

A PLACE OF BELIEVING AND BELONGING



ERSKINE PARISH

Church

The Brig
MARCH 2025



ERSKINE PARISH CHURCH

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A Word from Our **MINISTER**



Geronimo's Cadillac

'Technology is the future of the church,' exclaimed my conversation partner as we chatted over buffet food and Shloer in Glasgow Cathedral, just before Christmas. I was there to MC for Crossreach's annual Christmas Carol Concert and had been tracked down by someone from a neighbouring part of the Kirk to talk about the church, and specifically where its future lay. I listened politely, bristled a little, and kept chewing the conversation over until I could properly get to grips with my own reflections a little later, hoping to solve the question of why I couldn't raise my glass of sparking grape juice with a hearty 'cheers to that' at the statement.

The church in the broadest sense has come through a lot in the recent half-decade. Things weren't looking great from a numbers demographics point of view then a 1-2 of Covid and cost of living crises dealt a couple more giant blows. At my most sympathetic, I can see why 'online church is the future' was adopted. It became a lifeline during that time, allowing us to simulate even the faintest sense of continuing communion, however frail. It also seems to address the so-called problems of our cultural moment, where people aren't so keen on going to church (or indeed many such similar institutions and clubs), and like to spend a lot of time on electronic devices. I am

sympathetic to all this and have even at times thought, maybe this is the future. But that's not where I sit today. I don't think technology is a panacea for church decline, far from it. This may come as a surprise. I'm sure to many, since I've arrived at EPC, I appear to have constantly been pushing the church into embracing more digital expressions of our church life. That's true, I have, and I hope I can demonstrate, it's with good reason. Online technology, and the various platforms it has spawned, I believe are, even on their best day, simply tools and conduits for what is eternal about the church- the message of the Gospel and the people that gather around it. If we get this wrong, it can either become a

burden, a laughing stock, or a hindrance.

There is a now infamous photograph of storied Apache tribe leader Geronimo, stationed at the wheel of a Cadillac, in June 1905 for Oklahoma Gala Day. Geronimo is flanked by others in Native American garb, while he sits awkwardly in top-hat and suit, typical white man's attire. The photo relates a painful history, as he was actually a prisoner of the U.S Government at the time, simply paraded out as part of the show for that day. He never owned or indeed needed a modern Cadillac (or indeed Locomobile Type E as the vehicle actually is). This photo and event, inspired Michael Martin Murphey's 1972 song 'Geronimo's Cadillac', whose lyrics bring out the absurdity

and clash of cultures behind the image. The ill-fitting picture of Geronimo, in foreign garb, being forced to steer the juggernaut of modernity is poignant whichever way we look at it. Whether it's the inauthenticity, being forced to be something he is not. The burden, of having to play a part to try and fit in with the surrounding stream of modernity. Or pitiful nature of being a side-show at a gala day, little more than a laughing stock. To me, it is all too easy for churches to rush head-long into embracing technology because 'it is the future' and we are scared of being left behind. It is too easy to get caught up trying anything and everything in an attempt at relevance, as we panic about

fading numbers. Inevitably, if these are our motivations, we risk being a laughing stock - not taken seriously by our audience because they sense the inauthenticity or desperation or both.

That's why I've tried to focus on what we can do. Theologically, this means seeing technology as a tool, rather than a panacea, that can gently and accessibly reach people with the Gospel. Practically, it means focusing on what we can do consistently, to a high standard, and filtering out the rest. We have limited personnel and resources so this is important. But the goal of all this is clear. The church existed long before any algorithms because of

a life-giving message, in the person of Christ, and created an enduring community to live out that message. There's a mystery that takes place when we gather as God's people. I'm grateful for the ways that can extend into people's home over the ether, and the soft welcome it can give on a

screen. But ultimately, whatever it looks like at EPC, I believe in some old fashioned way that the future of the church is as the past of the church- God's people gathering, with technology being a well-crafted tool to support that gathering.

*Yours in Christ,
Rev David Nicolson*

A Word from A CORE GROUP



Young People & Families Group:

As convenor of the Young People and Families Committee it is my privilege together with the other group members to visit the organisations who meet in our building. It's important that we show how much we value them as part of our Church family.

Junior Church, which is staffed on a rota basis, has a core group of regular attenders together with the addition of visiting children.

This year we have been blessed to have Myra and the Puppet Ministry visit and this was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Our Parent and Toddler Group meet on a Wednesday morning and is a victim of its own success with numbers continuing to rise.

We have two healthy Brownie Packs who meet on Monday and Tuesday evenings followed by the Guides.

Our Boy's Brigade meet on a Friday evening where their numbers remain steady.

All of these organisations are staffed by volunteers, people who are willing and able to share their time, talents and energy with the young of our community and for this we are truly grateful.

However, we all know that there's no such thing as too many volunteers. So if you are able and interested in helping in any of the groups, please let me know. We are always happy to welcome willing hands.



↖
Junior Church
activity

"Children are a gift
from the Lord,
they are a reward
from Him"

PSALM 127 : 3



↖
Girl Guides
↙
Toddlers
Play Group

Elizabeth McDade

Young People & Families
Group Leader

Roll Keeper's ADDRESS



I have been Roll Keeper now for more years than I care to remember! My remit is to keep a record of all those who become members of the Congregation, those who leave or move away and those who have passed away. These figures have to be kept up to date and go to Presbytery at the end of each year.

It is with sadness we remember the following members who have passed away this quarter:-

Name	Died
Robert 'Bobby' West	15 December, 2024
Fred Thomas	05 January, 2025

It gives me great pleasure in announcing those who have been baptised with our church family so far this quarter:-

Name	Baptised
Aurora Jane Elliott	22 December, 2024



Blessings to you all.
Lerna Boyne
Roll Keeper



A Look Behind the Scene:

A common, and very fair question we get asked at the club is, why? Specifically, why is a church running a boxing for outreach class? There are several very practical and even mundane reasons. But the most interesting reasons are driven by the mission and purpose of the church. In a sense, all of Christian life should be a form of worship. I enjoyed recently having space to reflect very specifically about how this work, bringing together a passion for fitness, people and our community can be an excellent advert for the Gospel.

1- Responding to Need in the Community

When we study the life of Christ we see that He took part in activities and frequented spaces which were not religious, but communal and cultural (Matthew 9:10-13). He also put some effort into sharing life with people well beyond the margin of religious and 'church' life. He also attended to people's physical needs, as part of the proclamation of the kingdom (Matthew 9: 35-38). Sometimes the Lord's interest and care about people's physical needs is what opened doors for the Gospel message. But regardless, we can draw from



the example of Christ a commitment to holistic wellbeing (body, mind, spirit, John 10:10). Our current cultural moment has seen a dramatic rise in awareness and provision of fitness and health activities. The BFF class has already garnered some success stories of people.

2- Pastoral Outreach

As someone with pastoral training, I use my BFF class to listen to the clients, their struggles and issues as we build relationship week by week. I have also been able to support them at times pastorally outside the boxing club as a result. This is a cohort of people in the community of Erskine which would not normally otherwise come into contact with the church or a Christian worker of any kind for pastoral support. In that sense, it functions similar to any chaplaincy role.

3- An Onramp to Discipleship

- Reducing chronic pain
- Improving mental resilience and confidence
- Gaining a sense of purpose and achievement through new skills

My hope for anyone, as a minister of the gospel is that they embrace the life of discipleship. Increasingly, in a world where going to church is not an obvious option for more people, it's important for the church to explore other ways the conversation about faith can begin. This is an aspect of the club that I often pray into, being ready to respond should God begin to stir people to seek faith and a connection to the church. As of today, we have begun to see small shoots of this.

Rev David Nicolson

Certified Hatton Boxing
Instructor



500K

SUBSCRIBERS

We've recently reached 500,000 subscribers on YouTube, which has been a road of dedication, strategy meetings, and support from members like you! We are encouraged that our message is spreading and the Gospel is being heard in the wider community and even in other countries!

Thank you to everyone who has helped & supported our channel along the way!

WANT TO HELP?

Your ongoing support is always welcome through liking and sharing each post and video, which helps us to ultimately reach more people.

We also depend on our members to send in pictures of church life; whether it is a normal Sunday morning, a special event, a moment shared in The Hub, or a weekly group that meets. All pictures are helpful to keep everyone connected in how our church is moving, growing, and taking part in fellowship.

If you take any pictures at all, please send them to Alyssa at epcnotices@gmail.com

Follow us on all our available platforms!

 **YouTube**



@EPCVideo

 **Spotify**



EPC Sermon Audio

facebook



Erskine
Parish Church

Instagram



@erskineparishcofs

Monthly UPDATES

DECEMBER

In late November/December, we saw many generous donations that were all so thoughtfully given! These included £1,000 from Boxing for Fitness, £4,000 from The Hub, £1,000 from the Sunday Hub team, £650 from Line Dancing, and £200 from the Hub Snowman Draw. Our church life had many carol services and concerts attended including the Jesus & Me Prospects Across Scotland Annual Christmas Carol Service and the Rejoice and Sing Christmas Concert, both of which were great successes!

December also saw our annual Christmas Gift Collection where we donated many gifts and wrapping as a church to those in need in Renfrewshire.

We were also able to celebrate the baptism of Aurora Jane Elliott which you can find pictures of on the page of the Roll Keeper's Address.

Finally, at the end of the advent season, we were able to come together as a community in our church with Erskine & Bishopton Churches Together hosting the Christmas Eve Service at EPC.



JANUARY

In January, we launched our very first Unpaid Carers Drop-In Cafe, which saw a great turnout of six carers who were all able to share their experiences together and gain support from one another. Please see the advert on the next page for more information.

Also a huge thank you to The Hub who also provided us with two beautiful wooden flower stands.



UNPAID CARERS DROP-IN CAFE

NEXT DATES:

27 FEBRUARY
27 MARCH
24 APRIL

FEBRUARY

So far in February, we have been so grateful to have received a generous £700 donation from the Mothers & Toddlers Group!





UNPAID CARERS DROP-IN CAFE

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

NEXT DATES:

27 FEBRUARY
27 MARCH
24 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



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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