



ALLOWAY AND FISHERTON PARISH CHURCH NEWSLETTER



December
2025



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.



"He shall be called Immanuel God with us" Mt 1v23

Dear Friends

I remember once reading a minister's Christmas letter. It began with these words "I don't like Christmas".

For me I love Christmas! It is a time for food and fun and faith. It is a time to welcome light at the darkest of times. A time to enjoy the wonderful seasonal music which warms our hearts!

However, Christmas is also a very poignant and challenging time for many. While some celebrate, many people do not experience the blessings we so often take for granted. At this time of year many can feel alone, even in a crowd!

The first Christmas spoke and continues to speak to the harsh realities of this world. It is easy to airbrush and forget the huge challenges this couple from Nazareth faced!

Mary and Joseph had an arduous journey to Bethlehem at the demand of an unjust Roman ruler.

Theirs was no sweet story of ease. Theirs was a story of vulnerability and resilience!

The first Christmas story began with a family without shelter seeking a place of safety in acute need! They survived only because strangers welcomed them and gave them a safe place. Subsequently, the son of God became a refugee fleeing from an oppressive regime to Egypt.

To this vulnerability and this flinty resilience I believe we are called.

The first nativity reminds us too that this child truly was "Immanuel"! A child who was familiar with all the unfairness and suffering of this world.

Jesus walked our walk that we might not walk alone as we face our own slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

This Christmas it is time to gather around the crib again. Time for His love to be reborn in our hearts.

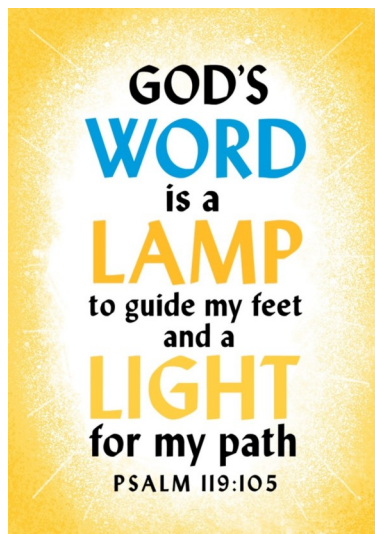
It is a love which for our day and age has to be as resilient and vulnerable as the love that first appeared gurgling in a manger over 2000 years ago.

To you and yours

A blessed Christmas and peaceful New Year!

From

Neil Jill and the family



Some notes from Rev. David...

What a wonderful turnout at our November meeting of the 'Men's Breakfast' with 37 gents in attendance - including some friends from St. Columba's Church. Following our usual breakfast of hot filled rolls, tea and coffee, we



heard from Denis Rattenbury who gave us a fascinating talk on the history of the Pipe Organ. Our next Men's Breakfast will be on Saturday 31st January 2026, 10.00-11.15am.



The final meeting of PULSE for 2025 took place on Sunday 30th November. For this meeting, we started with our usual activities in the Main Hall, Middle Lounge and Fellowship Lounge - table tennis, pool, darts (safety darts!), corn-hole, air hockey, table football, table-top games, craft and of course, tuck shop. We then moved to the Octagonal Hall for a variety of team and individual Christmas games. As expected, there was great hilarity, quite a mess, and some well-deserved prizes. I would like to thank each and every one of the volunteer helpers - it couldn't run without you! Our next meeting will be on Sunday 25th of January 2026 - perhaps there will be a Burn's themed quiz?

What a busy Messy Church we had at our meeting in November - 49 children accompanied by mums, dads, grans, grandpas, aunts and uncles. As mentioned previously, our theme this year is 'Important Numbers In The Bible!' and in November we focused on the number '2'.



We thought about - the animals going into the ark 2 by 2, 2 people coming together in marriage, and the Old and New Testaments - the 2 sections of the Bible. As always, the crafts were very popular and Jenny managed to find 'extra' activities needed for the large turnout. The kitchen team also worked wonders and managed to 'feed the 5000'! Our next meeting will be on Saturday 10th of January 2026, 4-6pm when we will focus on the Number 3.

Stepping Stones

The afternoon sessions of our autumn programme of Stepping Stones concluded on Friday 5th of December. Whilst the turnout at this programme was small, I believe that the participants found the different session valuable in helping with their bereavement and grief. The programme concluded with an invitation to our Quiet Service of Reflection in Church on Sunday 7th December. Another programme of Stepping Stones will commence on Friday 24th of April 2026, 2.00-3.30.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to send my warmest blessings to you and your family for this Christmas season and for 2026. May "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace". (Numbers 6:24-26).



Richest blessings, David.



Minister to Check Member's Passport!!!

With the cutting of a cake and a hearty rendition of "Happy Birthday" Mrs Beryl Panton was congratulated on her 100th Birthday by the congregation at Alloway on Sunday 9th Nov.

Beryl was born (allegedly) on the 11th November 1925.

Beryl is still a regular attender at church. When asked what her secret of growing old with such grace was Beryl quickly replied she didn't know because she hadn't finished yet.

Just remember everyone. Birthdays are good for you! The more you have the longer you live.

With her relentless good cheer Beryl remains an inspiration and encouragement to us all !!



I heard the Bells on Christmas Day

Christmas 1864 was the birth of this famous poem.

Longfellow sat alone on Christmas Day 1864, a 57-year-old widowed father of six, his eldest son still healing from near-paralysis as his nation bled. He had lost his wife in a tragic accident three years earlier.

The bells of Cambridge rang out their yearly message of "peace on earth, good will to men," but the words seemed to mock the reality of his own world.

Yet as he listened, something profound began to stir in his poet's heart. The resulting verses would move from despair to defiant hope!

I heard the Bells on Christmas Day

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth,' I said
'For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men.'

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The poem which became a song endures because it speaks honestly to the human struggle between faith and doubt. Longfellow's hymn acknowledges the reality of suffering while ultimately declaring God's sovereignty.

When the world seems darkest, when peace seems furthest away, the bells still ring out their defiant message of hope.

The Christmas bells still ring, and their message resonates down the years unchanged: in God's time, wrong shall fail, right prevail, with peace on earth, good will to all people.



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—Dec 3rd, Dec 10th, Dec 17th, Dec 31st, Jan 7th





Festive Cheer

Next Christmas

The grandson had just taken a photograph of his grandmother who'd come to stay for Christmas and her 89th birthday.

'Grannie, I sure hope I'm around next year to photograph you on your 90th birthday,' he said tactfully. 'Why not?' his grandmother shrugged. 'You look healthy enough.'

Attention With several relatives visiting, I was struggling to get my wife's attention. So, I simply sat down and looked comfortable. That did the trick.

Miscellaneous observations during the Christmas season...

Putting on weight is the penalty for exceeding the feed limit.

Christmas: The time when everyone gets Santamental.

Christmas is in my heart 12 months a year, and thanks to credit cards, it's on my Visa Card statement 12 months a year as well.

Many thanks to everyone who has already donated gifts for the Night Before Christmas Campaign. The collection box will remain in the church hall until mid-December for anyone wishing to drop off a new toy, book, or selection box to help families facing financial hardship at this time of year. Your generous support for this local charity is, as always, greatly appreciated. Lynda Mary





Alloway and Fisherton Parish Church Christmas Services

6th Dec

Christmas Fair 10am - 12 noon (Proceeds Bandawe School Malawi)

7th Dec

Morning Worship	9.30am	Fisherton
Christmas Jumper Service (Save the Children)	10.30 am	Alloway
Quiet Service of Remembrance	7pm	Alloway

14 Dec

Morning Worship	9.30am	Fisherton
Service of Lessons and Carols	10.30am	Alloway

21st Dec

Morning Worship	9.30am	Fisherton
Christmas Family Service	10.30am	Alloway
Christingle (Children dress up!)	3pm	Alloway

24th Dec

Community Carols	6.30pm	Fisherton
Community Carols	11pm	Alloway
Watchnight Service	11.30pm	Alloway

25th Dec

Christmas Family Celebration	10-10.30am	Alloway
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28th Dec

End of Year Service	9.30am	Fisherton
	10.30am	Alloway

Be assured of a warm welcome at all of our services!



Babies born in Scotland in 2025??

Google Bible for Bairns if you wish to register them to get a free gift each birthday until they are 5 when they may receive a Children's Bible.

Christmas Retiring Offering

A retiring offering will be uplifted at the Watchnight service and on Christmas Day for Ayrshire Street Pastors / Bandawe Girl School Fees (fees which recently have increased 50%)

New Year Concert

Next year's concert will be held a little later than usual. The date is Friday 6th February at 7.30 pm.

Music will be provided again by the Dalrymple Ukuleles and The Last Resort. Tickets are again priced at £7.50 and will be on sale from Sunday 4th January.

Again tickets numbers have to be limited and demand is normally high so please do not hesitate to purchase if you wish to go.

A sandwich and baking supper is included in the price.

Mission Committee.





Session Update

There have been two further meetings of session since the last report, one on 16th October and the other on 19th November. In October no financial report was given other than to let us know that things were running well and a detailed report would be given in December. We did hear however, that our Stewardship Campaign was producing excellent results with healthy increases being pledged by members.

Property Report—Our planned new kitchen upgrades have been completed and early feedback was very good. Remaining improvements, including new windows and lighting will be undertaken in 2026.

Other committee reports advised that our halls are running well.

Social Committee—The Committee are working away as usual providing teas/coffees and planning the next family Beetle Drive

Communications and Technology—The team were coping well with what was asked of them although further help there would be appreciated.

Mission Committee—The convenor confirmed the dates for the Christmas Fair (6th December) and New Year concert (6th February) and advised that she would need lots of helpers for baking/stalls etc.

Worship and Development—The convenor advised that they would be stopping their Wednesday coffee and chat group and this would allow the Wednesday Worship group to meet every week. Donald also confirmed that our Autumn Study meetings had started and feedback was good with everyone enjoying the format of praise, video and short discussion. He also confirmed that the £750 collected at our church summer opening had been presented to the Salvation Army with a request that it be used locally.

Neil advised that he had 4 people attending his new communicants' class and if all went well he hoped they would be joining in December.

Schools and Family Worker—David Hume then reported that all was well with schools and youth groups. Toddlers now have a limit of 45 and Pulse was attracting around 38. The three primary schools had been asked if they would like to help with the food shortage in Malawi and they had agreed raising over £950.

Presbytery and Safeguarding - There was nothing for Bill to report on Safeguarding and not much from Presbytery although he advised much time had been spent on discussing churches that were vacant but not in vacancy and how it would affect vacancy allowances which some churches relied upon. He also advised that he had been appointed Interim Moderator at St James while Neil had been appointed Interim Moderator at Ayr St Andrews.

At our November meeting we had a fairly full report from our Treasurer. Lorna advised that since we had now received all our legacies and paid a lower than budgeted sum for our new kitchen renovation our accounts were currently showing a surplus of £58,742 instead of a deficit of £72,500. Other income received included a donation from the Chat and Tat group and a payment of £2,500 from the National Trust as payment for usage of the access footpath.

£2,000 has been sent to the Bandawe Primary school for food (this included the Primary schools' contribution)

Neil then asked the court for approval to split our Christmas offerings and use them to support the work of the Street Pastors and our Malawi Students (school fees here have increased by 50% this year). This was agreed.

Anne Law, our Stewardship Convenor, then gave us a further update on our Stewardship Campaign reporting some excellent news. The amount of increase indicated from members is in the region of £44,000 including gift aid and thirty new gift aid forms have been completed. Neil praised the congregation for their generosity and thanked all the team who worked hard on organising, collecting and processing all the required information.

Other committees reported all was well and were getting ready for a busy time ahead. The Clerk, that's me, brought forward two items of business which require approval on a yearly basis. A Conflict of Interest form which has to be completed showing any elder who may have, in the event of a vote being taken, an interest which might influence their decision. The other is our Recording Policy which is displayed at both doors as you enter the church and advises any at the service that it will be recorded. This wording has to be agreed each year and altered if appropriate.

Alloway and Fisherton Parish Church Newsletter—December

David then brought us up to date with his youth and schools work where all is going well and mentioned that the recent Messy Church had 49 children plus parents and grand parents attending. He thanked all those who helped with his work without whom he would struggle to cope. He also mentioned that the five week autumn study course "Facing the Canon" had now finished and appeared to have proved very successful. It may be repeated in the future.

Again before we closed we heard the names of the four new members who had completed the communicant's class and will be joining the church next Sunday. Encouraging news.

Eric Ness—Session Clerk



Thank you so much to everyone who helped fill a shoebox for Blythswood Christmas shoebox appeal. A wonderful total of 132 boxes are preparing to make their journey to Moldova and Ukraine.

This year we were pleased to have 3rd Alloway Guides involved as their charity project for this term.

The P5-7 group wrapped the boxes which was done with love and enthusiasm! After discussing what items to include in the boxes, the girls very generously donated gloves, hats, books, puzzles, notebooks, toiletries and sweets.

Their kindness will ensure they bring joy and happiness to the recipients. Thank you so much girls.

Thank You

Harvest Appeal - Vine Trust

A big thank you to all who contributed to our harvest appeal in support for the work of the Vine trust.

The total sum collected was £3,497.58.

Breakdown:-

Harvest Offering Envelopes	£2,007.00
Harvest Supper	£583.33
	£2,590.33
Cheques made payable to The Vine Trust	£420.00
Gift Aid Element	£487.25
Final Total:	£3,497.58

Poppy Scotland

The sum of £576 was received at the Retiring Offering on Remembrance Sunday for Poppy Scotland.

Over the last few months, the congregation has raised funds for a number of organisations. We have received "Thank You" letters from:

Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis and The Ayrshire Hospice who received £300 each from donations received from hospitality following the Sunday services.

Christian Aid who received £366.02 from the sale of Ice Cream Sundaes to mark their 80th Anniversary.

All thank you letters are on the "Thank You" notice board in the Church Halls.

THANK
YOU



Last month, members of 1st Alloway Boys Brigade gathered for a practical and potentially life-saving workshop: CPR and AED use. Led by our guest, Mr Anderson and Mrs Moore (O.I.C) gave the boys hands-on experience learning how to respond confidently during cardiac emergencies.

During the training, attendees practised CPR, learned how to recognise when someone needs help, and became familiar with using an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Through demonstrations and guided practice, many commented on how simple—and how important—these skills truly are.

The training reflects our church's and BB'S commitment to caring for one another in both spiritual and practical ways. By equipping members with lifesaving knowledge, we strengthen our ability to serve not just inside our walls but in our homes, schools, workplaces, and neighbourhoods.

Although it is a very serious subject, we make learning fun and take a little bit of the fear away.

We encourage all our boys to consider participating. A few hours of learning could one day make a life-saving difference.

Lesley Moore

O.I.C. Junior Section

1st Alloway BB's





thirdallowaybrownies@hotmail.com

by Brown Owl Lise Whittle

We have been very busy at Brownies recently, and a few weeks ago we had a Pyjama & Quiz Night. The Brownies all came along in their jim-jams and slippers and brought their teddies. We had a 'Cuddly Toy' competition - well, it wasn't exactly a competition because there wasn't an overall winner and everyone received a certificate with loads of different awards such as 'The Fluffiest Cuddly Toy', 'The Jolliest Cuddly Toy', 'The Cutest Eyes', 'The Longest Tail', 'Best Dressed Cuddly Toy' and lots of other categories. So everyone was a winner! We had a quiz that had originally been put together by our old Barn Owl Sonya Hill a few years ago.

For our Pumpkin Party the Brownies all dressed up - some were rather scary! - and after a Parade around the room showing their costumes, we played some games. They went around the room in their Brownie Sixes to 4 different activities - Little Owl Lara tied doughnuts up on a stick with string and the Brownies had to try and eat them without using their hands; Snowy Owl Sam had the Feely Box where the Brownies were invited to put their hand in a hole in the box to feel something spooky! They were told it was 'wiggly worms' (cold spaghetti), 'witches eyeballs' (wet grapes), and 'body parts' (jellied Halloween sweets)! Some of the Brownies were too scared to try, they would put their hand out and then snatch it back at the last minute! Our new Duke of Edinburgh Owl Abigail did a balloon ghost game where they had to keep a white balloon up in the air for as long as possible; and Brown Owl did 'Dookin For Apples' dropping a fork into a bowl of apples to try and catch one. They all had lots of fun. Everyone made a ghost craft by cutting out a circle of white cotton fabric and drawing a face on it, then threading it over an empty Actimel bottle tied on a string - when they moved the string up and down the fabric sort of swirled around as if it was floating through the air!

We also had Remembrance Night when the Brownies wrote messages to their soldier on paper chains – some of the messages were very moving. We displayed the chain in Church. Several Brownies came along to the Remembrance Service and Parade carrying our flag in the Church and then parading up to the War Memorial.

The Brownies worked towards their Charities badge, and for Children in Need we made Pudsey rosettes for the Brownies to wear to school. We had a collection for Dibora who is the little girl in Ethiopia who the Brownies sponsor through the charity PLAN, the Brownies did helpful jobs at home and raised £31.25 – well done and thank you to everyone.

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who help at Girlguiding, and also for the support from everyone at Alloway Church. If you or anyone you know are interested in volunteering with Girlguiding, please get in touch at sarah.c@ggas.org.uk

BARN OWL SONYA'S QUIZ

(Sonya originally put this quiz together for the Brownies in 2020)

Round 1 General Knowledge

1. What's the 7th letter in the alphabet?
2. What vegetable is known to make people cry when they cut it?
3. Where would you hear the phrase 'Behind you! Behind you!'?
4. Which is the tallest mountain in the whole world?
5. What is the name of the tree that produces acorns?

Round 2 Animals

6. What do tadpoles turn into?
7. What country do kangaroos come from?
8. What's the tallest animal in the world?
9. What are baby goats called?
10. How many legs do spiders have?

Round 3 Disney

11. How many dwarves are there in Snow White & the 7 Dwarves?
12. What part of Pinocchio's face changes when he tells a lie?
13. What creature was Sebastian in The Little Mermaid?
14. What character is Woody in Toy Story?
15. Where does Winnie The Pooh live?

Round 4 Brownies

16. What colours are the Brownie uniform
17. What bird are Brownie leaders traditionally named after?
18. What were Brownies originally called?
19. What is the name of the plant that is in the middle of the Brownie circle?
20. What is the 4th word in the Brownie Promise?

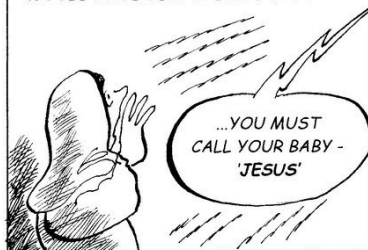
Answers: 1) G 2) onion 3) panto/theatre 4) Everest 5) oak 6) frogs 7) Australia 8) giraffe 9) kids 10) 8 11) 7! – several Brownies got it wrong!! 12) nose 13) crab 14) cowboy 15) Hundred Acre Wood 16) yellow & brown 17) owls 18) Rosebuds 19) toadstool 20) 'I' – I Promise that I will do my best.....



JESUS WAS BORN ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR JERUSALEM.



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD MARY SHE WOULD HAVE VERY SPECIAL BABY



MARY AND JOSEPH MADE THE LONG JOURNEY FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM. THEY HAD BEEN ORDERED THERE BY THE CENSUS.



BUT THE TOWN WAS FULL... THE ONLY SHELTER THEY COULD FIND WAS A STABLE...



...WHICH IS WHERE THE BABY JESUS WAS BORN.



SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS NEARBY RACED TO SEE THE BABY. AN ANGEL HAD TOLD THEM WHERE JESUS HAS BEEN BORN.



THEY WERE THRILLED TO SEE THE MOST WONDERFUL GIFT IN THE WORLD!

Parish Record

We welcomed the following new members by profession on 23rd Nov 2025

Mrs Vanessa Bateson Mochrum Way,

Mr Stephen Furey Woodpark Ayr

Mrs Hazel Brown The Pines ,

Mrs Fiona Simpson Gearholm Road



"Of such is the kingdom of God "

Baptism

19.10.25 Mrs Hazel Brown The Pines



"Blessed are those who mourn"

23.10.25 Mr George Allan Fairknowe Care Home

30.10.25 Mrs Jean Headley HomeFarm Road

30.10.25 Mr Lindsay Tolland The Mews Sundrum

1.11.25 Mrs Christine Hillier Creggenbahn

12.11.25 Mr Alec Henderson Greenan Road

23.11.25 Mr Philip Dutthorn Shanter Wynd

Deadline for January Newsletter—Tuesday 16 December—12 noon

Contributions should be sent to:

secretary.allowaypc@gmail.com

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



Alloway and Fisherton Parish Church of Scotland
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