

The **Lych Gate**

The Newsletter of St Machar's Ranfurly Church



March 2025

Volume 27 Issue 1



From the Minister

Dear Friends,

I write to you a week after my leaving service and on the day of the congregational vote. As my last such an epistle, I want to use the opportunity to thank you heartily for the wonderful send off you gave me on the 16th of February. It was great to see so many of you at the service and also stay behind for the lovely lunch in the hall. It was emotional to lead this final service and to receive your many well wishes. The new work bag is fabulous and was very timely as I'd just decided that I was going to need a new bag for work as my old one wouldn't stand up anymore. Then there was also a wallet (and some filling...). Thank you for your generosity!
The slideshow was great to watch and just goes to show how many things we've done together over the past eight years, and also how

many fun and joyous times we've had. Overall, as I look back, an immense feeling of gratitude prevails, you have been just right for me and I'm so thankful to have been your minister.

I will repeat what I said at the end of the service last week:

I thank you for your love and support of me and for us as the manse family,

For your faithfulness, your perseverance and all your hard work,

For your dedication to God, for your open-mindedness, for your commitment to love people well. For your willingness to keep good old things going and try new things too.

For keeping me right when needed, for being gracious in your feedback and sparse in your criticism.

For your generous giving of time talents and money.

I'm not going to single out individuals, but I do want to thank the kirk session in particular, for their support and commitment to working together to the best of our ability.

Thanks for letting me go, with a generosity of spirit.

I will not be your minister anymore, but I will continue to pray for you especially in the next few weeks to come. You've got this and more importantly: God has got you.

Always united with you in the one faith, and part of the one body of Christ,

Hanneke



BOYS' BRIGADE AND GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

For several years we have had an outing to the King's Theatre pantomime as the last event before the Christmas break, but this session we decided to go 10 pin bowling at Braehead. This worked well as the whole Company from Anchors to Seniors were able to participate, and it was a bit cheaper than the pantomime!

Our Company Section competitions are down to just our senior boys 5-a-side football team taking part in the second round on 2nd February. Should they get through then they would progress to the Scottish finals.

The officers are keen to give our senior boys some experience in leadership and not just organise everything for them. So, over the next few weeks we will be discussing with them what they might do if given an evening when they take the lead. This is something that was recommended at Cailean's recent officer training and thanks to him for implementing this idea.

At this time a few of our boys should be putting the finishing touches to their King's Badge work and will be looking forward to the King's Badge completion residential at Carronvale at the end of March.



Brian Logie

Times of Change

Help me to accept that change is part of life,
to welcome the newness each change brings,
and to embrace the gifts and joys of each Season

I trust Your guiding hand, God.
Help me adapt and have a willing, adventurous spirit.

May I look for the valuable opportunities
You're giving me in this situation
and make the most of them.

May I say yes to wherever You lead,
being glad and grateful to be on
a journey of discovery and growth with You.

December Quiz Answers

December Quiz Answers:

- | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. Kitchen | 2. Cookery Books | 3. Spice Jars | 4. Plate Warmer | 5. Dish Cloth |
| 6. Bread Bin | 7. Oven | 8. Tea Pot | 9. Kitchen Scales | 10. Egg Timer |

Helen Bullen

Strathgryffe Ranger Guides

We are incredibly fortunate to have a very enthusiastic Ranger Group who are open to sharing ideas, opportunities and having a go even when it could be out of our comfort zone.

Firstly, in these rather uncertain times in our church history we take this opportunity to thank the many members of the congregation, office bearers and parents for their tremendous past and their ongoing support of our Guides and Rangers. Our annual coffee mornings have enabled us to subsidise many activities. In particular the amazing long weekend we all had to London in 2023. Unfortunately, the weather on the day in November 2024 rather scuppered everyone's best endeavours however, after attending church service the following day the cake and craft sales were amazing.

The Rangers seem to have been very busy. We meet on alternate Tuesday evenings in the Hall and usually one Sunday a month although this is not set in stone. Some of the girls have recently completed their Bronze D of E and are starting their Silver journey. The Christmas Tree Festival was a hit and the girls followed their theme of Ding Dong Merrily on High with their decorations, writing supportive messages on their painted bells. Our Sunday in December we had a visit to The Cat Café in Glasgow. Absolutely fascinating and well worth a visit if you are a cat lover. We had a night out with Santa's Sleigh followed by a visit to the Pantomime at the Beacon in Greenock. Then we had a wee break!

This term has been busy with a Burns night celebration. We asked the girls to select a number of Burns verses and imagine he were

writing today to update his poems into today's speak! It was a super evening and despite there being no church kitchen everyone enjoyed their supper and entertainment. We had a Crime night in the Hall, it was hilarious, the girls had a section of 'props' to choose from and instructions to set the scene complete with forensics, even the CCTV of the scene was shown in black and white. We have some budding detectives in our midst. We have had a Saturday night sleep over in Bishopton Scout Centre. The girls enjoyed roller blading, team building with coloured pegs and had a go at fairly competitive hockey. Not for the faint hearted! Following the weekend we have had a night with the Scouts at the Braehead Arena watching Glasgow Clan win their Ice hockey match 4-3 against Manchester Storm. It was a fab night and everyone is keen to repeat the evening.

Moira Johnston



From the Organ Loft



For those who keep a note on my attendance at St. Machar's, you perhaps may have noticed I took an extra week's holiday in 2024 and was missing on Sunday 29 December. This wasn't due to the consumption of one mince pie or pig in blanket too many over the festive season but was to attend morning worship at St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh. That Sunday marked the final Sunday of Master of the Music, Michael Harris MBE after twenty eight years of service. Michael had been in post since November 1996. Michael and his wife, Brigitte, had been two of my university lecturers during my undergraduate studies at Edinburgh Napier University. Michael is a quiet, unassuming, supportive, clever and extremely talented man. His contribution to church music in Scotland far exceeds what he's often credited with and he leaves a huge legacy. He, and the St Giles' Cathedral Choir perhaps came into their own during the recent death of HM Queen Elizabeth II and subsequent presentation of the

Crown Jewels to HM King Charles III.

Michael was the main lecturer on the 1st year BMus course at Edinburgh Napier University. He steered us through Languages and Structures of Music. His knowledge and enthusiasm for his subject really shone through, you left his lecturers feeling you still had more to learn, and two hours very quickly flew by. He could've probably delivered all his lectures without notes, and did so when his laptop connected to the overhead projector ran out of juice! He was able to rise above the sniggering of thirty first year undergraduates when he announced the next week's lecture would be on three significant renaissance composers: "Schein, Schütz and Scheidt"!

He gave opportunities to his students with many being chosen to augment the St. Giles' choir, given chances to perform with some of the other groups he conducted and I was chosen to play the percussion part in Bernstein's Chichester Psalms. I never held it against him that he didn't let me play the Bösendorfer concert grand piano that the department had when demonstrating my score reading skills – he sent

me in the direction of the baby grand at the other side of the room! He also had a very dry sense of humour remarking his surprise that Edinburgh's fleet of electric buses were able to make it up the Mound without breaking down. And saying of the organ at one of Edinburgh's famous churches "I'm not playing that thing!"

His legacy at St. Giles' is vast – not just in terms of the worship, but a weekly concert series, various organ recital series, commercial and broadcast recordings, the establishment of a Friends of the Music (a society set up to help support the music department of St. Giles' cathedral and fund specific projects), commissioning several pieces for the St. Giles' songbook marking 900 years of music making at St. Giles'. Out with the cathedral he edited and composed simplified hymn arrangements for beginner organists, was a President of the Edinburgh Society of Organists, and was the driving force behind singing returning to churches in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic. You could tell he cared deeply about church music and of St. Giles' in particular. Never one to boast or brag about his achievements or

successes, he just quietly did his job. All his students were in awe of him and in his own unique way inspired us all. He was always well prepared for whatever lecture, rehearsal or performance he was leading. Twenty eight years at one Cathedral is a huge amount of time and his awarding of the MBE in the New Year Honours list is testament to his service to both St. Giles' and Church Music in Scotland.

It was an honour to have known him and I wish him well in his retirement. His commitment and dedication to his job and his duties is exemplary and should be what other organists/directors of music aspire to.

Ian Munro



Michael Harris with the Rieger organ of St. Giles' Cathedral

Farewell to Hanneke





Churches of the World

St Nikolai Church Kiel, Germany



There is a bronze baptismal font from 1340, an altar from 1460s, a triumphal cross from 1490 and a wood carved pulpit from 1705. They were all removed before the building was demolished.



This is a Protestant parish church which was built in a Gothic Revival style in 1242. It was badly damaged by bombing in World War 2 and then completely demolished because the ruin was unstable. It was rebuilt completely in 1950 with a more modern and simple contemporary interior.



The Church is dedicated to Saint Nicholas, the patron Saint of seafarers and merchants. .

Helen Bullen

Bridge of Weir Parish Church

On Sunday 23rd February the congregations of Freeland Church and St. Machar's Ranfurly Church voted to unite to form Bridge of Weir Parish Church with Rev Kenneth Gray as our minister.

The Presbytery Service to unite the congregations will take place in the Freeland Building on Tuesday 1st April. It is hoped that all members of both Congregations will attend this service of Union.

Christian Aid Week



**Christian Aid Week this year runs from
May 11—17th.**

A small group to take our support for Christian Aid forward is needed. Dave Macdonald has prepared a resume of last year's input as a starting point for discussion. Please consider offering your help. Email Mary Taylor (marytaylor1@live.co.uk) if you can help.

Final Service



On Sunday 30th March 2025 the final morning Worship for the congregation of St. Machar's Ranfurly Church will be led by Mary Jane Bird. It is hoped that the Church will be full for this special if sad occasion. At the end of the service in the hall we hope to mount an exhibition of photos and memorabilia from over the years. A light buffet will be served.

1st Bridge of Weir Guides

On our first night back after the New Year we had a review of 2024. The girls thought about what their favourite film, song, holiday and achievements were for 2024. If you are in the Church Hall please have a read of them as they are all on the Guide notice board. We then decorated glass memory jars. Each week everyone is going to try to record a good memory and store it in the jar until next year, when they can look back on the year past.



We started working on our Media Badge and celebrated Burns Night by making our own toy haggis's and enjoyed playing some games with them. We finished the evening enjoying eating real Haggis on oatcakes and shortbread and drinking Irn Bru.



The following week we all had a go at making each other's jigsaws (not as easy as you think especially when you don't have a picture to refer to) and other puzzles the girls brought along.

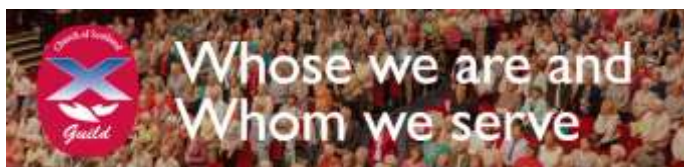
In February, we will, of course, celebrate Thinking Day when we think of our sister Guides and Girl Scouts in many other countries around the world. We will celebrate Shrove Tuesday with lots of pancake as well as continuing to work on our Skill Builders.

Christine Haddock - Unit Leader



Did you know that it was National Puzzle Day on the 29th January? We did and enjoyed an evening with the girls making their own jigsaw puzzles and wordsearches.

ST MACHAR'S RANFURLY GUILD



The Guild has been attended by 18 ladies over the past Guild year and we have had excellent speakers. Unfortunately the time has come to bring the Guild to a close, as St. Machar's Ranfurly Guild will no longer exist. Any ladies wishing to attend a Guild have a choice of Houston or Kilbarchan and I know one or two will go. Our Guild's last meeting is on the 17th March and we are closing with an afternoon tea. I would like to say a big thank you to the committee who have kept the Guild going with finance, speakers and lots of tea. Also thanks to our members who attended regularly .

Ann Hart

Bridge of Weir Churches Activities

Regular Activities

| | | |
|------------|--------------------|--|
| Mondays | 6.30 pm | Girls Association (All Age Group) at Freeland |
| Thursdays | 10.00 am - 12 noon | Coffee Drop-in Home Baking at Freeland |
| Thursdays | 4.15 pm | Junior Choir at St. Machar's Ranfurly Hall |
| Thursdays | 6.15 pm | Anchor Boys at Freeland |
| Fridays | 6.30 pm | Boys Brigade Junior Section at St. Machar's Ranfurly |
| Fridays | 7.30 pm | Boys Brigade Company Section at Freeland |
| 2nd Friday | 9.30 am | Church Garden Upkeep |

March Activities

| | | |
|---------------|----------|---|
| Monday 3rd | 7.00 pm | Kirk Session Meeting - in Freeland |
| Wednesday 5th | All Day | Freeland Church Open Day for prayer and meditation |
| Monday 17th | 2.00 pm | The Guild - Final Meeting |
| Tuesday 25th | 11.00 am | Freemachar's Meeting - Visit to Celtic Park |
| Saturday 29th | | Ramblers Group - Croy Bay to Culzean and back 7.5 miles |

April Activities

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------|---|
| Tuesday 1st April | 7.30 pm | Service of Union for Freeland Church and St. Machar's Ranfurly Church to form the Bridge of Weir Parish Church |
| Saturday 5th | 8.00 am | Prayer Breakfast in Pirie |
| Monday/Tuesday / Wednesday | 7.30 pm | Holy Week Services - in Parish Church (Freeland Building) |
| Thursday 17th | 7.30 pm | Maundy Thursday - in Parish Church (St. Machar's Ranfurly Building) |
| Friday 18 | Noon | Good Friday - Lunch - in Parish Church (St. Machar's Ranfurly Building) and Procession to the Parish Church (Freeland Building) |
| Sunday 20th | 11.30 am | Easter Sunday - Open air service in Parish Church Car Park |
| Wednesday 23rd | 7.00 pm | Monthly mid-week prayer meeting |
| Saturday 26th | | Ramblers Group - Isle of Cumbrae - 9 miles |
| Tuesday 29th | 11.00 am | Freemachar's Meeting Visit to Burns Cottage and Museum |
| | | |

May Activities

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------|---|
| Saturday 3rd | 8.00 | Prayer Breakfast in Pirie |
| Sunday—Saturday 11– 17 th | All Day | Christian Aid Week |
| Wednesday 21st | 7.00 pm | Monthly mid-week prayer meeting |
| Tuesday 27th May | 11.00 am | Freemachar's Meeting - Viist to Sikh Temple |
| Saturday 31st | | Ramblers Group—Isle of Kerrera - 7 miles |

Junior Choir

This session seems to be one of the busiest for our Junior Choir. With many of the juniors being in the uniformed organisations the juniors had asked about participating with the adults for the Remembrance Day Service. It was great to have them at that. Christmas too felt busy and many came to sing at the Christmas Tree Festival and had provided decorations for it. It was nice that both Heather (clarinet) and Lauren (piano) played a solo piece as part of the juniors' slot on the Saturday afternoon. It's great to be able to encourage their music making and for both of them it was their first time playing solo in public.

A power cut in Bridge of Weir meant we had to abandon our

Christmas concert which was a great shame. The children had put so much effort into it we decided to reschedule for January and our first session back ended with either a very late or very early Christmas concert!

This term saw us already sing as part of the adult choir at Hanneke's final service and preparations are in full throe for God's Green Planet. This is a church service specifically designed for young people – with the musical contributions being taken by the choir. Last year we did Water of Life and God's Green Planet is very much the same. The children will sing three or four pieces, lead the readings and there'll be hymns for all to sing on

an environmental theme. We'll then be beginning preparations for our end of term Easter concert.

Looking ahead to the summer term, we'll be joining with the Bishopton Church Junior Singers for a joint performance of Michael Hurd's Jonah Man Jazz.

If you know a child in the P3 – P7 age group who'd like to join us, please contact me (organist.stmachars@gmail.com) for further details. The Junior Choir meets on Thursday afternoons from 4. 15 p.m. – 5.15 p.m. in the hall at St. Machar's.

Ian Munro

Notices

Bridge of Weir Parish Church

Presbytery Service
to unite
Freeland and St Machar's Ranfurly
Churches
to form
Bridge of Weir Parish Church
7 pm
In
Freeland

Freemachars

A warm invitation is extended to all retired men to get together on the last Tuesday of each month.

Talks are in Freeland at 11 am usually followed by lunch.



Funerals

Jesus said
"I am the Resurrection
and the Life"

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Bobby Holms

29/01/2025

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Christine Muir

6/02/2025

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CONTACTS

Interim Moderator
Rev. Sonia Blakesley,
Tel: 0141 258 1161

Pastoral / Funeral Cover
Rev, Kenneth Gray
Tel 01505 690918



Session Clerk: Dennis Taylor
33 St Andrews Drive,
Bridge of Weir,
PA11 3HT
Tel: 01505 **612417**

ROTAS

| Date | | Service | Welcome | | Beadle/Reader |
|----------|----------|---|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| March 02 | 10.30 am | Morning Service - John Spooner | Dick Hughes | Anne Yeaman | Helen Bullen |
| 09 | 10.30 am | Morning Service - John Spooner | Philip McCulloch | Anne Allen | Dick Hughes |
| 16 | 10.30 am | Morning Service - Jennifer Boag | Bill Robb | Scott McLaughlin | Greg Miller |
| 23 | 10.30 am | Morning Service - Choir Led | Sarah McNaught | Agnes McKechan | Bill Robb |
| 30 | 10.30 am | Morning Service - Mary Jane Bird | Jennie Durward | Allan Durward | Ann Hart |
| April 06 | 10.30 am | Morning Service - in Parish Church | Elizabeth Lyle | Norma Hancock | n/a |
| 13 | 10.30 am | Morning Service - in Parish Church | Ann Hart | Morven McLeod | n/a |
| 17 | 7.30 pm | Maundy Thursday –in St Machar’s Ranfurly | Mary Taylor | Dennis Taylor | n/a |
| 20 | 11.30 am | Outdoor Easter Service | Mary Taylor | Dennis Taylor | n/a |
| 27 | 10.30 am | Morning Service - in Parish Church | Anne Allen | Bill Christie | n/a |
| May 04 | 10.30 am | Morning Service - in Parish Church | Philip McCulloch | Bill Robb | n/a |
| 11 | 10.30 am | Morning Service - in Parish Church | Scott McLaughlin | Agnes McKechan | n/a |
| | | | | | |

| Date | Flowers | Flower Delivery |
|----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| March 02 | Jennifer McNocher | Norma Hancock |
| 09 | Anne Porrelli | Anne Porrelli |
| 16 | Anne Yeaman | Anne Yeaman |
| 23 | Sarah McNaught | Sarah McNaught |
| 30 | Jennie Durward | Jennie Durward |

Editorial :

The Editorial Team of Dennis Taylor, Mary Taylor and Marion Reid would like to thank everyone for their contributions and support over the past 7 years. This is the last Lych Gate. There will be a new Bridge of Weir Parish Church Magazine and we look forward to reading your contributions in it.