

NESS BANK CHURCH

Congregational Newsletter

February/March 2025 - No 1025



***Congregation Formed 1787
Present Church Opened 1901***

Dear Friends,

My first New Year as Minister of Ness Bank Church has begun well. Encouraged by the support of friends in the congregation, Elspeth and I continue to find our way around Inverness, and our place in the purposes of God. I hope and pray that you too will find blessing in 2025.

It was great, over Christmas, to have enthusiastic participation in a range of events and celebrations from so many different people. A particular pleasure was the Christmas Carol Crawl when up to 200 people from different congregations sang and prayed in a Presbyterian, Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Independent Church in a single evening – proving that what we have in common is what defines us as Christians. I hope that in future we can do more of the same.



It has also been exciting to begin reading John's Gospel together on Sunday mornings. John not only describes what happened when he was with Jesus as one of his twelve disciples, but also thinks deeply about the significance and impact of the events he witnessed. He gives us the opportunity to share the thrill of growing faith and greater understanding, as Jesus shows us his priorities and shares his love in the world in which we live. I trust that as we follow this Gospel between Christmas and Easter, we will find ourselves practically equipped for lives of Christian faith.

Another exciting prospect is the work on our church building – about which there is more elsewhere in this Newsletter. It will be at least a year before we hope to have plans made and funding in place, but now is the time to be shaping that vision with planning and prayer. Please keep asking questions and sharing hopes and fears as we move forward together. We want our building to be the best possible resource for Christian worship and witness for many years to come.

And I hope to leave you for a while! Since 2012 I have spent some time in May each year at a Church Leaders Conference in Uganda. It takes place in the village of Kiryanyonza near Luwero, where my friend Gabriel Kijjambu lives with his family, runs a local church and school, and is the Pentecostal Bishop serving the wider area. Many local Pastors have little theological training and limited access to books, so we

spend the time reading the Bible together to reach a better understanding, with a view to enriching Christian preaching in the neighbouring villages. I value your prayers for safe travel, physical endurance and effective ministry.

But the day job remains for us all, between the special occasions, future plans, and exotic destinations. Each week we meet for worship – in person or online. Each day we have time to read the Bible and pray. And each moment could be the next one God has prepared for us to serve him in faithful and loving ways. I pray that 2025, with all its joys and sorrows, will be a time when we can say that we were there for God, as he is always here for us.

***Blessings
Stuart***



Congregational Register

Wedding

30 November: Emily Story and Richard Parkin

Deaths

1 December: Jan Proudfoot
Funeral held on 18 December

20 December: Myra Cameron
Funeral held on 8 January

6 January: Maureen Henderson
Funeral held on 27 January



to



Do you want to give the church more money?

Yes, you can, and it won't cost you a penny.

How is this possible?

The way to do this, is to sign a **GIFT AID** form.

If you pay tax to the government, and sign a gift aid form, the government will increase your offering by 25%.

Give £10 and the church will get £12.50.

If you want to help the Church, and haven't signed a Gift Aid form, or if you're not sure if you have, please get in touch with me.

Bill Paterson, Gift Aid Convenor

billpat47@btinternet.com 07985421571

The Messy Church Christmas Party

was.....

- ✓ *great fun*
- ✓ *engaging*
- ✓ *upbeat with a party atmosphere*
- ✓ *happy family event*
- ✓ *a successful outreach*

There were extra special moments too when the giant Conga (led by Eliza) broke out of the hall, shuffled along the corridor, and re-appeared through the other door.



The other highlight was when we formed a long queue and followed Stuart up to the sanctuary to focus on the Christmas story - the children and leaders sat in the chancel with parents occupying the front rows of the church.

Plans are in place for our next event on **February 23rd** when we feature '**Sandy and Rocky - The Parable of the Builders**'. Posters and fliers will be available soon but please keep the date and, if you can, encourage neighbours or grandchildren to come.

Looking further ahead, our Easter event will be on **April 6th** when we will explain the incredible story of injustice, death, resurrection and the hope of Heaven to parents and children who gather around.

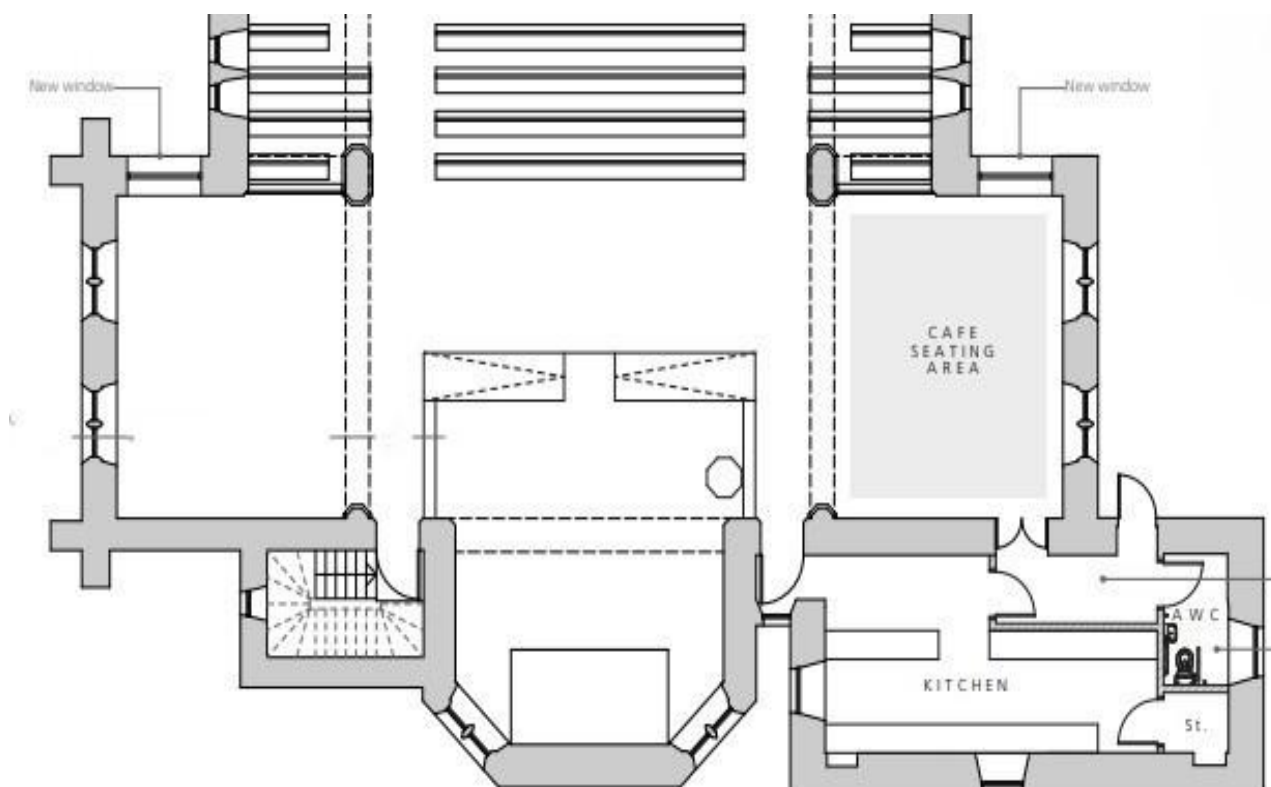
Margaret Livingstone

Building for the Future

The Ness Bank church building opened in 1901. Since then it has seen many changes and been used by succeeding generations of Christians in a variety of ways.

At the end of 2024 the congregation warmly endorsed proposals from the Kirk Session to revise earlier plans to adapt the building for the next generation in five ways:

- improve the north riverside entrance with a new door and a safer staircase
- install a lift connecting the Sanctuary to the corridor between Rooms 1 and 2
- remove the pews from the side transepts and front three rows of the church
- convert the vestry and organist's room into a kitchen and toilets
- redecorate the Sanctuary – for the first time in decades!



The aim is not only to provide a more comfortable and accessible space for our existing users, but to create a place of Christian welcome and witness for visitors throughout the year – building on our “Open Church” experience in August when over 1200 guests came. The changes would allow us to display the Bible and other Christian literature; share something of our wider work; provide a place for prayer; host activities for children; and offer tea, coffee, cakes, juice, soup, sandwiches...

Since the congregational meeting, Stuart MacKellar of LDN Architects has outlined a timescale – a year to do basic design, gain Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent, progress to detailed design, and obtain final approvals. The cost, he estimates, could be in the region of one million pounds! The Kirk Session have asked him to proceed with the first stage of that design work.

During that year the Kirk Session is forming three groups to progress the work:

- a Building Team to work with the Architect on all aspects of the design
- a Funding Team to make grant applications and organise an appeal to the congregation
- a Mission Team to plan a financially sustainable programme of welcome and witness

Volunteers are needed for all three teams. If you are interested, or can recommend someone else – perhaps a friend of the congregation – please get in touch with the Minister or Session Clerk.

There is a huge challenge. The cost is enormous and the work is extensive. We believe it is also a significant opportunity to share our Christian faith with people who don't normally come to church, and develop a new purpose for our beautiful premises – guaranteeing that Ness Bank will truly be a Building for the Future.



Stuart



The Guild

The Guild started the New Year with a lunch at Fairways Restaurant on 7th January, this was enjoyed by 17 members.

Our next meeting is on 21st January at 2.30pm in the smaller hall, when we will have a talk from Highland Blindcraft Sensory Services. This was formally known as Sight Action and this talk will tell us what is available for those with sight problems.

During February, we have an 'in house' discussion on the 11th and then we have a talk about a project the Guild supported in the past - The Free to Live Trust - on the 25th. On 11th March a physiotherapist will put us through some exercises suitable for the older person. Then our AGM is on 25th March, and a visit to the Botanical Gardens and the Grow Project at the Bught is planned for April.

This group is open to anyone and we would always welcome some new faces. For further information I can be contacted on 07425154715.

Anne Sutherland



The Baby and Toddler Group continues on a Wednesday from 0930 - 1130 during term time. This is very well supported and we always have space for children 0-5 years accompanied by parents or carers. We provide a suitable children's snack and tea/coffee for the adults, at a cost of £3. For further information please contact me on 07425154715.

Anne Sutherland

Copies of the Newsletter are
available in the vestibule

Ness Bank Church is online
at www.nessbankchurch.org.uk

Follow Ness Bank Church on Facebook and Twitter

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FAIRTRADE
FOUNDATION

We need your support in 2025

The power of collective action has always been central to how Fairtrade drives meaningful change. In 2025, we need you to keep this momentum going as we continue to work towards fairer trade for farmers and workers.

In 2024, your dedication and commitment to Fairtrade helped us achieve critical support for fairer trade, including over 100 MPs pledging their commitment to listen to farmers and workers dealing with the reality of unfair trade every day, a surge in Fairtrade awareness and sales, and widespread support across the UK.

In 2025 we want to create even greater impact for the farmers and workers behind some of our favourite foods and with your support we can do it! Read on for some updates and to see what's happening in 2025!

International Women's Day - 8 March

In 2025, we will be celebrating the incredible women who play a vital role in the Fairtrade system. From inspiring campaigners to resilient producers, we will shine a spotlight on their contributions and achievements. International Women's Day will be a key moment for us to amplify their voices, celebrate their impact, and continue to push for gender equality within global trade systems. Stay tuned for more ways to get involved and show your support for these extraordinary women.

Your moment of inspiration from a Fairtrade producer

"Up to now, we can speak as women, we can be heard,
and we need to educate more women in your community"



Fairtrade tea farmer, Linner Ruto, has gained more knowledge of her rights as a woman, and worker, through being part of Fairtrade certified FINTEA Growers Co-operation Union. Linner speaks frankly about the challenges of earning enough for her family. She talks passionately about the difference Fairtrade has made in her life. With 20 years of tea farming experience, Linner is

determined to keep exploring different ways of building her business. The training and knowledge provided by Fairtrade has supported her to diversify into dairy farming and beekeeping, which provides more income for her family during a time of fluctuating tea prices.

A new campaign launch - Summer 2025

We will continue our work campaigning for better pay and greater support for climate adaptation in 2025. In early summer we will launch a brand-new campaign, calling on businesses, consumers, and decision-makers to improve human rights for farmers and workers in the global trading system.

In 2025 we will take this vital call back to Glastonbury Festival, and to communities across the UK during Fairtrade Fortnight. We hope you will join us in advocating for change. More to come soon!

Fairtrade Fortnight

22 September - 5 October 2025

Just a quick reminder that Fairtrade Fortnight 2025 will take place from 22 September to 5 October.

We are excited for another fortnight of campaigning for fairer trade with your help. Keep an eye on your emails and the Fairtrade Fortnight webpage for more details coming soon - [**www.fairtrade.org.uk**](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

©Fairtrade Foundation

The Cosy Café at The Bught Stop

The Cosy Café reopened on Monday 13th January. There was a party atmosphere as new friendships formed, folks met again and everyone was very happy that we were back. The social aspect of this venture is a very important element and it was great to see folks enjoying this so much.

This is a Ness Bank Community Outreach/Mission Team venture with local volunteers from the area. We have some previous funding from The Arnold Clark Community Fund and The Highland Council, and new funding from Caring and Sharing. The Copper Bottle at Ness Bank has contributed by raising £191.24 towards our funds.

The Highland Council allow us to use the Bught Stop and pay for heating and lighting, and we purchase the food from The Red Pepper Café.

The Cosy Café is a warm space and a safe place to meet and enjoy food, warmth and friendship.

We will be open every Monday (until approximately the end of March/mid April).



We serve tea, coffee, juice, soup/sandwiches, cakes and scones from 1pm to 2:30pm (takeaway also available).

Lunch is free for those who need it but we also welcome donations towards the cost of the food.

The Cosy Café is at The Bught Stop in Torvean Avenue, Inverness (beside the shop).

There is always a warm welcome and a friendly vibe at The Cosy Café, so please come along and join us.

***Lilian Gilbert
Team Leader***

Elspeth's Blog

Being realistic, not afraid...

Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come... He will come to save you.".. And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way... But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

(Isaiah 35.3&4, 8&10)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith... Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted... It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as his children.... he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.

(Hebrew 12.1-3,7,10-13)

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world".

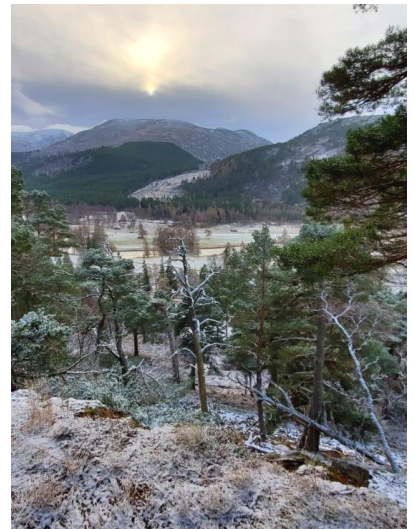
(John 16.33)

He never said it would be easy..... but how quickly we react against our Lord when life presents us with painful and challenging situations. Being a follower of Jesus does not somehow exempt us from the experience of humanity – our bodies are mortal, subject to injury, disease, disability of every kind. We are as likely as anyone else to suffer from flu, cancer, unemployment, depression, untimely bereavement, and every other woe which afflicts our species on this beautiful but broken planet. It is absolutely crucial for our perseverance in faith that we understand and accept this truth – accepting it over and over as each new struggle or challenge presents itself. It can be

very hard to do, but the Bible is quite clear that for as long as we resist and resent God's providence, we will fail to derive from it the blessings which He has prepared for us – depriving both ourselves and those around us as a result.

“If life's adversities, and God's use of them in discipline produce in the end both inward peace and moral uprightness, we cannot possibly have suffered in vain.” (Brown p235, Christ Above All – The Message of Hebrews. IVP 1982)

Please, please believe that I do not mean in any way to minimise or disregard the depth of pain, loss and weariness which some experiences can produce. I do not wish to imply in writing this that it is easy to persevere in faith when life has been blighted – it is not. **BUT**, I do think it is worth reminding myself of this truth regularly, when small difficulties arise, so that when the big things happen, I have some understanding of God's ways and am accustomed to turning first to him for help. It is also good to remember this when we pray for others who are facing life-changing, irreversible trials – that they in turn will be given grace to accept and mercy when they doubt, and persevere in faith.



God calls his children to persevere when their families have been shattered by broken relationships, or by illness and disability; when their own lives have become severely limited or their employment prospects permanently blighted. These “weights” are cripplingly heavy, and only Christ can ease their burden upon us and enable us to keep walking in his ways. It is in this continual turning, dependence, humble acceptance and valiant expectation that God is with us, working for our good and his glory **THROUGH** what is happening, that we find ourselves journeying each day nearer to the glorious city where all sorrow is ended. As we walk thus, we can be free from fear of what may come to us in the days ahead, because we are always in the care of our loving Heavenly Father, whose purposes for us cannot fail to be fulfilled.

Dear Lord, take all of this life's adversities and use them for our blessing and your glory – enable us to accept them from your hand. We are called to live with all the evils which beset this broken world, and it is only with your help that we can do so in ways which honour you. Lord, lead us by springs of fresh water, and sustain us on the journey, that we might not faint by the way...

aforgetfulsoul.com



Girls' Brigade

Our anniversary celebrations went well at the end of November. Former members and their families provided photos to display and we were delighted to welcome a number of former members along to the service in the church.

We were privileged to hear from Sheila and Helen at the service, two members who attended in the late 1950s and 1960s. It was great to hear about the activities they enjoyed during their time in the Brigade and moving to learn of the lasting impression it had on their lives. The get together in the church hall after the service was well attended and the picture below shows Marty cutting the cake. Thank you to everyone who made the celebration such a success.



4B Company ended the session with a Christmas party. Born to Lose Motorcycle Club kindly donated selection boxes for the members of both GB companies and also our Boys' Brigade company. We are very grateful to them for thinking of us.

Riverside Company ended the session with a Christmas Singalong at Trinity Life Church which was well attended. The money donated at the event is going towards a defibrillator which is to be located at Trinity Life Church for use by the local community. A substantial amount of money is required to purchase this and the next fundraising activity will be a Coffee Evening at Ness Bank Church on Friday 7 March 2025. We look forward to seeing you there!

Hazel MacDonald



Eco-Congregation Scotland

Get Scotland's climate progress back on track in 2025

Eco-Congregation Scotland is one of over 70 organisations forming the **Stop Climate Chaos Scotland** coalition campaigning for climate action. Please support **Scotland United for Climate Action**, our new call for MSPs and the Scottish Government.

We are at a pivotal point in Scotland's climate journey. The Scottish Government must take fast and fair action to get Scotland's climate progress back on track.

Please write to your MSPs now: sccs.eaction.org.uk/climate

We once had ambitious climate targets, but a lack of action since setting them meant they were abandoned last year. 2025 brings concrete opportunities to make much needed progress on climate action - to inspire hope and lead to a greener, fairer, healthier Scotland that plays its full part towards global efforts to limit the devastation being caused by rising temperatures.

Together we can show political leaders that people across Scotland are united for climate action, and that this will have positive impacts on our health, jobs, and planet. We are calling for action to:

- Make cleaner, greener travel easier for everyone
- Make our homes warmer and cheaper to heat
- Look after our land and seas in ways that work for people and nature
- Create and support good green jobs and transform our economy
- Deliver a fast, fair phase-out of fossil fuels
- Accelerate investment and fair funding for climate action

Visit the **Scotland United for Climate Action** website for resources, stories of local climate action, and ways to get involved in climate campaigns in 2025:

stopclimatechaos.scot/campaign/scotland-united-for-climate-action

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A New Beginning - David Jamieson

(SASRA (the Soldiers' and Aviators' Scripture Readers Association) exists to introduce soldiers and air force personnel to a practical experience of the Christian faith by living and working alongside them. In December last year Major Andy McMahon, their Scottish representative, visited Ness Bank to introduce David Jamieson, who will soon be posted to Fort George in Inverness.



We look forward to meeting David and his wife Laiyee in the near future to hear about their work and offer our support. In the meantime, the following article appeared in a recent SASRA newsletter).

The first three words of the Bible read, *“In the beginning...”* These words have resonated with David throughout his life and still today, “because every single day is a new beginning.”

David served with the RAF Regiment from 1979 to 1986, during which he completed tours of duty in the Falklands and Northern Ireland. He wasn't a Christian during his service years and never met a Scripture Reader. When he was growing up, he was dragged to Sunday school because his mother wanted peace and quiet on a Sunday! But upon joining the RAF, he heard a rumour that anyone who attended church would be relieved from Sunday duties.

“I proudly declared myself Church of Scotland,” says David, *“thinking there wouldn't be a Church of Scotland place of worship in England where I was based – that would mean I'd get time on my own. They said, “you're in luck, the Chaplain is Church of Scotland, and he holds services in that hangar.”* I'd dug a hole for myself and attended church all the way through my military time.”

David's transition into civilian life wasn't easy. He experienced homelessness, bereavement and bounced from job to job. During a particularly dark season of suffering, he climbed to the top of Arthur's Seat with his Bible. The rain poured down on David and soaked through to the skin, he cried, screamed and shouted out, "*God are you real? Are you not real?!*" He spent the entire night there. In the morning, he got an answer: "*When the sun rose through the clouds, I saw two great big sunbeams, which were like big open arms, and without sounding silly, I felt God say, 'Here I am, I'm here'.*"

All David's hurt, pain and anguish disappeared. He said, "*Okay God, how do I get to know you?*" He felt God say, "*Let's start at the beginning.*" Confused, David picked up his Bible to leave. It fell open at Genesis and he read, "*In the beginning...*" And so began David's journey with Christ.

Fast forward to the 2020s. David and his wife Laiyee were involved in their church yet sensed the Lord was calling them to be involved in ministry. They took three months out to discern and laid everything before the Lord, asking him to do whatever he wanted.

During this time, David had been working with an organisation that supported the mental health of veterans, and two people had mentioned SASRA to him on separate occasions. While the organisation he worked for acknowledged that faith positively helps with moral injury, nobody wanted to talk about it. David found this very difficult and persistently raised it with his team, trying to explain how faith is such a big help. He prayed and asked God what he could do. He felt God tell him to reach out to SASRA to see what would happen.

Now a new Scripture Reader, David says, "*If I can make a difference to people by giving them the hope of Jesus before they come out of the military, then it will make it a little bit different... By giving them the resilience before they ever get to that point is what I'm excited about... I'm looking forward to sharing my faith and having meaningful conversations with whoever I encounter.*"

Stuart

Visit

The new minister was doing the rounds to meet his parishioners. At one house where he knocked, a woman inside called out: "Is that you, Angel?" The minister hesitated and then called back: "No, but I'm from the same department."

Rev Rosemary Frew is Moderator Designate of the General Assembly for 2025-26

A Scottish Borders minister who is happy to be described as "a cheerleader for the Church" has been chosen to be the next Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Rev Rosemary Frew, Minister of Bowden and Melrose Parish Church, will become the Kirk's ambassador at home and abroad next May, succeeding the current Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson.



Rosie, as she prefers to be known, comes to the 12 month role with not only experience of parish ministry in Fife and the Borders, but of church involvement at presbytery and national level including as convener of the Faith Nurture Forum.

"It is incredibly humbling that other people see in you the qualities and experience that they think a Moderator should have," she said. "A very small number of people knew I was going forward for interviews and they all said the same thing: 'You have got to be yourself.' That's what I will bring to the job: I am bringing myself and my faith, my hope, my passions and my enthusiasm. Someone described me as 'a cheerleader for the Church' and I love that, I still have that passion and enthusiasm that I had when I was licensed for ministry despite all the hard times we have gone through."

Originally from Clarkston on the south side of Glasgow, Rosie feels incredibly grateful that Church, and especially Giffnock South Parish Church where she began attending Sunday school, has always been part of her life. The church connection continued when the family moved to Linlithgow when she was 14 and she joined St Michael's Church, going on to become a member of the youth fellowship and the hill-walking group and a Sunday School teacher.

These experiences included working at a Christian outdoor centre, Compass Ski Centre at Glenshee Lodge, where she took a gap year while deciding if she should

study for ministry. It was a very special place for Rosie, perhaps not least because it was where she met her husband Dave, with whom she shares son Pete (29) and daughter Bex (26).

Accepted as a candidate for ministry, Rosie studied theology at New College in Edinburgh, where she found herself part of a group of supportive and encouraging young – and not so young – trainee ministers. During her studies, she and Dave married and the couple moved to Fife where Dave worked as a civil engineer. Rosie completed placements at Abbotshall and Viewforth churches in Kirkcaldy and her probationary period at Markinch Parish Church, before being ordained and inducted to her first charge, Largo and Newburn with Largo: St David's, in May 1988.

"We came to Melrose 10 years ago to walk St Cuthbert's Way," she revealed. "Dave was keen to do long-distance walking when he retired and this was a test to see if he could manage a week's walking. Two years later, when my predecessor Alistair Bennett left, I read the parish profile and from that we ended up here. St Cuthbert's Way remains a big part of local ministry. A lot of people walk it and all the churches along the route have come together to look at ways of enhancing their experience to make it more of a pilgrimage and engage with walkers.

Excited about the possibilities and opportunities the year ahead will bring, Rosie added: *"I'm looking forward to meeting congregations and learning more about them and the challenges they face, but also about what excites them and the good things that are happening and using the particular platform the Moderator has to showcase that. I'm also looking forward to leading worship in all sorts of settings and seeing more of the wider work of the Church and all opportunities to represent the Church in a whole host of different ways and in different places. I know it will be a very busy year, but a very exciting and very privileged one."*

Although the Church has been going through a sometimes painful period of restructuring as churches close and congregations unite, Rosie is looking ahead to a positive new phase for the Kirk. *"Much of the hard, difficult work has been done and all these new things are being launched - that's the positive," she stated. "We maybe have to do things in a very different way and the future will be very different from the past, but I love the hymn 'Lord, For the Years' and its message: 'Past put behind us, for the future take us.' We do not know what the future is, but it is about being open to possibilities and trusting God will stand by his Church."*

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Prayer Diary



**How good it is to give thanks to you, O Lord,
to sing in your honour, O Most High God,
to proclaim your constant love every morning
and your faithfulness every night,
with the music of stringed instruments and with
melody on the harp.**

**Your mighty deeds, O Lord, make me glad;
because of what you have done, I sing for joy**

(Psalm 92 vs 1-4)

It is suggested that this prayer diary should be used as an additional resource for private daily prayers. The prayer points can be used as you choose each day. Give thanks for each topic as you pray and bring the needs of every situation before God.

Week beginning Sunday 16 February

- Lord, we ask Your blessing on our minister, Stuart, as he leads the congregation in worship and mission. We give thanks for his preaching of Your word and for the pastoral work being carried out by him and the Pastoral Care Team.
- Loving God, we pray for those known to us who are grieving for the loss of a loved one, especially those in our church family. Losing a loved one is so painful and we pray that Your love and comfort will sustain those who mourn.
- God, we pray for the staff in the NHS who continue to try and cope with the normal winter pressures but with the added problem of the high number of patients being admitted to hospital with flu.
- We ask your blessing Lord on the members and friends involved in the Ness Bank Building Development. We give thanks for the expertise of the architects and other professionals who will provide plans and give support for the work required to implement the changes to the sanctuary.

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- We ask Your blessing on elders and district visitors who will visit members this month with communion invitations and newsletters. We give thanks for their commitment to members and adherents in their districts.

Week beginning Sunday 23 February

- Father, we give thanks for the expertise of our organist, Ian, and for his commitment and dedication to Ness Bank. We ask Your blessing on the choir as they continue to lead praise on Sunday mornings.
- Father, we pray for all those resident in care homes and especially think of those from our church family who are no longer able to cope with independent living. We give thanks for the staff in residential homes who provide such wonderful loving care.
- Messy Church will take place on the 23rd and we pray that many children and parents will come along for two hours of fun and fellowship. We give thanks for the team in Ness Bank who organise the event and provide food, games, and crafts, and for the Bible stories enjoyed by the children.
- Climate change continues to be a major problem for our world and progress on agreed targets is slow. Extreme weather in many parts of the world is now a regular occurrence and we pray for all those affected by this. We remember all who have been affected by the wild fires in Los Angeles.
- Within the Ness Bank parish lies the Inverness branch of L'Arche which is an international organisation caring for people with learning disabilities and also some people who for various reasons cannot live independently. We thank you Father for the staff and volunteers and ask Your blessing on the residents who are being cared for, and who are also being taught to make candles and garden ornaments in their workshops.

Week beginning Sunday 2 March

- Lord, as we celebrate the Sacrament of The Lord's Supper we pray that the Holy Spirit will be in our hearts and in our minds.
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- The Cosy Café within the Bught area of our parish is open on Mondays and is a warm space for people who stay in that area. We give thanks for the volunteers from Ness Bank who serve snack lunches. We pray that those coming along for food and company will meet friends which will help to combat the loneliness for those who stay alone.
 - We give thanks for the Minister, Session Clerk and elders who are responsible for the business of the church, for the organisations and clubs, and for the safety and wellbeing of the congregation.
 - Father, we ask you to bless all the young people that are involved in Ness Bank in Girls' Brigade, Boys' Brigade, Baby & Toddler Group and Messy Church. We pray that more children will come along to Sunday School to hear about Jesus and how much he loves us all. We ask Your blessing on the Girls' Brigade Coffee Evening being held this week and pray that this will be well supported by parents and friends.
 - During the winter months Highland Council is responsible for the gritting of roads and pavements, and we give grateful thanks to the drivers of the gritting lorries and the small tractors gritting the pavements.

Week beginning Sunday 9 March

- We give thanks for members and friends involved in the readers' rota and the tea/coffee rota, also those on the welcome teams.
 - The Guild in Ness Bank will meet this afternoon and we ask Your blessing on all the members. We pray that this will be a time of fun and fellowship and we give thanks for those who organise the meetings.
 - Schools, colleges and universities are now working normally after the Christmas holidays. We pray that the students doing prelims in December/January received good results and that their studying for standard and higher grades is going well. We ask Your blessing on all teachers and lecturers together with support staff.
 - We give thanks for our church administrator, church officer and cleaner as they continue to provide such good support to office-bearers and the congregation.
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- Gracious God, we ask Your blessing on the trustees, staff and volunteers in Inverness Foodstuff as they continue to cope with an increase in the number of people coming along for food and company. We give thanks for the food provided by supermarkets and other outlets, and also for the many gifts of food and clothing.

Week beginning Sunday 16 March

- The audiovisual system provides the livestream on Sunday mornings and also at some funerals. We give thanks Lord for the volunteers who operate the system and pray that additional volunteers will offer their services.
- The Guild Work Party meets this afternoon and we give thanks for the many garments knitted by Guild members and others knitting at home. New members are always made welcome and we pray that more knitters will come along and enjoy an afternoon of fellowship.
- Almighty God, we pray for peace in our troubled world. We pray that people may stay in a place of safety and without violence. We pray that world leaders will work towards ending conflicts in various parts of the world such as the Middle East, Ukraine and Sudan.
- We pray for the Prime Minister of the UK and the First Minister of Scotland and ask that they would seek to exercise integrity and wisdom in their life and work. We ask Your blessing on Christians in political life and pray that they will be able to live out their faith in their life and work, and influence political decisions for the benefit of all citizens.
- We pray for the Vine Trust as this organisation continues to send medical and nursing staff to areas of the world where treatment is not available. So many people in Africa have received cataract operations and other procedures by volunteers of the Trust and this has made such an impact on their quality of life.

Week beginning Sunday 23 March

- We ask Your blessing on the leaders and members in the various Ness Bank Teams and give thanks that they readily give their time for the work of Your church.
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- Fuel prices continue to increase and many pensioners and families on low incomes are finding it difficult to pay energy bills, pay rent and buy food. The extra winter payment for those in need has not been received by everyone yet. God, we pray that extra funding will be made available for those who have to decide whether they eat food or heat homes.
 - We give thanks Father for the various organisations and charities who give aid to many countries throughout the world. We ask Your blessing on Christian Aid, WaterAid, Tearfund, World Vision, MAF and many more who provide food and other essential items in areas of conflict where the volunteers are often in danger.
 - We ask Your blessing on the staff and volunteers in CrossReach which is the social arm of the Church of Scotland. CrossReach is responsible for the operation of care homes in Dornoch, Nairn and in Inverness, and we give thanks for these facilities.
 - The Ladies Discussion Group will meet this week. This group is for ladies in our congregation who live alone and who meet once a month for a meal at the Redcliffe Hotel and enjoy a time of fun and fellowship.

Week beginning Sunday 30 March

- The season of Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, 5th March, and lasts forty days. It is a time when Christians reflect and prepare for Holy Week and the celebrations of Easter. Some Christians give to charity, set aside time to study the bible and meet with other Christians to reflect on Jesus' life.
 - The Inverness Foodbank is run by Blythswood Care and provides a three-day emergency food pack for those in need. We give thanks for the staff and volunteers, and also for the local church congregations who donate supplies not only at Harvest but throughout the year.
 - Father, we continue to give thanks for the Flower Committee for their skill in providing beautiful arrangements at the front entrance and in the sanctuary.
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- Both Girls' Brigade companies attached to Ness Bank continue to meet on a weekly basis and we give thanks for the leaders who give their time and their talents to ensure that the girls enjoy their time of fellowship.
 - We pray for those who are trying to deal with addictions whether it be substances or alcohol, and we ask Your blessing on the various agencies such as Beechwood House and Cale House who provide great support and rehabilitation in Inverness.

World Mission Prayer Topics

Church of Scotland Missionary Partner:

- Gary Brough returned to Malawi recently with his family. He describes it as hot, prices are rising and the economy is fragile. He asks that we continue to pray for him in his job as a Development Co-ordinator, and he will pray for us in Scotland, that we may trust in God's provision and His purpose for us, serving Him with gladness in whatever He has called us to do.

Tearfund:

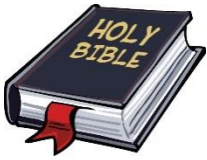
- More than 36 million people have been affected by the worst drought Southern and Eastern Africa has seen in 40 years. Local conflict, rising food prices, uncertain electric supply, lack of clean water and outbreaks of infectious diseases are all factors Tearfund's local partners are dealing with every day. Today we stand in prayer with those struggling communities and with the Tearfund's local supporting staff.

The Leprosy Mission in Sri Lanka:

- The Leprosy Mission's work in Sri Lanka has considerably extended in the last 10 years. They partner with districts, provincial and national health programmes. There is currently a very high number of children being diagnosed with leprosy in Sri Lanka. We pray for early detection and treatment so that disability can be prevented.

CrossReach:

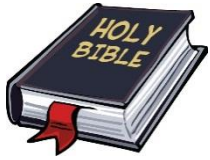
- Erskine Waterfront Campus is a CrossReach school for 36 children and young people with additional support needs. We pray for the staff as they strive to support the children and their families, that the pupils will feel safe to learn, grow and develop and to know they are loved.
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Daily Bible Readings

February 2025

Saturday	1	Romans 3: 1 - 8
Sunday	2	Psalm 24
Monday	3	Romans 3: 9 - 20
Tuesday	4	Romans 3: 21 - 31
Wednesday	5	Romans 4: 1 - 12
Thursday	6	Romans 4: 13 - 25
Friday	7	Romans 5: 1 - 11
Saturday	8	Romans 5: 12 - 21
Sunday	9	Psalm 25
Monday	10	1 Samuel 19: 1 - 24
Tuesday	11	1 Samuel 20: 1 - 17
Wednesday	12	1 Samuel 20: 18 - 42
Thursday	13	1 Samuel 23: 7 - 29
Friday	14	1 Samuel 24: 1 - 22
Saturday	15	1 Samuel 25: 1 - 22
Sunday	16	Psalm 26
Monday	17	1 Samuel 25: 23 - 44
Tuesday	18	1 Samuel 26: 1 - 25
Wednesday	19	1 Samuel 27: 1; 28: 2
Thursday	20	1 Samuel 29: 1 - 11
Friday	21	1 Samuel 30: 1 - 25
Saturday	22	1 Samuel 31: 1 - 13
Sunday	23	Psalm 27
Monday	24	Acts 12: 25; 13: 12
Tuesday	25	Acts 13: 13 - 25
Wednesday	26	Acts 13: 26 - 43
Thursday	27	Acts 13: 44 - 52
Friday	28	Acts 14: 1 - 7



Daily Bible Reading

March 2025

Saturday	1	Acts 14: 8 - 20
Sunday	2	Psalms 28
Monday	3	Acts 14: 21 - 28
Tuesday	4	Acts 15: 1 - 11
Wednesday	5	Acts 15: 12 - 21
Thursday	6	Acts 15: 22 - 29
Friday	7	Acts 15: 30 - 41
Saturday	8	Acts 16: 1 - 10
Sunday	9	Psalms 29
Monday	10	Isaiah 14: 1 - 17
Tuesday	11	Isaiah 22: 1 - 14
Wednesday	12	Isaiah 24: 1 - 13
Thursday	13	Isaiah 24: 14 - 23
Friday	14	Isaiah 25: 1 - 12
Saturday	15	Isaiah 26: 1 - 21
Sunday	16	Psalms 30
Monday	17	Isaiah 27: 1 - 13
Tuesday	18	Isaiah 29: 13 - 24
Wednesday	19	Isaiah 32: 1 - 20
Thursday	20	Isaiah 33: 1 - 16
Friday	21	Isaiah 33: 17 - 24
Saturday	22	Isaiah 35: 1 - 10
Sunday	23	Psalms 31
Monday	24	Mark 3: 7 - 19
Tuesday	25	Mark 3: 20 - 34
Wednesday	26	Mark 4: 1 - 20
Thursday	27	Mark 4: 21 - 34
Friday	28	Mark 4: 35 - 41
Saturday	29	Mark 5: 1 - 20
Sunday	30	Psalms 32
Monday	31	Mark 5: 21 - 43