope you get a flavour from these photos of the trail.



The good news is that there will be another Nativity Trail this coming Christmas and, once again, all will be welcome to join us. So, we will be delighted to welcome some visitors back for more fun and perhaps see others who couldn't make it last time.

Shona Cook

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 2024

Over the course of three days visitors were able to admire and appreciate 23 beautifully decorated Christmas Trees. Each organisation chose a Christmas Carol or song as their theme and their imagination went wild. Every tree was unique and the skills on display were a joy to behold! We had a light-hearted quiz which involved the visitors trying to match the tree with the piece of music.

Thank you to all the organisations who took part and to all who came to visit. Ruth Laidlaw



THANK YOU

The WATCH committee at Blackhall St Columba's Church were delighted to present Mairead McLeod from Blood Cancer UK with a cheque for £10,000 at our morning service on Sunday 26th January 2025. Thank you to all of the congregation and community who helped us raise this amazing sum from the sale of our calendar, coin collection, craft coffee morning and the Christmas Fair. Without your help and generosity it would not have been possible.



Lynn Bunney
WATCH Committee

The WATCH team would like to thank the following businesses for their kind donations to Blackhall St Columba's Church Christmas Fair in aid of Blood Cancer UK.

Abinger's Café – Craigcrook Road

Alexander McCall Smith

Alien Rock indoor climbing

Baillie Signs – Canvas Print

Ballina Construction Ltd

BDW Vets Blackhall

Beautique Blackhall

Blackhall Cycle Repairs

Blackhall Framing Gallery

Boots Craigleith

Bowling Club – Blackhall

By Ellen Beauty Salon

Cameo Picture House

Charlie Miller

Cloudberry Café Barnton

Comely Bank Podiatry

Conifox Adventure Park

Connect Barbers

Craigcrook Deli & Coffee Shop

Dine Restaurant – Cambridge St

Discover Chiropractic

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Fine Fellas Barber

Forage & Chatter Restaurant

Gail Stewart Styling

Gathering Space Café Cramond

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Martin Wishart

Murrayfield Golf Club

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Rachel's – Nail Studio

Rangers

Ravelston Golf Club

Ronaq Indian Restaurant

Scottish Grocers' Federation

Scottish Rugby Union

Scottish Seabird Centre

Siverknowes Stores

Slater menswear

Stone Fired – Pizza

The Bonham

The Cove Restaurant

Tigerlily

Tiso

Urban Vanity – Blackhall

Valvona & Crolla

Westwoods Health Club



Mairead Macleod, Blood Cancer UK's Scotland fundraising manager wrote to thank us for our fundraising. This is an extract from her letter which shows how much it is needed and appreciated.

It has been great hearing about all the fundraising efforts put into raising as much money as possible to support people with blood cancer. At Blood Cancer UK we are dedicated to beating blood cancer. We do this by funding research and supporting those affected. Since 1960, we've invested over £500 million in blood cancer research, transforming treatments and saving lives. The day we beat blood cancer is now in sight and our researchers are determined to finish the job.

Our work in finding a cure is only possible thanks to supporters like your congregation and the WATCH Committee. We have seen so many developments in blood cancer research over recent years and are hopeful we will find a cure for blood cancer within our generation.



Both halls were very busy with shoppers, the Edinburgh Blackhall Suzuki group provided a musical interlude in the sanctuary, Santa was in his grotto and Rev Fergus Cook called out the lucky winners of the Christmas Hampers.



**ST COLUMBA'S
CHRISTMAS
FAIR 2024**

Thank you all for coming – we hope to see you again in 2025





BLACKHALL BOWLING CLUB



Blackhall Bowling Club celebrated its 125th Anniversary in 2023. This is a long time to be at the hub of a community, and we are justifiably proud of our success. Of course our main *raison d'être* is Bowls, with this year's bowling season starting with our Opening Day on Saturday 19th April. The club runs "Open Days" – this year on Sundays 27th April & 4th May – if you are interested in seeing what we are all about, please come along to one of these Open Days. Our senior members and coaches will be on hand to show you around and let you try out your Bowling skills. Following on from a successful launch last year of an Open Evening, we will be repeating this in 2025 on Saturday 24th May.

During the bowling season we have a multitude of internal and external competitions, however, participation in these is voluntary, so you can enter as few or as many as you like. One of our most popular events is our Monday Hat Night, which runs all though the season. The format here is very relaxed, with players changing position throughout the evening. This gives new members in particular an opportunity to meet other members, as well as trying out "lead" or "skip" etc. in a very informal setting. The Ladies run a similar event each Wednesday afternoon, with tea and biscuits included at the end of proceedings. We also have Saturday morning coaching lessons, these are primarily aimed at new members, where the basics of bowling as well as the etiquette of the game, are explained by our friendly and knowledgeable coaches

Although Bowling is our main activity, in recent seasons we have established various activities out of season to keep our members occupied through the winter months. These include Table Tennis, Bridge, Book Club and a Choir, all of which have been very successful. We also run regular social events all through the year – some Bowls related, and some not, including Fish & Chip nights, Spice nights, Country & Western nights etc. We have a fully licensed bar manned by volunteer members, and we like to think we are one of the most friendly clubs in the city.

We currently have around 120 playing members – split fairly evenly between Ladies & Gents, so if you fancy giving Bowls a try, or would just like more information, please get in touch and we will be delighted to make you welcome to our Club. We also have a website at Blackhallbc.com, where more information about our office bearers and history is available.

Douglas J Main, President

Club Phone :- 0131 332 0335

Club E-Mail :- blackhallbc@live.co.uk



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BLACKHALL LAWN TENNIS CLUB

Nestled at the end of Keith Terrace and the comforting embrace of Ravelston Woods, it's not unusual for play to be disrupted by the delicate call of a buzzard above or a visit from the deer. Despite being a tennis club since 1915, the quiet backdrop means that not everyone knows of its existence, as the club carries out its business in a low-key manner. Well, OK, it is sometimes accompanied by sounds of frustration as that potential winning drop shot doesn't even reach as far as the net.

It has been a busy few years for the Club though, renewing the playing surface with 3 Advantage Pro astro courts and moving to LED floodlighting. The practice wall has been resurfaced, the often-overlooked starting point for many a serious player. In addition, we have appointed two new coaches, Olivia Smart and Nina Szownadze. Both are Level 3 qualified LTA coaches and bring great enthusiasm and experience for all ages. There are group, individual and match play sessions currently underway, as well as Cardio Tennis sessions on Monday mornings which certainly blow away any cobwebs.

The Club has three Men's Teams and three Ladies' Teams which compete at various levels in the East of Scotland Leagues, as well as several Junior Teams at different age levels. The Club also offers plenty of social tennis opportunities.

More information and contact details at: <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/blackhalltct>



Dec@Breath-Works and Yoga with Esme have joined forces to create a supportive yoga community within the heart of Blackhall.

Two experienced teachers, teaching different styles of yoga, but both with the same focus: to bring people together through yoga, helping their community to grow, uplift, support and inspire each other.

From gentle Yin Yoga to powerful Vinyasa, in the morning or the evening, there is a class to suit everyone.

Find your perfect class now!
e-mail dee@breath-works.co.uk or esme@yogawithesme.com
or scan the QR codes.



Breath-Works



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Lawn Tennis
Club



The Cubs of the Monday and Friday night packs took on this art project. They collected a wide variety of badges and placed them around the Scout emblem. The project has been framed and is hanging in the Church Hall.



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Girlguiding **Blackhall Guiding**

202 and 202B Brownies raised £1,636.51 for Cash for Kids Mission Christmas. They then went to the shops to spend their money on gifts. They then dropped it all off at Mission HQ filling 9 trolleys worth for children aged newborn-18 years. The girls learned many skills from budgeting, handling money, learning about what charities do, team work, keeping the brownie promise and law by thinking of others before themselves and helping other people and much



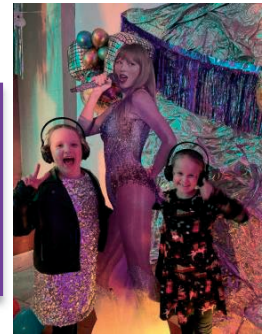
202 and 202B Brownies have been working on the skills for my future theme this term learning how to cook, use tools and make things out of wood. 8 Brownies are very excited to go to Amsterdam in the easter holidays and lots of girls are looking forward to going to Dalguise on a residential in May. **Nicole Harland– 202&202B Brownie Leader**

Rangers had fun planning a dream trip which they hope will come true! And many are looking forward to working on the expedition section of their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. **Claire Slaine - Ranger Leader**

157th Rainbows are planning to be helpful at home to raise some money which they will use to learn about coins and then buy items for the local food bank. **Claire Slaine- 157 Rainbow Leader**

202 Rainbows are looking forward to attending the County Rainbows party at the City Chambers with 300 girls. Plus working on First Aid badge and exploring nature. **Nicola McDermid – 202 Rainbow Leader**

202 & 202B Brownies had a Silent Disco at JoJo's Parties at Ocean Terminal.



202c Brownies have been busy learning how to sew making sock monkeys. We have also enjoyed a division sleep over at Dynamic Earth **Helen Abbott – 202C Brownie Leader**



202 & 202B Brownies each brought a special adult along to the weekly meeting to create a fresh christmas wreath together.

202A Rainbows enjoyed a visit from Wildside Nature. They made s'mores and hunted for mini beasts. **Barbara Bon – 202A Rainbow Leader**

Volunteer with Girlguiding Edinburgh?

Could you spare some time to volunteer with us? It's an exciting time to be part of Girlguiding as we get to grips with our most exciting (and biggest) programme overhaul in 100 years!

We are looking for enthusiastic adults to help with Rainbow, Brownie & Guide units city-wide,

Full training and support provided. See our website or register online for more information:

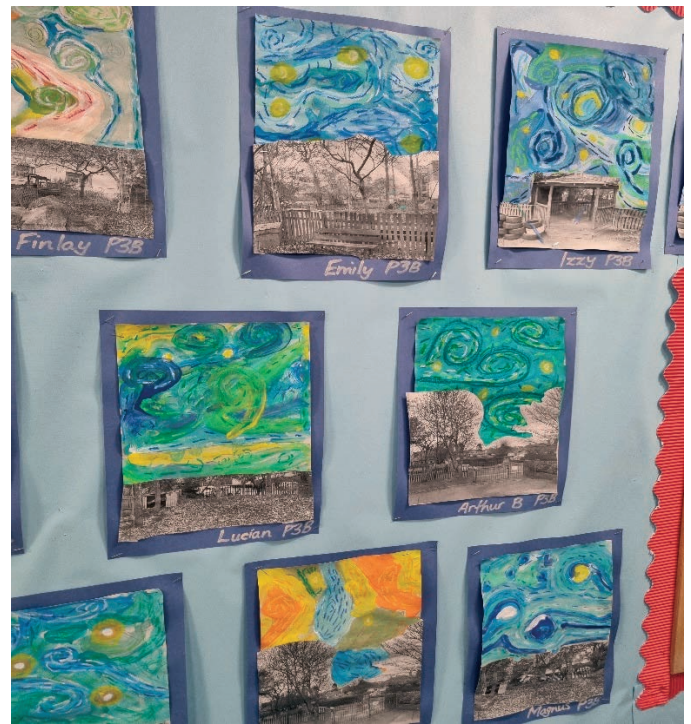
<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/>

blackhall.districtcomm@gmail.com



P3 have been learning how to create movement through art.

We learned about Van Gogh and his Starry Night piece. This linked to our topic - Space and Sky Explorers. Pictured below we have a selection of our art work.





Parking at Blackhall Primary School

Pick-up and drop-off times are busy outside our school. This can cause an increased safety risk to both children and parents / carers

Parking restrictions outside the school are there to keep you and your children safe.

Parking or stopping inconsiderately can put people in danger and you also risk being fined.

Parking Attendants will issue an instant PCN to any vehicle parked at school keep clear markings during the hours of restriction. (£60 and 3 penalty points on your license)

It's important that motorists follow the Highway Code.

Safety tips for parking outside our school

When picking up or dropping off children at school, you should do the following:

- Allow yourself plenty of time as the area is likely to be busy.
- Do not park on zigzag lines and avoid parking opposite them.
- If you decide to park further away, please be considerate of local residents and avoid blocking driveways or access ways.

JRSO

Our JRSOs (Junior Road Safety Officers) a small group of P7s & P6 work together throughout the school year to find ways to inform and educate our school community on keeping safe when out and about and have carried out presentations at assemblies, conducted surveys and have had a visual presence at drop off and pick up times, encouraging safe parking around our school.





BLACKHALL NURSERY

NEWS MARCH 2025

Blackhall Nursery is situated within the wonderful nature resource of Ravelston Park and Woods. At Blackhall Nursery, we follow a child-led, play-based and rights-respecting pedagogy. We provide a safe, healthy and happy environment where children grow and develop through play and active learning. This year is our 25th Birthday and we have a year's worth of celebrations planned.

As I write this we have had a very busy first term with all the usual Christmas excitement and then returning to explore icy weather in the Nursery garden. We plan responsively- meaning that the children choose how the next few months will go, but we do plan to look at Lunar New Year, Easter, Holi, life cycles/Spring, keeping ourselves healthy, people who help us and then finally transition to school for our P1 leavers.

In June we hope to have our end of term trip to East Links Farm again -always a lovely way to mark the end of the nursery year.

We have begun our place offers for the 2025-26 nursery year and this process should be completed by early March. You can place your child's name on the Nursery waiting list from their 2nd birthday by downloading an application form at www.blackhallnursery.co.uk and we recommend doing this as close to their 2nd birthday as possible as our waiting lists continue to grow!

Blackhall Nursery is a registered Scottish charity working in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. We offer full day (6 hours) places for 3-5 year olds during term time.



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Blackhall Probus

CRAIGLEITH PROBUS

The Blackhall Probus Club is part of a UK-wide group which organizes social events for retired/semi-retired gentlemen in the local area. With a membership of around forty, we meet on the first and third Thursday of the month from October through to April at the Blackhall Bowling Club on Keith Row at 10:00 to chat over tea/coffee/biscuits before listening to a talk given by experts and enthusiasts across a wide range of subjects. We also organise one or two lunches (including Christmas) to which partners are invited, Quiz, Pie and a Pint sessions after a couple of the talks as well as local walks lead by one of our members.

Talks this session included “*Scottish lighthouses*”, “*On the buses*”, “*Surgeon’s Hall Museum*” and “*The history of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service*”, all of which created a diverse, interesting and entertaining series of topics.

We are always pleased to welcome new members, so if you would like to find out more before joining us for the start of the next session in October please contact the President for more details or come along to our AGM on 3rd April when, in addition to the AGM, we will be holding a Pint, Pie and a Quiz immediately afterwards.

We look forward to meeting you.

Gordon Hamilton, President, Blackhall Probus Club.
Email: hamilton3cb@sky.com

PROBUS NEWS



With numerous signs of spring appearing, Craigleith Probus members may be looking forward to their early summer jaunts; before then we have three contrasting talks as you will read below.

Our talk on Wednesday **March 5th** is about *The Arctic Convoys* given by Leonie Thomas who collated the records of her father, Leonard H. Thomas, which were contained in a well-hidden secret notebook from which he later wrote his memoirs. In her talk Leonie will tell of how the men suffered from an appalling food shortage, the intense cold, and the stark conditions as they sailed from a rainy Belfast to the freezing, unforgiving, and unknown shores of Arkhangelsk in northern Russia as well as offering an insight into the morale of the men, and how they used their humour to keep going under the constant threat of succumbing to a watery grave. As with all our talks everyone is welcome, in this case especially if you have any links to the Arctic Convoys.

Perhaps our talk on **Wednesday March 19th** will give another slant on how society changed in the past sixty years or so when James Waugh tells us about the link between the Rise and Decline of Coal Mining and the Arrival of the Twin Tub Washing Machine. We can all think back to the days of coal bings, the large wheels that turned, and the faces of those involved. Did you know 150,000 were directly employed in the mining industry in the early 1900s out of a population of four and half million? As for the Twin Tub - that was a luxury to many even in the 1960s!

Our final talk takes place after a brief AGM on Wednesday **April 2nd** when David Land will explain how Counting, Writing and Speaking are connected.

If any of the themes above are of interest to you please just drop me an email or just pop along to Blackhall Bowling Club for a welcoming tea or coffee plus biscuits at **10am**, before the talk.

You are assured of a friendly ‘Blackhall’ welcome.
John MacLennan - Past President
johnmaclellanuk@googlemail.com

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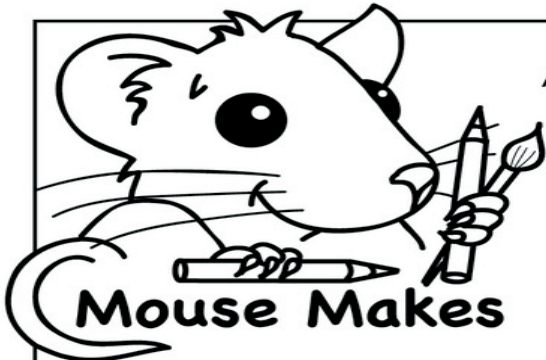
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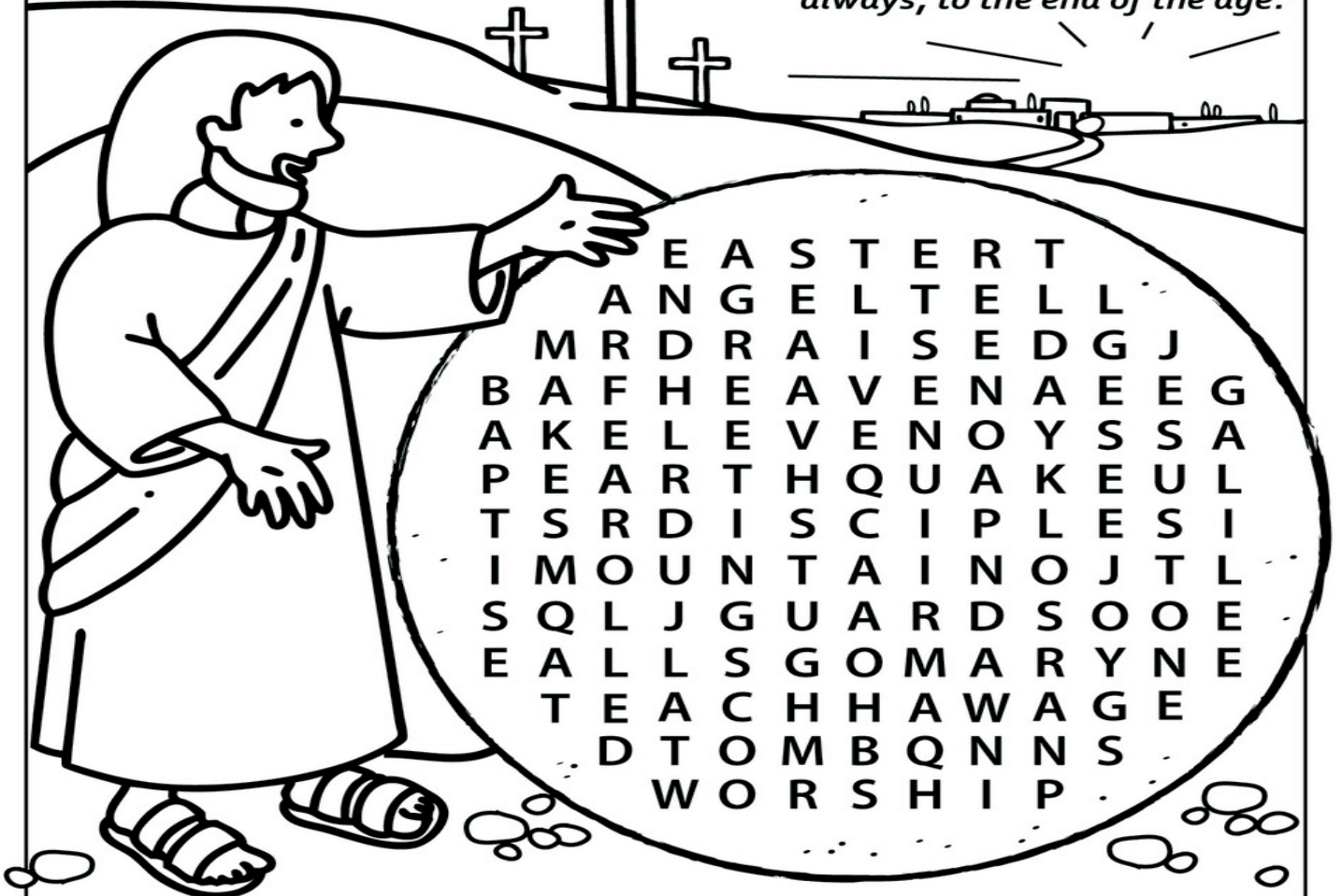
JESUS IS ALIVE!

After Jesus had been raised from the dead He met Mary and Mary Magdalene "Greetings," He said, "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee. They will see me there."

When the disciples met Jesus in Galilee He said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. **And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age."**



Read the account of Jesus' resurrection in *Matthew 28:1-20*



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 disciples nursing care
 family fasting worldwide
 repentance Lent spiritual
 prayer seeking Easter
 desert growing preparation
 selfdenial finding nurture

Easy sudoku

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			6	1	5	9		
	4		8					3
3								7
1					7		5	2
		9	3	7	1			
		6	5				4	

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Medium sudoku

	4			1				8
7	6	2	9		4			
	8	5	3	2	7		9	
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4	2						8	7
	9			5				2
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			4		3	9	6	5
9				6			2	

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Session Clerk
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Telephone 332 5702

Church Secretary
Church Office
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DEADLINES

Kirk News (May edition)
Friday 18th April

Please send all items to the Editor;
Judith Mair, c/o Church Office
or by e-mail to: judith.mair@hotmail.com

Blackhall Bulletin (September edition)
Sunday 27th July

Please send all items, including **Advertising Enquiries**
to the Editor: Barbara Wilson, c/o Church Office
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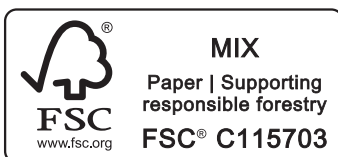
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