

The Link

The Newsletter of Dalriada Mid Argyll Church
(www.dalriadamidargyllchurch.org.uk)

May 2025

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“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen!”

(Luke 24:5-6)

The tomb is empty, the stone rolled away, and we have celebrated the most glorious truth of our faith—Christ is risen! And now, we find ourselves in the days beyond Easter, when the fanfare quietens, but the significance and meaning deepens.

Easter isn't the end of the story. In many ways, it is the beginning.

After the resurrection, Jesus met His disciples in everyday places—on roads, in homes, by the sea. And just like then, He continues to meet us in the ‘everydayness’ of life: in our routines, our relationships, our joys, and our struggles.

Beyond Easter, we are called to live as resurrection people. This means

- choosing hope when despair whispers,
- forgiveness when grudges tempt,
- peace in the face of conflict,
- and love even when it costs us.

The risen Christ walks with us, not just on mountaintops, but in the valleys too.

So let's continue moving forward together in this resurrection season, not leaving Easter behind, but carrying it with us—into our decisions, our service, our worship, and our witness for the resurrection of Jesus is not a one-day event—it is a daily reality. It is the heartbeat of our faith and the light that guides us through every season.

Easter reminds us that death does not have the final word, that hope is stronger than despair, and that love always prevails.

Let the resurrection of Jesus shape your words, your choices, your prayers. Be a bearer of that hope in your family, your workplace, and our community for tThe world needs Easter people—those who walk in grace, speak with kindness, and live with courage.

Let's not leave the empty tomb behind too quickly. Instead, let us walk with the Risen Christ as He continues to surprise us, teach us, and call us to new life.

“Be still,
and know



I am God”
(Ps46 v10)

The Garden Group which has helped nurture the grounds around our hall and church in Ardrishaig has separated from the Eco Congregation team. But do not be alarmed, there has been no great falling out. Rather, this has come about because this is an activity that is focused on the church garden in Ardrishaig whilst the Eco-congregation projects are Dalriada Mid-Argyll wide, even world wide.

Perhaps other small gardening projects could be done round about our other buildings and we would enjoy joining with others to share ideas, seeds etc.

The group had a great start to the growing season. Kind-hearted local builders David and Scott Cameron gifted a wonderful garden shelter. Its unique features include a perspex roof made from a recycled Covid pandemic screen, and a porthole. It's a perfect place to sit for reflection and prayer and the porthole allows us to sit protected from the weather but with a wonderful view of Loch Fyne.

But the goodwill didn't stop there. We also had another donation – soil, day lillies and a further promise of more plants and pots as the growing season progresses.

Why not join us in the garden on a Monday afternoon from 2pm to 3pm or have a quiet moment in this lovely spot.

We did it and thank-you!

The small change donated for tea and coffee after our Services recently totalled **£418** which has been sent to Tear Fund's Toilet Twinning project. It will allow for 6 toilets to be built. So, well done everyone—it's amazing how donations of 50p or £1 can bring about such change.

Pounds (of another kind) have been sent to Recycling for Good Causes. **34kg (~75lbs) of items** have been sent and we look forward to finding out how much money this will raise for Transform Trade.



**Saying Goodbye
Remembrance Service
Glasgow, Scotland**

GLASGOW CATHEDRAL

10TH OF MAY, 2025 - 11AM

A SERVICE FOR ANYONE WHO HAS
LOST A BABY IN PREGNANCY, AT BIRTH
OR IN EARLY YEARS, WHETHER THE
LOSS WAS YESTERDAY OR 80 YEARS
AGO. THIS EVENT IS ALSO FOR THOSE
GRIEVING THAT THEY HAVE NEVER
BEEN ABLE TO HAVE A CHILD.

SAYINGGOODBYE.ORG

SAYING GOODBYE IS A DIVISION
OF MARIPOSA INTERNATIONAL

Who is this service for?

The answer is “anyone who has either personally lost a baby at any stage of pregnancy, at birth, or in early years, or who has been affected by family members' or friends' loss. Whether the loss was recent or 80 years ago, everyone is welcome to attend. We have also extended the services, and gladly welcome anyone who is grieving the fact that they haven't had children. This may be due to circumstance, infertility, or for other reasons - but all are welcome. Babies and children are also invited to come with their families, as the Saying Goodbye service is truly a family event for all. www.sayinggoodbye.org

The Church of Scotland stands at a defining moment, facing stark financial realities while holding onto a compelling vision for the future, writes Rev David S Cameron (Convener Church of Scotland Assembly Trustees) as he explains why this is a time of lament but also a time to dream.

The need for radical change has long been recognised as declining minister numbers, membership reductions, and shrinking income place strain on the Church at both national and local levels. Recent General Assemblies have introduced necessary reforms, but the urgency of the current financial situation demands even more difficult decisions, with free reserves now covering less than five months of operating costs.

In 2024, the General Assembly instructed the Trustees to reach a balanced budget by 2027. However, the financial outlook has worsened as income continues to fall in real terms as cost pressures increase, bringing the Church to a tipping point. As a result, the Trustees have had to implement measures they had hoped to avoid, including a Voluntary Exit Scheme, compulsory redundancies within the national administration, and significant reductions in the Seeds for Growth budget. Changes to the Vacancy Allowance, now covering only locum or pulpit supply costs for vacant congregations, took effect in January.

Further adjustments to the Presbytery Mission Plan Act will be presented at this year's Assembly, introducing a closer focus on financial sustainability and requiring mandatory adjustments for congregations unable to meet their debts.

These steps, while necessary, come with intense grief. They affect our people, ministries, and the Church's ability to serve communities. We acknowledge the pain these changes bring, and we hold in prayer those affected, trusting in God's guidance as we navigate this challenging landscape.

Yet even amid difficulty, we look beyond mere survival toward renewal. At the National Ministers' Conference in February, the Faith Action Leadership Team launched 'Vivid Vision', a bold commitment to a future where the Church is vibrant, growing, and deeply rooted in Christ.

'By 2027, we envision a Church where congregations – whether traditional, new, rural, or urban – find innovative ways to make Jesus known, serving their communities with compassion and courage. Local ecumenical partnerships are flourishing, and new worshipping communities are emerging organically, guided by the Spirit.'

The leaner national Church we have been moving towards will remain focused on empowering local mission and equipping leaders to serve faithfully. This transformation requires sacrifice. Some churches have closed, and others will still follow. Familiar ways of working may no longer be sustainable. But even as we lament these losses, we hold fast to a greater hope.

'A new culture is taking root – one of faith, trust, and a "can-do" spirit that empowers congregations to dream, act, and serve in new ways. Presbyteries are becoming centres of support, and young leaders are stepping forward to shape the Church's future.'

Yet vision alone is not enough. The renewal of the Church will not come from words alone, but from the willingness to act. This is why what we do matters, stewardship matters. The choices we make now – how we allocate resources, what we prioritise, and where we invest our time and energy – will determine whether this vision becomes reality. The Church of Scotland must be both courageous and responsible, balancing tradition and adaptation, financial prudence and missional ambition.

This is a moment for lament, but also for resolve. A time to grieve, but also to dream. As we walk this road together, may we trust in God's provision and the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit, who continues to call us into a future filled with promise and purpose.





and the unstoppable power of hope!

In 2025 Christian Aid marks 80 years of fighting poverty and injustice. Today they remain united in love and hope with churches and Christians around the world, supporting millions of people of all faiths and none. Because they believe in the unstoppable power of hope.

"Thanks for being part of our global community of supporters, churches, fundraisers, activists and partners. We couldn't deliver our groundbreaking work without you and the hope, love and determination you bring to all we do together."

Christian Aid Week is fantastic opportunity for churches and communities to come together, but our work together doesn't end there. Please join us throughout 2025 and beyond in our mission to ensure that everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.



Christian Aid's 80th anniversary services will be held at St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, on 17th May at 7pm and at Westminster Abbey, on 12th June at 12noon. All are welcome to join these events and you can register online for a place at www.christianaid.org.uk

Locally, as well as the annual Christian Aid Week collections there will be a Coffee Morning on 17th May in the Church Hall in Ardrishaig from 10am till 12noon. There will also be a display of WW2 model aircraft and anyone with memorabilia is welcome to bring it along as we celebrate the end of World War 2 and the beginning of Christian

Aid's work throughout the world. (Helpers and baking will also be most welcome).

Remember ACORN?



ACORN, the daily routine of asking God to show you who you should contact and with whom you should engage in meaningful conversations.

It's one of God's way of involving you in His purpose and building your faith.

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.

We then just ask the person "How are you?" God is already there, with the other. Our job is to find out what God is doing and join God in that conversation. God then reveals deeper hurts, desires and opening for the Gospel.

Christians then frequently gather to disciple and encourage each other by **Reporting** what God has been doing in and through them, and by **Noticing** together what God is up to and doing in the other person.

Sharing experiences can also build faith in others. In the last Link I asked if you could send your testimonies to me at jgmalcolm@btinternet.com for inclusion in future newsletters. I've not had any emails but a member of the congregation did tell me that, after praying the prayer, God laid on her heart to make a couple of phone calls. At first she was unsure and hesitated but the request grew stronger. She made those calls and had meaningful conversations.

We might not know the reason for the calls or the outcome but God knows!

Jim Malcolm



Journey to the Cross

This year's Journey to the Cross exhibition brought some very special moments and conversations, as individuals, groups of friends, and families visited our Easter displays, followed the "Lego video tour" of Easter witnesses, and enjoyed the fantastic home-baking on offer afterwards.

There were more slow starts and quiet spells than we'd had last year, but this actually gave scope for more friendship and conversation between those on the stewarding and kitchen rotas, helping cement good relations with those from all the different churches who gave of their time and effort to be on hand and help it all run smoothly. Each day folk from St Margaret's, Christchurch, Lochgilphead Baptist, Lochgilphead Free Church and our neighbours in Netherlorn Parish turned up to add their help to our rotas, and we were especially glad of front desk assistance from Margaret Jacobsen, one of the local Quakers. Visitors seemed to come along a bit like buses – none for ages, and then a whole cluster of them all together!

Floral arrangements by Rhona Thompson, Liz Malcolm, Margaret Davidson and Linda Tighe, along with artwork by Lynne Girdwod, Ardrishaig Halls Manager, Morag Robbins of St Margaret's and Melanie Norman all added to the beauty of the exhibition. Margaret McCulloch kindly provided the kitchen supplies, and the delicious Fairtrade chocolate eggs from the Meaningful Chocolate Company were purchased by Davina Sully, some for sale, and some for use on one of the displays. I know that they were a special attraction for the 5 teenagers who made more than one visit to the exhibition!

A wide range of literature was available for people to take away with them, and it was heartening to see that a good number of the "Good News" newspapers and "Am I Alive?" magazines went, along with more than 40 of the leaflets that encouraged people to commit their lives to following Jesus, making their own journey of faith.

One or two visitors who were passing through took a bundle of newspapers to distribute in their home churches on Arran, in Edinburgh and in Cheshire.

People left some very lovely and heartfelt comments both on the boards round the main hall, and in the Visitor book.

Special thanks to Colin and Zander Brailsford for their exceptional stone-work(!), to David Jardine "Screenmeister", and to all the "construction crew" who so patiently helped with assembling and dismantling – no mean feat!

Thanks too to those who prayed for this event to be "a success". It's sometimes hard to quantify what "success" might look like in God's eyes, and we'll probably never know the results He brings about in people's lives through an experience like this. Perhaps it would be good to begin by asking one another – "What did it mean to you to visit the Journey to the Cross?" or by sharing with others how you found the experience?

We occupied the Public Hall for 4 days, but let's continue to pray the event draws hearts and minds closer to our Lord in the days to come.

Ruth Carruthers

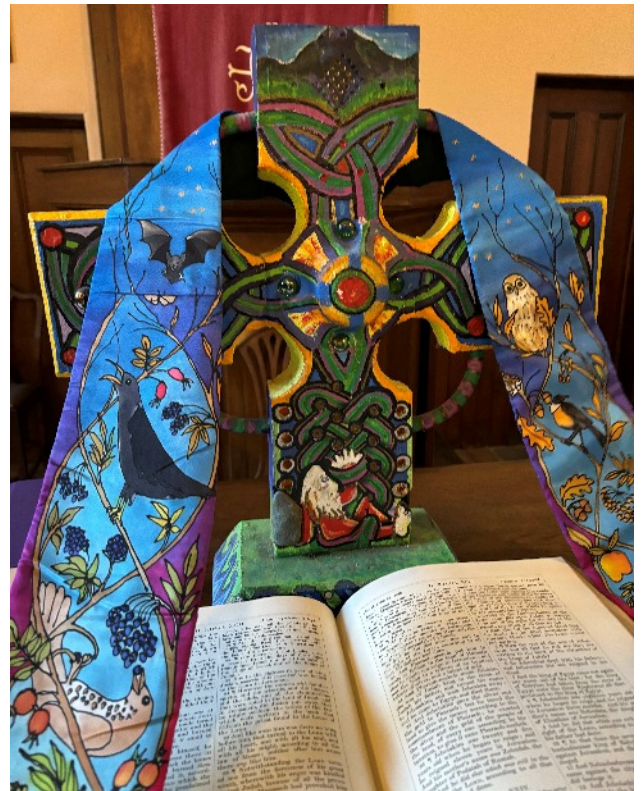
“The path I walk, Christ walks it”
(attributed to Saint Columba, 6th century)

This year’s Holy Week activities saw us in our churches and in the community as we remembered some of the events of Jesus’ last earthly journey.

It began on Palm Sunday with Rev David Coleman of Eco Congregation Scotland and his many animal puppets to help illustrate his thought-provoking take on the events of that day. The presence of twigs and Alan Cameron’s pruned rhododendrons made good (re-purposed) substitutes for palm branches. After the Service lunch was enjoyed in the church hall. Whilst it wasn’t quite a re-enactment of Jesus feeding 5000+ people, similar emotions/tensions were on display. At 10 o’clock there was barely any food to share (“what will we do?”) But by the time the Service was to start there was so much (“what will we do?”). Thanks to Alexis, Catherine, Ealasaid, Melanie and Moira for organising things and to Graham, Ian, James, Joanna, Libby, Linda, Margaret, Paul and others who helped with bringing it all together.

The next night, in Achahoish, David Coleman’s theme was *Pilgrimage*; something which we as a congregation engage in week by week but also took up as we travelled from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday – from Ardrishaig → Achahoish → Kilmartin → Ardrishaig Hall → Columba’s Cave, Ellary → Lochgilphead Front Green → Kilmory Chapel → Tayvallich → Lochgilphead → Ardfenaig. At each of these staging posts there were opportunities for the “pilgrims” to reflect on Hospitality and Servant-hood; Commemoration/Celebration Meals (old and new); Love and Sacrifice; Isolation and Desolation; Hope and Hopelessness; Resurrection and Hope – Life.

Some of those themes can also be seen in the imagery of one of David Coleman’s stoles and Celtic Cross.



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