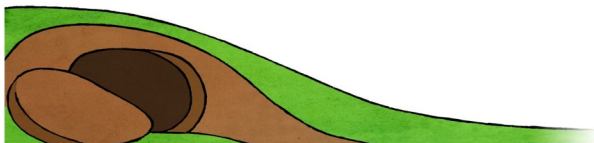




ALLOWAY AND FISHERTON
PARISH CHURCH
NEWSLETTER



April
2026

Front Cover by Ava P6G Alloway Primary School



The Church of Scotland seeks to inspire the people of Scotland and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and serving communities.



Dear Friends

When I first became minister at Alloway and Fisherton I felt I became a jailer!

A very generous set of keys was given to me. Big mistake.

I am not always good with keys!

I'm sure I'm not the only person to have locked themselves out of their car. Approximately thirty years ago a kind police officer helped me out in Glasgow. Or should I say helped me in?

(You might not be able to find a police officer quite so easily now!)

I visited Jill's parents in their home and was ready to drive home in my Father's newish car.

But where were the keys?

For what seemed like an eternity they could not be found.

Eventually they were found out in the peg bag hanging outside in their garden.

Where else would you leave your car keys?

Speaking of keys -

Easter gives us very enduring keys to life and living.

I frequently share the story of the little girl who when asked which was her church declared hers was the one with the plus on top!

The Easter message unlocks the positivity of the good news.

The cross is a picture of violence, yet the key to peace;
a picture of suffering, yet the key to healing;
a picture of death, yet the key to life;
a picture of utter weakness, yet the key to power;
a picture of punishment, yet the key to forgiveness;
a picture of hatred, yet the key to love.

The empty tomb invites us to believe that there is nothing in life or death which can separate us from His love.

Thus in a warring, weary world we find keys to a new way of life and love and service.

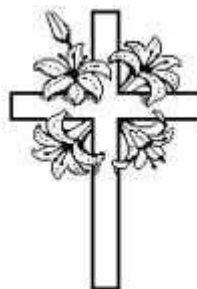
We find new hope for this life and the next!

As the springtime sunshine warms our faces may our hearts also be warmed.

May the cross and the tomb unlock our faith and hope for the future.

Happy Easter to you and yours!

Rev Neil McNaught



Some notes from Rev. David...

SCHOOLS

It is a privilege for Fiona and me to run Scripture Union at Alloway Primary School (Wednesday lunchtime) and Doonfoot Primary School (Friday lunchtime). Each week we have approximately 45 children attending, and they look forward to receiving a prize for 10-weeks attendance (a book) and for 20-weeks attendance (Youth Bible). Attendance has been so good this year that we have already awarded almost 30 bibles. It is also really encouraging to see so many of the children also attending PULSE. I wonder if we will have any children receiving a prize for 30-weeks attendance? - that would be a first (I will need to identify a suitable award!).

At our March meeting of the 'Men's Breakfast', we had a record attendance - 40 gents joined together for a hot-filled roll, tea or coffee before hearing from our guest speaker from the RNLI. Jim Redmond who is the Lifeboat Operations Manager at Troon Lifeboat Station gave a fascinating presentation on the work of the RNLI and Troon Lifeboat Station. Jim kindly invited the men to visit Troon Lifeboat Station in the Summer months to see around the station and observe a lifeboat being launched for a training exercise. The donations received (£153) were given to support the work of the RNLI. Our next Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday 30th May at 10.00 - all men welcome!



What a wonderful and joyful evening we had at our 3rd Annual Church Family Ceilidh on Saturday 28th March. As in previous years, the music was provided by the amazing 'Jiggered Ceilidh Band' who ensured a full dance floor throughout the evening. It was so good to see dancers of all ages on the floor, all with smiles on their faces. I must express my appreciation to the Church Social Committee who again provided a fantastic supper - Thank-You! The feedback received at the end of the evening suggests that I should get the band booked for a 4th Annual Church Family Ceilidh in 2027 - look out for details in January!



Another wee plug for 'Praise Gathering 2026'. Praise Gathering is a 450-voice choir drawn from more than 200 Scottish Christian Churches and in addition will feature performances by the PG Youth Choir, Celtic Worship, The Searchlight Theatre Company, and a reflection from Kenny Borthwick. This year, the Praise Gathering concerts will be held in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Saturday 20th June (3.00pm) and Sunday 21st June (4.00pm). For further information, please speak with Rev. David. Tickets are available at

<https://register.praisegathering.org.uk/choir/purchase-tickets>.

The next meeting of Messy Church will be on Saturday 9th May, 4.00-6.00pm. We continue with our theme for this session - 'Important Numbers In The Bible!' and in May we move on to the number '40'. As always, we will enjoy crafts, videos, songs, games, and finish with a meal together. All children accompanied by an adult will be welcome! Once again, a massive 'thank-you' to the amazing teams that join together to make Messy Church possible.



Stepping Stones

The next programme of Stepping Stones, our bereavement support group will commence on Friday 24th April. We will meet from 2.00-3.30pm on the following dates: Fridays 24th April, 1st May, 8th May, 15th May and 22nd May 2026. If you know someone who would benefit from bereavement support, please encourage them to come along - you can accompany them! Previous participants have found the sessions extremely beneficial. Please speak to me if you would like further information, or pick up one of the information leaflets in the church/ church halls.

Richest blessings, David.



Session Update

There's not too much to report from our last meeting in February which was finished in just under an hour. Most of our convenors and those giving reports now tend to send a copy to elders prior to the meeting giving them an opportunity to see which routine matters have been dealt with and therefore only need to ask questions on more important items which may need further discussion.

From our Property Committee we heard that our annual PAT testing had been completed, the organ had been serviced and found to be in good order and our Fire Evacuation Procedures had been reviewed. Comment was made about the excellent result of the re-sanding of the main hall floor and a plea made for care when moving tables and chairs. Donald confirmed that we have just accepted a quote to replace double glazing units in the kitchen, office, toilets and small hall. However, he did also report that there had been a further blockage in the Ladies toilet at the hall which had required a call out from Drain Clear and caused them some difficulty in clearing. Consequently, a letter to all organisations using the hall would be sent asking for their cooperation in keeping the drains clear.

Our treasurer had sent a copy of the completed annual report and accounts to all elders and advised that a special meeting of Trustees would take place after the communion service on 8th March when they would have a chance to ask questions or make comments prior to the accounts being formally presented for approval. The only comment Lorna made at this point was to note that where we had forecast a deficit for the year of £97,000 we have finished with a surplus of £93,000. This was due to a number of unforeseen generous legacies, additional income from members after a Stewardship campaign and some reduced expenditure on major projects.

Other than announcing a few dates for our next leisurely lunch (Thursday 26th March), a Ceilidh (Saturday 28th March) and a new praise service (Sunday 1st March) our committee convenors had little to report this month.

An update was given on the sale of Fisherton Church to confirm that an offer had been accepted subject to clarification of a couple of administration points which were being dealt with.

We did, however, finish with some more good news with the admission of three more new members.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES.....

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Kirk Session and congregation for arranging to present Long Service Awards to us during the morning service on Sunday 8 March 2026 to mark our length of service in the Eldership of the Church of Scotland.

It should be appreciated of course that these years of service are an accumulation of our time as Elders in the congregations where we have previously served. As we have only been members in Alloway for a couple of years it's only natural that you would like to know a bit about our background experiences.

Andrew was ordained as an Elder in March 1973 in Kirn Parish Church and in 1975 after moving to Lochgilphead was admitted to Lochgilphead Parish Church where he was Session Clerk for the next 9 years. In 1984 we moved to Nairn and it was here that Margaret was ordained and we both became Kirk Session members in Nairn Old Parish Church. Life changed however for us in 1996 when Andrew was offered, and ACCEPTED, early retirement from his position as Director of Technical Services with Nairn District Council when the Authority was being absorbed along with eight other Districts into Highland Region.

In RETIREMENT we decided to return to Argyll and so returned to Kirn in 1997 where we rejoined Kirn Parish Church where we were both members of the Kirk Session and Andrew later became Clerk to the Congregational Board until it became part of the new Unitary Authority. It was mainly due to things like size of house, gardens, stairs, ferries etc. that we decided in our twilight age to downsize and by chance rather than design we found our ideal retirement flat at The Pines here in Alloway. We have enjoyed very much the warmth of welcome we have received in this congregation although we apologise for now falling into the "inactive" category compared with our past experiences.

Thanks to everyone for marking this milestone in our church life. We do value the Certificates and small mementos we have received and look forward to our future here in Alloway.

Andrew and Margaret Cook

happy
memories

Kiltwalk 2026

The Kiltwalk Glasgow 2026 is scheduled to take place on Sunday, April 26th, 2026.

Neil, Jill, Bill, Jean, Madge and Stevie a.k.a. the Alloway Strollers are in training for their 14 mile stroll to raise funds for Christian Aid.

Given the reduction in direct governmental overseas support, there never has been a more important time to support some of the world's poorest

Here is a little of what Christian Aid do

"With humanitarian crises like Ukraine and the Middle East filling the headlines of our newspapers and social media, there's no question that millions around the world wake up every day to the perils of living in an emergency.

Last year, with your support, we were able to help meet the immediate needs of 3.3 million people in crisis".

If you would like to support our venture please click on our team link.

Please note it is possible to gift aid.

[https://www.justgiving.com/team/allowaystrollers2026?
utm_medium=TE&utm_source=CL](https://www.justgiving.com/team/allowaystrollers2026?utm_medium=TE&utm_source=CL)





Service Times

Please note that on 26th April the service times will change to 9.45am and 11.15am. The 11.15am service will be a youth parade. The services will both be conducted by Rev Dr David Hume

Wednesday Worship

Why not join us for Wednesday Worship 10.30am - 11am in the Octagonal hall this month?

(A short service followed by a long cup of tea)

Wednesday Worship 8th/15th/22nd/29th April 2026.

Amazing

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

By Isaac Watts



Christian Aid Book Sale and Coffee Morning

Our Christian Aid book sale, coffee morning and plant sale will be held on Saturday 16th May so please make a note in your diary/calendar.

Please bring any books you wish to donate on Sunday 10th May to the church hall between 10.00am and 12.00noon. We regret that we do not have space to store books before this date.

If this donation time is unsuitable the only alternative is between 6.00pm and 7.00pm on Friday 15th May. Any plants you wish to donate should also be brought at this time.

The cost is only £1.00 per book or 6 for £5.00. As well as buying books we would encourage you to visit our tearoom in the large hall for morning coffee or tea plus delicious home baking. The cost for this is only £4.00.

All profits will go to Christian Aid who do such wonderful work among some of those in greatest need in our world today.

Books can also be purchased between 11.15am and 12.00noon on Sunday 17th May.

Mission Committee



Leisurely Lunch

Our next lunch will take place on St George's Day, Thursday 23rd April, from 12.00noon until 1.30pm.

This will be our last lunch until September and so it would be good to finish with a full hall.

The menu can be found on the poster within this newsletter.

Mission Committee



Christian Aid Coffee Morning, Book and Plant Sale

Alloway Church Halls

Saturday 16th May 2026

10.00am until 12.00noon



Cost £4.00 - for home baking and tea/coffee.

Books - £1.00 each or 6 for £5.00

**Books also for sale on Sunday 17th May
after the church service until 12.30pm.**

St George's Day Lunch

Alloway Church Hall



Thursday 23rd April 2026

12.00noon until 1.30pm

Carrot/Orange & Ginger Soup or



Lentil Soup



Bread and Butter Pudding or



Cheese Cake



Minimum donation of £7.50 includes tea/coffee and biscuits.

Note from the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Rt Rev Rosie Frew

Scottish Elections

The Scottish Parliament elections take place on Thursday 7 May.

A new initiative called Scotland's Four Words of Hope has been established to create more discussion of values in public life.

The Four Words are taken from the ceremonial mace in the Scottish Parliament: Integrity, Compassion, Justice and Wisdom

Can I encourage you to think about, talk about and pray for all our political leaders to demonstrate these values in their words and decisions.

Colleagues in the national office will be sharing more about this over the next weeks and months, and the Scottish Church Leaders Forum will issue a series of four calls to prayer in the weeks prior to polling day, each will be themed around one of the Four Words.

CrossReach continue to relate to and engage with public policy decisions which impact them as a provider of social care. Their election priorities are set out in this leaflet.

<https://flipbooks.crossreach.org.uk/crossreachelectionpriorities>

If you are able attend a hustings, please ask questions which relate to Scotland's Four Words of Hope and which highlight the incredible work done by CrossReach and their election priorities.



26th April St Mark

Mark, whose home in Jerusalem became a place of rest for Jesus and His 12 apostles, is considered the traditional author of the second gospel. He is also usually identified as the young man, described in Mark 14:51, who followed Christ after his arrest and then escaped capture by leaving his clothes behind.

Papias, in 130, said that in later years Mark became Peter's interpreter. If so, then this close friendship would have been how Mark gathered so much information about Jesus' life. Peter referred to him affectionately as his 'son'.

Mark was also a companion to Paul on his journeys. When Paul was held captive at Rome, Mark was with him, helping him. Mark's Gospel, most likely written in Italy, perhaps in Rome, is the earliest account we have of the life of Jesus. Mark died about 74 AD.

Early in the 9th century Mark's body was brought to Venice, whose patron he became, and there it has remained to this day. The symbol of Mark as an evangelist is the lion, and is much in evidence in Venice.

The representation as a lion is derived from Mark's description of John the Baptist as "...The voice of the one who cries in the wilderness: Prepare Ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths" which artists compared to a roaring lion.



23rd April St George

The English have a patron saint who isn't English, about whom next to nothing is known for sure, and who, just possibly, may not have existed at all.

But that didn't stop St George being patriotically invoked in many battles, notably at Agincourt and in the Crusades, and of course it is his cross that adorns the flags of English football fans to this day.

It's most likely that St George was a soldier, a Christian who was martyred for his faith somewhere in Palestine, possibly at Lydda, in the early fourth century. At some point in the early centuries of the Church he became associated with wider military concerns, being regarded as the patron saint of the Byzantine armies. There is no doubt that St George was held as an example of the 'godly soldier', one who served Christ as bravely and truly as he served his king and country.

The story of George and the dragon is of much later date and no one seems to know where it comes from. By the Middle Ages, when George was being honoured in stained glass, the dragon had become an invaluable and invariable visual element, so that for most people the two are inseparable. Pub signs have a lot to answer for here: 'The George and Dragon'.

However, it's probably more profitable to concentrate on his role as a man who witnessed to his faith in the difficult setting of military service, and in the end was martyred for his faithfulness to Christ.

The idea of the 'Christian soldier' was, of course, much loved by the Victorian hymn-writers - 'Onward, Christian soldiers!' The soldier needs discipline. The heart of his commitment is to obedience. The battle cannot be avoided nor the enemy appeased. He marches and fights alongside others, and he is loyal to his comrades. In the end, if the battle is won, he receives the garlands of victory, the final reward of those who overcome evil.

St George's Day presents a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is to distance the message of his life from the militarism and triumphalism that can easily attach itself to anything connected to soldiers and fighting.

The opportunity is to celebrate the ideal of the 'Christian soldier' - one who submits to discipline, sets out to obey God truly, does not avoid the inevitable battle with all that is unjust, wrong and hateful in our world, and marches alongside others fighting the same noble cause.



Church Walk

The Worship and Development Committee is planning a walk at Dumfries House on Sunday 12th April in the afternoon. We will meet at the church car park at 1.30pm and car share to Cumnock. There are several walks for different abilities and a good cafe for refreshments. Please join us and enjoy a pleasant afternoon.





An excerpt from the Minister's Stated Annual Meeting Report 2025 -2026

Alloway and Fisherton remains an exciting place to be minister!

Last year I conducted 51 funerals -9 Baptisms 13 Weddings.

In September 2025 I had the unexpected privilege of becoming Interim Moderator at St Andrews's Ayr. The congregation there face a challenging future - yet their fellowship is warm and welcoming.

The official closure of Fisherton Church building took place on 22nd March 2026. A moment of sadness but also a time for thanksgiving for all that has been achieved there.

We look forward to welcoming worshippers from Fisherton to our sanctuary Sunday by Sunday.

Last year was a positive year financially.

A predicted deficit became a surplus thanks not least to the congregation's very positive response to our Stewardship Review.

Our giving to grow figure for 2025 was £132k. This represents what the church pays centrally (not the minister's stipend).

These are challenging time for the Church of Scotland.

There remains a national deficit of well over 6 million pounds.

I fear further cuts will be on the way.

Here at Alloway and Fisherton we rejoice in the number of people who have joined us from other churches.

Attendances at worship both on Sunday and mid-week are heartening.

In closing I remain very grateful to all our wonderful members and friends who continue to be faithful with extraordinary support.

I must mention all elders and convenors of our session groups.

*Alloway and Fisherton Parish Church Newsletter—**

I remain indebted to our dedicated session clerks Helen and Eric Ness for their continued guidance and support and good cheer.

Thanks also to Jill and the family for ongoing patience!

(I know Jill deserves a medal!)

Together we look forward to another year of service in the community.

"Look forward in faith, all time is in God's hand.

Walk humbly with him and trust his future plan.

God has wisely led his people by his power.

Look forward in hope, he gives us each new hour."





thirdallowaybrownies@hotmail.com

by Brown Owl Lise Whittle

3rd Alloway Brownies and 1st Dalmling Brownies joined together again for a Circus themed Brownies Sleepover in Alloway Church Halls.

We started with a quick intro and safety talk, and by singing our Brownie songs. Everyone began filling in their Sleepover diary and getting everyone else to sign it. Then it was time for a game - we played a game called Circus Revolution where the Brownies were quietly given a picture and had to go around the room and find other Brownies with the same picture - they weren't allowed to speak but they could make sounds! After that it was time for crafts and everyone coloured in a clown and fitted him inside a hoop to roll along the floor in a race.

Another craft was to make a paper bedtime lantern in the shape of a circus tent. They drew circus pictures inside a strip of paper and curled it into a circle to make a round tent shape, and then made a removable pointed top. Each Brownie put their circus Big Top on a round red Petrie dish, and put a colour-changing battery candle inside which created a lovely glow through the paper and cut-out doorway. They used their lanterns later beside their sleeping bags at bedtime.



After some delicious snacks of filled rolls and traybakes made by our fabulous Cook Owl Fiona, we played some circus themed games of Ring of Fire bean bag toss (don't worry, they were only paper flames attached to a hula hoop!), Hook a Duck, Spinning Plates, Juggling Balls, Diablo, Glitter Tattoos, and Tin Can Alley. We also had Diddy Car races, Tiger Feet races, and daring Tight Rope Walking along a rope - on the floor!

*Alloway and Fisherton Parish Church Newsletter—**



After all the games and crafts it was time for bed. The Brownies made up their sleeping beds in the Octagonal Hall with their lanterns beside them, and after a bedtime story it was time to go to sleep. After a fair bit of whispering, giggling and fidgeting, everyone went to sleep and slept well.

In the morning after a delicious filling breakfast of cereal, pancakes, brioche rolls, frubes and fruit, it was time to pack up our sleeping bags. We then had a Pow-wow and handed out certificates and badges, and everyone was ready to be collected to go home.

Everyone had a good time, and it was a great trial run in advance for our Pack Holiday next month. For some of the Brownies it was their first ever Sleepover away from home - a great achievement. Thank you to all the Leaders who helped prepare and came along - Fiona R, Lara, Lisa T and Lise, and to Hazel for being our Emergency Contact if needed. A huge thank you also for the support and interest from everyone at the Church, and for letting us use the Church Halls for our Sleepover.

3rd Alloway Brownies is urgently needing another volunteer adult helper at our weekly meetings. If you are interested in volunteering, or know anyone who is, please get in touch at

thirdallowaybrownies@hotmail.com



Parish Record

"Of such is the kingdom of God "



1.3.26 Struan Frederick Alistair Ballantyne son of Elspeth and Thomas, Dalkeith



"Blessed are those who mourn"

17.2.26 Mrs Pearl Tait Templeton House Care Home

Deadline for May Newsletter—Tuesday 21 April—12 noon

Contributions should be sent to:

secretary.allowaypc@gmail.com

Please visit our website www.allowaychurch.org or our Facebook page



The Church of Scotland

Alloway and Fisherton Parish Church of Scotland
No. 070440

Scottish Registered Charity
No. SC012456