

A PLACE OF BELIEVING AND BELONGING



ERSKINE PARISH

Church

The Brig
DECEMBER 2024

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 **ERSKINE PARISH CHURCH**

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A Word from Our **MINISTER**



He who was seated on the throne said,
"I am making everything new!"

~Revelation 21:5

The scariest films ever made are not the ones we would presume. Contrary to popular belief, films laden with serial killers, gore, and even elements of the spectral, phantoms and ghostly destroyers are not the most terrifying to us. In fact, a good case can be made that 'Threads' (1984) is among the scariest of movies in the scariest of genres. It is a bleak, post-apocalyptic, hero-less vignette on life in Britain after nuclear war. Why is that considered so much more terrifying? Probably because of the realness. With phantom beings and serial killers, we are able to comfort ourselves that they are somewhat unlikely for us to encounter, but the ever-present threat of nuclear

holocaust is different. For most of us, we love and cherish our world, want it to succeed, and the thought of some irrational, drunk on power men dragging us into an unwinnable hellscape of nuclear war... somehow doesn't feel unrealistic. But this is the very crucible in which faith is formed. Since the early church Christians have dwelt in earthly tents, had to serve dictators, and have been caught up in the throes of waning, crumbling empires. There is nothing new under the sun. While the circumstances change - the spark of faith passes from generation to the next, enabling us to hope in God in the midst of darkness,

bleakness, or blessedness. The mystery is that, despite the fading hopes we can feel given our cost of living crisis, rumours of wars, and political instability, God is making all things new. A paradox perhaps, but one we can see to be true if we exercise a little faith.

Perhaps a concrete way to see this is in the church. For years now our national church has been trying to brace us for the reality of falling numbers and receipts. A big adjustment is necessary. So yes, the church is shrinking. But it is also growing. As recently as last month, we shared the joy of welcoming a host of new members by profession of faith into our church family. There are parts of the South and Far East where the church continues to explode. You see, often in the midst of threat,

hopelessness and despair, God is doing something new and birthing a great movement of hope.

This is why advent is so precious. In the darkness and of the mid-winter, in a tiny outpost of a pompous imperial power, God birthed the hopes of the nations for generations to come. The hopes of the failing and fledgeling, the fears of the world-weary and the grief-stricken. What is that hope? However dark and long the shadow of world events, church decline, or personal grief and heartache, He has begun to make all things new. And He will not cease until all is made new.

*Yours in Christ,
Rev David Nicolson*

A Word from A CORE GROUP



Finance & Governance Group:

Members: Marion Menabney, Karen Bain, Margaret Rhoddan,
Ann MacKichan, Richard McWhirter

The Finance and Governance Group was established to support my role as Treasurer in monitoring the church finances and to review its policies and procedures. The combined knowledge, experience and skills of the group's members have allowed us to have a productive few months since our first meeting back in March. We have discussed a range of issues and reported back to Kirk Session with recommendations for changes to practices or policy amendments. Reflecting the scope and range of our remit, examples of our discussions include Communication, Payment Procedures, Gift Aid. Flower Fund, Employment

Contracts and Terms and Conditions, Lone Working, Reserves Policy, Risk Management and Assessments, Weekly Count and Gift Day Procedures.

We are currently reviewing Fire Safety, Security and Treasurer Bank Accounts.

I am very grateful to each member of the group for their ongoing participation and ideas. Our meetings are long and lively, but I hope that reflects the fact that each individual feels their opinion is valued, and that together we do make a difference.

The 'Finance' element of the group's remit is straightforward enough. We have to make sure we have efficient systems that

record and measure all income and expenditure with appropriate controls to demonstrate full transparency and accountability.

The 'Governance' part simply means how the church is managed and organised to meet its legal obligations. As a registered charity, there are legal requirements imposed on Trustees, and there are also Church of Scotland regulatory expectations to be respected. Erskine Parish Church has dozens of policies and procedures, all of which are necessary to meet legal or regulatory obligations. However, many of these are unwritten or perhaps needing to be updated. So, although our activities do meet or exceed minimum requirements, we might struggle just now to readily show this with supporting documents. The Finance and Governance Group's objective is to establish an updated collection of policy and procedure documents demonstrating Erskine Parish Church's full compliance with

its legal commitments.

In early 2025, we are hoping to establish an online library where policy and procedure documents can be accessed by interested members through the website. There will also be a confidential storage facility with restricted access for more sensitive issues.

As a Trustee I can see the difference the Core Group system makes to decision making. The Group's reports to the Kirk Session summarise the discussions, providing background and context which allows Trustees to focus on the recommendations and ask relevant questions. Overall, control of the church's activities legally remains with the Trustees, and they must formally approve all policies and procedures. The work of the Core Groups allows the Trustees to fulfil this obligation more effectively.

Marion Menabney
Finance Group Leader

A Word from A CORE GROUP



Local Missions:

The Local Mission Core group was created in the spring of 2024 and is currently made up of 4 members, Morag Moffat, Alison Cook, Pauline Pearson and myself, Aileen Robb, as team leader.

We report to the Kirk Session and our remit involves identifying ways in which the church can look beyond ourselves and reach out to our local community to share the message of God's love and hope in practical and tangible ways.

In society today, many people have no live church connection and often see the Christian message as irrelevant to their busy lives. It is not enough that churches are buildings in our communities, but instead they need to be places where, as

God's people, we reach out beyond our four walls and engage with our neighbours to identify their needs. Compassion and service are central to our Christian faith, embodying the essence of Jesus' teaching and the actions of the first disciples and the Bible contains many examples and instructions that emphasise the importance of reaching out to others in need, in Christian love.

Throughout my career in social work, I often faced frustration when statutory agencies were unable to provide the practical or financial help needed for a person or their family because they did not fit certain criteria or due to budget constraints. It was at these times that I was greatly encouraged and thankful for the

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COMING SOON!
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UNPAID CARERS
DROP-IN CAFE

LAST THURSDAY EACH MONTH
STARTING 30TH JANUARY

11AM-12:30PM
THE HUB AT
ERSKINE PARISH CHURCH

If you are an unpaid carer in the local community looking after a relative or friend, come along for a cuppa and some chat. We'd love to hear from you, help you find support, and share each other's experiences in a warm and welcoming space.

Contact us at 07914601033

unconditional love and support provided by churches of all denominations who we turned to for help. These experiences have served as a lasting reminder that as Christians we are called to show Christ's love in action to those in need. This passage sums this up:

'What good is it, my brothers & sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes & daily food. If one of you says to them. 'Go in peace: keep warm & well fed' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead'.

~James 2:14-17

The Local Mission group has been discussing ways of identifying new outreach opportunities within our

local community and have recently been working on setting up a monthly drop-in group for unpaid carers in The Hub. This has come about through conversation with people caring for loved ones in the community and meeting with staff at Renfrewshire Carers Centre who have been very helpful in providing support and guidance. It is planned that the group will evolve over time with those attending playing a part in shaping how it will best benefit them, and it is planned that speakers can be arranged from agencies providing advice and support. The first meeting will be on Thursday, 30th January between 11am to 12.30 pm in The Hub so if you are a carer or if you know anyone who cares for a relative or friend, please come along and enjoy a cuppa and a chat. Members of the team are also involved in the Listening Service in partnership with the charity Listen Well Scotland. Trained listeners are available by appointment to meet

with anyone who would like to talk over an issue which is affecting them, and this service is confidential, 1:1 and free. Leaflets with contact details are available in The Hub and church foyer. Please pass these on to anyone whom you think may benefit.

We are working on extending the service to work with children in Park Mains High School and hope to be in a position to report on this soon.

The J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) group for adults with learning disabilities and autism are busy preparing for the Annual Prospects Carol Concert for all. This is attended by Prospects groups from across Scotland and will take place on Saturday, 30th November at 2pm in Inchinnan Church. Please come along if you can to support our group. It promises to be a joyful and uplifting afternoon to start the season of Advent. Tea/coffee, mince pies, and shortbread will be served after the service.

We are very blessed to have several churches in the Erskine area who

share the desire to work in unity to spread the gospel message within our community and the Local Mission team is represented on the Erskine and Bishopton Churches Together (EBCT) group. This group organises joint events throughout the year, including the Community Fun Days at Erskine Waterfront Campus which are set to be an annual feature in the calendar. This year, our Local Mission group organised a children's lucky dip and really enjoyed meeting many younger members of our community and their families. Over 40 volunteers and 500 members of the community attended the free event.

During July, we were involved with the local churches in organising a week long summer holiday club for primary school age children using the facilities in the Church of the Nazarene and our own church hall for games and snack time. Although the numbers of children attending were low, we all had a great time and are already thinking about plans for 2025.

Other joint events are planned in the coming months so look out for notices about these.

I would like to express thanks to the members of the team for their commitment and hard work and we would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the congregation who support these events and activities with their time, talents, gifts of money and prayers.

We can all play a part in spreading the message of love and hope and making a difference in people's lives. If you would like to help in any way or have any suggestions for local mission and outreach, please speak to any member of the team or email Aileen on aileen.robb@talk21.com.

Harvest Sunday
↓



J.A.M.



Community Fun Day
↓



Aileen Robb
Local Missions Group Leader



I would like to thank every one who comes and gives their time to staff The Hub every week, and to cover holidays. We have had a good year, with lots of new people from the community coming for coffee, cakes, etc. This all helps with the Church's community outreach. It's been lovely to see the church folk also come for coffee and a chat.

All of the above has helped us give donations to the church to help with all the work that has been needed to be done .

We hope you have enjoyed the decoration changing with the seasons (I would like to thank the small team to find and change the decorations with the seasons).

We are also excited to announce that we are in the process of redesigning our menu, which will be finished very soon! Be sure to come by soon to see the new menus!

Everyone from The Hub would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a 'Best Wishes' for Christmas and the New Year.

Hope to see you again next year for a warm welcome coffee and chat (yes we serve tea also).



Helen Hambleton
The Hub Co-Ordinator

Girl GUIDES

At the end of last session we were delighted to present seven of our girls with the Guide Gold Theme Award. They are the first Guides in our unit to gain this award since the themes were introduced in 2020. The themes are the same in all Guiding sections:

Be Well, Have Adventures,
Take Action, Know Myself,
Skills For My Future, and Express Myself.

On average, it takes about a year to complete two themes. For each theme award the girls need to complete an Interest badge, five set Skill Builder activities and four hours of related unit activities. The Gold Challenge is not for the faint-hearted.

The presentation finished off a busy year during which they had an evening with Owl Magic, slept Under the Stars in Finlaystone Park, arranged a Christmas Coffee Morning, went to the Pantomime, had a sleepover in the Science Museum and took part in the Outdoor County Camp at South Newton.

We are very proud of our girls, each of them is a credit to her family!



When thinking about writing this article the parable of the mustard seed came to mind; the story of the line dancing class illustrates the amazing things God can do with submitted, willing people.

The story began in 1992 when the Young Women's Group were holding a fun day and the Deaconess, Morag Erskine asked one of the group, Janette Lynch to run a keep fit session. Such was the popularity of the session Morag asked Janette if she would take a keep fit class weekly on a Monday night to encourage younger women to access

church.

After two years line dancing was becoming popular so Morag asked Janette to do a line dancing class instead of keep fit. During the years we have "entertained" many groups and been involved in church fun nights and events such as the family barbecue. One memorable event was our visit to Erskine Hospital. An elderly resident had always wanted to go to The Grand Ole Opry but was unable to travel. The hospital asked us if we would come along and dance and they organised a band to play some good old country music and so the Grand Old Opry came to Erskine Hospital!



*Our line dancers
who love to dance!*

After 32 years we still have many of the original young women (including Janette as our teacher) and we have fond memories of those no longer with us but who loved to dance.

100% of the weekly takings are donated to church funds. So from the small, humble beginnings of a busy young mum volunteering her time to teach a class she had no experience or training to do,

evolved into a much loved class, still running 32 years later and raising more than £40,000 for church funds.

What is your mustard seed? What seemingly small thing is in your heart from God to do? Be like Janette and do it, and don't be surprised if you see God bring amazing results!

Monthly UPDATES

SEPTEMBER

In September, Jan's Table Top Sale saw a donation of £800 made to the church.

Much fun was had by all at the Community Fun Day hosted by Erskine & Bishopton Churches Together at the Erskine Waterfront Campus.

September also held our Harvest Sunday where 30 full crates of food and dry goods were gathered to donate to Renfrewshire foodbank!

Additionally, we are thankful for the donations from the Guiding Units and Girls Brigade who donated £300 and £350, respectively!



OCTOBER

In October, the Guild held a fundraiser where they saw entertainment from 'The Midges'.

We saw a brilliant donation of £250 from the Guiding Units! Our Growing in Faith campaign, which began in September, saw a sum of donations in October that came to £470. The Property group have used this to purchase £147 worth of plants for the rockery thus far! If you would like to be part of this initiative, it is not too late! There are still some envelopes in the Hall of Fellowship, or you can speak to a member of the Property Team if you would like to bring or buy a particular plant.



NOVEMBER

In November, we held our Remembrance Sunday service in honour of the armistice. At this service, the church uplifted the offering to Erskine Home's Veterans Charity. We managed to collect £542 to donate and Erskine Home expressed their gratitude many times for this generous donation.

The following week, we welcomed 9 new members into our congregation at our New Members service. It has been great to see God working in our midst as we watch our church grow!



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ErsKine Parish Church
1 Rashielee Ave
Erskine
PA8 6HS

Playgroup

Stay & Play

9:45 - 11:30
Every Wednesday



£3
per week



Includes a snack
Hot drink & biscuits for grown ups

How are
you?

I'm fine

But are you
really fine?



Do you have a worry or concern that you would like to talk over with someone? Someone who will really listen?

ListeningTime4U, our free confidential 1:1 listening service is available on Mon, Tues and Fri mornings from 10 – 12 through the Hub cafe at Erskine Parish Church.

For more information, pop into the Hub cafe and pick up a leaflet. You can also contact us on 07778 719735 or by email at: erskinehublistening@gmail.com.

let's get in touch

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