

A PLACE OF BELIEVING AND BELONGING



ERSKINE PARISH

Church

The Brig
MARCH 2026



ERSKINE PARISH CHURCH

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A Word from Our **MINISTER**



There are times when it matters how you got somewhere, more than the fact of getting there. The journey, as much as the destination.

I remember as a young man taking a college module in sea survival skills. There was one particular exercise where we had to scramble to get into a replica ship's life-raft from the water – not an easy task with a fully inflated life jacket restricting your every move! In that case, our instructor told us, it doesn't matter how you get in- just get in! On the other hand, I think of a friend who has come out of the Mormon LDS 'church' and their stories of coercion, control and mind games – all deployed as tactics to get and keep people into the movement.

When we are dealing with Jesus Christ, His message, His Kingdom, His people - the

method really does matter! And if we look at Jesus, we find something remarkable. He called, and people were compelled. He preached God's word, and they marvelled. He loved, listened, healed blessed, ate and drank - and people could not stay away.

Dear friends, the method is all there for us to simply follow. We need not re-invent the wheel. I have been massively encouraged at the start of this year as we welcomed new members to our church family by baptism and profession of faith. I honestly find it hard to comprehend how much life, growth and blessing God has been pleased to send us, and thank Him for the wonderful new

souls joining us. But, the gratitude is equally for who we are as a people. I truly believe Erskine Parish Church practices what it preaches. It loves those who come, as Christ did. It's not the whole story, but it is a big part of who we are and what creates a welcoming new church home for so many. As we continue in this season, considering the words in John 15 which encourage us to handle our growth well- in prayer, love, faith, giving of offerings, love for God and others, I'm excited for what God has for us as a people of faith, growing together over the coming year.

I'll leave you with the words of Robert Murray M' Cheyne (1813-1843), the great minister and preacher of St Peter's Dundee:

"The Christian is a person who makes it easy for others to believe in God."

*Yours in Christ.
Rev David Nicolson*

A Word from A **CORE GROUP**



Young People & Families

We have been blessed in Junior Church this year by an increase in the number of young people attending and in their enthusiasm while they are with us. They also display a love for others and a

willingness to come together to support both the church and the community.

During October, both young and slightly older members (adults) joined together to walk from Erskine to Westminster, not literally, but to cover the number of miles through a sponsored walk. They were successful in doing this as well as raising £685 in the process. In November, we held a Bake Sale with several of our young people, as well as members of the congregation, providing the goodies which were well received and a total of £150 raised. We are very grateful and appreciative of all the support we received in both of these ventures.





In September, some of our older members noted that they would like to organise and participate in a nativity play at the Christmas service. They named and allocated the characters to those who were happy to take this forward. They rehearsed in Junior Church on Sundays and happily



dressed in costume to participate on the day. We are surrounded with lots of young talent in our group with everyone's acting skills, as well as Emily who sang and played guitar with Reverend David. Well done to all involved and we look forward to what 2026 will bring.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers on our rota for the giving of your time and talents and for sharing your faith with the young people we have contact with.



Elizabeth McDade
Young People & Families Leader

Girl Guides

All Erskine District guiding units now meet in Erskine Parish Church, and we have five units covering all sections. Although overall numbers have declined in recent years, we are delighted to have over 100 girls from 5 to 16 years of age meeting every week during term time. Eight of our older girls are working in Young Leader roles, gaining experience and a qualification



our meetings and they are always warmly welcomed. The kitchen has been well used recently. Guides made cheesy mash for their food critic badge, and Rangers made tasty soup as a healthy eating choice for their cooking badge. Making biscuits is a favourite activity for Rainbows and Brownies. Tasting the produce is definitely the best bit for everyone!

Meeting other units and spending time away from the meeting place is an important aspect of the Guiding Programme. Last year the Rainbows and Brownies enjoyed a 'roar and explore' day at Blair Drummond when the safari park was taken over by Girlguiding Scotland. Guides slept 'under the stars' at South Newton, Rangers did a 'Mind the Gap' tour of Glasgow's subway circuit.

I am very grateful for the ongoing commitment of the voluntary leaders and the support from parents. We also



to become Guiders in the future.

We are very grateful to have the space and facilities provided by the church. The girls and leaders also appreciate the interest our designated elders take in our activities. Janet, Elizabeth and Pauline are regular visitors to

owe a huge 'thank you' to Neil and Ian who faithfully open the church for us every week. There are some spaces available in each of the units, and there are always volunteering opportunities for adults. All adults must undergo PVG checks and Safe Space training.

Please contact me at erskinedistrict@gmail.com for more information.

*Please note the new times as well.

Rainbows (age 5-7)

Mondays 5.30 - 6.45pm

Tuesdays 6 - 7.15pm

Brownies (age 7-10)

Mondays 7- 8.30pm

Tuesdays 6.15 - 7.45pm

Guides (age 10-14)

Tuesdays 7.30 - 9pm

Ranger Guides (14-18)

Tuesdays 8 - 9pm

Kirsty Martin

Erskine District Commissioner

A Word from A **CORE GROUP**



Fundraising

The Fundraising Core Group was created last July in response to the growing financial pressures we face and God has blessed us with a fabulous group of enthusiastic and passionate volunteers. Our group is made up of 9 members: Ann Gallacher, Carol Dobbie, Karen Bain, Catherine Malcolm, Helen Boyle, Helen Sime, Joyce Melrose, Lorna Boyne and myself, Margaret Rhoddan, as Group Leader. Our aim is to ensure that the worship, witness, mission and care that our church provides will continue for generations to come. Generosity is a central part of our faith. We believe that God is endlessly generous to us and we are called to be generous in return. The mission and life of the church is only possible because of the generous giving of our congregation and the wider

community. Christian stewardship recognises that everything we have belongs to God and we are called to care for all that God has given us. The Fundraising Core Group are honoured to be part of EPC's stewardship.

Whilst fundraising is a fundamental part of what we do, at the heart of organising fundraising events is our desire to offer hospitality to our wider community. We want to welcome everyone with warmth and kindness, making them feel part of our church family and extending Jesus' loving presence.

At our first meeting, we started to plan the Christmas Fayre. We set the date, allocated tasks and the Fundraising Group was off the starting blocks. On Saturday 8th November, the enormous efforts of the team and the phenomenal support of the church



organisations (Guides & Brownies, Playgroup and Line dancers), the congregation, and wider community paid off. The large hall was filled with seasonal cheer: stalls with homemade crafts & baking, a bottle and a chocolate tombola, toys, gifts, handbags and bric a brac; carols sung by Bishopton Singing for Wellbeing Choir; and the aroma of hot mulled apple juice. The Hub was busy serving tea, coffee, seasonal treats and rolls while the Kids Zone in the small hall had games and offered free face painting thanks to a donation from Erskine Rotary. Santa and Mrs Claus even greeted the children in the Quiet Room which had been transformed into Santa's Grotto at the North Pole. It was a magical day and raised a sum of just under £3, 500! Our next endeavour was a family ceilidh on Saturday 31st January. Ceilidh stems from the Gaelic word for "visit" or "party" and this sold-out event was indeed a party. Folk from 5 to 93 enjoyed dances like the Gay Gordon's, Dashing White Sergeant

and Strip the Willow, entertained and guided by The Midges. Raffle prizes were generously donated by The Village Rest in Luss, Scoff & Patter in Bishopton, Spar, Rowlands, Morrisons, Elis in Inchinnan, congregation members, Singing for Wellbeing choir and family and friends of the Fundraising Group who also provided refreshments for the evening. We were delighted that our first social evening was such a success and it raised the grand sum of £1,044! I would like to express my sincere thanks to the members of the team for their hard work, dedication and enthusiasm in making these events possible and to also thank everyone who supported us in any way. As the saying goes "we couldn't have done it without you!" We are currently busy thinking about our next event and look forward to making an announcement soon.

Margaret Rhoddan
Fundraising Leader

Meet our TEMP COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

BETHANY WATT

I am so thrilled to be the temporary communications assistant here at Erskine Parish Church. I have an honours degree in multimedia journalism and have experience with The Scottish Government, STV and the charity sector. My special interests include art, film and I am currently writing my own book! I am excited to use my experience towards the growth of the wonderful community at EPC.



Sincerely,
Bethany Watt
Temporary Communications Assistant

Free Will Offering PAYMENT METHODS

Now that there is no longer a bank branch in Erskine, the Sunday Duty Teams now have to use one of the local post offices to deposit the weekly collections. Unfortunately, the Bank of Scotland will not accept any cheques processed via the Post Office. This means we are no longer able to accept cheques from the congregation. Our apologies for any inconvenience this may cause.

There are a number of alternative options for making freewill payments:

- We have a facility available in the Hall of Fellowship on Sundays for instant online card payments. (See the Session Clerk or Duty Team leader for assistance with this.)
- Online payments can be made anytime via the Donate button on the church's website. erskineparish.com
- Payment by bank transfer or standing order using the details below:

Bank of Scotland
Sort code 80-13-53
Account number 00739874

Freewill offerings and Gift Aid donations are essential sources of income for the church. We could not operate without them. We very much appreciate every individual contribution and are grateful to those that have recently reviewed their giving to help the church meet its commitments.

EPC Youth Project is

GOING FOR GOLD

**IF YOU HAVE GOLD
(BROKEN OR
UNWANTED ITEMS),
WE CAN TURN
THAT INTO CASH
TO FUND OUR
YOUTH MINISTRY.**

**PLEASE PLACE ANY UNWANTED GOLD INTO THE
ENVELOPE ATTACHED, DROP IT IN THE
OFFERING PLATE & SEE
WHAT GOD CAN DO WITH IT!**

Did you know?

**GOLD IS MENTIONED MORE THAN 400 TIMES IN
SCRIPTURE & SPANS FROM GENESIS TO
REVELATION.**

**THE BIBLE SPEAKS ABOUT GIVING GOLD IN TWO
PRIMARY WAYS; AS A PRECIOUS AND SYMBOLIC
OFFERING SUCH AS THE GOLD THE MAGI
BROUGHT TO HONOUR JESUS, & THE GOLD
GIVEN FOR THE TABERNACLE TO SYMBOLISE
GOD'S GLORY & DWELLING AMONG HIS PEOPLE.**

Take from among
you a contribution
to the Lord.

Whoever is of a
generous heart, let
him bring the Lord's
contribution: gold,
silver and bronze

Exodus 35:5

So they came, both
men and women. All
who were of a
willing heart
brought brooches
and earrings and
signet rings and
armlets, all sorts of
gold objects,
everyone dedicating
an offering of gold
to the Lord.

Exodus 35:22

On coming to the
house, they saw the
child with his
mother Mary, and
they bowed down
and worshiped him.
Then they opened
their treasures and
presented him with
gifts of gold,
frankincense and
myrrh.

Matthew 2:11

GROWTH-

OPPORTUNITY-

LIFE-

DISCIPLINESHIP-

TOGETHER WE CAN GROW OUR CHURCH
BY

GIVING YOUNG PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY
TO

FOLLOW A LIFE OF FAITH AND BECOME
AN

EVERY DAY DISCIPLE FOR JESUS

GRANT FUNDING

for the Youth Worker



During 2025 we gratefully received a total of £41,765 in grant funding.

The majority of grants were specifically to fund the costs of a Youth Worker for two years. These funds have been placed in a restricted account pending the appointment of a suitable applicant. The recruitment process is currently ongoing. As a result of receiving these grants, the impact on EPC’s finances of employing a Youth Worker will be minimal.

Amount Received	Awarding Body	Purpose of Grant
£180.....	Church of Scotland.....	Contribution to heating survey
£15,000.....	CoS Seeds for Growth.....	Youth Worker costs (1 st instalment)
£2,000.....	Bishop Radford Trust.....	Laptop for Youth Worker
£1,000.....	Presbytery Local.....	Puppet Ministry purchases
£2,585.....	Presbytery Local.....	Kitchen Cabinet upgrades & Pizza Oven for kitchen
£16,000.....	Benefact Trust.....	Youth Worker costs
£5,000.....	Ferguson Bequest.....	Youth Worker costs

Monthly UPDATES

DECEMBER

December is always a month that inspires us to give back in light of the great gift of a Saviour that we receive. This season we saw many generous donations, especially through the success of our annual participation in the Renfrew Social Work Toy Donation (right). We were also able to introduce our new digital donation station which allows easier access to donating via card payment.

The church was very grateful to receive a £5,000 donation from The Hub and £900 from the Line Dancing group!



JANUARY

In January, we received generous donations from the choir (£200) and Jan's stall (£500)!

Our ministry candidate, Heather Thorpe, took part in the successful 'Sharing the Faith' panel discussion with Erskine Churches Together where the community gathered to discuss our beliefs and build a sense of unity.

The flower ministry calendar opened up as well, so if you would like to sign up for a date or give the flowers to someone who is unwell, please speak to Ann MacKichan. We saw the end of January through with a fundraising family ceilidh, which was enjoyed by many and may be read about further in Margaret Rhoddan's article on page 7.



FEBRUARY

February has already been a month to celebrate as we held a baptism and profession of faith service. We welcomed 8 new members into our church family! While we have sent Alyssa, our communications assistant, off on maternity leave with well wishes and congratulations, we have also welcomed a new temporary communications assistant who will provide cover for Alyssa's maternity leave. Please help us to make Bethany feel most welcome! You may read more about her on page 9!

February will also see the celebration of the Guild Musical Afternoon on 25th February with entertainment by Neilston Strings. It's sure to be a lively and fun event!



We would like to also note our appreciation of the blessings we receive from our congregation! From November to January alone, we received a total of £2, 280 from individual donors! Thank you all and God bless you!



UNPAID CARERS DROP-IN CAFE

LAST THURSDAY EACH MONTH
11AM-12:30PM
THE HUB AT
ERSKINE PARISH CHURCH

NEXT DATES:

26TH FEBRUARY
26TH MARCH
30TH APRIL

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

Prayer Group

Prayer requests for yourself or someone you know may be placed in the blue box in the Hall of Fellowship and will be included in our fortnightly prayer group meetings. We do not need many details; just a name will do.

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."
1 Peter 5:7

let's get in touch

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