

The Link

The Newsletter of Dalriada Mid Argyll Church

(www.dalriadamidargyllchurch.org.uk)

February 2025



The Manse

“The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice
and blossom like the crocus;
it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.
(Isaiah 35:1-2)

Spring is coming and Lent is almost upon us! This year the season begins on 5th March (Ash Wednesday) and incorporates the 40 weekdays (excluding Sundays) from Ash Wednesday to Easter. It is generally observed by Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and some Protestant churches as a period of reflection, repentance, and fasting.

The term *Lent* comes from the “Old English *lencten*—springtime, spring” and “from the West Germanic *langitinaz*—long-days or lengthening of the day.”

Are you looking for something new or different to do during Lent this year? There are many ways to make the Lenten period meaningful without missing meals.

Many different charities and organisations (including the ones our congregation tries to support throughout the year, see below) are looking for help and support this year.

Among the many others is *The Shelterbox Trust* which was recently brought to my attention. They are launching a *Give a Tent for Lent* project and ask, “Do you want to help give shelter to families facing disaster? If so, you and some friends might want to sign up. You will have 40 days to fund-raise for ShelterBox, helping to provide shelter for families who’ve lost their homes to earthquakes, floods, hurricanes or conflict.

Some suggestions for fundraising include having a Lent Lunch, organising a collection, a sleep-out/sleepover, giving up chocolate (and donating what you would spend), a sponsored digital detox. Be creative! It’s totally up to you. You can do it as a group, with friends and family, or by yourself.

Do it to give emergency shelter. Do it to help families recover. Do it to deepen your Lent journey by remembering people rebuilding after disaster. Sign up and ShelterBox will send you everything to get you started – and inspire others to join in. More info about ShelterBox can be found at:
<https://shelterbox.org>

Other Lent projects are being organised by:

WaterAid: help communities build clean water systems for generations to come.

Christian Aid: Acting on poverty, living in solidarity

TearFund: working with local churches and organisations in more than 50 countries

So, be creative this Lenten season for “the wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.”

God will bring about a beautiful restoration.

The wilderness and wastelands of this world shall blossom abundantly and rejoice.

This promise has proved true in many ways, and in some sense is yet to be fulfilled.

The promise is true as modern-day humanitarian projects are implemented.

The promise will be true in its ultimate fulfilment when God restores the ecology of the world and His Kingdom is come.

ACORN

(the simplest way of following God in mission)

Jesus invites us to test prayer when he says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."(Matthew 7:7)

The General Assembly in 2021 urged churches to try the practice referred to by the acronym A-C-O-R-N. It seeks to connect Christians with the work God is doing in others through caring conversations. Try it as follows:-

Ask – 'Lord is there anyone beyond the church You want me to connect with today?'

When God **Calls** and reveals a person for us to get alongside, we simply **Obey** and follow through by contacting them in any way appropriate.

When we ask that person "How are you?" God is already there. Our job is to find out what God is doing and join Him in that conversation. God then reveals deeper hurts, desires and an opening for the gospel. We should then encourage each other by **Reporting** what God has been doing in and through us; **Noticing** together what God is up to and doing in other people.

Here is an actual example. The lady seemed overly surprised and beyond happy when someone came to her door. Our friend had arrived with flowers. The lady said "Thank you so much for remembering me on my birthday" and shared that no one else had come to see her. Our friend had no idea it was her birthday – but God did. This was no coincidence and what a day they had.

God does answer prayer. When I returned to the pulpit after my accident I reported to each congregation how God had answered their prayers by ensuring I was in the best place and that I recovered quicker than anyone expected!

So ask, seek and knock and share with us the wonderful things God is doing!

Jim Malcolm



Christian Aid is 80 This Year!

Christian Aid's work began in 1945 when it was founded by the British and Irish churches to support refugees in Europe following the devastation and upheaval caused by the Second World War.

Ever since the charity has worked around the world to overcome the injustices of poverty and to tackle its underlying causes.

In 2024, the work with 250 partners in 26 countries enabled them to be able to reach 4.5 million people directly and 19.3 million people indirectly.

Our congregation's Christian Aid Reps are Fiona MacFarlane and Norma Kelly who have been involved in raising the profile of Christian Aid in our communities and by helping to organise the annual fund-raising Christian Aid Week.

This year there will be an online Supporter's Gathering on Tuesday 25 February 2025 from 10.30am-12pm. To find out more use the following link:

www.christianaid.org.uk/events/gathering-2025

Please send all submissions
for the March issue
to moirathompson176@gmail.com
by 18th February.

“His Banner over Me is Love”

In the build up to the new millennium the Church of Scotland Guild suggested each Presbyterial Guild Council in Scotland could create a banner to commemorate the occasion. Each Council was allotted a Bible text. As part of South Argyll Guild Presbyterial Council we were asked to consider Joel Chapter 2 v28: “I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.”

We were offered a weekend course on banner making at Carberry Tower which Jennifer McNab and I attended. Many of those on the course were experienced in making banners and at first it was a bit daunting. However, everyone was friendly and helpful and it was a good experience with time set aside for reflection and prayer.

I was aware that not everyone in the congregation would welcome banners hanging in Ardrishaig church. It was suggested that perhaps the young minister who would soon join us would be happy with them, and he was.

All Guilds within the South Argyll Guild Presbyterial Council area were encouraged to take part, including the Council itself. It was the Council’s own interpretation of the text which was eventually chosen to be part of the national exhibition in Edinburgh, where over 60 banners from the Councils were displayed. The South Argyll

Council’s banner was eventually given to the Scot’s Kirk in Paris and I was fortunate to see it there a number of years ago when I visited the city.

My late husband, Jim, ably assisted by John McNab and the late Donald McMillan set up the pulley which enables us to change the banner according to the season. Eventually Betty McDougall and I were all that remained of that original banner group. Sadly Betty is no longer with us and without having her around to bounce my ideas off, I thought I had made my last banner.



However when on holiday in Ireland I discovered the story of John Newton who wrote the

words of many hymns including *Amazing Grace*.

He was a ruthless slave trader whose ship was caught in a fierce storm once, when sailing back to England. He prayed for help from God and the ship found shelter in Loch Swinny, County Donegal.

From then on he slowly turned his life around and eventually became an evangelical cleric and slavery abolitionist.

Shortly after that I watched a *Songs of Praise* programme which was entirely made up of John Newton hymns. That was my inspiration to make what will certainly be my last banner with the text ‘Amazing Grace.’

All the banners including the original, “I will pour out my spirit on all people” are stored in Ardrishaig Church Hall. I would be delighted if someone would take over being ‘Carer of the Banners.’ It would be even better if someone was inspired to make some new ones! And I would be happy to help in any way with this.

Kay Ballantine



Dalriada Mid-Argyll Church (An Eco-congregation)

This time of year is often associated with a good clear out and reorganisation of our homes and churches when we feel like a new start for a new year.

A surprising amount of funds can be raised from what we might discard and other items can be distributed elsewhere rather than end up in landfill. This month we are focusing on jewellery, watches, Christian books, Bible and stamps.

In March there will be a collection throughout the parish of old, broken jewellery and watches to raise funds for Transform Trade. This will be a new venture for our church and we look forward to what we might achieve. The process is that we will send off items to a recycling service and monies made will go directly to Transform Trade.

There will now be an ongoing collection of Bibles and Christian literature for Book Aid . This is because we now have access from another source of both Bibles and Christian literature and also an easy way to get both to the West of Scotland collection point in Bishopsbriggs. Please pass any Bibles and books for Book Aid to Ealasiad, Melanie and Moira. Book Aid provides books and Christian literature to people who would struggle to find access to these resources due to political instability and foreign currency restrictions.

Collection points for used stamps are in Ardrishaig and Kilmartin churches. Funds from our stamps are currently going to a Malawi project, *Firmly planted*

Finally there is a collection point in the lobby of Ardrishaig Church for used batteries.

The contact person for eco-congregation is Melanie Norman at melanie.norman@live.co.uk

PS It is hoped that Eco Congregation Scotland's chaplain, Rev David Coleman, will be with us on Palm Sunday at our *All Together* Service on Palm Sunday.



If, like me, the sight of Easter eggs in the shops in January makes your hackles rise, then please accept my apologies.....this is an Easter-related article!!

As we did last year, in conjunction with the local churches, we will be holding the Journey to the Cross Exhibition in Ardrishaig Public Hall.

The event will run from Wednesday April 16th until lunchtime on Saturday 20th, with our Good Friday Evening Service being held within the exhibition.

Perhaps last year you were involved in helping, or attended the event? Perhaps you missed out on being there? Why not put it in your diary now, and be sure to keep those dates free so you can come along?

Will we be looking for helpers? Of course we will!

There will be more details nearer the time, but for now the best help would be to pray for the organising that needs to be done, and perhaps also to pray about who you could bring along to it?

Last year's event was well-attended by folk from the local churches, but it would be good to draw in people within our neighbourhood who may find it an easier space to enter than the churches themselves, and for whom it offers a real opportunity to engage with the Easter story, and the salvation which Jesus' death and resurrection makes possible for us all.

Ruth Carruthers

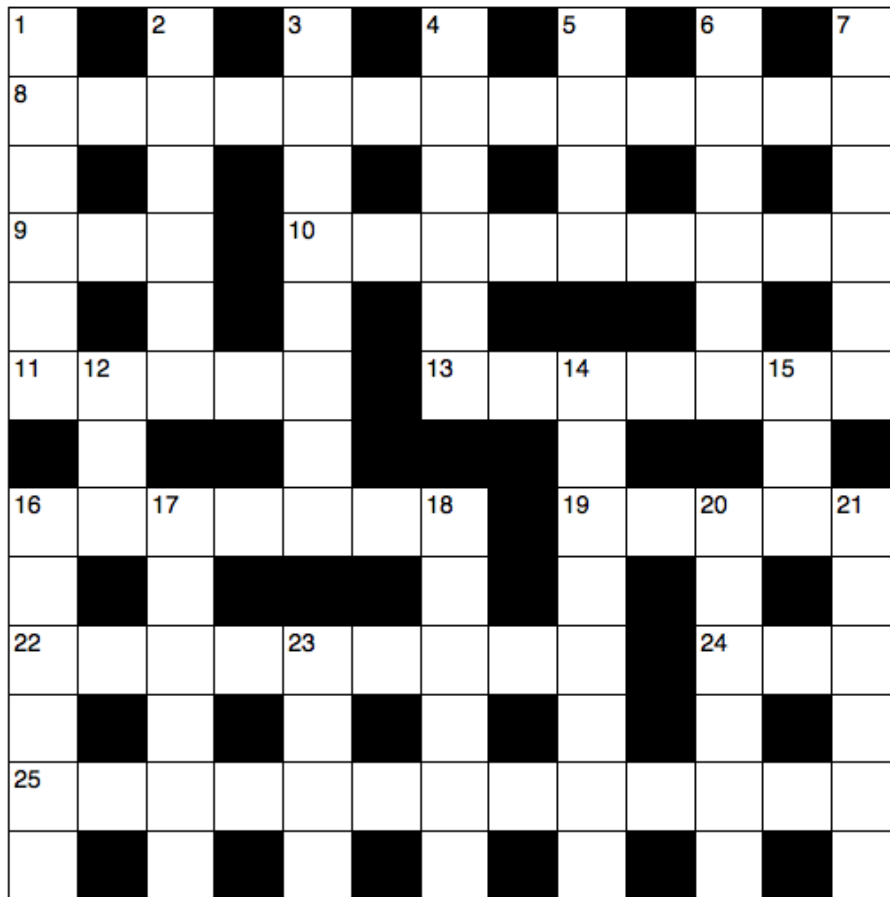
Paradoxes of Time

- Today we have bigger houses and smaller families,
More conveniences, but less time.
- We have more degrees, but less common sense,
More knowledge, but less judgement.
- We have more experts, but more problems,
More medicine, but less wellness.
- We spend too recklessly; Laugh too little;
Drive too fast; Get angry too quickly;
Stay up too late; Read too little;
Watch TV too much and pray too seldom!
- We've multiplied our possessions, but reduced our va
We talk too much, love too little, and lie too often.
- We've learned how to make a living, but not a life.
We've added years to life, not life to years.
We have taller buildings, but shorter tempers;
- We spend more, but have less.
We buy more, but enjoy less.
- We've been all the way to the moon and back,
but have trouble crossing the street to meet our neigh
- We've conquered outer space, but not inner space.
We've split the atom, but not our prejudice.
- We've learned to rush, but not to wait.
- We have higher incomes, but lower morals.
- More leisure and less fun;
- More kinds of foods, but less nutrition.
- Two incomes, but more divorces;
- Fancier homes, but broken homes.

That's why I propose, that as of today,
you don't keep anything for special occasions,
because every day you live is a special occasion.

- ◇ Search for knowledge. Read more.
- ◇ Sit on your front porch and admire the view without paying attention to your needs.
- ◇ Spend more time with your family and friends,
- ◇ Eat your favourite foods and visit the places you love.
- ◇ Life is a chain of moments of enjoyment, not only about survival.
- ◇ Use your crystal goblets.
- ◇ Don't save your best perfume, use it every time you feel you want it.
- ◇ Remove from your vocabulary phrases like "One of these days" and "Someday."
- ◇ Write that letter you've thought about writing.
- ◇ Tell your family and friends how much you love them.
- ◇ Don't delay anything that adds laughter and joy to your life.





Across

- 8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)
- 9 'Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap' (Leviticus 4:12) (3)
- 10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)
- 11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)
- 13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)
- 16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)
- 19 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (5)
- 22 David's plea to God concerning those referred to in 14 Down: 'On — — let them escape' (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)
- 24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1)
- 25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)

Down

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)
- 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)
- 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)

- 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)
- 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)
- 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)
- 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain of erings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)
- 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)
- 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)
- 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)
- 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)
- 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)
- 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)
- 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)
- 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)
- 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)

The Power of Prayer

(Some personal thoughts on Prayer)

“The Lord’s Prayer” is the example Jesus gave when asked how we should pray. While this prayer is a template given by Christ, we must use its words with a heart felt seeking of God! Contemplate the words of the Lord’ prayer to examine your own heart.

- The power of prayer is the power of God
- Prayer is a key way to develop a loving relationship with God.
- The gift of prayer is that we learn to receive, experience and return His love.
- Prayer is one place where God can get to us, speak to us and minister to us.
- Seldom do we get closer to God than in prayer.
- Christianity is a relationship.



We have to remember that Jesus had to suffer and die on the cross to make it possible for us to approach God to worship and pray. We must remember to thank God as He gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

The heart of what prayer is not just asking for things. It is also about seeking God’ face, listening to Him, spending time in His presence and enjoying communication with Him and getting to know Him better.

He welcomes everyone. There is no distinction. All you need is your faith in God and He promises you grace, honour and blessings.

It doesn’t matter where you are or what you are doing anyone can pray. When I am walking and I think about the hymn ‘How Great Thou Art’ (“Oh Lord my God! when I in awesome wonder consider all the works Thy hand has made”) I feel really close to God and at peace.

I am sure everyone at times, especially when faced with a difficult situation, has a silent prayer: ‘Oh God help me’ or ‘Why me?’ And faith is tested because you cannot believe that God has allowed this to happen to you. God does not promise to remove all trials and difficulties from our lives. Instead of removing them, God will take us through them. Learn to rely on God’s strength and guidance as He is with you, you are never alone; believe because you are loved by God.

Jesus said ask and it will be given to you. The starting power of an answered prayer is asking, as He listens to all our prayers. The response may be yes, no or wait.

Forgiveness can be a barrier to prayer as can praying with wrong motives – “bear with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgive each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive” (Colossians 3:13)

Sometimes Satan, without us realizing, is tempting us. Jesus prays to God on our behalf and helps us to walk wisely and play a part in God’s calling. We then have to wait before our prayer is answered.

Consider Paul’s advice in Philippians Chapter 4, verses 6-7: “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
Amen

Catherine MacLennan

What's On in February

Sun	2 nd	Services in Ardrishaig at 10am and Achahoish at 11.30am
Mon	3 rd	Craft Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall, 2pm to 4pm
Tues	4 th	No Reading Group/Book Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall
Wed	5 th	Not Another Coffee Morning in Ardrishaig Church Hall at 10:30am
Thur	6 th	Reading Group/Book Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall at 2pm
Sat	8 th	Café Connect in Achnamara Hall, 10.30am to 12.30 pm
Sun	9 th	All Together Service in Tayvallich at 11am
Mon	10 th	Craft Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall, 2pm to 4pm
Tues	11 th	Reading Group/Book Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall at 7.30pm
Wed	12 th	Not Another Coffee Morning in Ardrishaig Church Hall at 10:30am
Thur	14	Reading Group/Book Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall at 2pm
Thur	13 th	House Group, contact Louise Logue
Fri	14 th	Mission Group meets in Kilmartin Church at 2pm
Sat	15 th	Café Connect in Achnamara Hall, 10.30am to 12.30 pm
Sun	16 th	Services in Kilmartin at 10am and Ardrishaig at 11.30am
Mon	17 th	Planning Group meets in Lochgilphead Church Hall at 10am
Mon	17 th	Craft Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall, 2pm to 4pm
Tues	18 th	Reading Group/Book Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall at 7.30pm
Wed	19 th	Not Another Coffee Morning in Ardrishaig Church Hall at 10:30am
Thur	20 th	Reading Group/Book Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall at 2pm
Sat	22 nd	Café Connect in Achnamara Hall, 10.30am to 12.30 pm
Sun	23 rd	Services in Achahoish at 10am and Tayvallich at 11.30am
Mon	24 th	Craft Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall, 2pm to 4pm
Tues	25 th	Reading Group/Book Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall at 7.30pm
Wed	26 th	Not Another Coffee Morning in Ardrishaig Church Hall at 10:30am
Thur	27 th	Reading Group/Book Club in Ardrishaig Church Hall at 2pm

Crossword Solution

ACROSS:
 8, Cross-examined. 9, Ash. 10, Apocrypha. 11, Sci-fi. 13, Typical. 16, Visited. 19, Offer. 22, No account. 24, RAC. 25, Sovereign Lord.
 DOWN:
 1, Oceans. 2, Hophni. 3, Islamist. 4, Exhort. 5, Omar. 6, On spec. 7, Add all. 12, CBI. 14, Plotting. 15, Awe. 16, Vanish. 17, Starve. 18, Daub it. 20, Furrow. 21, Recede. 23, Cure.

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