

# ***NESS BANK CHURCH***

***Congregational Newsletter***

***May/June 2023 - No 1018***



***Congregation Formed 1787***

***Present Church Opened 1901***

---

## *Dear Friends*

Spring is here. The temperatures are getting warmer, the days are getting longer, there is blossom on the trees and colour in the flower beds. I thought I ought to begin this epistle with some cheerful words, so there we have them!

Meanwhile we continue with a cost of living crisis and news of terrible wars, all as we seemingly head towards environmental disaster. Sometimes, in fact all too often and all too easily, the difficult news can seem to overshadow the good news to such an extent that it gets lost in the gloom.



Here at Ness Bank we are facing our own challenging times. The news of Penelope's diagnosis came as such a shock, and Wym will say more about that elsewhere. The loss of all the excellent work she had been doing for us is also a significant blow for our congregation in this already difficult time of vacancy. Adapting to the 'post Fiona Smith' era was never going to be easy, but Penelope has helped to bridge that gap and smooth over some of the rougher bits of the path. Naturally our thoughts and prayers are with her as she undergoes the necessary treatment.

We also faced a challenging time as a Session when, as we are required to do, we had to decide whether or not we would be open to applications from ministers who are in a same sex marriage or civil partnership. Such issues can be sharply divisive in these days, but it turned out that our Session has an evenly spread range of views on the matter. They are so even that we did not achieve a majority either way. This reflects that we are indeed a broad church, but I know that the resulting outcome, that we are not open to such applications, has been a hard one for many to accept.

Sometimes the difficult news can seem to overshadow the good news to such an extent that it gets lost in the gloom. Yet we are here as a church because we believe in good news, the ultimate good news, that through all our confusions and controversies and contradictions, we still discover the grace which we do not deserve and the mercy which we could never earn. For our faith is in Jesus Christ, the light who stepped down into darkness to rescue us. This is light which shines on through every darkness,

---

---

the light which no amount of gloom can ever smother. Sometimes it can feel as if this light is flickering precariously, barely visible among the gloom. Sometimes it can feel as if the gloom is winning. Yet this good news never goes away and it continues to glow for us. No storm, wave or threat can overcome this light. In the end, the good news always wins.

So we press on with our calling to share and to live out this good news, which we are already doing and which we can always do better and more fully. A new era awaits us under the leadership of a new minister, and this is gradually creeping closer. We hope to be able to appoint a Nominations Committee who can start the search process in the coming weeks. However we can do so much more than just wait for that to happen. In these difficult times there are so many people who need to hear and to experience some good news, and we are the people who have plenty of it to offer.

Spring is here, the good news is among us, hope remains buoyant, and we have much to be getting on with.

*Best wishes*  
*Ian Manson*

---



## *The Guild*

The Guild session has now finished and our next session will start at the end of September. We ended on a high note with a gathering of about 90 Guilds Together members from around the Presbytery in St Ninian's in Nairn on 26<sup>th</sup> April, with a praise afternoon followed by a meal in the Sundancer. On 1<sup>st</sup> May we joined with the Salvation Army for their very enjoyable Spring Rally.

As usual, we are always on the lookout for new friends to join our happy band for fellowship, prayer, action and fun.

For further information please contact me on 07425154715.

*Anne Sutherland*

---

Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisers!

---

---

## *Congregational Register*

### **Deaths**

- 8 March: Minnie Anderson  
Private funeral
- 14 March: Norma Campbell  
Funeral held on 30 March
- 15 March: Professor Malcolm Laing  
Funeral held on 4 April
- 2 April: Margaret Bremner  
Funeral held on 18 April
- 16 April: Jessie (Nan) Shand  
Funeral held on 28 April
- 

### ***If You Stand Very Still***

If you stand very still in the heart of a wood  
you will hear many wonderful things.  
The snap of a twig and the wind in the trees  
and the whirl of invisible wings.

If you stand very still in the turmoil of life  
and you wait for the voice from within,  
you'll be led down the way of wisdom and peace,  
through the rough world of chaos and din.

If you stand very still and hold onto your faith  
you will get all the help that you ask.  
You will draw from the silence the things that you need -  
hope and courage and strength for your task.

Anon

---

---

## ***Rev Penelope Smirthwaite***

As I'm sure many of you will know Penelope, our Locum Minister, has been obliged to retire on health grounds following a diagnosis of leukemia and as I write this notice is receiving treatment in Raigmore Hospital.

Penelope has been associated with our church for several years, first assisting with our outreach in the Bught area followed by assisting with Inverness Foodstuff, and since Fiona's move to the post of Principal Clerk she has brought her own lively self to the position of Locum Minister.

It is extremely difficult to express in words the shock felt by our church family but I felt that you should be informed of the situation and all our love and prayers go out to Penelope during her treatment and of course to her husband Steve and their family.

We are indebted to Professor Bill McBryde for offering to extend his services to us by way of taking over many of Penelope's leading of Sunday worship duties. Our Interim Moderator, the Rev Ian Manson, will continue to be our guide during the vacancy and for now he will oversee the arrangements for funerals and weddings.

***Wym Simpson***  
***Session Clerk***

---

## ***Newsletter by Email***

The Communication & Publicity Team is encouraging more of the congregation to receive their newsletter as an email attachment, therefore reducing the amount of paper we use. If you would like to do this please contact me and I will add your name to the circulation list. The newsletter is also available on our website.

***Joyce Muir***  
***Email: conandjoyce@btopenworld.com***

---

Ness Bank Church is online at [www.nessbankchurch.org.uk](http://www.nessbankchurch.org.uk)

Follow Ness Bank Church on Facebook and Twitter

Ness Bank Church of Scotland, Inverness, No: SC010870, is a Registered Charity

---

---

## ***Finance Report***

The financial condition of our church now, and in time to come, affects every one of us however we are associated with Ness Bank. We thank the 58 ladies and gentlemen who came to the Annual Stated Meeting on 26 March to learn about this through the presentation and powerpoint illustrations as well as a summary sheet of figures which was handed out.

First here is a summary of all the deserving causes you kindly supported in 2022 totalling £6,604:

- Christian Aid week - £3,142
- L'Arche Ukraine Appeal - £2,535
- Watchnight Service appeal for the Highland Hospice - £432

and

- through the copper bottle - £200 to Caring & Sharing and £295 to Water Aid.

**EXPENDITURE** from the General Fund in 2022 totalled £189,383. A detailed breakdown was provided in the handout, and a few are detailed here such as Ness Bank's contribution towards the final year of the Ministries & Mission calculation for supporting the overall operation of the Church of Scotland which totalled £80,091. Maintenance of the church building, and long overdue renovations which could be dealt with while the Manse is empty, totalled £40,083. Electricity and gas cost £8,125. Ness Bank is part of the Church of Scotland General Trustees (COSGT) scheme for negotiating utility contracts. Ness Bank has benefitted from COSGT fixed term contracts since 2020 which for electricity is fixed until October this year and for gas is fixed until April next year. Ness Bank continues to pay at least the Scottish Living Wage rate to our much valued and dedicated staff. A combined insurance policy for our church and the Manse had increased to £6,012. Inflationary increases pushed up our office costs for copying and stationery etc. to £4,695.

**INCOME** to the General Fund in 2022 totalled £180,606 Your faithful, regular, donations make up most of this, being £126,674 - a slight reduction from 2021. Refunds from HMRC totalling £27,981 were claimed on behalf of 74% of you regular

---

---

donors who are signed up for the Gift Aid scheme. Income from weddings and funerals was £2,210, half what this source of income had been in 2021. £7,088 came from dividends on invested funds, and other sources of income. The donations received from various organisations using the rooms and kitchen downstairs totalled £16,653. This resulted in a shortfall last year of £8,777 which had to be funded from the church's limited reserves.

The budget the Finance Team have calculated needed to operate Ness Bank in 2023 is £185,140. The main cost for supporting the overall operation of the Church of Scotland is now calculated by a different method known as Giving to Grow. Ness Bank's contribution this year is to be £78,090. This has been calculated in proportion to our church's income, with a reduction due to a concession while we have no permanent Minister. Inflation, which is reported so regularly in the news, is increasing costs and prices for everything else in our church too.

The Finance Team are forecasting that, collectively, our giving would need to increase by 5% this year if Ness Bank is to break even.

We ask that you, prayerfully, review your regular giving this year. This should, of course, be proportionate to what you can manage. It is an important part of our Christian faith that we undertake to support our church by way of such regular giving. Please also, prayerfully, consider a bequest to Ness Bank in your Will to help provide the Christian support for future generations which we have benefitted from throughout our lifetime.

Collectively by this we can ensure the future financial security of our beloved Ness Bank Church. Thank you.

***Finance Team***

---

### ***Baby & Toddler Group***

The Baby and Toddler group meets during term time in the Church hall on a Wednesday from 0930 - 1130. We will welcome any wee ones of under school age, so just come along.

For further information please contact me on 07425154715.

***Anne Sutherland***

---

---

## ***Familiar Faces in Ness Bank: This Month's Spotlight is on:***

### **Heather Matheson**

I was born in Inverness at my maternal grandfather's house on Telford Road, next to the old dairy, in 1954. I'm the third oldest of four children and attended Central Primary School and Inverness High School. I left school when I was 15 and went on to study an intensive commercial course at Inverness Technical College where I obtained standard grades. I did a further year of evening classes to achieve my higher grades.



I started full-time work with the North of Scotland Milk Marketing Board in 1971. I joined as an office junior, moved up to the typing pool and then became PA to the Managing Director. The MD I initially supported was Bob Russell, the next was Joe Anderson, both were members of the congregation at Ness Bank Church. I worked there for 19 years and many colleagues became friends, including Rene who has been a close friend for over 50 years.

I married John in 1986 in Trinity Church, Inverness. At Trinity I became a communicant member, helped with the Crèche and was Deed of Covenant convener. My only daughter, Elaine, was born in 1987. Sadly, my husband died in 1993 after a short illness.

By this point I had moved to Kinmylies, where I still live today. I transferred to the new Kinmylies Parish Church when it opened. Initially starting out in a portacabin, it was exciting to be part of the new church in our local community and to see the congregation grow. At Kinmylies I was treasurer for the Girls' Brigade. Following changes at Kinmylies, I moved to Ness Bank Church about 18 years ago.

My working life has always been in administration and when the Milk Marketing Board relocated their offices to Nairn, I started work with the Prudential in the former Inverness Courier offices in town. I was initially part-time to be at home for my daughter after school and later went back to full-time work. It was a role I really



---

enjoyed and I completed my financial planning certificate whilst there. I was with the Pru for 10 very happy years until their Inverness office closed.

I went on to do several other admin roles in different sectors, including social housing, but eventually returned to financial services working for various financial advisers around Inverness. I started cutting back my working hours in 2014 and retired fully in June 2019.

With more time to dedicate to other things, I started helping at the open days at the church over the summer and more recently have joined the welcome teams and act as relief helper in the kitchen at the Baby & Toddler Group.

Away from church, I volunteer at a local charity shop and also volunteered at Raigmore Hospital during the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020. I have also started helping at the Bught Stop Cosy Café which opened in January.

I spend quite a bit of time in Edinburgh where my daughter lives and when the weather is good you'll likely find me pottering in my garden or out for a walk with friends.

***Heather***

---

## ***Diamond Wedding***



Thank you all for your good wishes and the many cards and flowers received on the occasion of our Diamond Wedding. They were all greatly appreciated.

***Bridget and Archie***

---

A father had recently given his daughter a young puppy. The following day he found her in the kitchen looking sadly at a puddle in the centre of the floor. "Look Dad" she said, "My pup runneth over!"

---



## *Girls' Brigade*

Riverside Girls' Brigade Company has had a busy few months!

Each section has continued with their programme topics and here's a snapshot. The Explorers have had fun with activities from various countries including Ireland and Japan. The Juniors have made bee puzzles from an old calendar and learned about Emergency Services including the number to dial in an emergency throughout Europe which is 112. The Brigaders have looked at prayer spaces for schools and decorated a lovely pot for Mother's Day in which a Bellis Daisy was planted. A nice treat for mums!

At the start of March our Explorers and Juniors attended a Challenge Event at Trinity Church halls along with girls from other local companies. The Explorers met in the morning and the Juniors in the afternoon. The girls enjoyed a series of physical, creative and memory challenges in small teams, spread over the two halls. The girls were encouraged to 'Be kind to everyone' by Anne Macquarrie, our Divisional President, at the start of the event and the leaders were delighted to see them helping, encouraging and comforting each other throughout the day. Each girl left with a gift bag of small items including an Easter message and the leaders went home exhausted!

At the end of March, the company joined with 4B Inverness for a coffee evening in Ness Bank Church hall. The girls helped serve their parents and friends, there were some exciting stalls, tasty baking, a challenging quiz and a raffle. There was a real buzz in the hall and we were delighted to welcome



---

families, friends and members of the congregations of Ness Bank, Trinity and Inverness Christian Fellowship. The amazing sum of £751.50 was raised for Mikeysline, the chosen charity. A representative of the charity came along at the start of May to accept a cheque and the photo shows the presentation.

We are now busy practising for our Parents' Evening on Monday 22 May 2023. This will be held in Trinity Church Hall at 6.45pm and will conclude the 2022/2023 session. During the evening the girls will receive their awards and put on some displays to show the parents and friends what they've been busy with throughout the year. We would be delighted to welcome anyone from the Ness Bank congregation who is interested in coming along.

We would like to thank all those who have supported us throughout the year and ask for your prayers for the next session, the details of which are uncertain due to changes brought about by the Presbytery Plan.

*Hazel MacDonald*

---

## ***Blythswood Care Shoe Box Appeal 2022***

Blythswood Care has thanked supporters for the response to its 2022 Shoe Box Appeal. Nearly **89,000** gift-filled boxes were donated to the appeal, a rise of seven per cent on the previous year. Filled with small, practical items such as toiletries, stationery and clothing, the individually-wrapped boxes have been distributed in schools, hospitals, orphanages and care homes, and to households in very low income communities. Many have gone to people affected by the war in Ukraine.

*"This year we were especially encouraged by the response of supporters within Scotland" says Blythswood's head of projects, Finlay Mackenzie. "Overall we were seven percent up on last year. The extra boxes allowed us to send three lorry-loads instead of two to Ukraine, around 16,000 boxes. Our co-workers there are trying to help people there in incredibly difficult circumstances, displaced from their homes and separated from husbands and fathers by war. We have also sent boxes to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania and Serbia. We are so grateful to everyone who filled a box and to our volunteers around the UK who assisted with collection and checking." 2022 was the 30th year of Blythswood's Shoe Box Appeal and brought the total number of gift boxes delivered to 2.65 million.*

**©Life and Work**

---

---

## ***Letter from Penelope***

Having being diagnosed with leukaemia and all that involves, I find myself unable to continue to work as your Locum. It is with a heavy heart that I must say my goodbyes and apologise that it must be in the form of a letter.

It has been a privilege to work with you at Ness Bank Church. Ness Bank is a vibrant reminder of what a community of people can achieve by coming together in faith, responding to God's word and working to bring God's love beyond our own settled lives.

There are so many people to thank for their support that it is impossible to name them here. But above all I must thank you as a congregation for your welcome, your patience and your love.

Steve and I have found a place among you and I imagine that over the next few months we will pop in and see you. Also we will join you for online worship.

Thank you for the lovely flowers and the many cards and good wishes. We feel very surrounded by your care and concern.

I wish you every blessing with all your endeavours and pray that the next few months will bring you a new minister to lead you forward as a City Centre Church.

I hold this time with you in a special place in my heart and although I sign off with tears may love and peace be among you.

***Penelope***

---

Thank you, dear God, for all the good things  
with which you have blessed us.

Thank you for your love in good times;  
thank you for your unfailing love in difficult times.

Thank you for your promise to be with us always.

Amen.

---



## *Stamp Appeal 2023 - 2024*

The new project is planned to support Firmly Planted, which is a community-based agro-forestry initiative with the ambition of making a sustainable impact across Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It presents an opportunity to address the challenges of food security, de-forestration, climate change and youth unemployment. Tree nurseries create employment opportunities, fruit trees improve nutrition and wider tree planting helps mitigate the impact of climate change and in turn, improves agricultural productivity.

Firmly Planted will provide community-based training tailored to the community needs, ensuring woodlots are all well maintained to have the greatest chance of thriving. It is hoped to attain large scale tree planting in locally relevant woodlots - these could be linked to schools, churches, clinics or community groups.

The Project has been spearheaded by our Church of Scotland Partners, Church of Central Africa Presbytery (CCAP) and is built around the Church's community structures. CCAP have already established a pilot nursery and is looking to replicate this across the Synods by allowing each nursery to grow tree seedlings based on the needs of their communities. A member of our Mission Partners staff, Gary Brough, is one of the co-ordinators of the project. In his recent blog, he explains there has been lots of behind-the-scenes work regarding the necessary condensing and clarifying of processes and policies. Financial systems have been strengthened, laying the groundwork for things to come. Southern Malawi, in particular, has been so badly affected by the recent flooding caused by Cyclone Freddy and there is much rebuilding to be done.

**This is a very interesting project and our stamps can play a small part in it, so please continue to save your stamps.**

Gary concluded his blog by quoting all of Psalm 1, where the Psalmist speaks of the righteous person being "like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, and whose leaf does not wither."

***World Mission Team***

---

---

## *All in the month of May*

### **It was:**

250 years ago on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1773 that Britain passed the Tea Act, which favoured the British East India Company over the American colonies, which led to the Boston Tea Party in December, which escalated into the American Revolution and the establishment of the USA.

150 years ago on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1873 that David Livingstone, Scottish missionary and explorer, died. Best known for his search for the sources of the Nile, and for going missing (and being found) in Africa.

90 years ago on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1933 that the first modern sighting of Scotland's Loch Ness monster was reported in the Inverness Chronicle.

80 years ago on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May 1943 that the RAF launched Operation Chastise, which became famous as the 'Dambusters' Raid'. Bouncing bombs were used to bypass anti-torpedo nets and breach dams, which caused catastrophic flooding in Germany's Ruhr Valley.

75 years ago on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May 1948 that Israel was declared an independent state as the British mandate in Palestine came to an end. Next day the Arab-Israeli War began with the invasion of Israel by Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

70 years ago on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1953 that New Zealand mountaineer Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay became the first people to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

40 years ago on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1983 that the journal Science reported the discovery of the HIV virus that causes AIDS.

25 years ago on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1998 that in a referendum, the people of Northern Ireland voted to accept the Good Friday Agreement. 75% were in favour of a Northern Ireland Assembly.

15 years ago on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 that the Sichuan earthquake took place in China. More than 69,000 people were killed, over 370,000 injured, and nearly five million made homeless.

---



## *International Christian Medical and Dental Association*

The Association's Ukraine Appeal Fund raised £450,000 and this has now been spent, but more and more supplies for less and less money continue to be sent due to the generosity of public and private donations of drugs, consumables and equipment and our partnerships with commercial logistics companies.

The remaining 43 anaesthetic machines of the 53 donated by The Royal London Hospital will be going out in the next few weeks having been fitted with new vaporisers and gas hoses. Very soon a shipment of low molecular weight heparin and protamine with a UK retail value of £97,000 arrived in Lviv - the total cost to ICMDA was £0 as the drugs were donated through IHP and shipped by BioPort.

We have already shipped 20 paramedic backpacks (each worth £1,000) for use by doctors tending to casualties on the frontline but a further grant of \$75,000 from partners Heart of Evangelism in Sweden is going to enable us to send a further 60. Members of CMF UK in Oxford will be packing them over the next few weeks.

We have also had some fruitful discussions with the UK's Nightingale Hospitals which were set up to care for covid patients and may be able to supply us with now redundant equipment that is badly needed in Ukraine.

Please pray that the floodgates will open and that we will be able to secure the funding necessary to ship it out. Almost all our supplies go via our Ukraine member organisation CMAU in Lviv which, under the inspirational leadership of Rudi Migovich, will distribute them to hospitals throughout Ukraine.

God is good!

©ICMDA

---

How many women can one man marry? A little boy who attended his first wedding worked that one out pretty quick: the answer is 16. It is easy, if you think about it. Four better, four worse, four richer, four poorer. Comes to 16!!

---



## ***Ness Bank Prayer Diary***



**Sing a new song to the Lord!**

**Sing to the Lord, all the world!**

**Sing to the Lord, and praise him!**

**Proclaim every day the good news that he has saved us.**

**Proclaim his glory to the nations, his mighty deeds to all peoples.**

**(Psalm 96: vs 1-3)**

These 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 21 May**

- Gracious God, we give thanks for the ministry team in Ness Bank and ask Your blessing on Bill as he continues to lead worship on Sunday mornings. We also give thanks for Rev Ian Manson, our Interim Moderator, as he continues to guide the Kirk Session through the vacancy process and undertakes funerals and weddings. We ask Your blessing on Penelope who was our Locum Minister and who has been diagnosed with leukaemia. We pray that your love, strength and comfort will sustain her and her family as her treatment begins.
- We pray for the Session Clerk and elders as progress with the vacancy process continues. Lord, we give thanks for their dedication and commitment to Ness Bank.
- The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland will take place this week and we pray for the officials and commissioners. Lord, we ask Your blessing on the new Moderator as she commences her moderatorial year and pray that she will be a inspirational ambassador of the Kirk in Scotland.
- Praise continues to be led by Ian, our organist, together with the choir and the music group, and we give thanks for their dedication and musical skills.



- 
- Father, the Property Team continue to maintain our building and in addition the team are working on the upgrade to the manse. We give thanks for the skill, dedication and commitment of the team and ask Your blessing on all they do in Your name.
  - Loving God, we pray for the citizens of Sudan during this dreadful strife throughout the country. The power struggle between the military leadership has caused disagreement as to how the country should be ruled and the ordinary citizens are suffering because of this. Many people have lost their lives and many injured. We give thanks that the British nationals as well as other nationals have been evacuated safely. The International Committee of the Red Cross reported that a plane loaded with relief supplies, including health kits for hospitals, landed safely at Port Sudan. Father, we pray for an early resolution of this strife so that peace can be restored, and food, water and medical supplies can be distributed to those in need.

### **Week beginning Sunday 27 May**

- Father, the secondary pupils are now in the midst of exams and we ask Your blessing on them during this stressful time. We pray that teachers and parents will be understanding and supportive. We pray for all teachers and support staff and give thanks for their efforts in the education of our young people.
  - The cost of living continues to be of great concern to many people, and the rising cost of food and energy is causing great hardship to many. The energy grants from the government have helped and we pray that these grants will continue over the next few months. Food poverty is a big issue and we ask Your blessing on all charities providing meals to families during this difficult time.
  - Domestic abuse greatly increased since the start of lockdown and still continues to rise in Scotland. It is so necessary that victims of abuse have a safe haven where they can be helped and supported. Lord, the Inverness Women's Refuge has been under threat of closure and we give thanks that this service will stay open and provide the support that is so needed.
-

- 
- Almighty God, we give thanks for the staff and volunteers enabling CrossReach to provide a wonderful service throughout Scotland. In particular we ask Your blessing on the local services such as Cameron House, Cale House, Beechwood House, Oversteps in Dornoch and Whinnieknowe in Nairn.
  - Almighty God, we pray for the people of Ukraine as the Russian missile attacks continue causing citizens to be injured and buildings destroyed. We remember those Ukrainians who have fled to other countries and give thanks for many host families in the UK who have given sanctuary to those requiring accommodation. Father, today we pray for peace for Ukraine.
  - Gracious God, we give thanks for Christian Aid Week and for all the volunteers who distributed envelopes. This year's appeal is to assist Christian Aid partners in Malawi help farmers transform their livelihoods by using the mighty but humble pigeon pea - a drought-resistant, soil revitalising, high protein, low cost delicious crop. Lord, we pray for everyone involved in this project.

### **Week beginning Sunday 4 June**

- Today we will celebrate the Sacrament of The Lord's Supper and we pray Lord that the Holy Spirit will be in our hearts and minds.
  - Father, we give thanks for the Trustees, staff and volunteers of Inverness Foodstuff who continue to provide nutritious meals three times a week. We pray for the participants who come along for food and company, and we give thanks for the support agencies who attend the sessions in an effort to help with the many problems experienced by those who are homeless and vulnerable. We pray that the supermarkets and private businesses will continue to provide supplies so that the participants can enjoy treats as well as meals.
  - Lord, we ask Your blessing on the young people who are involved in Ness Bank in the Baby & Toddler Group, Girls' Brigade, Boys' Brigade and Sunday School. We pray that they will enjoy the summer break and will look forward to the new session starting in September. We give grateful thanks for all the leaders and volunteers who enable these organisations to guide and support young people.
-

- 
- Lord, the Highland Hospice is a wonderful facility offering inpatient and outpatient services to the Highlands. The hospice has a specialist team of staff and also has a large number of volunteers and fundraisers. We give thanks for everyone involved in caring for those who require palliative and respite care. We also remember the chaplaincy team who provide support to staff, patients and families.
  - Loving God, the United Nations Humanitarian Affairs Agency has said that Afghanistan is facing its third consecutive year of drought, its second year of severe economic hardship, and the continued consequences of decades of war and natural disasters. Humanitarian aid remains the last lifeline for much of the population and it is estimated that \$4.62 billion is required in aid for 2023. We pray Lord that this aid will be forthcoming so that the citizens will have food, clean water and medical supplies.
  - The whole Bible is available in 719 languages that are spoken by 5.8 billion people but worldwide, 1 in 5 people are still waiting for a Bible in their own heart language. In addition, many languages have local dialects which can seem like a very different language. The Scottish Bible Society is part of the international group of Bible Societies who are continuing to translate Scripture into more languages as well as producing resources for use in schools and churches. We pray for their careful, time-consuming work, as their experts search for the right word to convey the exact meaning of Scripture.

### **Week beginning Sunday 11 June**

- Loving God, today the Sunday School will enjoy their end of session BBQ and we give thanks for the dedication and commitment of teachers and volunteers. We pray that today will be a great time of fun and fellowship.
  - Loving God, we pray for members of the Guild and give thanks for their commitment to Your Church. We ask Your blessing on those members who will be organising the syllabus for the new session commencing in September. We also give thanks for the Work Party who continue to provide many garments for hospitals, social services and charities throughout Inverness.
-

- 
- Lord, we pray for the staff in the NHS who continue to provide wonderful care to all who require treatment. The waiting lists for operations, investigations and appointments continue to be very long and the staff are working hard to try and reduce the number of patients waiting for care. We pray that the new treatment centre in Inverness will be of great help in reducing the waiting times for surgical procedures.
  - We give thanks for the Ness Bank Crafties who continue to meet every Tuesday morning. Lord, we give thanks for their skill in crafting and pray that they enjoy their time of fellowship.
  - CrossReach's Counselling Services operate in Glasgow, Inverness and Moray, offering counselling support to adults, children and young people struggling with mental health problems. In these days of rising levels of anxiety, fear and social isolation among all age groups, we give thanks for their professional skills that help individuals to regain a balance in their thinking, and we pray for God's protection for the staff.

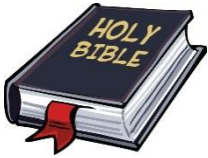
### **Week beginning Sunday 18 June**

- Heavenly Father, we ask Your blessing on all members of Inverness Presbytery who continue to implement the Mission Plan throughout the area. We pray for those congregations whose buildings have closed and we pray that members will be warmly welcomed by the churches who are now linked. We pray that vacant charges can now start to begin the process of seeking a new minister.
  - We pray for families and friends grieving for the loss of a loved one, whether it be recent or long ago. We understand the pain of bereavement and ask that Your love, strength and comfort will sustain them during these difficult days.
  - In the midst of such change and concern give thanks for God's constant love. Help us to know that whatever the circumstances and challenges we face, He cares for us. It is important in these difficult times that we count our blessings for everything God is doing for us and pray that we will follow in His footsteps all the days of our lives.
-

- 
- Lord, we pray for those known to us who are ill whether they are at home, in hospital or in a care home. This is an anxious time for patients and families and we pray that care and treatment is progressing. We give thanks for the medical and nursing staff in the community as well as those in hospitals.
  - Gary Brough, the Church's Mission Partner in Malawi, is part of the team at the Presbytery of Central Africa who are establishing a new project to plant trees in areas around churches, schools, and communities, to be looked after by the local people. The current Stamp Appeal supports this project. We join with those involved, in praying for the tree nurseries to be successful, both in the growth of the trees, in new employment opportunities and in helping to reduce the effect of climate changes.

### **Week beginning Sunday 25 June**

- Lord, worship this morning will include the Sunday School prizegiving which is always a happy time for the young folks, parents and congregation.
- The Ladies Discussion Group consists of ladies in our congregation who stay on their own and this week they will meet for their monthly lunch at the Redcliffe Hotel. We give thanks Lord for those who organise the meetings and ask Your blessing on the group as they enjoy this time of fellowship.
- School summer holidays will commence this week and we pray that all staff and pupils will enjoy a few weeks of rest and relaxation. Numerous activities are available throughout the summer for young people during the holiday season and we ask Your blessing on leaders and volunteers involved in these pursuits.
- Loving God, we give thanks for the team who provide the live streaming of Sunday worship. The live stream is a wonderful facility for those members and friends who are unable to attend church as it enables them to be part of worship and to keep up-to-date with what is taking place in Ness Bank.
- In Uror County in Jonglei State, South Sudan, malnutrition is a major health threat to children under five. It is caused by a lack of nutritious food, a lack of healthcare advice and facilities, and poor feeding practices. Pray for Tearfund's work alongside UNICEF, providing health clinics to help advise mothers and treat children.



## *Daily Bible Readings*

*May/June 2023*

### **May**

Sunday	21	Psalm 94
Monday	22	1 Kings 9: 1 - 28
Tuesday	23	1 Kings 10: 1 - 29
Wednesday	24	1 Kings 11: 1 - 25
Thursday	25	1 Kings 11: 26 - 43
Friday	26	Acts 1: 1 - 11
Saturday	27	Acts 1: 12 - 26
Sunday	28	Acts 2: 1 - 13
Monday	29	Acts 2: 14 - 21
Tuesday	30	Acts 2: 22 - 26
Wednesday	31	Acts 2: 37 - 47

### **June**

Thursday	1	Acts 3: 1 - 10
Friday	2	Acts 3: 11 - 26
Saturday	3	Acts 4: 1 - 12
Sunday	4	Psalm 95
Monday	5	Acts 4: 13 - 22
Tuesday	6	Acts 4: 23 - 31
Wednesday	7	Acts 4: 32 - 37
Thursday	8	Acts 5: 1 - 11
Friday	9	Acts 5: 12 - 16
Saturday	10	Acts 5: 17 - 26
Sunday	11	Psalm 96
Monday	12	Acts 5: 27 - 42
Tuesday	13	Acts 6: 1 - 7
Wednesday	14	Acts 6: 8 - 15
Thursday	15	Acts 7: 1 - 22
Friday	16	Acts 7: 23 - 43
Saturday	17	Acts 7: 44; 8: 1 - 3

---

Sunday	18	Psalm 97
Monday	19	Acts 8: 4 - 25
Tuesday	20	Acts 8: 26 - 40
Wednesday	21	Acts 9: 1 - 19a
Thursday	22	Acts 9: 19b - 31
Friday	23	Acts 9: 32 - 43
Saturday	24	Acts 10: 1 - 16
Sunday	25	Psalm 98
Monday	26	Acts 10: 17 - 33
Tuesday	27	Acts 10: 34 - 48
Wednesday	28	Acts 11: 1 - 18
Thursday	29	Acts 11: 19 - 30
Friday	30	Acts 12: 1 - 19a

---

### ***Positive Count***

Count your blessings instead of your crosses,  
 Count your gains instead of your losses,  
 Count your joys instead of your woes,  
 Count your friends instead of your foes,  
 Count your laughs instead of your tears,  
 Count your full years instead of your lean,  
 Count your kind deeds instead of your mean,  
 Count your health instead of your wealth,  
 Count on your God instead of yourself.

---

May you have the hindsight to know where you've been,  
 the foresight to know where you're going,  
 and the insight to know when you're going too far.

---