

A PLACE OF BELIEVING AND BELONGING



ERSKINE PARISH

Church

The Brig
JUNE 2026



ERSKINE PARISH CHURCH

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A Word from Our **MINISTER**



Back to the Ranch

I genuinely thought cowboys were a thing of the past. And not just the recent past. Having studied bits and pieces of modern American history- I thought they were forever frozen in a world of 18th century cattle rustlers and skirmishes with Native Americans - except for John Wayne and Clint Eastwood. I was shaken out of my ignorance recently through the Paramount TV show Yellowstone. The show is centred on the Dutton family who own the largest cattle ranch in Montana, their personal and political battles, and the lives of those who make the ranch what it is. Through this, I learned that modern day cowboys are very much a thing. They work on some enormous ranches stretching across

hundreds of thousands of acres of land, using a mixture of traditional horsemanship and modern technology. They make a modest living but work with a deep connection to the land and animals. They also form a community where games and competitions within their craft (such as bull riding) offer opportunities for a lucrative payday. The show is enormously successful, and as someone who is fascinated by our modern culture, I wonder what that tells us. Why do so many of us, who wouldn't last a week on a working ranch, feel drawn into that world?

I think it taps into something primal-our longing for rootedness, to connect with the land we are placed in, and some sense of tradition that outlasts us.

I actually think this speaks to us for some of the same reasons the biblical narrative continues

to make sense to people in our culture. The biblical narrative is overflowing with motifs of land, rootedness in place, pastures, livestock, adventure, the starry night sky and seedtime and harvest. And I think it goes deeper. Modernity often leaves us feeling detached, as we can be citizens of everywhere and nowhere through technology, writing emails, texting and sharing memes that are nothing if not transient and fleeting. I think we can push this further. Picking up the good book at the beginning,

we find that God placed us in a garden, and gave us a special relationship with a particular land:

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Genesis 2:15 (NIV)

I've also been listening to a lot of Zach Bryan. He is easily my favourite artist right now, and I've been reflecting on why that is. Country music has always had a strong following in Scotland, (certainly growing up in Lewis it was revered), and I found this out with aplomb when I struggled to get tickets for his upcoming gig at Hampden. Zach writes rooted, gutsy Americana.

He is like a Springsteen, a working class prophet for our generation. But in a sense, it is more profound. He writes about finding the sacredness in ordinary moments, ordinary places, as well as longing, regret and hometown ghosts. He writes something real in an age of the over-polished and over-produced. His music arrives for my generation after a string of institution failures in politics, media and public life- where trust is fragile and we are trying to hold onto fragments of meaning where they can be found. I think the longing for the ranch, the land, the open road, the small town, or the old songs and stories tells us something about who we really are. As creatures, we bear the mark of our Creator. God plants humanity in a garden and ends the biblical story with a restored creation. Perhaps that is why we feel the pull of rootedness so deeply.

We were not made to drift endlessly through a digital world of noise and distraction. We were made for creation, community, stewardship and sacrifice — for the place where heaven and earth meet again. Dust and glory are united there. Maybe that is why the story of the cowboy still makes us watch, lean in and pay attention. Beneath the dirt and dust lies a glory we still long for.

'Take me back to somewhere I miss',

Zach Bryan, Something in the Orange 2022

*Yours in Christ.
Rev David Nicolson*

A Word from A **CORE GROUP**

Pastoral Care

**JESUS REPLIED:
“ ‘LOVE THE LORD
YOUR GOD WITH ALL
YOUR HEART AND
WITH ALL YOUR
SOUL AND WITH ALL
YOUR MIND.’
THIS IS THE FIRST
AND GREATEST
COMMANDMENT.
AND THE SECOND IS
LIKE IT: ‘LOVE YOUR
NEIGHBOUR AS
YOURSELF.’
ALL THE LAW AND
THE PROPHETS
HANG ON THESE TWO
COMMANDMENTS.”
MATTHEW 22: 37-40**



In Jesus response to the teacher of the law in this passage, he brought together 2 great commandments, that both summaries the laws of Moses and expends it, focusing the love of God and linking that love with our duties to help others. I feel fortunate to be a member of a church that takes these passages to heart; week by week listening to David and others tell us through sermons of the great love of God, linking this to our current situations and seeing every day how our congregation reaches out to our community to help our neighbours and seeing how we react to each other when we are together for worship. If you cannot regularly attend our services in person, it's hard to describe the growing sound of individual conversions as people meet up again after just a week apart and take pleasure in the community of sharing and caring for each other.



As well as Session Clerk, I'm also help on the rota for the audio-visual and streaming group. Its easy to see this noise on the recordings as just chatter, but it is a fundamental element of our worship together, the small quiet pastoral cares we give to each other as we welcome each other to join together under the love of God, to worship the God who first loved us and asks us to love each other in his name.

Through the teachings of Jesus, we know that it doesn't have to be the big things that demonstrate our faith, but in the lots of small, quiet everyday acts of care and concern. I pray that we each feel the closeness of the love of God in sharing our cares for each other and our community. If anyone is aware of any person who is in need of Pastoral Care, who may not reach out for it themselves, please let us know so that a follow up can be done.

Bless you all.

Willi McGregor
Session Clerk

A Word from our YOUTH OUTREACH WORKER

I am loving my role of Youth Outreach Worker here at EPC! Everyone has been so kind, welcoming and encouraging to me, thank you! I am enjoying getting to know everyone and learning about the community.



I have started meeting with the high school age young people every 2 weeks on a Sunday morning, where we are looking at Jesus and all that he does.

These sessions have been fabulous so far, with the young people showing such interest and excitement about digging into their bibles! This is so encouraging and I can't wait to continue building upon this and getting to know the young people better. We had our first Youth night on the 10th of May, and it was a huge success!

Rebekah Lennon
Youth Outreach Worker



It was such a fun night, with the escape room showing amazing teamwork, and the silly games bringing such laughter and joy into the space. The young people had lots of fun and were even teaching us new games that they wanted to play! I am looking forward to a summer full of youth events to try and get some buzz going and build connections with young people in the wider community.



There will be a variety of events running, such as crafts, games, and perhaps even a traitor's night! Thank you again for the welcome you have all given me and the encouragement I have been receiving, it means a lot and I am really thankful to be surrounded by such a supportive congregation who are excited to see what God is building for the young people in Erskine.

Rebekah Lennon
Youth Outreach Worker

NOTHING BEATS A SUMMER HOLIDAY CLUB!

10-14 AUGUST 2026

COME FLY WITH US!
ERSKINE CHURCHES
TOGETHER PRESENTS

BACKPACKERS!

Games - Crafts - Snacks - Fun

FREE SUMMER HOLIDAY CLUB

Scan the QR code to Register

Church of Nazarene, Rashilee Avenue, Erskine

10:00-12:00 - Monday 10th - Friday 14 August

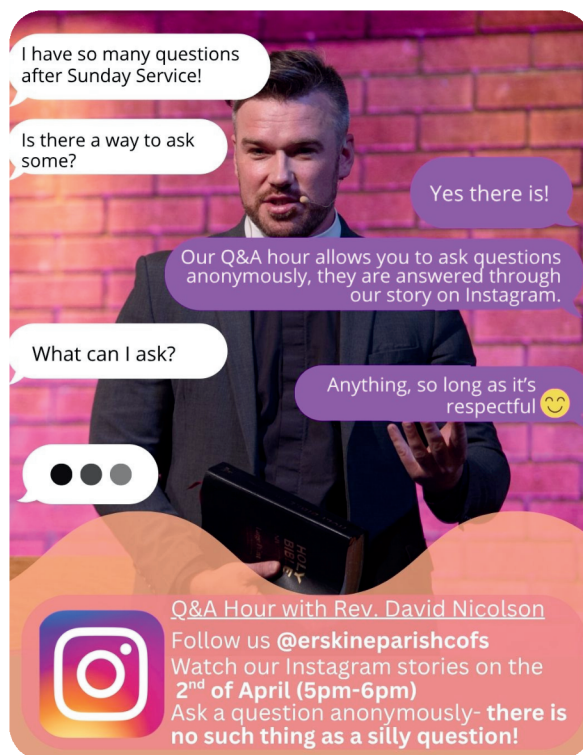
*starting P1 in August 2026



Social Media Efforts

TEMPORARY COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

My first few months as temporary communications assistant have been wonderful! I feel so welcomed by this church and have found the role creative and very rewarding.



I have been focusing on video content across our social media platforms in order to boost engagement, starting the "Interview With" series by chatting with Rebekah Lennon in lieu of her new role, which was really well received, reaching 1.5 thousand views!



One of my goals was to increase our message on Instagram. To do this, we began a Q&A series exclusive to the aforementioned platform's story. Here, followers can ask Rev. David Nicolson questions. It was a hit, and we have grown engagement by 46%. Concerning YouTube, we have surpassed 600 subscribers, which is just thrilling. Knowing EPC is reaching so many of you warms my heart. I hope I have done well in keeping the communications here at EPC ticking along whilst Alyssa is enjoying her time off with her baby boy. I also hope I have done justice to this, my first edition of The Brig!

Bethany Watt

Temporary Communications Assistant

A Word from A **CORE GROUP**

Property

Over the last few months the Property Group has been busy trying to keep our failing heating system working. During this period we submitted grant applications to the Church of Scotland General Trustees Central Fabric Fund for a replacement heating system in the church and a new kitchen in the manse. I'm glad to report that we were successful on both fronts receiving £25,976 towards upgrading the church heating system and £12,790 towards the upgrade of the manse kitchen. This along with the generous legacy and donations of £11k from anonymous donors means that we only need to use around £3,500 of church funds to complete these projects.

At the time of writing both projects are just about to begin, and at the time of publishing this issue of the Brig both projects should be completed. We have also been working hard at finding ways to save on our energy costs which make up a large proportion of our monthly outgoings. We have been changing out old style bulbs with more energy efficient types, installing draft excluders to many of the doors, and changed out all of the old M-Fr heating timers and replaced them with new daily programmable timers. This has allowed us to have so much more control of when the heating comes on and off and to only heat areas when they are in use, this has helped towards our energy savings.





During the period November 25 to May 26 we are reporting a £3,441.00 saving compared with the same period last year. The majority of this saving came from gas (£3,217.00) but the savings have a major caveat regarding ongoing savings as we had no heating, therefore very little gas consumption, for a number of weeks during this period. We'll have a better idea of the actual savings next winter once the new heating system is in place.

Reprogramming the timers to meet the different requirements each week takes a considerable amount of time so thanks goes to Kenneth Hume for carrying out this task and for suggesting and implementing many of the other energy saving initiatives.

Now that spring is here the team has started work maintaining the gardens and rockery and this will continue until the autumn.

I would like to thank everyone in the team for their ongoing efforts and support and we will continue to work as hard as we can to keep our church in the best possible shape over the months and years to come.



Irvine Bain
Property Group Leader

Monthly UPDATES

March

March was a wonderful month of generosity, and we were already starting to see the impact of the Going for Gold campaign, with £3,027 raised.

We welcomed Alyssa's baby boy, Jacob Aaron MacDonald, into the world on the 4th of March and wished her all the best during her time off with her beautiful family of four!

The church was very grateful to receive a £5,000 donation from The Hub, along with an anonymous donation of £10,000 towards the cost of the new central heating system.



EASTER AT EPC
SERIES TITLE: THE COMING KING

PALM SUNDAY
29TH OF MARCH
THE KING WHO COMES IN PEACE
11AM

HOLY WEEK SERVICE
1ST OF APRIL
WITH THE GUILD:
7PM

MAUNDY THURSDAY
2ND OF APRIL
THE KING WHO SERVES
7PM

GOOD FRIDAY
3RD OF APRIL
THE KING WHO SUFFERS
7PM

EASTER SUNDAY
5TH OF APRIL
THE KING WHO LIVES
11AM

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE WILL HAVE A FAMILY AND TESTIMONY ELEMENT: PEOPLE SHARING HOW GOD HAS IMPACTED THEIR LIVES

Easter Week was a wonderful time of worship, and we had a detailed plan for each service, which was very helpful. On Palm Sunday, we began Holy Week with a sermon titled "The King Who Comes in Peace".

We also welcomed our Youth Outreach Officer, Rebekah Lennon, to the team. Who has now settled into her new role at Erskine Parish Church.

There was much cause for celebration this month!

April

April saw the remainder of Holy Week, concluding with a very emotional Easter Sunday. We warmly welcomed members to worship with us on Easter Sunday, and we also said goodbye to Heather Thorpe, Candidate in Training with the Presbytery of Glasgow, wishing her every blessing and success on the next stage of her journey. Rebekah held her first session of the High School Group, marking a milestone in her progress at EPC. The Fundraising Team hosted a Silent Auction and Quiz Night on 18 April, which was a huge success!



We were delighted to host Park Mains High School's Valedictory Service in April, the first of its kind since Covid, which marked a new chapter in the relationship between the Parish Church and the High School.

We also received an amazing donation of £1,800 from Boxing for Fitness - thank you!

May

May has been a busy month so far. We held Christian Aid Week from 10–16 May, with this year’s focus on urban poverty in Nairobi, Kenya, supporting families living in informal settlements.

Rebekah hosted a Youth Night for high school-aged young people, with pizza, games, and even an orchestrated escape room! Work has begun on the installation of the new boiler, made possible by The General Trustees awarding us two grants totalling £40,376, alongside other generous donations received.

At the time of writing this, we look forward to the full-immersion adult baptisms of John and James on Sunday 24 May. We are also looking forward to the Vintage Breakfast Event being held by the Fundraising Group. The QR code to book the free Primary School Summer Group is now live! You can find and scan the code on page 4.

We would like to also note our appreciation of the blessings we receive from our congregation! Thank you all and God bless you!

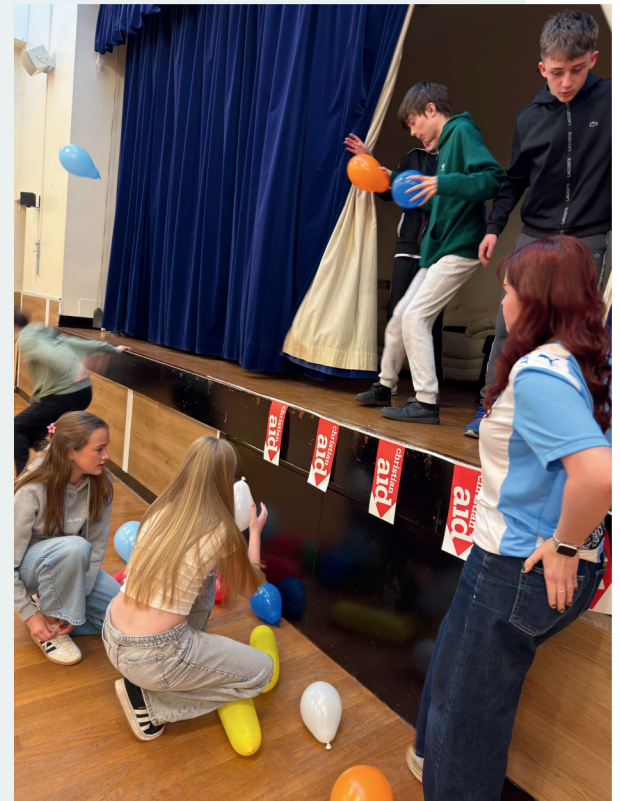


Photo Highlights

Palm Sunday



Flower Cross



Living Stones



Bidding farewell
to Heather Thorpe



UNPAID CARERS

DROP-IN CAFE

LAST THURSDAY EACH MONTH

29TH JANUARY

26TH FEBRUARY

26TH MARCH

30TH APRIL

28TH MAY

25TH JUNE

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.

Contact us at

07914601033



let's get in touch

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