

KIRK NEWS

August to October 2025

No. 846



BLACKHALL
ST. COLUMBA'S
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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



August
2025



See how the wild flowers grow! They don't work
to earn, or craft their own clothes, but even
King Solomon with all his wealth was not
dressed as well as they are. Lk 12:27-28



Fergus leading a memorial service on the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth

‘A friend and advisor to all’

As I write this article, I am sitting in my cabin aboard the Queen Elizabeth Aircraft Carrier (in the Navy abbreviated to QNLZ). By the time you read this, I hope to have returned from my ‘Initial Sea Time’ which is part of the ongoing training I undertake as a Royal Navy Reserve Chaplain.

The Royal Naval Chaplaincy Service provides chaplains to the whole of the Royal Navy which includes both the surface fleet and the submarines of the Royal Navy, the Royal Navy Reserves, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the Royal Marines together with the Royal Marines Band. This provision of pastoral care and emotional support is for those at sea and ashore and their families as well. Unlike the other services, chaplains to the Royal Navy, although still commissioned by the Sovereign, do not hold any rank other than that of "Chaplain Royal Navy". In effect, we share the rank of the person we are speaking to whether that be a brand-new Able Seaman or an experienced Admiral. We are often addressed as Padre, Reverend or, more frequently and informally, as ‘Bish’.

Along with normal ministry, we lead services of worship, conduct daily prayers, host Bible Studies and have pastoral care of our charges, we also have a role to play in providing ethical and moral guidance to those around us. Our charges include everyone, of 'all faiths and none' and we are here as is often quoted as, a friend and advisor to all'.

Although the QNLZ has a dedicated worship space, the St Paul's Chapel, few ships have this, and services are normally conducted in or on converted messes, quarterdecks or flight decks as appropriate.

Most of the work of the chaplain is out and about meeting and dealing with people where they are working at their various workstations.

A large part of a chaplain's ministry is demonstrating their beliefs through their example, through their words and their actions.

It is partly this ministry, through example, that leads me to think of the passage from 1 Timothy 4:11-16; *"Command and teach these things. Let no one despise your youth but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, pay attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers."*

It is this passage and passages like it that have caused people to coin a number of phrases like; *"You may be the only Bible some people read...You may be the only Jesus some people see..."*

This is true, not only of military chaplains, but also of each person who professes to worship God and follow Christ. If you think on your life, you will realise that there may be many occasions when you are the only person in a group who actually professes faith and believes in God and the teachings of Jesus. Especially, if the people in the group know you are a Christian, then everything you do reflects on how those people will regard Christianity.

In those cases, you are the only Bible some people will read and you are the only Jesus some people will see.

Whilst this may seem daunting, please don't let it be. As Christians, we are called to serve him by serving others. We should not hold back because of worry about how we will manage, whether we will do a good enough job or because we think we may face the criticisms of others.

Each person has been given gifts with which to serve. They are not all the same but they are all important.

I believe that, if we show willing, alongside compassion and grace, then God can make our best, but sometimes seemingly feeble, efforts into something great. I think God gives us opportunities to serve. It is those opportunities, when taken, that develop and grow us as disciples of Jesus. Sometimes we miss those opportunities.

Everybody has something that could hold them back from fully serving God. Those feelings come from our human anxieties and reticence. God calls each person to focus on him, as Jesus confirmed,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself." Luke 10:27.

If we do love the Lord and do our best to help our neighbour, with all our heart, soul, strength and mind, then the Bible people see and the Jesus people meet will be the right one.

Best wishes and blessings
Fergus



Fergus on board HMS Queen Elizabeth Aircraft Carrier

Sunday Worship



The Session Clerk's Report

The Kirk Session

The Kirk Session met on Tuesdays 22 April, 27 May, 10 June and 24 June 2025.

Adherents

It has been agreed that a Register of Adherents be maintained. This would be a register of those not Members but who regularly attend and are not members of another Church. By registering as an Adherent these people would have certain rights with regard to voting within our Church.

Building For The Future (BFTF) 2

Kirk Session has been considering how the residual monies (c £80,000) from the earlier BFTF project should be used. A number of meetings have been held and the view is that the priorities should be (not in this order) 1. Extending the Audio Visual to the halls, 2. Upgrading the toilets, and 3. The entrance to the halls.

The Congregation will be kept informed.

Congregational Roll

Kirk Session agreed by resolution to admit Mrs Margaret Martin, Barnton Avenue to membership of the Congregation.

Correspondence

A note of thanks had been received from the St Columba's Hospice for the donation of £838 from the Easter retiring offerings.

We received a cheque in the sum of £2,500 being a bequest from the late Angus Troup.

The Session Clerk's Report

Fabric

Readers will recall that an incident occurred in the Sanctuary and halls late in the afternoon of Tuesday 11 February following the upgrading of our 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 has cost the Church circa £35,000 to make good the damage caused. Meantime we continue to be in liaison with Scottish Power, our insurers and the Church's Law Department regarding recouping the expenditure. This has been a protracted exercise.

Kirk Session Dates 2025 / 2026

The Kirk Session will meet on the following dates: -

2025

26 August

21 October

11 November

2026

13 January

17 February

17 March

21 April

26 May

23 June



Our Session Clerk, Eddie making the intimations

The Session Clerk's Report

Knitted Bible

The Knitted Bible is a unique artistic project that features knitted representations of biblical scenes, created by a community group at St George's United Reformed Church in Hartlepool. Our interest in borrowing the Bible has been taken forward and we will have it from 10 March 2026 to 25 March 2026 for exhibition in our Church. While as yet this is in its early stages, Shona Cook, Sheila Mackintosh, Fiona Cook and Dorothea Mair are the team to manage matters. It would require us to pick up the exhibits from Cleadon, Tyne and Wear and bring these up to Edinburgh. With regard to what format this would take, there are many options to consider and the Team will take this forward.

Presbytery Elder

Eddie Thorn was re-appointed as Presbytery Elder.

Presbytery Plan

There have been no developments to report to Kirk Session. The ball remains in the court of the Presbytery Deployment of Resources Committee.

Safeguarding Panel

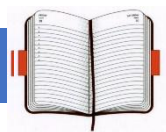
Kirk Session has appointed a new Safeguarding panel consisting of: Jacquie Lowe, Deborah Pearce, Pat Macleod, Bill Campbell and Adrian Johnston.

WATCH COMMITTEE

It was agreed that the Watch Committee support the Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity for this year.

Eddie Thorn, Session Clerk

Church Calendar



August

3 rd	10.30am	Morning Worship
10 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
15 th	12 noon	VJ Day Service of Thanksgiving followed by lunch
17 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
24 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
31 st	10.30am	Morning Worship

September

7 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
14 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
21 st	10.30am	Morning Worship
28 th	10.30am	Morning Worship

October

5 th	10.30am	Sacrament of Holy Communion
	3.00pm	Short service of Communion for those unable to attend the 10.30am service.
12 th	10.30am	Morning Worship and Harvest Thanksgiving
19 th	10.30am	Morning worship
26 th	10.30am	Morning Worship

November

2 nd	10.30am	Morning Worship
9 th	10.30am	Remembrance Sunday

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.

Congregational News

New member admitted by Resolution of the Kirk Session

Mrs Margaret Martin

Deaths

Sadly, the following members have passed away.

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

May

16th Mrs Elisabeth Downie

June

2nd Mr Michael Morton

5th Mrs Jean Cunningham

24th Mrs Moira Purves

30th Mrs Anne Meikle

July

11th Miss Muriel Hodge

12th Rev Robert Barker

24th Mrs Esther Elliot



Sheila Macintosh, Roll Keeper

Open Doors Day

The WATCH Committee is supporting Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity this year. We had an excellent introduction to the charity at our service on the 6th of July by a representative of the charity - Pippa Johnston. ECHC are taking part in Doors Open Day on 28th September, if any of the congregation would like to drop by to learn more about what they do, then you can go onto the Doors Open Day website to find out more details about Doors Open Day at the hospital. If a small group would like a bespoke tour (4 or 5 folks), please contact Lynn Bunney or Jim Bishop to arrange.

Lynn Bunney, WATCH COMMITTEE

Getting Connected



Throughout May and June, the Connect group continued to meet each Sunday evening in the Sanctuary. There are usually around ten of us- a mix of ages; a range of experience; a variety of opinions. There are also a couple of folk from another local church, which makes the mix more interesting too. It's a great opportunity to discuss aspects of our faith and encourage one another on our "journey".

As the name suggests, it's also about building relationships with one another and, after a year or so together, we have become quite well "connected" – but it is always good to welcome others too.

We took advantage of the less busy summer months to change to a weeknight, meeting once a month in someone's home. Quite apart from the tasty treats with our tea and coffee, it also meant that we were not constrained by the usual hour and we spent a bit longer together, looking at the book of Colossians and its relevance to living as a Christian in today's secular society.

In September, we resume our "Sundays at Six", with a completely new format - and we invite you to join us. Fergus has passed on a set of discussion topics based on the themes of the musical "Les Miserables", and we plan to use some of these at the start of the session. Taking advantage of the AV facilities in the Sanctuary, we will begin by watching a scene from the film, focusing on one of the musical numbers, and go on to consider the questions he has put together. As a "Les Mis" fan myself, I am intrigued to see how we will look at the film from the perspective of our faith. Perhaps that appeals to you, too?

Sunday 7th September, at Six, in the Sanctuary.....see you there?
Muriel Stenhouse

Annual Golf Outing 2025



This year's participants in the golf tournament

Blackhall St Columba's Church Golf Outing 2025

Once again, the Annual Golf Outing was held at Ravelston Golf Course, on the 27th of June, there were 15 players and 18 staying for a delicious high tea. Our thanks go to Ravelston Golf Course for a most enjoyable day.

The winners this year are: -

Involvement "88" Golf Cup – Graham Patterson

Murrayfield Ladies Cup – Barbara Duguid

2nd Pam Harrington

3rd Frances Douglas

Murrayfield Cup – Matt McGowan

2nd Fergus Cook

3rd George Miller

Nine Hole Prize – Diane Ross

Nearest the Pin – 5th Graeme Patterson 9th Barbara Halliday

Thank you to Murrayfield House for their sponsorship.

David Thomson

Frances Douglas, Secretary

WATCH Committee's Charity 2025-2026



**Edinburgh
Children's
Hospital Charity**

Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity (EHC) believes no child should face hospital alone. Every day, 500 seriously ill children and their families arrive at the Royal Hospital for Children and

Young People (The Sick Kids) facing a potentially life-changing visit. And every day, they inspire the team at EHC to make those visits as positive as possible.

Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity, EHC, would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the WATCH Committee and the whole congregation of Blackhall St Columba's Church for your generous support. Your fundraising will support The Hub - a welcoming, warm space away from the wards where young patients and their families can receive emotional support, join in with activities, or simply have a cuppa and a chat.

For those unable to leave their hospital bed, your donations help EHC bring fun and distraction directly to them - through visits from magicians, activity boxes, toiletries for parents, and friendly volunteers offering a listening ear.

Thank you for standing with us to ensure no child must face hospital alone. You are truly making a difference - to your hospital, your city, and your community.



The Watch Committee with Philippa Johnston from the "Children's Wellbeing Service," Edinburgh Children's Hospital at the launch of our new charity fundraising initiative at Blackhall St Columba's Church. (Photo left to right- Frances Douglas, Jim Bishop, Pippa Johnston and Rosi Watt)

Celebrating VE and VJ Day 80

VE Day 80

Around 80 people came to the church to mark this special commemoration which began with a meaningful service of thanksgiving conducted by Gordon Farquharson. This was followed by an afternoon tea and a musical performance of wartime favourites by our own Jenny Logan and Donald Cameron.

A huge thanks to everyone who contributed to this special occasion.



VJ Day 80

We wouldn't mark VE Day without marking VJ Day 80 which finally brought WW2 to an end. This will take place on Friday 15th August 2025 and will be a curry lunch. Don't worry if you're not a fan, there will be an alternative!

It will begin **at 12.00** to meet for refreshments and a chance to share stories followed by a service at 12.20pm and then lunch. There is no charge for this but in order to plan our catering requirements, if you are planning to attend, please contact either:

Lynn Bunny 07742 271878

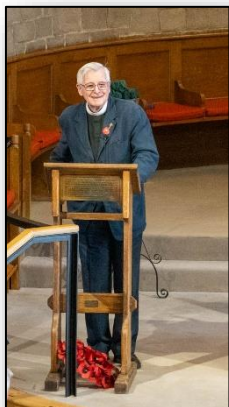
Alison Hewat 0131 332 4842

Ruth Laidlaw 07513 967974

Or add your name to the sheet which will be at the back of the church on Sunday 27th July, 3rd August and 10th August.

Ruth Laidlaw

VE Day Celebrations in Pictures



Around St Columba's

Flower Deliveries

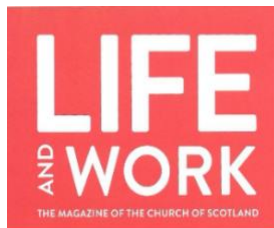
We need more volunteers to join the Flower Delivery List. The task is simple: volunteers get an email with the flower recipients. There are usually three or four names on the list. After the Sunday service is over, the flowers are made into bunches for delivery.



Volunteers will be scheduled on the rota to deliver for one month at a time, with the option to exchange months or individual Sundays if required. For further information or inquiries, please contact -

Alison Hewat at rajahewat1@btinternet.com or Tel 332 4842.

Life and Work Magazine



Those of you who follow the General Assembly will already be aware that the Church of Scotland will not be publishing Life and Work after this year. The August copy is the last one.

This is very sad as it publicises many of the issues that we face. Consideration is being given to a possible alternative in the future but for those of us who read this publication there will be a gap. This, as you have already guessed, is down to cost.

Goodbye L&W, it's been interesting having you to read and discover what is going on in the wider church.

Alison Hewat

WATCH Committee Craft Coffee Morning



**Adults £4
Children free!
CASH ONLY
PLEASE**

The Watch Committee
invite you to their

CRAFT COFFEE MORNING

Saturday 27 September 2025
10am – 12 noon
*at Blackhall St Columba's
Church Hall*

**LOVELY KNITTING,
CRAFTS & POTTERY**

**CAKE & CANDY
STALL**

**TEA, COFFEE
& HOME BAKES**

**and a
BEAUTIFUL
PATCHWORK QUILT
RAFFLE!**

**NOT TO
BE
MISSED!**

**PUT IT IN
YOUR
DIARY!**

And all in Aid of this year's Charity
**EDINBURGH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
CHARITY**
*Please come along with
friends and family for a very sociable
and fun morning!*
Scottish Charity No SC020862

Edinburgh
Children's
Hospital Charity

Edinburgh
Children's
Hospital Charity

Junior Singers and Friends in Concert



The Junior Singers performing



The Suzuki Violin Group



*The Junior Singers in
concert at Blackhall St
Columba's*

*Blackhall St Columba's
Praise Band*

Junior Singers

Junior Singers had their final “outing” for the ’24 – ’25 session when they took part in the “Musical Evening” in May along with the Blackhall Suzuki Violin Group. The evening began with the Singers taking the audience on a musical tour of Scotland with songs from Edinburgh, Galashiels, Kirkcudbright, Glasgow, the Western Highlands and Aberdeen before returning to Edinburgh with the song “Greyfriars’ Bobby”.

The violin group then took to the stage and performed traditional Scottish music as well as items from their Suzuki repertoire. Junior Singers then performed the mini musical, “Jonah Man Jazz”, accompanied by the Blackhall St Columba’s Praise Band. The evening drew to a close with the Junior Singers, the violin group and the band joining together with “I’m Gonna Sing”.

It was a fine end to the evening, the year and for the six P7s who are now moving on to secondary school and so leaving the choir. We will miss them but have so enjoyed watching them develop, over the years, into fine choristers.

In the attached photo, “The Lord” is trying to persuade Jonah to go to Nineveh but the unimpressed Jonah, is just sitting there trying to think of a way out.

Amy Donaldson



The Nativity Trail

Save the dates!

Thursday 18th and Friday 19th December 2025



I know it seems early to be mentioning Christmas already BUT December will be here before we know it! Many of you will remember that for the last two Christmases we have held a very special Nativity Trail event which has been highly successful and, this year, we are very excited to announce that a third Trail will be happening. We have based it largely on last year but there will be a few changes, not least the absence of the Christmas Tree Festival. However, there will be a couple of new features which are a surprise.....so watch this space! Our doors will be open wide to welcome everyone, young and not so young, to come into the church at the heart of the Blackhall community and experience for themselves our “Nativity Trail- The Christmas Celebration” You will not want to miss this event and so get your diaries out and note down the details now.

What- NATIVITY TRAIL- THE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Where-BLACKHALL ST COLUMBA’S CHURCH

When-THURSDAY 18TH and FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER 2025

On the last Thursday and Friday before Christmas, throughout the day and early evening, we will spread the Good News by hosting this interactive exploration of the Greatest Story Ever Told using the church itself and all its halls and buildings. We want members of our community to join us in finding out the true meaning of Christmas in a novel and exciting way as they hear the Angel Gabriel’s message and go on their own journey with Mary and Joseph. They will find the shepherds and encounter King Herod before they finally reach Bethlehem, search for a resting place and finally arrive at the stable and discover the most wonderful gift we have ever been given. As if that wasn’t enough, we are also planning to offer a Christmas Nativity Escape Room for the older children who come along. This has been extremely popular in the last two years.

Nativity Trail August 2025

As you can understand, such an ambitious project needs the help of many people to ensure that it is the best that it can be and this is where you all come in. We need lots of help before the day itself and then during the event as well. More information will be provided as we get closer to Christmas but now, we are looking for volunteers. We need people to help set up our trail which involves scenery and props and we need others who can be helpers on the day to ensure everything goes smoothly. We need a cast of characters too, of course. We also need folk who can help prepare crafts for the children beforehand and who can supervise the crafts on the day. Then, of course, we need bakers and people who can serve refreshments. Lots of people who have helped in the past have offered their help again which is wonderful but some are unable to do so and so we need some folk who maybe haven't volunteered before. If you feel that you can help in any way, however small, please get in touch with Shona Cook by email (shonacook505@gmail.com) or by 'phone (07981 970054). Any help you can give will be gratefully received and just makes everything easier AND more fun.

We will be looking for several items/ props to help create our trail and ensure the experience is the best we can make it and, in the very near future, we will be making available a full list of things we are needing. Please keep an eye out for this. If you could donate/ lend any of these, that would be brilliant. Please just let Shona know how you can help. If you don't have any of the things on the list that will be issued later but would like to contribute, a small donation would help us to buy any of the things we can't source like craft materials. Last year, many of you kindly lent us toys, animals, ornaments etc and we would be very grateful if we could borrow these again.

Last Christmas, we welcomed over 450 community members in one day. I believe we can exceed that this year. So come on Blackhall, let's show them what we can do to spread the Good News this Christmas.

Thanks,
Shona

The Monte Cassino Service of Remembrance, 3rd May 2025. A photographic representation.



Watch Committee Programme

WATCH COMMITTEE PROGRAMME – July to December 2025

COIN COLLECTION - We started our coin collection on the 6th of July and how wonderful it is to sing along as we fill the 'bucket' on a Sunday morning! Although we don't seem to have much change in our pockets these days, we are still managing to find something to put in the bucket each Sunday.

CALENDAR 2026 - Following the success of last year's PETS Calendar, we are creating another one featuring Blackhall St Columba's Church groups and hall users. We've received some great photos but still need submissions from several groups. If your group hasn't sent a photo yet, please email it to lynnbunney@gmail.com by end of September (the sooner the better) or contact our official photographer James Burr who can take some photos of your group for you.

CRAFT COFFEE MORNING – This will take place on SATURDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 10AM TO 12noon.

Apart from the delicious coffee there will be savouries and sweets to tempt you and there will be stalls to browse including home baking and produce, crafts, hand painted cards, and pottery to name a few. Please note we accept CASH only. We also have a stunning patchwork quilt which we will raffle at the coffee morning. I look forward to seeing you there.

QUIZ – A quiz has been prepared by Mr & Mrs Quiz and will be available for purchase at the Coffee Morning for £2.00 per entry.

CHRISTMAS FAIR - The Christmas Fair is scheduled for the 29th of November 2025. The event will feature traditional activities, and Santa Claus will officially open the fair before welcoming children in his grotto. Children can share their Christmas wish lists with Santa, then have their faces painted by Santa's elves. There will be a wide range of toys and books available to buy, alongside all the usual stalls such as books, bric-a-brac, sweets, and a lucky dip. Highlights also include an extensive tombola offering exciting prizes, as well as our exceptional hampers and home-baked goods.

The Prayer Circle

Do you know someone in need of prayer? A friend or relative perhaps who is unwell, grieving or find themselves in a position where they don't know where to turn?



Blackhall St Columba's Prayer Circle is a small team of people who will pray frequently for anyone in need of help in complete confidence. We are also happy to accept prayer requests giving thanks for a happy event or asking for God's help with any forthcoming personal endeavour or challenge. Please contact Prayer Circle secretary Betty Watt at lbthwatt@yahoo.co.uk or Fergus Cook at Fcook@churchofscotland.org.uk or 0131 466 7503. Alternatively, please put your request slip into the locked box on the table in the church vestibule.

Tuesday Topics

Hello from Tuesday Topics yet again. For anyone who hasn't heard of us, we are a group of mainly women but we do have some gents who have found our talks interesting. We meet on the last Tuesday of the month in the Small Hall at 7.30pm and after a talk lasting about 45 minutes on various topics, we have tea and coffee and there's an opportunity to chat, discuss the topic or make new friends. If you haven't been before why not come and try? Membership is £25 or you can just come as a visitor and pay £3 per meeting.

We start on September 30th 2025 with a talk by Alistair McDonald. He has written a book called "the Cold Hand of Charity, Tales from the City Poor House" so we look forward to hearing how poverty was dealt with in those days.

On October 28th, Maggie Quayle will tell us about the RNLI. On November 25th, we will continue with the nautical theme and we have David Hughson who will speak to us about 'Lighthouses'.

Around St Columba's

On November 25th, Tuesday Topics continue with the nautical theme and we have David Hughson who will speak to us about 'Lighthouses'. That takes Tuesday Topics to Christmas and we have some more excellent topics for the New Year which will be in the next Kirk News.

Do come and join us. For more details

Lyndy Paton. Sec. 0131 332 7377 or 07460212174

Sheila Mackintosh 0131 336 1357

Cameo

The first six months of 2025 have been eventful for Cameo, beginning with our television appearance on the network news in January. Our increasing membership have been enjoying all manner of musical entertainment, plus a quiz. The highlight was perhaps the Summer Outing to North Berwick this year where we enjoyed an excellent lunch at the Glen Golf Club. In June we were the first to hear the debut of a new choir led by Marge Whiteside called The Cameo Singers – we all enjoyed their enthusiasm and needed no encouragement to sing along with them.

The second half of the year will feature The Rock Choir, which is part of a national choir who have performed in front of King Charles. There will be about thirty singers that day. A new performer, Johnny Collington, will be entertaining us in September, and our Festive Lunch has already been booked at the Murrayfield Leonardo once again in November.

It is free to join Cameo. The dates of our fortnightly meetings can be found on the church calendar at blackhallstcolumba.org.uk. We next meet on the 8th of August if you would like to come along, or volunteer either to drive or serve coffee and teas, contact the number below for more details.

Fiona Drinnan (Convenor) 343 6762

Around St Columba's

The Buon Appetito Club - Calling all ladies



It is always good to gather over delicious food for a time of fellowship with friends old or new and get to know each other better. Hence, the Buon Appetito Club which meets every two months throughout the year to enjoy the delights of Italian food.

Our next outing will be for dinner at O'Oliviero , 64 The Grassmarket on 5th September 2025 at 6pm. If you are interested in coming along, please contact Shona Cook by email (shonacook505@gmail.com) or mobile (07981 970054) by 15th August.

There is an upper limit of 20 people and so don't delay. Get in touch to secure your place.

Outreach Events

The Outreach Team is preparing a programme of events leading up to Christmas and will soon distribute a flier with details. Fliers will be in church and event information will also appear on the website. Please check for updates and support as many events as possible - your participation helps everyone. If it is music you desire, please check Donald Cameron's Music @ St Columba's article here in the Kirk News for future musical events at Blackhall St Columba's.

As a family of God here in Blackhall, it is not only good but essential to get together regularly to socialise and enjoy a time of fellowship which encourages new friendships and strengthen existing ones. We cannot truly love one another unless we know each other.

For future outings, please, check the church website for details at - www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Around St Columba's

"Soup n Chat" As you will be aware from our May 2025 Kirk News article the outreach group called Soup n Chat has now been running successfully for over 2 years. The photograph below was taken on our last gathering before the summer break.



Soup n Chat resumes on Friday 29th August at 12noon. It is held every two weeks and the post-summer dates are given below. Open to everyone, these sessions welcome both church members and community residents, helping people connect, make friends, and feel less isolated. Come along on a date that suits you (bring a friend or neighbour) and join the party to enjoy some soup, chat and company. You are assured a warm welcome too.

Friday 29th August in the Large hall
Friday 12th September in the Small Hall
Friday 26th September in the Large Hall
Friday 10th October in the Small Hall
Friday 24th October in the Large Hall

If you or someone you know is looking to carry out voluntary work for Scouts/Guides/Duke of Edinburgh, we are always recruiting "Chat hosts" or kitchen helpers. Please get in touch on 07875 558977.

Michael Cockburn, Lead and admin volunteer.

Around St Columba's



Our Art Club continues to flourish following a successful Annual exhibition in May.

This year's chosen charity was Erskine Veterans Charity. At the preview night Jim Watret came across from Glasgow and gave us a very good talk about the charity and people it serves.

We were delighted to have a good turnout from the community and able to donate £1130 to the Erskine Veterans. We thank everyone for coming along to support the event by buying paintings, handmade cards and with donations. We also thank everyone who helped to put the exhibition together from building exhibition boards, preparing catalogues and taking turns during the week for viewing.

The people's choice award for the most popular painting was awarded to Carol Carden with her painting Summer Meadow.

The club starts up again on Monday 8th September in the large hall.

Marge Whiteside



The Art Club Exhibition



Carol Carden receiving her reward

Scottish Country Dancing

Our 6 "Summer Sessions" after the Easter break proved to be a great success, with more than half of the class coming along regularly and several others dropping in when they were free.

Having just two or three sets of dancers meant that we were able to tackle some of the more complex dances that people requested as "old favourites"; and several of these will form the basis of our weekly programme when we start back in the autumn.

After a break of three months, we will ease in gently on Thursday 18th September, continuing to start at the earlier time of 7pm. New members are always welcome and we plan to have another Afternoon Tea Dance, this time with a Scottish theme, on Wednesday 27th November.

Tickets will be available at £5 each, in aid of The Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity, and we look forward to welcoming many of you to help us raise money for this worthwhile cause.

Muriel Stenhouse



FreshStart

In May, we reported the increase in demand for “Starter Packs” and all household items. This trend has continued as more people, including the homeless, move into Edinburgh’s northwest.

Homelessness remains high in our city but FreshStart is working with partners and city authorities and progress is being made, albeit slowly.

We kindly ask that you continue supporting us with your household donations. If you are unable to deliver items directly to FreshStart (the warehouse is open Monday to Thursday), a volunteer will be available to accept donations at the church halls on Fridays between 10:00 am and 11:30 am. Should you be unable to attend during these times or deliver items directly, please contact us to make alternative arrangements. (Please note we cannot accept scissors, kitchen knives or wine/beer/spirit glasses due to FreshStart policies.)

During the summer, FreshStart, together with its partners, continued to provide community lunches on Tuesdays and Fridays. These meals offered families a hot lunch instead of sandwiches or lighter options. The Pantry Shop has also been running a family membership scheme so shoppers with children pay £7 rather than the usual £5 and receive in return a significant boost in their shopping. This almost doubles the items they can have. This initiative helps provide children with nutritious meals during the school holidays. Clearly the shop needs ongoing donations to sustain this holiday scheme. We are grateful that individuals, churches and local supermarkets offer support. However, there is always a need for more food donations for the pantry and these can be brought on a Friday to the church hall together with household items.

We do appreciate that the church is also assisting the Ferryhill Primary School sharing shelf and we are asking people again to dig deep but the need has never been greater. Your help is much appreciated by FreshStart and the FreshStart Team at our church.

Lilian & Michael, C/O Church Office Tel 0131 332 4431

Around St Columba's

Mid-week PEACE Service

We are currently on our summer break but we will be back soon! Our next session begins on Wednesday 17th September at 12.00 in the Small Hall. Our meetings take the form of a short act of worship, usually with an invited speaker, followed by a soup lunch.



It is an opportunity to share fellowship, food and worship together and everyone will be made very welcome. Please consider joining us.

We rely on volunteers to make and serve lunch and to drive some of our attendees to the church so if you think you might be able to help in this capacity, even on an ad hoc basis then we would love to hear from you.

This is a great opportunity to thank all our current volunteers who help out in various capacities, what you do is greatly appreciated so I hope you will continue next session.

Shona Cook and Ruth Laidlaw



PEACE Service Communion 28th May

Knit n Natter

Just before taking a summer break, we made a delivery to Pregnancy Counselling and Care Scotland at the Gyle with all the things we have knitted this year. They were delighted to get our donation and hoped we will keep knitting for them.

We'll be starting up again on Monday, September 8th in the Sanctuary and we welcome any new members along with our returning regulars. Please do not feel you might not be good enough or you cannot knit! Beginners are encouraged to join and learn to knit.

For further information please contact Lilian Cockburn
stcknitnnatter@gmail.com



Knitted goods produced by Knit n Natter and donated to Pregnancy Counselling and Care Scotland

Around St Columba's

Christian Aid



We were again delighted to have members of the Horticultural Society join us at our Coffee Morning in May. A lovely sunny day allowed many plants to be displayed indoors and outdoors.

Including proceeds from the sale of donated baked goods, £820 was raised. The concert by the Forth Valley Chorus in the evening contributed an additional £700, and combined with donations of £985, a total of £2,505 was sent to Christian Aid. These funds were collected from those who participated or supported the events. Thank you to all who contributed or helped to make our events such a success.

Sheila Mackintosh

The Christmas Fair

Your help is needed!



Preparations for the Christmas Fair on the 29th of November, 2025 have already begun, and the Watch Committee asks for your support.

Please start collecting items for donation - such as tombola prizes, books, bric-a-brac, crafts, fashion accessories, hampers and hamper goodies, sweets and toys.

We also welcome help in securing business donations of raffle prizes or vouchers. If you can assist, contact Rosi Watt at rosijwatt@otlook.com or Lynn Bunney at lynnbunney@gmail.com. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

Praise Gathering



Praise Gathering at the Usher Hall, June 2025

After ten weeks of rehearsals in our own church, with over 80 singers from around Edinburgh and Fife, the Usher Hall was the venue for our concert on Saturday 21st June. It was marvellous to come together with the other choirs from Glasgow and Dundee, and to be praising God surrounded by so many voices in such a brilliant auditorium.

Marge, Libby and I, from Blackhall St Columba's church choir, had our annual reunion with Jill Douglas from Edinburgh Northwest Kirk at Pennywell, but well known to so many of you as the wife of one of our former ministers.

Looking out on the rows of people in the Stalls and Grand Circle, it was great to know that several of our own congregation had come along to share in the evening. So good to make out some familiar faces!

While the main choir presented a programme of fourteen worship songs, accompanied by a five-piece praise band, there was also a lively youth choir who filled the front of the stage for two songs in each half of the programme. This year's guest soloist was Onaje Jefferson, formerly with the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir; and the drama duo Searchlight presented a moving tribute to the athletic success and Christian witness of Eric Liddell.

Challenged by a short address from Kenny Borthwick, at one time minister at Wester Hailes Church, we sang our final piece, “When we all get to Heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be” – and, for just that short while, it was as if we had a wee preview!

Roll on 21st June 2026, when we gather in Glasgow’s Royal Concert Hall. Do consider joining us in the choir – all rehearsal materials provided – or save the date to come over to support us that afternoon.

Muriel, Marge and Libby

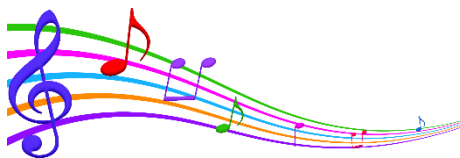


Muriel, Libby, Marge and Jill



Musical Notes

St Columba's has hosted several musical events recently.



The **Forth Valley Chorus**, to which a number of our members contribute their vocal skills brought “songs and Sparkle” to our church on 17th May. A good audience enjoyed a wide variety of songs all with a light-hearted approach and lots of enthusiasm on the part of the singers.

Jubilo is a large choral group who came to our church on 7th June to lead the audience in a “Come and Sing” Mozart’s Requiem. This well-known and much-loved work was given a strong lead and all those present were able to sense the power of the work as they were helped to understand not only the music but the emotion behind it.

On Sunday evening June 8th the **Junior Singers** treated us to a rendition of Jonah-Man Jazz by Michael Hurd. They certainly gave 100% in their presentation of this fun show of 6 songs with the kids making up much of the choreography themselves under the expert guidance of Amy Donaldson and Marge Whiteside. The band acted as backers for this group and thoroughly enjoyed working with them. Many of the young folk will be heading to senior school where other musical opportunities await them. It is a shame to lose all their enthusiasm and experience but we will be looking to starting a new group in the new session of Blackhall school.

A number of us went to the Usher Hall on 21st June to hear the 400 strong **Praise Gathering** choir and band lead over 1500 people in a combination of well-known praise songs as well as some new material led by soloist Onaje Jefferson formerly of Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir in New York. The Youth Choir performed with such energy it was hard to keep folk sitting in their seats. The Searchlight Theatre Company did a couple of very moving sets – one about Chariots of Fire hero Eric Liddle telling of his faith and witness. Worth catching them in the Festival if you get a chance.

Music @ St Columba's

The **Praise band and singers** provide an alternative accompaniment to the singing in the church. Traditional big hymns probably do best with the organ at full blast but some of the modern songs really require rhythm and a more modern sound. Therefore, we now have piano, keyboard, bass, percussion, guitar and two or three violins providing the music and a group of singers who learn the new songs to teach them to the congregation. We enjoy leading the singing and if you play any musical instrument or feel you could join us a few times a year to lead the singing I would be delighted to hear from you.



The Praise Band and Singers

Our next planned event in the **Music@St.Columba's** series is on **Saturday 30th August at 7pm** when I hope to have the **Hakuna Matata Children's Choir from Kenya** giving a concert. All the kids are orphans, mostly of war and they bring an energy and joy to their singing which is remarkable given their background. More details will be given soon but please put the date in your diary since this is unlike any concert we have held before.

Music @ St Columba's

The **RESOL String Quartet**.

The Quartet will again give us a 12.00 noon lunchtime concert of one hour, on Saturday 6th of September - so if you are free and want a dose of classical music played by young, gifted musicians then join us to see this group once again.



RESOL String Quartet

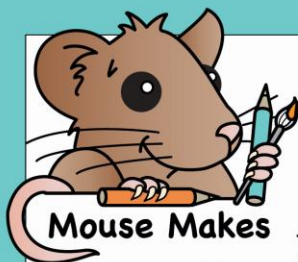
For something a bit different in our series, **Lucy Farrimond** is coming to present an evening of light popular and classical songs. Lucy is an accomplished pianist but she also sings a variety of musical genres. This time she will accompany herself singing some well know songs as well as some which will be new to us. She interacts with her audience and will tell us something about the life of a musician in Scotland.

For the first time, the 25-member **Edinburgh Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra** will join their East Kilbride colleagues to perform a concert on Saturday, 8th November at 7pm. This event will highlight the versatility of these instruments and feature popular tunes you'll likely be humming on your way home.

I hope you will support these musicians as they come to entertain us and give of their time and talent. I am sure you will enjoy each of these as they perform in their different ways.

Donald Cameron

Director Music. Blackhall St Columba's Church of Scotland



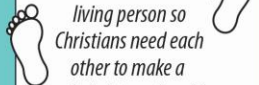
"Just as a **body**, though **one**, has **many** parts, but all its many **parts** form one body, so it is with **Christ**. For we were all baptised by one **Spirit** so as to form one body... Even so, the body is not made up of one part but of many..."

...Now you are the body of Christ, and **each** one of you is part of it."

from 1 Corinthians 12:12-27



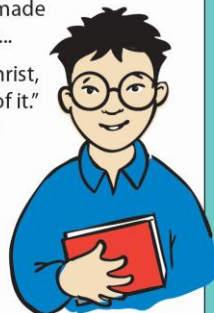
Just as the different parts of our body need each other to make a **whole**, living person so Christians need each other to make a whole living church!



K N E E S
J O W H O L E
T E E T H H Q J V
E A F H E A D O E
Y C F M A N Y I R
H E B O D Y N Y
C E Y E S D E F
H T K C P M D I
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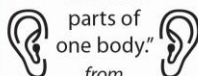
Look in the Bible verses for the words written in **bold** then look for these words too!

GOD • TOGETHER • EQUAL • ALL • EVERY
HEAD • EYES • EARS • MOUTH • TONGUE
TEETH • NOSE • ARMS • HANDS • FINGERS
LEGS • KNEES • FEET • TOES • GIFTS



"Though we are many, we are one body in **union** with Christ, and we are **joined** to each other as **different** parts of one body."

from Romans 12:1-7



 <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>

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Publication deadlines

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For contributions to Kirk News:

judith.mair@hotmail.co.uk

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