Cumbrae, Fairlie Largs Parish Church

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NEWSLETTER

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DEAR FRIENDS

I hope that you are as well as it is possible for you to be!

Many of you will be aware of the Presbytery-called special meeting on 20th August in Ayr regarding our church buildings in Largs. There is no concern for Cumbrae or Fairlie Parish Churches. Following this meeting, guidance was received from the Principal Clerk of the Church of Scotland, Rev Dr Alistair May. In essence, as there is no possibility of building a new church, there is no actual plan for the Largs church buildings. Therefore, the decision on the buildings has been taken back into a formal Presbytery-led process under the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (PMP Act). To this end, a special committee has been set up of five serving presbyters under the convenorship of the Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, a former Principal Clerk and Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Over the last few years, there has been a wide range of dialogue regarding how our buildings could best serve the congregation to deliver our God-given mission across Largs. Therefore, in order to make their prayerfully considered recommendation to Presbytery, this Committee must consult with the appropriate national Church bodies. The Kirk Session must also be properly heard, and further surveys may be commissioned if needed. The Committee will develop a recommendation based on mission as well as buildings and, once complete, the congregation will be formally cited to appear at Presbytery when the report will be received and any decisions made.

While our congregation is at the heart of these decisions, this situation is being played out in many parishes across the national Church. Therefore, a Day of Prayer has been identified to pray for the Church of Scotland and the communities we serve, reflecting: The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it - John 1:5

Therefore, on Saturday 31st October the sanctuary at Largs Parish Church will be open from 1.00 – 2.00pm to allow anyone with an interest in praying for our parish, the wider Church, and all the communities that we serve, to gather. However, if you cannot manage to come to Largs for 1.00pm, you may wish to join online, as the service from West Kilbride Parish Church will be livestreamed at 11.00am. I do hope that you may find time to join as the whole Church comes together to pray for the light of Christ to shine upon us in these challenging days of darkness.

With every blessing, Graham

COMMUNION ACROSS THE PARISH

Sunday 25th October

All who love the Lord Jesus Christ are invited to share in the bread and wine

Retiral offering in aid of The Parish Benevolent Fund

LARGS & DISTRICT CHURCHES TOGETHER

Sunday 25th Oct: Service for Peace

5.00pm. St Mary's Chapel.

Sunday 8th Nov: Remembrance Sunday

10.50am: Cumbrae War Memorial before Worship

10.50am: Fairlie War Memorial following Worship

10.50am: Largs War Memorial before Worship

Sunday 29th November: Taizé Service

5.00pm. St Columba's Episcopal Church.

I SEE YOU

This was said to be a standard greeting of the Bushmen (San) of southern Africa. It struck me that maybe God is saying it to us and to our parish right now. It assures us, but also challenges us, that He knows us through and through. We are never outside His awareness. Does that make us glad – or nervous? Can we say "I see you" to God? How often do we come to that point of meeting with Him, "seeing" Him?

There is a story of an old Yorkshireman who spent a long time on his own in church. When asked what he was doing, he said straightly, "God sees me and I see God." A simple but profound statement of openness. A hymn says,

"Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,
to reach out and touch Him, and say that we love Him."

How does seeing God affect how we see each other? Jesus said, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13. 34) Do we skim past these familiar words, or do they snag our attention? What about the people we find difficult? Maybe they – and we – need more loving.

May we be able to say with Hagar "I have now seen the One who sees me". (Genesis 16.13)

Morag Fowler

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Fairlie Depute Session Clerk: Ann Tyler Tel: 07394 340126 Email: anndtyler@gmail.com
Largs Depute Session Clerk: Jim Welsh Tel: 07769 648340 Email: jim.welsh@sky.com

CHURCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Since the union of the five parishes, for one reason or another, our financial position has diminished by approximately £100,000 per year. This is in part due to some recent bereavements. However, it would seem that some of our members are choosing not to support the wider work of Christ's mission in our parish and beyond. While this is a sad situation, as the modern adage says, 'it is what it is!'

As a parish, we endeavour to share the good news of Jesus our Lord and Saviour and how His life was given that we may have life eternal. However, before attaining life eternal, Jesus said that He has come that we may have life now, in all its fullness. And for us as a parish to help those who are struggling with life, we need to improve our financial givings. To this effect, we are forming a new Fundraising Committee which will set a programme of events to help raise our church funds. Additionally, however, we would ask everyone to reconsider their givings to the work of the church. While we may not be able to change the life of everyone, we can help change the life of some who are in desperate need due to the ongoing 'cost of living crisis.'

At the beginning of September, we held an Autumn Fair in the Dunn Memorial Hall. This was a highly enjoyable time for those who came along and over £3,000 was raised for church funds. A big thank you is extended to everyone who donated, managed a stall, worked in the tearoom, or who came along to support. There was a great atmosphere on the day bringing people together for the Lord's work. Our next fundraisers are our Christmas Fayres.

We are very grateful for all your donated givings for the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Given the foregoing deficit, we would ask you to take this opportunity to review your offering to the church. Remember, if you are a taxpayer you can gift aid your offerings if you haven't already done so. For more information on Gift Aid please contact Alastair Coutts (07432 426434), or, to set up a standing order payment please contact Jim Welsh (07769 648340).

Our parish Accounts give a complete breakdown of our parish income and expenditure. If you would like a copy, you can collect one at any of our parish churches. However, if you contact our Parish Treasurer, Mr Jim Welsh, he will send you a copy: jim.welsh@sky.com

KIRK SESSION SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Safeguarding is essential to the safe running of any organisation caring for young and vulnerable people. The recommended time for renewing Elder/Trustee Safeguarding Training within the Church of Scotland is 3 years.

As it is mandatory for Elders/Trustees to attend training regularly, training has been arranged for Ian Brown to provide 2 in-person training sessions for those members of our Kirk Session who need a refresher course.

Sunday 18th Oct: 2.00pm – Largs Parish Church, Main Hall
Sunday 1st Nov: 2.00pm – Fairlie Parish Church, Session Room

The training will last approximately 2 – 2½ hours and coffee/tea will be available prior to both training sessions from 1.30pm. If an Elder/Trustee has not attended a refresher within the 3-year period, they are not legally (OSCR) entitled to serve as a Trustee. Therefore, all elders should let our Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Alison Tunnicliffe (07800 717909), know as soon as possible which session they are able to attend.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

For many people, the experience of singing Christmas Carols is enhanced when it is by candlelight. It may be the reality that, like our lives of faith, light from small flames can break through the darkness around us. Therefore, with the choirs of our three churches, together with young voices and an ecumenical praise band, we will be holding a Parish-wide Service of Carols by Candlelight in Largs Parish Church on 13th December at 3.00pm. Please let others know about this that they, too, may experience the joy of giving God praise in a new way.

SERVICE OF LIGHT AND REMEMBERING

Thursday 3rd Dec, 7.00pm

Advent and Christmas for everyone is special. However, because this is a special time, it can be difficult for families who reflect back on life and have sadness due to the passing of a loved one. This doesn't really get any easier with time. Therefore, each year local congregations host the Service of Light and Remembering.

This year the Service will take place in Brisbane Evangelical Church and will be a 'gentle' service of remembering when there will be an opportunity to light a small candle to demonstrate the love that continues beyond death. As St Paul reminds us, 'Love is eternal.'

The Service of Light and Remembering is open to anyone who may wish to come along.

PARISH CHRISTMAS FAYRES

28th November - Largs, 10am
5th December - Fairlie, 2pm

We are holding two fundraising Christmas events this year to help ease everyone into Advent. They will be held in the Clark Memorial Hall on 28th November (10am – 1pm) and in Fairlie Parish Church on 5th December (2pm – 4pm). We hope that you will find some time to come along and enjoy a cuppa and some home baking (with soup being available in Largs from 11.30am), as we enter the season of Christmas. In Fairlie Santa will be visiting for all boys and girls. Please look out for further information on how to help, make donations, bake or make soup, from the beginning of November.

PARISH GIFT SUNDAY

6th December

For the last few years we have been supporting Glasgow City Mission at Christmas time by gifting new items for children – teenagers or by making a financial gift to assist in their necessary and very challenging work. Gifts will be collected and dedicated at Morning Worship, then taken to Glasgow on 7th December.

BLYTHSWOOD SHOEBOX APPEAL

Our parish support of the Blythswood Shoebox is now open and is running until 25th October. Please pick up a leaflet at any of our Parish Churches which lists the items possible to gift. Then, if possible, support those who are in great need by either filling a Christmas-Wrapped Shoe Box (available from Largs Parish Church) or donating some items into the collection boxes at the back of our churches. If you are unable to buy items and would like to donate money for us to purchase on your behalf please speak with Christine McCubbin (07719 837506), Ann Tyler (07394 340126), or Elizabeth Robertson (01475 675681), as soon as possible. This is a wonderful opportunity to help make Christmas special for those with very little.

Receiving a filled shoebox and knowing that a stranger has filled it with love and is thinking of them will make Christmas a little brighter for those less fortunate than ourselves.

IMPORTANT DIARY DATES

Saturday 31 October
1 – 2pm. **Day of Prayer**
Largs Parish Church sanctuary open for prayer.

Saturday 21 November
2 – 4pm. **Cumbrae Guild Christmas Fair**
Age Concern Hall

Monday 23 November
1st Largs B.B. **Christmas Post** until 16th Dec. *Halliday and Morrisons only*

Saturday 28 November
10am – 1pm. **Parish Christmas Fayre**, *Clark Memorial Hall.*

10.30am – 12 noon
God's Families,
Dunn Memorial Hall.

2 – 4pm. **Millport B.B. Tea Afternoon**, *Parish Church*

Sunday 29 November
1st Sunday of Advent.

Saturday 5 December
10am – 12 noon
Largs B.B. Christmas Fayre, *Clark Memorial Hall*

2 – 4pm
Parish Christmas Fair
Fairlie Parish Church

Sunday 6 December
2nd Sunday of Advent
Parish Gift Day *supporting Glasgow City Mission.*

Christingle at Worship
Fairlie and Largs

2.30pm. **Kirk Session** meeting Largs.

Wednesday 9 December
Millport BB Christmas Post: until 16th December.

Sunday 13 December
3rd Sunday of Advent.

Christingle at Worship: Cumbrae

3pm. **Carols by Candlelight**
Largs Parish Church.

Sunday 20 December
4th Sunday of Advent
Nativity Sunday
Kingdom Kids Nativity at Largs
followed by Christmas Party

Christmas Eve
5pm. **Crib Service**
at Fairlie Parish Church.

11.30pm. **Watchnight Service**
at Largs Parish Church.



Christmas Day
10am. **Christmas Morning** Worship at Fairlie Parish Church

Sunday 27 December
11am. **Morning Worship** at Cumbrae and Largs.

No worship gathering in Fairlie.

Sunday 3 January 2027
9.30am. Morning Worship in Fairlie. *No worship in Largs*

11am. **Morning Worship** in Cumbrae.

PARISH BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER GROUPS

Across the parish, while we worship on Thursday and Sunday mornings, we also hold specific times for prayer and bible study through the week.

On Cumbrae the prayer group meets at 10.40am, just before morning worship, and on the final Tuesday of each month at 6.15pm in the church; while the Bible Study Group meets each Thursday morning in the Goldfish Bowl, at the Garrison, at 11.00am.

In Fairlie the prayer Group meets at 10.00am in the Millennium Room, and joins for Bible Study in Largs.

In Largs the Bible Study recommences on Wednesday 21st October at 7.00pm in the Mary Stewart Chapel and will be looking at 'The Chosen', a television drama about the life and ministry of Jesus.

All of our Prayer and Bible Study groups are open to anyone who wishes to join. There is no expectation that you will have any specific gift for prayer or bible study, just that you have an interest to participate and grow in faith. Please just go along.

CFL GUILDS 2026/2027

All Guilds across the parish restart during October. Cumbrae begins on Monday 19th, whereas Fairlie and Largs begin a bit earlier on Tuesday 6th (Fairlie) and Monday 5th (Largs), respectively. All commence at 2.00pm and the theme for this session is: 'Beyond the Walls' with each Guild providing their own varied programme.

The Guild at Fairlie is beginning their session by conducting morning worship on 4th October, whereas the Guild at Largs is leading on Sunday 29th November, when everyone will learn about the work which supports the church and its wider mission.

Next year, the Guild in Largs is holding a Charity Concert on Saturday 20th February 2027 at 2.30pm in the Dunn Memorial Hall where entertainment, following the success of this year, will be provided by the Jimmy Blair Accordion Orchestra. Tickets, priced at £10 including refreshments and home baking, will be on sale shortly. Please put the date in your diary!

If you would like to join any Guild meeting, you will be made very welcome. Please contact each respective contact person: Cumbrae: Diane Robertson; Fairlie: Rev. Tom Macintyre; Largs: Christine Gallettie.

AROUND THE PARISH

THE LUNCH CLUB (FAIRLIE)

As the winter cold takes root, this popular get-together is held on the last Monday of the Month (26th Oct and 30th November) from 12.00 – 2.30pm when homemade soups, a variety of filled rolls or sandwiches and cakes are on offer. Vegetarians and Gluten free catered for too. This is a warm, welcoming and fun filled lunchtime so come along on your own or with friends and enjoy some good food and good company. All free but donations are welcome.

TUESDAY CRAFT CAFE (FAIRLIE)

The Craft Cafe meets in Fairlie every 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month from 2.00 – 4.00pm. You don't need to be particularly talented to go along because beginners and more experienced crafters are always welcome. We gratefully receive donations of wool and some of those who come along take the wool, and with large needles, knit easy scarves for the Shoebox Appeal as well as hats. We hope to have crochet lessons and do some decoupage for Christmas. We hope to join with the Guild for a Christmas Dinner.

THURSDAY KIRK CAFE (FAIRLIE)

The Kirk Cafe meets each Thursday morning from 10.30 – 12.30pm, in the Session Room at Fairlie Church. The Cafe is always busy and we are looking for more cheerful volunteers, so if you are able to help once every 4/5 weeks, please contact Shirley McGinty (07951 576171) or speak to someone on a Thursday.

THURSDAY CONTACT (LARGS)

The Thursday Contact Group meet from 7.00 – 9.00pm in Largs Parish Church Office, offering women the chance to get together in fellowship. There is a varied programme of chat nights, activity nights and visiting speakers. All are very welcome. Come along.

Contact: Fiona Page
07779 822983.



Kingdom Kids, our new gathering of children and young families on a Sunday morning, has restarted and meets each week. Please just arrive at church before worship begins and you will be pointed in the right direction.

After a time of praise, talk, and prayer the youngsters leave to join the leaders for more singing, learning and doing in a specific area for them. Afterwards, there is the opportunity for the young families to join for refreshments with the rest of congregation. In Largs, the families enjoy refreshments in the Dunn Memorial Hall, and it is possible for members of the congregation to join them there.

While Kingdom Kids meet weekly, our gathering of God's Families is on the last Saturday of the month in Largs. It meets from 10.30 – 12.00 noon in the Dunn Memorial Hall and is a time of Praise and Celebration for all ages. During our time of play the children receive a snack, while the adults can enjoy a chat and catch-up over a cuppa and a bacon roll. For God's Families in Fairlie and Cumbrae, please look out for updated adverts.

All families are welcome at both Kingdom Kids and God's Families.

Recently a Church of Scotland minister asked his congregation their views on various aspects of ministry, worship and the church. They have recently gone through a union, so he was seeking a bit of clarification on the views of those who came to worship to discern God's vision for their congregation. The following is a top 10 extract of his findings. I wonder if any of it sounds familiar?



A NEW CONGREGATION: THIS IS WHAT WE WANT!

1	We want change. Just not too much, too fast, or anything we would notice.
2	We want to shake things up, evolve gently, keep everyone in the loop, ideally at the same meeting.
3	We want young people in church. We also want the service exactly as it has always been, at the time it has always been, in the seats we have always sat in.
4	We want to get rid of the pews. We would also like it noted that some of us are quite attached to the pews.
5	The church is not the building. Also, can we modernise the building.
6	We want a youth worker. We do not have the money for a youth worker. We want a team of volunteers instead. We are the volunteers. We are tired.
7	We want to share our faith boldly and slip Jesus into every conversation. We would also like the church to be attractive and not put anyone off.
8	We want fewer hymns, more modern music, and the hymns we like.
9	We want a Saturday service for busy families, two services on a Sunday, and a weekday evening one, led by the same minister, who should also be at the school gate.
10	We want leaders for separate groups, not one overall person. We would like someone to organise this.

And underlying all of this, in almost every note submitted: "we love this church, we love this village, and we would very much like both of them to have a future."

……which, contradictions and all, is not a bad place to start.

WORSHIP, MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP

Family Drop-In Week

In July we held a Family Drop-In for the first time. The Dunn Memorial Hall was set out with a variety of games and play resources for children for all ages. Each day around 40 people dropped in to play, relax and socialise. We had a very small but willing team of members of our congregations who spent time getting to know those who came along. Several people came on each of the five days, and it became clear that a place where families can go, particularly in the school holidays, is very much needed.

Gift Bags

This summer, one of our Outreach initiatives was to make up and give out small Organza bags containing a heart shaped card which said, 'Jesus Loves You', on one side, and a Scripture message on the other side. The bag also contained a small wooden cross and a wrapped jelly sweet. During the Viking Festival 2,000 bags were given out and a further 2,000 were distributed during the Cumbrae Weekend. The bags were very well received, and we found that people would often take the time to stop and talk. Several people talked about their Faith journey while some people just appreciated having someone to talk to. The committee is presently planning community outreach projects during Advent. If you would like to be involved in any way, please speak to Gillian McEleny (07984 980516).