

KIRK NEWS

May 2025
No. 845



BLACKHALL
ST. COLUMBA'S
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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



May
2025



Church in the community Matt 5:14-16, Acts 2:44-47, Phil 2:3-5

Love One Another

By the time you read this article, in the May edition of the Kirk News, Easter will have passed. If you were on holiday that will just be a distant memory with some nice photographs and possibly a souvenir or two. How quickly do we all go back into our routines after a holiday.

But the original Easter Sunday Holy Day we just celebrated was one that meant that none of us can go back to a 'normal' routine. The events over two thousand years ago in Jerusalem were so momentous that the world would never be, and has never been, the same.

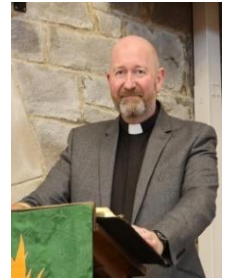
Because we as humans tend to revert to what we regard as 'normal', it is worth reminding ourselves, regularly, of not only what happened over two thousand years ago but also of its implications for us today.

On Maundy Thursday, we marked the occasion of 'The Last Supper'. During that service I reminded people of what it would have been like to be in the upper room with Jesus during that meal.

It followed on from a tumultuous week. Jesus had entered Jerusalem in triumph, he had gone to the Temple and driven out the money-changers. He had angered the chief priests and religious leaders enough that they were now looking for a way to kill Him. Jesus knew it, and his disciples knew it.

They may have found a temporary respite in that upper room, but there was no real safety. In fact, Jesus was preparing his disciples for his death and even telling them that one of them would betray him. Now, just hours before that betrayal and his arrest, Jesus gathered his disciples together for one last meal and one last chance to emphasise his purpose and mission.

If you knew that one evening was to be your last on this earth, I wonder if you have thought what your last words, or actions, might be to those closest to you. If you knew you weren't going to be able to say or do anything else I'm sure you'd want to make it count.



From the Minister

This was the situation Jesus was in. I doubt whether the event, the meal, was the tranquil, holy scene that we often see pictured in those famous paintings of the Last Supper. There would have been a lot of commotion, especially given what was revealed about being betrayed.

It is written that, knowing all that was to come, during supper, Jesus,

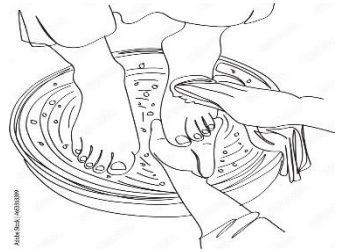
“got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet.”
(Read John 13:3-17)

That simple act was Jesus’ response to all the commotion, chaos, confusion and conflict swirling around him. With all the danger, all the suffering that Jesus knew was coming, he washed the disciples’ feet. Jesus had foretold the betrayal by Judas and the denial by Peter. He knew the crowds would shout for him to be crucified. He was aware the religious and political leaders would deride him right up to his death. All of that was coming, and knowing it, Jesus’ response was the simple, humble, most ordinary act of love and kindness that could be imagined. He washed their feet. And he did it, he says, to teach his disciples, and to teach us what is the most important thing in the world. He did it to teach us that at the end of the day, whatever craziness or chaos is going on in our lives, love is the most important thing. To love each other, as Jesus loved us, is all that really matters.

When we look around the world today, there is a lot to be concerned about. I don’t remember a time in my life, even during the pandemic, when there was so much uncertainty, so much unrest, tension, conflict and violence. Turn on the news at any time, and you will find something discouraging, something to worry about, or something to get angry about.

This is why, I think, that Jesus, knowing he had one last chance to emphasise his message, made the point he did. Remember, this was a time when Jesus was at a very anxious and discouraged point in his ministry. And yet, that was when he did this very ordinary, yet extraordinary act.

Jesus got down on his hands and knees and washed the disciples' feet. That is where and when Jesus taught them, not only to love one another, but he showed them they should do it in practical ways. This is where Jesus cemented his new commandment, that we should love one another, as he loved us.



When we see the trouble in our world, and are confronted with the latest disturbing news, what should we do? Love one another. When we have disagreements about what to do about all the challenges our world faces, what should we do? Love one another. When there are people who want to betray us, or deny knowing us, at our moment of deepest need, how should we respond? Love one another. When in doubt, Jesus seems to be teaching us, love one another.

Don't get me wrong, I don't think that this is an easy command. However, that is what Jesus calls for.

No matter what else is going on in our lives, we can love one another. At times, it won't seem enough. We will all want to do more. Life is complicated. This world is complicated. And there are many times when we will be tempted to find another answer. And that is when it is important to remember again, all the commotion, chaos, confusion, and conflict, that was swirling around the upper room. Then, remembering that unrest, we need to remember how Jesus responded to all of that. He responded to all of that by loving those he was with. When in doubt, love one another. A simple command, but one that can guide us through whatever confusion and chaos we might experience in this world.

Best wishes and blessings

Fergus

Easter Sunday at Blackhall St Columba's



The Session Clerk's Report

The Kirk Session

The Kirk Session met on Tuesdays 18 February and 18 March 2025.

Correspondence

A note of thanks had been received from the Scottish Bible Society for a donation of £600.49, the proceeds of the Christmas retiring offerings.

A note of thanks was also received from the WATCH committee for help at the Christmas Fair and throughout the year.

Fabric

An incident occurred in the Sanctuary and halls late in the afternoon of Tuesday 11 February following the upgrading of our electric meter to a new meter. This was at the request of Scottish Power with the work carried out by a sub-contractor.

When the work was completed and the power reconnected, there was a surge in power or some form of unbalanced restoration of the supply to the various distribution boards. This resulted in significant damage across the building and in particular to the heating pumps and lighting

It will cost the Church circa £34,500 to make good the damage caused. Meantime we are in liaison with Scottish Power, our insurers and the Church's Law Department regarding recouping the expenditure.

Presbytery Plan

In March, the Minister and Session Clerk met with representatives of the Presbytery Deployment of Resources Committee. There was nothing new to report regarding the Plan.

Roll

Session agreed to admit by resolution, the following new members:

Alison Neilson, Telford Road

Les Dickson, Marchfield Park Lane

Gordon Young – Craigleith View

Michael Gibson – Belgrave Crescent

Mrs Christian Gibson – Belgrave Crescent

Stated Annual Meeting

The meeting was held on Sunday 23 March 2025

VE Day 80th Anniversary

It was agreed to mark this special occasion with a short Service of Thanksgiving on Thursday 8 May followed by an afternoon tea in the Sanctuary.

Future Kirk Session dates (all Tuesdays at 7.30 pm except for April and May when these meetings will start at 7.45 pm)

20 May 2025

24 June 2025

Eddie Thorn, Session Clerk

The Great Tommy Sleepout at St Columba's

The Great Tommy Sleep Out is a fundraising challenge organized by Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) to support veterans experiencing homelessness in the UK. Participants are encouraged to sleep outside for one night or more, raising awareness and funds for over 6,000 homeless ex-servicemen and women.



Fergus and his pitched tent ready for the sleepout at Blackhall St Columba's church grounds

The Great Tommy Sleepout

On Saturday 29th of March 2025, Fergus and his three daughters, Catriona, Heather and Lori, took part in 'The Great Tommy Sleepout'. The night was an interesting one with their tents set up in the Church grounds on Queensferry Road. Although the rain stayed off, the wind was strong enough to tear the advertising flag and pull a couple of tent pegs out their holes! Between the wind, the traffic and some drunks at 3:30am they did not have much sleep but they made it through the night successfully. The primary objective was to raise awareness and funds for the Royal British Legion Industries charity.

The Sleepout was on behalf of the Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI), an organisation that predates the Royal British Legion by 3 years. The RBLI is a national veterans charity supporting the Armed Forces, people with disabilities and people who are unemployed. The RBLI village is the largest veteran village in the UK with a full care pathway dedicated to providing care and support to the veterans of the Armed Forces community at any stage of their lives.

The Great Tommy Sleepout at St Columba's



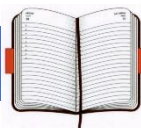
The RBLI Mountbatten Pavilion provides emergency accommodation and newly constructed homes at the Centenary Village and a state-of-the-art care home provide help in various forms, including a STEP-IN welfare programme for veterans who need immediate help.

In addition, around 150 people are employed across the social enterprise of RBLI of whom more than 70% are disabled military veterans or civilians. These people face daily challenges due to physical disability, such as amputation, or hidden disability such as post-traumatic stress disorder or learning difficulties. Those working at RBLI's social enterprises in Kent and Renfrewshire are given the tools to change their own lives.



Fergus and daughters Catriona, Heather and Lori prepare to camp in the church grounds

Fergus would like to say a huge thank you to all who contributed. Between online contributions, cash handed to him directly and the retiring offering just over £1000 was raised. Thank you to everyone who contributed.



These dates and times are correct at the time of going to print, however, they may be subject to change. You should check on the website, social media and intimations nearer the time to confirm the arrangements remain the same.

May 2025

3rd	4pm	Saturday afternoon Monte Cassino Service of Remembrance. All welcome.
4 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
8th	3.30pm	VE Day Service of Thanksgiving followed by afternoon tea.
11th	10.30am	Morning Worship and Christian Aid Week
18th	10.30am	Morning Worship and General Assembly Week
25th	10.30am	Morning Worship

June 2025

1 st	10.30am	Sacrament of Holy Communion
	3pm	Short service of Communion for those unable to attend the 10.30am service.
8th	10.30am	Morning Worship - Pentecost
	3pm	Pentecost Service at Cramond Foreshore
	6.30pm	Junior Singers and friends
15 th	10.30am	Family Service and Father's Day
22nd	10.30am	Morning Worship
29th	10.30am	Morning Worship

July 2025

6 th	10.30am	Morning Worship. Watch Committee coin collection begins.
13 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
20 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
27th	10.30am	Morning Worship

Congregational News

We welcome new members admitted by Resolution of the Kirk Session

Mr Les Dickson

Mr Michael and Mrs Christian Gibson

Mrs Alison Neilson

Mr Gordon Young

Deaths

Sadly, the following members have passed away.

Our thoughts and prayers are with their family members and friends.

February

9 Mrs Moira Donald

20 Mrs Dorothy Coulter

April

6 Mrs Margaret Bailey



Sheila Mackintosh, Roll Keeper

Hall Bookings

For inquiries about Church Hall bookings, please contact the Church Office or reach out via the dedicated hall bookings email provided below.

Sheila Mackintosh

Church Office

Tel: 0131 332 4431

secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Hall Bookings

bookings@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk



Connect

The **Connect** group has continued to meet on Sunday evenings, covering a range of topics from a Christian perspective and encouraging one another in our journey of faith. In February, we began to look at the church's mission statement, mentioned on all our online communications and in most worship services – "To glorify God, to proclaim Christ, to serve others". This was originally intended as a three-week series; but, as we discussed the various aspects of who God is, why we believe in him, and how we glorify him, both in our church and in our daily lives, we realised that we'd have to come back to it after the Easter break.



In March, we focused on Assisted Dying and held our first open meetings, when interested members of the congregation, and from other churches, came together to consider this controversial issue. The focus for our discussion was the recently produced video from the Church of Scotland, created to encourage congregations to reconsider our views in anticipation of the Scottish Parliament's debate and completion of Stage 1 of Liam McArthur's Member's Bill by May 23rd.

Led by retired GP and Police Surgeon, Dr Norman Wallace, the first meeting included a viewing of the video – which is available on YouTube under the title "Assisted dying: a brief introduction to some of the issues" - and consideration of the opinions of the five main contributors.

Norman's own professional experience proved to be very useful in helping us to think about the impact on patients and their families; and, while there was a range of views shared among us, there was general agreement regarding the need for funding for improved and more widely available palliative care.

Connect member Philippa Wood, a Consultant at ERI, led the follow-up session, when she outlined the actual terms of the Bill being raised in Scotland, to be found on the Scot Gov website. We then divided into small groups to discuss various questions under the main headings of Control and Autonomy in our lives; Suffering and its impact on the patient and family; and the Hope we have as Christians, even in the face of death.

We also shared a concern about possible coercion, the individual feeling about being a "burden" and the wider issue of the effect on those left behind.

In the summing up session that followed, most of the group were against the idea of Assisted Dying becoming legal in Scotland but there was also agreement that the church must consider what we can do to contribute positively to support those at the end of life, and their families.

The end of March and most of April were given over to Lent Conversations run by Fergus and, again, it was good to be joined by others from the church to look at his four main topics – Repentance and Forgiveness; Prayer and Reflection; Fasting and Sacrifice; and Renewal and Transformation.

After a two-week break for Easter, we will be starting back on 4th May, looking at how we Proclaim Christ in Blackhall St Columba's and beyond. You'd be very welcome to join us.

Muriel Stenhouse

VE Day – the end of World War II in Europe



VE Day (Victory in Europe) – was celebrated 80 years ago this month, on 8th May 1945, marking the end of World War II in Europe. It was marked with a public holiday.

The previous day the formal act of military surrender had been signed by Germany, and celebrations broke out when the news was released. Big crowds gathered in London, impromptu parties were held throughout the country, and people danced and sang in the streets. King George VI and his family appeared on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, and Churchill made a speech to huge applause. The two princesses Elizabeth and Margaret mingled with the crowds outside.

Many went into churches to give thanks – and to pray for those still involved in the war in the Far East, because the real end of the war, Victory over Japan, would not happen until 15th August. At St Paul's Cathedral there were ten consecutive services giving thanks for peace, each attended by thousands of people.

The celebrations masked the fact that so many had lost family and friends, as well as possessions and homes. But for the moment normal social conventions broke down, strangers embraced, and love was in the air.

By Tim Lenton

The 80th Anniversary of VE Day

VE Day 80 - an invitation!



You are invited to come and join in the commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of VE day.

Where – St Columba's Church

When – Thursday 8th May at 3.30pm

What – a short service of thanksgiving followed by an afternoon tea.

There will be music and a chance to reminisce - so please bring photos, memorabilia etc that either belonged to you or to family and friends.

All are welcome.

For further information please contact Ruth Laidlaw on ruthlaidlaw@gmail.com



Blackhall St Columba's in the Scottish Parliament

The following motion was proposed at the Scottish Parliament:



Congratulating Blackhall St Columba's Church on Raising £10,000 for Blood Cancer UK

- **Submitted by:** **Alex Cole-Hamilton**, Edinburgh Western, Scottish Liberal Democrats.
- **Date lodged:** Wednesday, 26 February 2025
- **Motion reference:** S6M-16597
-

That the Parliament congratulates members of Blackhall St Columba's Church, in Edinburgh, on raising £10,000 for Blood Cancer UK as part of its annual charitable efforts; commends the church for holding a number of fundraising activities, including a craft coffee morning and Christmas fair; recognises that blood cancer is the UK's fifth most common cancer and the third biggest cancer killer; understands that Blood Cancer UK is the UK's leading charity dedicated to funding research into all blood cancers, including leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma, as well as offering information and support to those with a blood cancer; further understands that, thanks to fundraisers, like Blackhall St Columba's Church, Blood Cancer UK is able to invest more money into research, which will help improve survival outcomes for many, and notes that the entire amount raised by the congregation since they began supporting a different charity each year in 1992 is now £284,076.

Junior Singers

After their success in performing “Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat”, the members of the Junior Singers were very keen to have one final performance before the P7s in the group move on to secondary school.

We chose the piece, “Jonah Man Jazz” and thought, as it is quite short, that we could perform it during a family service / church service. However, like Topsy, this idea started to grow and now we are preparing “A Musical Evening”, which will still include “Jonah Man Jazz”, but will also bring together all the children who are musically involved in our church. For the occasion, Junior Singers will be joined by the Blackhall Suzuki Violin Group, and we hope to have some members of the church praise band to support us. The Blackhall Suzuki Violin Group, who hold their group practices in our church halls, have, for many years, provided musical entertainment in the church during our annual Christmas Fair and are now well-known to many of our church members.

The date for your diaries is **Sunday, 8th June (6.30pm start)** and we hope many of you will come along to the church to support all the children who will be performing.

Amy Donaldson



The Junior Singers performing at the February Youth Service 2025

Forth Valley Chorus

World renowned women's chorus singing barbershop harmony

★ SONGS AND SPARKLE ★



Saturday 17th May 2025 @ 7pm



Blackhall St Columba's Church

Columba Road, Edinburgh, EH4 3QU

Tickets £12 includes refreshments

Tickets available from:

ticketsource.co.uk/blackhall-st-columbas-church-of-scotland



or phone: 07989437059 or 07742271878

Proceeds from ticket sales to
&
Forth Valley Chorus



Easter Cross Display

Men's Shed Club

Hopefully many of you will have noticed the cross display as part of our Easter week. The work was done, in response to an idea of Fergus', by our 'Shed Boys' group of men.

They have been together for many years, initially to support Edinburgh theatre and our Church shows, building scenery and props for the productions. More recently they were asked to help with the 'Nativity' Christmas event. They designed and built the extensive scenery for the Nativity Trail.

They are invaluable as they take on church DIY needs and repairs as required and, as a group, enjoy the sociable side when they gather – always likely over coffee and Biscuits! ---

Mike Whiteside



The 'Shed Boys' from left to right - Peter Price, Mike McKinnell, Mike Whiteside, Alan Denham, Douglas Mulholland

(Missing lads – George Millar and David Marshall)

Easter Dawn Service at Cramond Front



The Easter Day Dawn Service at Cramond Foreshore- The Worshippers were joined by some four-legged friends. Barbecued fish was cooked and served on the beach. A reminder of the disciple's encounter with the risen Christ. (John 21 v 12 to14)

Dates for Your Diary May - August 2025

Thursday 8th May: VE Day 80th Anniversary.

We are holding a celebration to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day at 3.30pm in the sanctuary. There will be a short service of thanksgiving followed by afternoon tea and music. Please bring along any photos of yourself or family members from the war years so we can share stories and reminisce together. Donations will be gratefully received and will go to a military charity.

Saturday 17th May: Forth Valley Chorus – Songs and Sparkle.

The world-renowned women's chorus singing barber shop harmony. Please join us at 7pm in the sanctuary. Tickets are £12 each and include refreshments. Tickets available from: ticketsource.co.uk/blackhall-st-columbas-church-of-scotland, or phone: 07989437059 or 07742271878. Proceeds from ticket sales to Christian Aid and Forth Valley Chorus

Saturday 7th June: Blackhall Sports Day

This annual event takes place in Ravelston Park from 12 - 4.30pm and we, as a church, take a stall to engage with the local community. Anyone who is available and willing to help with this should contact Shona Cook.

Sunday 8th June: A Musical Evening with the Junior Singers.

Join us in the sanctuary at 6.30pm to enjoy an evening of songs from around Scotland, the Blackhall Suzuki Violin Group and Jonah Man Jazz. There is no charge for this event and no tickets are required but donations towards the refreshments and treats will be gratefully received.

Shona Cook, Outreach

Outreach Events

Wednesday 11th or 18th June: Community Conversations - Edinburgh Climate Change Institute.

We continue our series of topical conversations with a discussion about Climate Change. If you are concerned about this matter and want to know more, please come along. This is open to members of the church and the wider community and is free of charge. Further details of exact date and time to be confirmed.

Sunday 6th July: Movies @St. Columba's

What we did on our holiday (12A). Please join us in the sanctuary at 6pm for a tragicomedy from 2004 starring Rosalind Pike, David Tennant and Billy Connelly. Doug & Abu, a married couple on the verge of divorce, take their children on a vacation. However, their kids' inability to keep their secrets leads to a series of unexpected events for the duo. There is no charge for this event and no tickets are required but donations towards the refreshments and treats will be gratefully received.

Saturday 19th July: Music @ St. Columba's – Ben Kearsley

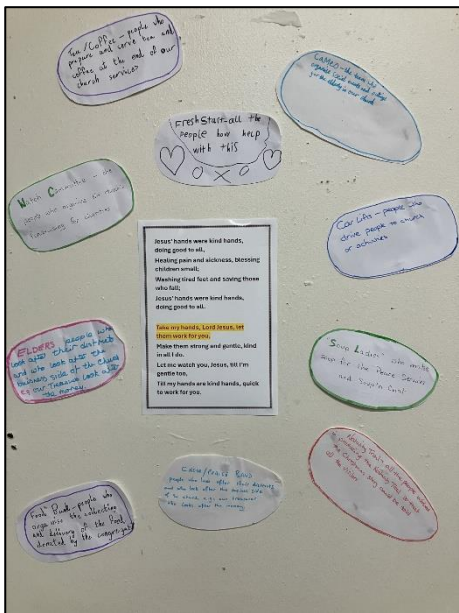
Please join us in the sanctuary at 12.30pm for the return of this popular guitarist. He will be playing three suites of Baroque lute music by Sylvius Weiss. Ben plays and teaches classical and jazz guitar in several Edinburgh schools and is a well-known concert guitarist throughout the UK. There are no tickets needed for this event but donations for Ben's work will be gratefully received.

Friday 15th August: VJ Day 80th Anniversary.

We are holding a celebration to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day in the sanctuary (time to be confirmed). There will be a short service of thanksgiving followed by afternoon tea and music. Please bring along any photos of yourself or family members from the war years, so we can share stories and reminisce together. Donations will be gratefully received and will go to a military charity.

Sunday Club may be small in numbers, but the children who attend are always ready and enthusiastic to take part in whatever activity has been prepared for them.

One Sunday in January, we sang the children's hymn, "Jesus' Hands Were Kind Hands" and this was the precursor to several weeks of discussion and activity. In verse 2 of that hymn are the words, "Take my hands, Lord Jesus, let them work for you" so we started to look at the way in which members of the congregation "worked" for Jesus and came up with quite a list of activities



People helping

involving many in our church family – see some of the different ways of helping, in the photograph. We developed this over the coming weeks by looking at how they, the children, could help others and finally by looking at some stories in the Bible where people helped as in the Good Samaritan and the paralysed man whose friends lowered him through the roof to meet Jesus. It was an eye-opening experience for both leaders and children when we realised how many people in our church are working away quietly in the background doing their bit to help others.

Sunday Club runs each Sunday throughout the year with some children coming regularly, some occasionally and others coming when they are in the area visiting family. It matters not – all are welcome whenever they come.

Amy Donaldson

Around St. Columba's

The WATCH Committee

Working

All

Together

Caring

Helping through the cross



The WATCH was set up by the Kirk Session in 1991 with a remit to support and raise awareness of local charities. Over the ensuing years, we have raised £291,276 for many and varied charities. The WATCH Committee operate during the last six months of each year. Our work begins with a coin collection every Sunday morning in July and August. We continue to fundraise with an Autumn Craft Coffee Morning, a Christmas Fair and Quiz. Last year we designed and sold a calendar in aid of our 2024 charity and we propose to do a similar calendar this year using a new theme. More details of this will be revealed in July. Meanwhile, we will be contacting all the social groups who use our Church Halls and Sanctuary and we will be inviting them to provide us with a 'Happy Smiling Group Photo' for this year's Calander.

After much deliberation and research, we have chosen the '*Children's Wellbeing Service*' at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (Sick Kids) as our next charity to support.

Dates for your Diary:

Quiz sheets will be available in July

Coin Collection – July and August

Craft Coffee Morning – Saturday, 27th September 2025

Christmas Fair – Saturday, 29th November 2025

Lynn Bunney

WATCH Committee



Christian Aid Coffee Morning



With Baking and Plant Stalls

Saturday 17 May 2025

10 am – 12 noon

Blackhall St Columba's Church

Tickets £4

Please come and support us

**Donations of home-baking to be sold would be
appreciated.**

Christian Aid Scotland

Registered Charity SC039150

Blackhall St Columba's Golf Outing

Blackhall St Columba's Golf Outing
will be held at Ravelston Golf Club
on Friday 27th June 2025 at 1.30pm.

Please contact **Frances Douglas**
if you wish to play 9 or 18 holes
and stay for High Tea.
All welcome 07795 204646.



Buon Appetito



Buon Appetito - Calling all ladies!

Whether you are a relatively new member of our church or have been at Blackhall St Columba's for years, it is always good to gather over delicious food for a time of fellowship with friends old or new and to get to know each other better.

There is a Curry Club within Blackhall St Columba's for the men amongst us and, therefore, it seems only fair that there should be something for the ladies too. Hence, the "Buon Appetito" Club which meets periodically throughout the year to enjoy an Italian meal.

Keep checking the website under "events" for details or, if you don't have access to the internet, give your name to Shona Cook (07981 970054) and she can keep you advised of the outings.

The next outing is on Thursday 5th June 2025. Further details TBC. If you wish to be added to the list of those attending, please give your name to Shona by 15th May.

Bruce Davies



We had Bruce Davies back singing for us on Saturday 22nd February and although we had to use the large hall because the heating in the church was not working, his warmth of approach and singing style soon got us all in the mood.

He sings a great variety of songs and his guitar playing is always a delight to observe. We joined in several of the better-known Scottish songs and he also led a few Christian songs, some old and some new. He describes himself as a Scottish folk singer who happens to be a Christian rather than the other way round and that was very much the flavour of the evening. We could see why he remains a very popular figure in the Scottish music scene. No doubt we will have him back again.

Donald Cameron, Director of Music



*Bruce Davies
performs in the
Large Hall*

Heart and Soul Swing Band

On Saturday 22nd March, we were treated to another great evening under the Music @ St Columba's brand. The Church of Scotland has its own Jazz band and we had the 26 members of the Heart and Soul Swing Band give us a very varied presentation of solo



Members of Heart and Soul performing

songs and instrumentals with solo players. The music ranged from Hymns to Spirituals to original compositions and all arranged by Robin Hill, their lead saxophone player. Both their male and female singers and their small backing choir were all first rate and they performed very convincingly whether separately or together. They even encouraged us to join in so we sang a couple of songs from CH4. Who would have thought it - CH4 to a Swing Band! The band does not perform all that often and we really appreciate them getting together to make this event such a resounding success. The audience of around 100 donated a total of £662 to Christian Aid. Heart and Soul will return in two years' time.



Heart and Soul at St Columba's

Donald Cameron, Director of Music



*The audience
joining in voice at
the Heart and Soul
Swing Band
performance*



Images by Julia Forsyth of Joyful Photography

Scottish Country Dancing Spring News

The **Scottish Country Dancers** have enjoyed a very busy term from January to Easter and it's great to see the hall filled each Thursday evening. Our first charity event, the Daffodil Tea Dance in February, was a great success, with plenty of folk to dance and to chat to one another at the tables. The afternoon tea, provided by the church ladies, was a real feast, served on "proper" cake stands, with teacups and saucers – and yellow napkins and daffodils. Between ticket money, raffle tickets and generous donations, we made £800 for Blood Cancer UK And we do plan to have another go in November!



Daffodil Afternoon Tea

We then had six weeks to prepare for our annual Spring Fling, the party night before the Easter break. The programme this year celebrated Edinburgh's 900th anniversary, with jigs, reels and strathspeys, all linked to the city in some way, and we were delighted to be able to have Matthew McLennan provide the accordion music to keep us on our toes.



For the first time since Covid, we were joined by a number of dancers from other groups; by some of our former members; and by a few from the Cameo club, who had come to enjoy the music. The buffet was provided by the members of the class and, as always, there was an incredible spread, with plenty for everyone.

A display of "baby" photographs (with several early childhood snaps among them) created a great deal of interest, with much good-natured banter about the identity of each image. However, with the highest score on the night being just 7/20, there will be some hilarity when the identity of each is revealed.

Around St Columba's

Traditionally, the class has taken a long break until mid-September. This year, however, there have been several requests for us to continue after the Easter break, so we have decided to have a six-week term with "old favourites" and social dances until the end of May. If you would like to join us, from 7pm to 8.45pm on Thursdays in the large hall, you would be very welcome!



The Blackhall Country Dancers

Muriel Stenhouse

Tuesday Topics

We've had a very successful year for our first year of monthly meetings with some excellent talks and a very good turnout at most meetings. We've even had quite a number of men attending and they seem to have enjoyed their evenings with us.

By the time you read this we will have had our last meeting of the year which was a social evening with games and nibbles. We had a splendid time and I'd like to thank Debbie Pearce for organising it.

We hope to continue next year with monthly meetings so please keep a lookout in the Kirk News and the Bulletin for dates but I think we'll probably start in late September or October.

We'd love to welcome new members and will try to make you feel welcome if you'd like to come. We meet at 7.30pm on a Tuesday evening once a month in the small hall in St Columba's Church and we will, I hope, have a new set of interesting talks for you.

For more details **Lyndy Paton**. 0131 332 7377 or 07460212174

Around St Columba's

Mid-week Peace Service

The remaining services are: -

30th of April – Prospects Across Scotland – Ivy Blair

14th May – Review of the Year – Shona Cook

It would be lovely to welcome new people to our mid-week service where you will enjoy a short act of worship followed by lunch. We meet at 12 noon in the Small Hall.

If you would like more information or if you could volunteer your time to make/serve the lunch or offer a lift to some of the attendees then Shona or Ruth would love to hear from you.

Ruth Laidlaw - ruthlaidlaw@gmail.com

Shona Cook - shonacook505@gmail.com

Blackhall St Columba's Art Club Exhibition



This year Blackhall St Columba's Art Club have chosen to support Erskine Veterans Charity at the annual exhibition starting on 13th May. Erskine is a provider of care for veterans and their spouses. Erskine provides nursing, residential and dementia care in Edinburgh and Bishopton.

We welcome everyone to come along and enjoy the art on display along with cards and unframed pictures. The exhibition is also open after church on the 18th of May 2025 for the congregation to drop in after the service.

Marge Whiteside

Blackhall St Columba's Art Club Exhibition & Sale 2025



Stuart Nichol

**Wednesday 14 May - Saturday 17 May
10.30 - 16.30**

**Blackhall St Columba's Church Hall, Queensferry Road
Free entry to exhibition**

In support of Erskine Veterans Charity

As Scotland's foremost provider of care for Veterans and their spouses, Erskine provides unrivalled nursing, residential and dementia care in our care homes in Edinburgh and Bishopton. Supporting over 800 Veterans each year, Erskine's strength lies in the very special blend of dedicated care, compassion and understanding we offer to residents and their families.

Registered Charity (SC006609)

"Soup n Chat"

Soup n Chat has been running successfully for 2 years with a regular following.

There is room for more however, so if you haven't attended our Friday events, why not give it a try and bring a neighbour. These gatherings are open to the community as well as to church members.

Soup n Chat is every two weeks and the dates are given below. We meet every two weeks at 12noon in the Small Hall to enjoy soup, chat, company and a warm welcome.

We are always looking to recruiting "Chat hosts" or kitchen helpers. If you are looking to do some voluntary work or know a Scout, Guide or Duke of Edinburgh participant looking to volunteer, then please get in touch on 07875 558977.

Upcoming Dates until our summer break.

Friday 9th May 2025 at 12noon in the Small hall

Friday 23rd May 2025 at 12 noon in the Large Hall

Friday 6th June 2025 at 12 noon in the Large Hall

Friday 20th June 2025 at 12 noon in the Large Hall

Friday 4th July 2025 at 12 noon in the Large Hall

Michael Cockburn, Lead and admin Volunteer.

FreshStart

Sadly, there has been no let-up in the demand for FreshStart "Starter Packs" as individuals move into a flat or house after experiencing homeless or having previously lived in hostels or bed & breakfast accommodation.

The demand for basic essential home items has trebled. Despite huge support from churches, corporations, community groups and supermarkets the demand sadly grows and FreshStart is just keeping up with the demand and we mean just!!!

Around St Columba's

The starter packs provided by FreshStart to those in need vary based on individual requirements. These can include donated items such as crockery, cutlery, pots and pans, cleaning supplies, towels, kitchen utensils, curtains, bedding sheets, blankets and duvets (if not marked). Donations of small electrical appliances, including microwaves, vacuum cleaners and flat screen TVs are always welcomed. These are PAT tested before issue and are highly sought after.

All donated items should be clean, with the guiding principle being that if you would not use it because it is scratched or badly worn, then it should be discarded. Sadly, many items received by FreshStart cannot be issued. Consequently, FreshStart must pay for their disposal, reducing funds available to buy necessary items beyond donations. FreshStart has a policy of not accepting wine, beer and spirit glasses and suggests you give these to a charity shop of your choice. Household tumblers are appreciated, whether as a set or individual pieces, provided they do not feature alcoholic advertising.

In 2025, the demand for Starter Packs remained high, with 18,407 distributed last year. The FreshStart warehouse received 65 tons of donated items from churches, corporations and individuals, which is approximately the same weight as 43 Mini Cooper cars. It is a great bonus that these items are not going into landfill and that they are having a recycled second life. This benefits both the recipients and the environment.

Please keep the donations coming! If you cannot take the items directly to FreshStart, one of our volunteers will be on duty to accept donations on Fridays at the church halls, between 10 and 11.30am, If you cannot come on a Friday to the church halls or deliver your donated items direct to FreshStart please contact us for assistance. Your support is much appreciated by FreshStart and the FreshStart Team at the church.

Lilian & Michael Cockburn

C/O Church Office, 0131 332 4431

Flowers in the Church

The Flowers we see in the Apse on Sundays are donated to the Church.

Many are in Memory of someone, but some are to celebrate an Occasion.

Would you like to donate flowers?

If you would there are two ways to do it. Either give the Flower Team some money or arrange the flowers yourself.



Both ways are very welcome. If you would like some more information please get in touch with one of the Team, Lyndy Paton, Moira Laing, Ann Pugh or Alison Hewat (rajahewat1@btinternet.com or tel. 3324842)

Cameo Club

Do you know anyone in the community who would benefit from Cameo Club which meets every second Friday? Our members are grateful for the opportunity to meet and enjoy an hour of entertainment. On May 2 and 16 we have Blackhall musicians – Amy Donaldson with the ensemble Quern, and Allan Crocker with a programme of guitar music. There will be no meeting in the halls on Friday 30 May as we will be on our Summer Outing to North Berwick.

As our membership increases, we need more volunteers to help in the halls and to provide car transport. Drivers need only bring members for the 10.30am start and then return to take them home at 12 noon. This would help to cover Summer holidays when volunteers are away. If you would like to help, please phone the number given below. Thank you in advance ...

Fiona Drinnan Tel. 343 6762



2 Hearts, 1 Fate

A show written, produced and performed by children! A jaw-dropping, fast paced and funny remix of Romeo and Juliet. Come and join us for an exciting and fun time on Saturday 14th June!

This show is being put on in the Large Hall at Blackhall St Columba's Church by a group of Primary 7 pupils at Blackhall School. They would welcome your support.

Where: - Blackhall St Columba's Church Large Hall

When: - Saturday 14th June. Show times at 3.30pm and 7.00pm.

Donations at the door with the proceeds going to Blackhall Library.

The Nicene Creed 1700th Birthday

This month, 1700 years ago, one of the most important meetings in the history of the Christian Church began in the Bithynian city of Nicaea. It began in May 325 AD and went on until the end of July 325 AD.

The Council of Nicaea was convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine, and he had an urgent job for the Christian bishops to do. He wanted them to spell out as exactly as they could the core beliefs of the Christian Church, especially about the person of Christ.

Constantine had good reason to do this: a man called Arius of Alexandria was spreading the idea that Jesus Christ was not divine but instead was a created being. Such a belief, if accepted, would have changed the very heart of Christianity.

After three months of hard work, the bishops at Nicaea had prayerfully and carefully written down as exactly as they could the core beliefs of Christianity. It became known as the Nicene Creed, and it has been the bedrock of orthodox Christianity ever since.

The Nicene Creed is unique in that it is the only Christian statement of faith that is accepted as authoritative by the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and major Protestant Churches



The Nicene Creed

***We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is,
seen and unseen.***

***We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.
Through Him all things were made.***

***For us men and for our salvation
He came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
He became incarnate of the Virgin Mary and was made man.
For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.***

***On the third day He rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.***

***We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.***

***We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come***

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

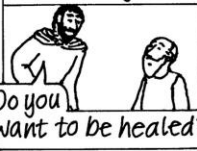
It can be read in the Bible in
John chapter 5 verses 1-18

Jesus was in Jerusalem for a festival, and he visited the pool of Bethesda. People said that an angel sometimes made the water ripple.

Sick people waited for the water to ripple, because they thought that the first person in would be healed.



Jesus went up to a man who had been sick for 38 years.



I've got no-one to put me in the pool, so I can never get in first.



Do you want to be healed?

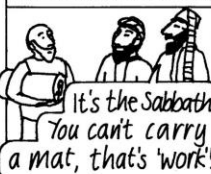
Pick up your mat and walk!



He was healed! The man picked up his mat and walked around. But it was the Sabbath.

God had given the Law that the Sabbath day was a rest day (Ex 20: 8-11)... but to make sure it was kept, the Jewish leaders had made up rules, and then more rules so that anything that even might be work was banned.

The Jewish leaders saw the healed man.



It's the Sabbath! You can't carry a mat, that's 'work'!

The man who healed me told me to carry it.



Which man?

I don't know.

Later, Jesus found the man in the temple.



You are healed now, but don't sin any more, or something worse might happen to you.

Now the man knew who Jesus was...



he went straight back to the Jewish leaders to tell them.

and they went to Jesus



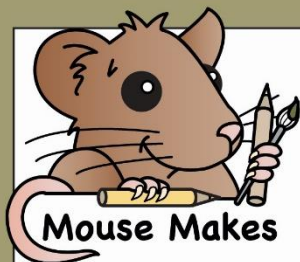
You were working on the Sabbath!

My father, God, doesn't stop working on the Sabbath so I keep on working as well.

Not only does he disobey our Sabbath rules, but he says he is equal to God!



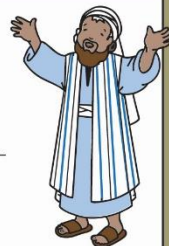
We definitely have to kill him.



MIRACLES OF PETER

At which temple gate
did the crippled man lay?

Acts 3:1-10



Who were the man and wife
who lied to God?

and _____

Acts 5:1-11

People carried the sick into
the streets so that when Peter
came by at least his

might fall on them.
Acts 5:12-16



How long had Aeneas
been paralysed for?

_____ years

Acts 9:32-35

Where had Tabitha's body been laid?
in the _____

Acts 9:36-42



"And the word
of God
continued to
increase,
and the number
of the disciples
multiplied
greatly."
Acts 6:7

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

After Jesus
ascended into
heaven, the
Holy Spirit
came upon
the Apostles
and Peter was
able to perform
many miracles
in Jesus' name.
**See the book
of ACTS**

PETER • SIGNS • WONDERS • MIRACLES • HEALED
CRIPPLE • LAME • WALK • LEAPING • PRAISING • LIED • DIED • SICK
AENEAS • PARALISED • TABITHA • ILL • PRAYED • ALIVE



Find the words from the questions too!

May25© deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk

 <p>BLACKHALL ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND</p>	 <p>@ BStCC_EH</p>
<p>Website</p> <p>https://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk/</p>	 <p>Blackhall St Columba's Church</p>

<p>Minister Rev Fergus Cook 5 Blinkbonny Crescent Edinburgh EH4 3NB Tel: 0131 466 7503 fcook@churchofscotland.org.uk</p>	<p>Session Clerk Eddie Thorn Tel: 0131 332 5702 sessionclerk@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk</p>	<p>Church Office Church Office Tel: 0131 332 4431 secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk</p> <p>Hall Bookings bookings@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk</p>
--	---	---

Publication deadlines

For contributions to Blackhall Bulletin:

(bulletin@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk)

September 2025 issue 30th July 2025

For contributions to Kirk News:

(judith.mair@hotmail.co.uk)

August 2025 issue 18th July 2025

November 2025 issue 17th October 2025

Thank you to James Burr our Church Photographer.

Printed by Winter & Simpson Print