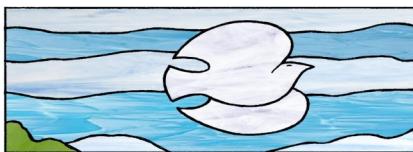
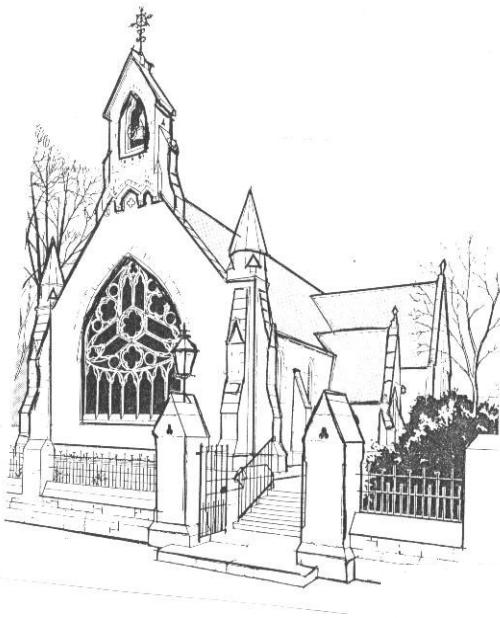




ALLOWAY AND FISHERTON PARISH CHURCH NEWSLETTER



February
2026



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

These are very challenging times for the Church of Scotland with a significant loss of church buildings.

As your minister and as interim moderator I have found myself observing these challenges first hand in three different communities.

In Troon, the town is to lose the Old Parish Church.

In Ayr, St Andrew's Church building is to be put up for sale.

In Fisherton, by the time you read this letter, the building there too will be sold.

All of these buildings have served their communities well for generations. In Ayrshire we cannot escape a national trend.

In Scotland, approximately 3,500 churches have closed over the last decade.

Reverend David Cameron the convener of the Assembly Trustees, acknowledges that closing churches is a painful but necessary exercise for the church.

"We feel first-hand what it means to people when they've gone to their local church, they've got married there, they've had their children baptised there, and they've buried their loved ones from there. We recognise the real sorrow, but we do have to rationalise our buildings in an appropriate way."

All of these buildings were loved and served their communities well for generations.

We are all saddened to see them close.

However, the church is not the building it is the people.

Life is not about institutions it is about relationships.

In the living church we all have an important part to play.

Thus, we warmly welcome members of other churches who have recently joined us.

We look forward to learning from their experiences and know that they have much to teach us.

If you see visitors in our midst, please ensure you invite them to coffee after the service!

I think the late great Queen Elizabeth was correct when she said

"It's often the small steps rather than the large steps which bring about lasting change"

Sometimes in life we can't do much about the large steps.

However, the small step of a warm welcome and a smile can make anyone's day!

"A friend may just be waiting behind a stranger's face"

Maya Angelou

Yours in Him

Neil McNaught

Some thoughts from Rev. David...

Dear Friends,

As we enter a New Year, and leave one behind, it is naturally a time when we look back, and also look forward. We spend time thinking about the events of, and our personal experiences of 2025 - some of them we are keen to remember, and others we are perhaps keen to forget, and some we hope will never be repeated.

It is important for us however to recognise, to deal with, and to accept the past - both the good and the bad - it is important that we try to find ways of dealing with what has happened and that we deal with our emotions - there is generally nothing positive to be gained by burying our heads in the sand. This may only result in our emotions and memories piling up, without us dealing with them. and this is not a good strategy in the long term.

The start of a New Year also means that we consider the future - we wonder what 2026 will bring. We need to look forward and embrace the future because life is precious and is for living. Though it can at times be very difficult, we should seek to be hopeful and optimistic, though there is no avoiding the fact that there may also be challenging times ahead.

There are however, many verses from Scripture that we can depend on when we are faced with challenges. One such verse is found in John 1:5: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Jesus is indeed the light that shines in the darkness, and we were reminded of this at Christmas - God came into the world in the baby Jesus, to be the light of the world.

No matter how dark life might be for us, we are assured of the presence of God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - as the constant light in our lives. With Jesus in our lives, we will never walk in spiritual darkness - our lives have purpose and meaning through a personal relationship with God. Even faced with death, we have been promised eternal life in heaven with our loving Father.

So though we will most likely experience both blessings and trials in 2026, and in every year, let us remember that Jesus is the Light of the World - he is here for us - every circumstance - to give light in

the darkness; to open the door of eternal life; to guide our path; to keep us safe; to bring beauty in our life; to wrap his loving arms around us, TO BE THE LIGHT IN OUR WORLD.



A wee reminder that our 'Family Ceilidh' will be held on Saturday 28th March 2026: 7.00-10.00pm. Once again, music will be provided by the fantastic 'Jiggered Ceilidh Band'. Tickets will be available from February 8th - £10.00 for adults, £5.00 for children - includes a light supper.

Please remember, that if I can help you in any way, please get in touch - 07858 966367, or dhume@churchofscotland.org.uk.

Blessings, David.





Fisherton Parish Church - A Brief History

Not too far from the present Fisherton Church site there existed the pre reformation church of St Bride's. The baptismal font used in Fisherton Church was found at this site.

Fisherton Parish Church began as a mission around 1820, serving the local farming and fishing community.

Initially, it operated as a preaching station before a chapel was constructed in 1838-39. The reason it was built where it was built was because it was in the middle of the Parish which it served.

Over the years the church building has undergone several renovations including repairs after a storm of 1912. In 1978 the church was linked to Maybole West Church. In 2003 the link was changed to Kirkoswald.

In autumn 2023 the congregation voted to unite with Alloway Parish Church.

In 2024 Alloway and Fisherton Parish church was born.

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 and fellowship!)

Wednesday Worship Feb 11th, 18th, 25th, Mar 4th



KIRK SESSION

Session Update

There was a special meeting of Session held on Sunday 30th November following our communion service with the purpose of updating the elders on the progress of the sale on Fisherton Church and setting a closing date for offers. We have been surprised with the number of people who have asked to view the property which then stood at around 30 but in fact the latest figure is 46. With that number showing interest, the small team dealing with the sale recommended continuing the viewings into the New Year and setting the closing date for offers towards the end of January. This was accepted by Session and the date was set for Thursday 29th January.

At our routine business meeting on January 14th we had a full agenda and a good turn out to deal with any matters arising. From Property, Donald Ross advised us that we have replaced a good number of light bulbs both inside and outside the sanctuary, Drain Clear have been asked to clear the ladies toilet and a quote £4,800 to sand and varnish the hall floor has been accepted. Plans for 2026 include replacement of double glazing units in the kitchen and office, replacement of the transept cross which was damaged during storm Eowyn and servicing of the church organ. He finished by announcing that he was hoping to do a spring clean in the halls next month and would be seeking willing volunteers.

There was no report from Finance but Neil confirmed that the amount raised from our Christmas services was £1,502 and this had been divided equally between "Street Pastors" and Bandawe student fees, as previously agreed. Our Social Committee, which has been very busy over the Christmas period, is preparing to help with both the upcoming Concert and Ceilidh and they also confirmed that the monies raised from your tea and coffee donations would be sent to Ayrshire Cancer Support.

Neil had asked Simon Mann, one of our elders who is currently in training for the Ordained Local Ministry, if he would like to tell session a little of his story so far. Simon gladly did this and took us through his nearly three years of interesting work. He hopes to finish and be ordained in August this year and I'm sure he will be telling us all more about his journey later.

After a short Mission report Murray Hutchison had been asked to speak on our work in Bandawe where he has been guiding and advising on matters regarding the replacement of the Thipula Church roof. This is in desperate need of repair and we had already agreed to help with funding. We are now in a position to send our share of the costs which would enable them to buy material now. This should be most helpful as they have a very high rate of inflation.

Donald Kemp from the Worship and Development committee mentioned future events which are being planned such as another litter pick, a church walk, a Sunday praise evening and perhaps a visit to The Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow to join in a praise gathering. He also spoke about our summer 2026 church opening and sought approval for the recommendation that the recipient for our donations should be the local charity Crossroads which cares for carers. This was agreed.

Bill Duncan, our Presbytery elder, reported on the latest Presbytery meeting highlighting matters which he thought would be of interest. He advised that on 1st October he was appointed Interim Moderator at St James and on 2nd October Neil was appointed Interim Moderator at St Andrews. However, with the formation of North Ayr Parish Church on 1st January 2026 his own tenure ceased. Determination had been received by the General Trustees to dispose of Troon Old Church buildings and halls, Ayr St Andrews Church and halls and Lugar Church halls. Many other local churches have formed unions or been given approval to call either a minister or a team ministry.

Jan Duncan, our secretary and Roll Keeper then gave us the review of the roll for 2025. At the start of the year we had 834 members and at the end of the year we had 828 members. We lost 36 by transfers and deaths but it was pleasing to note that we added 30 from transfers and new members joining.

David Hume then reported on all his work with the youth and schools and was pleased with the encouraging numbers of children taking part in all our clubs and organisations.

Finally I was able to confirm that we will be recognising Elders long service, hopefully at the next communion, and 13 of our Session will be eligible for certificates.



St Valentine 14th February

God obviously approves of romance - after all, putting Adam and Eve alone together in the Garden of Eden was His idea.

The history of the Israelites began with three great romances: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Rachel. The on-going history of Israel was deeply affected by later romances: Esther and King Xerxes, David's love affair with Bathsheba, and Solomon's marriage to hundreds of foreign wives. There is even an entire book in the Old Testament devoted to human love: the Song of Solomon!

When we reach the New Testament, we find real love between Joseph and Mary (even when Joseph thought Mary had been faithless, he did not want to harm her).

St Paul, though himself perhaps a bachelor, nevertheless spent a lot of time urging Christians to love and be kind and faithful and considerate to their spouses.

He even wrote 1 Corinthians 13 - the great love chapter that is read at millions of weddings worldwide 2000 years later.

Down the centuries ever since, romantic love has been critical in shaping history (Anthony and Cleopatra), in shaping cultural ideals (King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table).

Some of our favourite stories are built on romance. (Puccini's Tosca, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre.)

Today, romance is still alive and well in Britain - last year we sent about 25 million Valentines to each other.

And what of the future?

Well, just as the Bible begins with a love story, so it ends with one. And you are involved!

For actually the greatest Love Story of all time is that between God and his people.





Dear Friends at Alloway and Fisherton Parish Church

"We are so grateful for your kindness and very generous donation of £3010.33 to support our work in the Amazon

The funds will support the purchase of medicines and lab material for tests which are freely provided to the communities visited by our medical ship."

Kenny Holt

Chief Exec Vine Trust

Pastoral Care Visitors

The Kirk Session is hoping in time to re-establish a small team of pastoral care visitors. Such volunteers might be expected to visit someone on a monthly basis.

The person receiving a visitor may be in a Nursing Home or just wishing to receive a little more news from the church.

The pastoral care visitor would provide an additional level of fellowship and care from the church. Such volunteers will require PVG disclosure.

It will take some time to get this team together. However, if you feel you could be of assistance and would like to hear more, please be in touch with the secretary by 1st March 2026.

[secretary.allowaypc@gmail.com]

(We are not primarily looking for ordained elders but additional visitors).

Leisurely Lunches

Our next lunch will take place on Thursday 26th February from 12.00noon until 1.30pm in the church hall. The menu is shown on the poster within this newsletter and you will see that in honour of St David's Day, Welsh Cakes will be served with the tea and coffee.

The cost is £7.50 and all the profits will as usual go to the church and school in Bandawe.

Mission Committee

Sunday Teas and Coffees

Due to the number of people enjoying fellowship after Sunday Services - up to 100, we are looking for more volunteers to help. This would be for 3 or 4 Sundays in the year. If you feel you would be able to help or would like more information, please speak to June Parker at coffee.

Your Donations

Many people in the Church enjoy the after Sunday Service hospitality in the Halls. This hospitality is provided partly by the Social Committee and also by the Sunday Fellowship volunteers.

During 2025, the donations raised by the Sunday Hospitality, run by the Fellowship Volunteers, came to £3673.23. This figure also included contributions from the Wednesday Coffee & Chat, which ran monthly up until October 2025. To cover the costs of tea/coffee/biscuits/sugar, the Church retains half the Sunday money - in this case £1395.12. The remaining £2278.11 goes to our chosen local environmental charity, Ayrshire Rivers Trust and in particular their project for a native tree nursery in Ayrshire. Your donations are always very welcome and as you can see help towards one of the many charities our Church supports through the year.

Sheena Kemp on behalf of Worship & Development



St David's Day Lunch



Alloway Church Hall

Thursday 26th February 2026
12.00noon until 1.30pm

Carrot/ Orange & Ginger Soup or



Lentil Soup



Apple Crumble

or

Cheese Cake



With custard or ice cream

Minimum donation of £7.50 includes tea/coffee and Welsh Cakes.

In Memory of Sonya Hill



We were all very saddened recently to hear of the passing of our dear friend Sonya.

It would be so easy to have looked at Sonya and seen only the disabilities she lived with, but there was so much more to Sonya. So very much more.

She suffered from a severe form of cerebral palsy, was quadriplegic, had difficulties in speaking and really only had physical control over her left thumb.

But look beyond all that and you found a highly intelligent, resilient and resourceful woman who was full of humour and mischief, tempered by a steely determination which enabled her to overcome much and achieve many things.

Her service as Barn Owl with 3rd Alloway Brownies, where she devised quizzes and other activities, was testament to how much she had to give, and how much we all could learn about leading life to the full despite the difficulties we may experience.

Sonya's mum, Rita fought hard to gain access for her to have an education, and at the Victoria School in Birmingham Sonya learned many things, but most importantly developed her IT skills which opened up a whole new world of communication and creativity.

Sonya wrote a book about her life, it's called Mixed Blessings. It was typed up entirely using only her thumb and took 17 years to complete.

There is a link to it on the Church website. It is a very inspirational read!

It is intended that Sonya's memorial service will be shown on Wed Feb 11th at 11.15am in the Fellowship Lounge in the Halls.

All welcome!

Carol George



Gillian's Walks

Alloway Active Coffee Club invite you a talk by Gillian Craig, who has created a resource to help you plan your walks all based in Ayrshire. Lots of tips and information to inspire you to get outdoors.

All welcome on Monday 23 February at 11.15am in Alloway Church Halls. Free admission. Donations welcome for Crossroads who provide in home respite care and Spotty Zebras who support children with additional needs.



Foodbank Donations

A huge thank you is due to everyone involved in helping with our work with the South Ayrshire Foodbank. From those who spend two hours on a Sunday morning collecting the donations and crating them for collection (keeping the door open is not always the warmest job in the winter) to those facilitating the uplift on a Tuesday morning. A very special thank you to all members of the church and community who without fail make donations to this necessary cause in both food etc. and cash. Every gram and every penny is used to help those who struggle to get the basics in life like food.

In 2025 Alloway and Fisherton Parish Church continued to be one of the main contributors having donated 6201.9 Kgs of food etc and £4,000 of cash donations.

Thank you for the fantastic and considerate work achieved and as this continues to be very much needed please, please keep up the good work.

Bill Duncan





Becoming 90

It is just a number and our church fellowship includes quite a number who are beyond this amazing age so I did not think it a milestone to be celebrated. However, family and church friends decided otherwise!

So a very BIG THANK YOU to everyone for flowers, cards and two beautiful large cakes which allowed me to share with all who wished me Happy Birthday. From the end of November until the actual date (20th Dec) groups of friends kindly marked the occasion together with me. For someone who spends a great deal of time alone - such a joy and creation of so many happy memories. I feel so blessed that it has been so well celebrated - thank you, thank you all so very much.

Helen Blythe

Inner Wheel Club of Ayr Coffee Morning

The Inner Wheel Club of Ayr will be holding its annual coffee morning in the Church Halls on Saturday 7th February 2026 from 10am to 12noon.

Monies raised this year will be split between South Ayrshire Parkinson's Support Group and the International Charity - WaterAid. Tickets priced £4 are available from club members or at the door on the morning of the event.



Praise Evening

Sunday 1st March at 7pm in the Octagonal Hall. This will be led by Karin and Stephen.

Please put the date in your diary.





Lent Feb 18th, 2026

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. But why 'Ash' Wednesday? The reason has to do with getting things right between you and God, and the tradition goes right back to the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites often sinned. When they finally came to their senses, and saw their evil ways as God saw them, they could do nothing but repent in sorrow. They mourned for the damage and evil they had done. As part of this repentance, they covered their heads with ashes.

For the Israelites, putting ashes on your head, and even rending your clothes, was an outward sign of their heart-felt repentance and acknowledgement of sin.

(See Genesis 18:27; 2 Samuel 13:19; Job 2:8, 30:19; Isaiah 58:5; Jeremiah 6:26; Jonah 3:6)

In the very early Christian Church, the yearly 'class' of penitents had ashes sprinkled over them at the beginning of Lent. They were turning to God for the first time and mourning their sins.

But soon many other Christians wanted to take part in the custom, and to do so at the very start of Lent. Ash Wednesday became known as either the 'beginning of the fast' or 'the day of the ashes'.

The Bible readings for today are often Joel 2:1-2, 12-18,

The actual custom of 'ashing' was abolished at the Reformation, though the old name for the day remained.

"Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return..." (Genesis 3:19)

The late medieval custom was to burn the branches used on Palm Sunday in the previous year in order to create the ashes for today.



A two year project has borne fruit. The Boys' of the company have funded the 5th public defibrillator machine in the Parish. Alloway Halls, Pharmacy, Belleisle Conservatory and the Secret Garden. Every Company Section lad is CPR and Defib trained, along with 95% of the Junior Section. This Project started after the tragic loss one of our lads in 2023. South Ayrshire Council, St Johns and Mitie (school janitorial) have worked to support this Community facility.

The 3 Ayr Battalion Cross Country races were a success. Combined with the Junior section we came 2nd overall.

Alzheimer Scotland, were the beneficiary of a Fundraiser. This was a Junior & Company extravaganza for the whole family - hobby horses, owners colours, boys as jockeys, catering and hotdogs. It was almost a prize for everyone no losers! A total of £1,250 was donated. Thanks to all the staff and our two Cowboys Ian & Simon.

The Saturday before Remembrance four volunteers required to collect on behalf of the Lady Haig Poppy appeal. Eight turned up and a record collection £1,032 was recorded.

Friday Sports - 15 different activities, all adding to the competitive spirit of the boys. The inter squad sports are hotly contested any of the squad could be overall winner.

After last year's successful "home grown" bible class., the lads have continued on this route. For the first half of the year it was Old/New Testament heroes. This resulted in some superb research and insights.

Santa's Sleigh - as always successful and greatly supported (smallest night 16, wettest 26!). Three out of the five nights were wet, two in fact were atrocious. Payments of £500 has been made to the following 6 charities : Alzheimer, Cancer Research, Belleisle Conservatory, British Heart Foundation, Erskine Hospital & St Johns Ambulance. In addition a couple of other charities have received donations.

Final event of 2025 was a night at the Go-karts in Kilmarnock. The top driver was 8 seconds faster than the slowest.

Eight members of the Company are members of the Ayr Battalion Archery Club, others being 2nd Ayr, 8th Ayr and 1st Coylton. In winter this is held at Galston, summer at Alloway.

Camp 2026 - is the NEXT on the Agenda- expected cost per boy £50 Early In the New Year 5 staff complete the Officer Training (YLT). Giving us a high staff/boy ratio and ensuring maximum efficiency.

Stewart Robertson

Captain 1st Alloway Coy. The Boys' Brigade



Welcome everyone to the Junior Section

This age group follows its own programme built around six exciting areas: Get Active, Get into the Bible, Get Creative, Get Learning, Get Adventurous and Get Involved. The programme is designed to challenge the boys while helping them learn, grow and have fun together. Over recent months, the boys have been learning where our food and water come from, taking part in cooking activities and exploring the meaning of harvest. As a Company, we have also been busy volunteering, showing just how important it is to help one another and support our wider community. The boys took part in the National Sleep over, connecting with BBs throughout the country. We have practised vital life-saving skills, including CPR and how to use an AED. The boys have worked incredibly hard and, since September 2025, have donated an amazing £4,000 to charity.

Lesley Moore OIC Junior Section





thirdallowaybrownies@hotmail.com

by Brown Owl Lise Whittle

Happy New Year!

3rd Alloway Brownies made a good start to the new year. We started off with a Welcome Back Night, singing our Brownie songs 'We're Brownie Guides, We're Brownie Guides' and 'Good Evening Friend Brownie'. We wished everyone a Happy New Year with a Mexican wave around the circle. After that we played a Christmas memory game where everyone had to think of something they had for Christmas or something that happened in the Christmas holidays, and think of an action to go with it. Taking turns, everyone had to remember what everyone else had said, before adding their own memory. The list to remember got longer and longer!

Little Owl Lara told us about the new theme badge we are going to be working on this term which is called 'Have Adventures'. The badge is all about getting out and about to explore the outdoors and nature, learning outdoor skills, and finding out about wild animals and our environment. We will be looking at stars, finding out about campfires, campfire singing, and putting up a tent. We are not actually going camping - they do that in Guides!

The Brownies coloured in large Brownie colouring sheets which we will laminate and use as mats for leaning on when we do craft and drawing activities. This should make sure we don't get any marks on the tables!

We ended our meeting with a very noisy game of Timebomb. This involves everyone standing in a circle and throwing a ball to each other until someone drops it, and then there is a 10-second countdown of frantically throwing it to each other and the last person to be holding it after the countdown misses a turn. The game led to a lot of loud excitement, squealing and giggling.

Once again, we'd like to give a huge thank you for all the support from everyone at Alloway Church, and to all the volunteers who help at Girlguiding. If you or anyone you know are interested in volunteering with Girlguiding, please get in touch at sarah.c@ggas.org.uk

Bible Bite

It can be read in the Bible in
1 Samuel 2:11-17, 22-25, 3:1-21

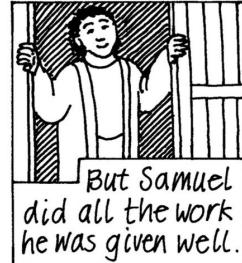
A short story from the Bible

As soon as he was old enough to leave his parents, Samuel went to live at God's temple in Shiloh, with the priest, Eli...

Eli's sons were also priests, but they helped themselves to what people had brought to give to God.



Eli talked to them about it. They ignored him.



One night, after everyone had gone to bed, Samuel heard someone calling him.



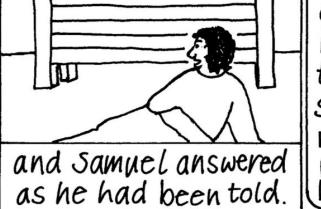
He thought it was Eli, so he ran to him.



The third time, Eli knew it must be God calling Samuel.



God called Samuel again,



The next morning, Eli demanded to be told what God had said.



He is God. He will deal with us as is right.



God continued to talk to Samuel. He became known throughout Israel.



Parish Record

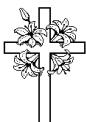
New Members Welcomed

Mr and Mrs Colin & Veronica Mutch	Auchentrae Crescent
Mrs Irene Morrison	Dalrymple View, Colyton
Mr Eric McInnes	Greenan Road
Michael & Daisy O'Brien	Woodside Drive, Coylton
Mrs Carol McLarty	Coylton



"Of such is the kingdom of God "

18.1.26 Emily Ann Thomson daughter of Robert Thomson and Christie Faulds



"Blessed are those who mourn "

17.12.25	Mrs Doreen Lawrie	Windyhall Nursing Home
20.12.25	Mrs Mary Senior	Bentick Crescent, Troon
23.12.25	Mr George McBride	Whinhill Road
24.12.25	Miss Janet Granger	Morrison Gardens, Ayr
4.1.26	Mr John Campbell	Meadowpark, Coylton
9.1.26	Mrs Helen Christie	Bridge of Weir Nursing Home
10.1.26	Mrs Ann Boyd	Carseloch Road
16.1.26	Mr Jim Nathaniel	Kintrye Avenue

Deadline for March Newsletter—Tuesday 17 February—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