

The Link Easter 2026



Ardoch and Blackford Parish Church of Scotland
Scottish Charity Number SC000139
ardochparishchurch.org | blackfordparishchurch.org
facebook.com/ardochandblackfordparishchurch

Dear Friends,

I wonder how your Lent Journey is going.
Who have you met along the way?
Where have you stopped off to rest awhile?

Lent is my favourite time in the Christian calendar. A time to stop, reflect, ponder a while. To meet Christ in so many fascinating places and experiences. To deepen your time with him in prayer and in awe and wonder.



An easy journey? Certainly not. But one of the most rewarding journeys you can make. To walk with Christ as he enters those last weeks.

- to meet the people he met.
- to stumble with him,
- to feel even a little of the pain that he felt.
- to be unsure if you will endure to the end with him.

Finally to reach your destination, at the foot of the cross, humbled and still left wondering, yet feeling blessed to be able to join in the glory of Easter morning and be able to proclaim, **“He is risen”** and hear the echoes of, **“He is risen indeed!”**

May God bless your Easter journey.

With Love,

Rev Mairi

Minister: Rev. Mairi Perkins, mperkins@churchofscotland.org.uk
The Manse, 5 Greenhaugh Way, Braco, FK15 9PT; 01786 880948

Session Clerk: Sandy Marshall, 01764 682354
sessionclerk@blackford.org.uk

Depute Session Clerk: Charles Robertson, 01786 88094
cr.ardochsession@gmail.com

Treasurer: Drew Muir handing on to Andrew Sinclair
muirandrew6@gmail.com; AndrewSinclair878@outlook.com

Safeguarding Officer: Jeannette Barr, 01764 682825
jeannette.barr18@gmail.com

We print and distribute around 130 copies of *The Link* across our parish. PDF copies are also available to download on the home pages of our websites; web addresses are on the front cover. Blue underlined text then becomes a hyperlink to click or tap to go straight to the websites we're referring to for further information.

The angel asks, "On what basis are you here in heaven?" What's your response?

Big questions deserve a big question mark. And a bit of time. As we approach Easter, it's a great time to ask this question but then, it's never a bad time. Give some thought to it to see if you can shape your answer and have it ready before you get to the inside back page of your copy of The Link.



We've got the usual mix between here and there of looking backwards and forwards to fundraising, social and most importantly missional events as we live out our calling as the church of Christ—the family of God—in our parish.

Look out for news of how we are celebrating Easter this year including the sharing of this Good News with our community. The image on the front of your Link will be on the front of our Easter cards shortly going through all the doors that we can manage to get to. Will they spark an interest or a conversation as we use our Christmas trees to connect with Easter through the cross? Possibly, but prepare to help that interest along the way.



Look out too for more ways to develop our ability to use our Bibles "prayerfully, personally, corporately, expectantly and regularly:" as the Kirk Session is committed to seeing and supporting. How did you get on with colouring and reflecting through Advent?



If you had 90 seconds to explain to a non-Christian what Christians believe, how would you use that time? What would you say? Add notes in this box to our two questions.

The Apostle Peter's advice to those who got his first letter included,
*"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you
to give the reason for the hope that you have.
But do this with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15)*

Gordon Roy, Editor, gordon.roy@outlook.com

Kirk Session

You may have noticed from recent intimations that the Kirk Session has been meeting almost every other week since the start of this year. The reason is that our Kirk Session team has been focused on putting together our mission, visions and aims for our church in our *Five Year Mission Action Plan*. These meetings have stimulated much discussion and ideas as we look positively towards the future mission of our church and of course the wider Presbytery Mission Plan. All Church of Scotland congregations are being tasked to carry out their individual action plans and our aims will be submitted to Presbytery for their consideration by the end of March.



March is a particularly busy time for church administrative matters. Having completed our first year of union, the Ardoch and Blackford Parish Church congregational roll was recorded as having 201 full members and 10 adherents. The annual set of accounts for 2025 will also be received by the Kirk Session at the end of the month. I take this opportunity on behalf of the Kirk Session and members of our congregation to extend our grateful thanks to Drew Muir, our retiring Treasurer, for all his hard work, commitment and guidance over the past years and welcome Andrew Sinclair as our new Treasurer. In addition to the accounts, there is the annual Presbytery requirement for all our congregational records to be submitted for inspection which include our safeguarding procedures, minutes of meetings, congregational roll, baptismal register, property register and policy documents.

After some years as Ardoch Property Convenor, Liz Paterson has now retired from this position. We thank Liz most sincerely for her dedicated service in this role particularly through the purchase and sale of the manse last year. We are actively looking for someone to fill this role and if you can help then please speak to Charles Robertson.

The Kirk Session team is here to serve and we would welcome any suggestions and ideas that you may have relating to our church as we move forward together in faith.

Sandy Marshall, Session Clerk



Are you a thermostat or a thermometer?

How does the use of words like "transform" and "conform" in [Romans 12:2](#) help you understand and answer the question?

Christian Aid Week 2026: 10th—16th May

In Ardoch it is hoped to join up again with The Hot Chocolate Group and help run The Big Brekkie in Ardoch Church Hall on the morning of Saturday 9th May; watch out for notices nearer the time!



The Blackford Big Brekkie will be on Saturday 16th May with their Hot Chocolate Group also coming along to cook and serve bacon, pancakes, tea, coffee toast etc from 9:30am to 11:00am.



This year's [Christian Aid Week](#) will help mothers in Nairobi, Kenya, facing the devastating reality of urban poverty and the daily struggle to feed their children and grandchildren.

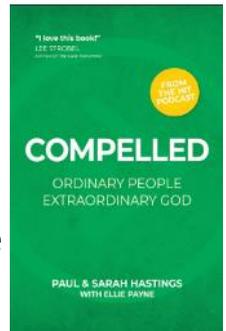
Blackford Giveaway

On Saturday 7th February, we hosted another Great Blackford Giveaway and Repair Café. Aside from this clothes section, there was also "some really nice stuff going free" made up of books, crockery, toys, kitchenware and household goods. Thanks to Ruth Feather and others who made this and the refreshments happen.

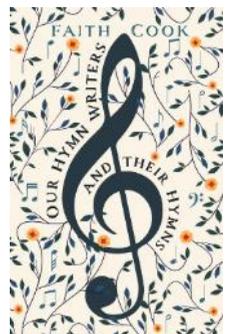


Looking for some summer reading?

We've highlighted various historical heroes of the faith previously, but [Compelled](#) tells seven incredible stories of ordinary people who met an extraordinary God and share how God is working in the world today.



The people of God have always had cause to sing, and who has more reason to sing than those who know the Lord Jesus Christ, the joy of sin forgiven and the certainty of a life to come? In [Hymn Writers and Their Hymns](#), we enjoy biographical sketches of a number of our best-known writers discovering their individual personalities and circumstances. We stand amazed as we read of their faith, often in the face of severe persecution and hardship, which has been so wonderfully expressed in verse. Their words stir us up, as congregations and personally, to express our thankfulness to God. One day the whole redeemed church of the Lord Jesus Christ will join in one great anthem of praise to his glory. 10ofthose.com for more



Ardoch Fundraising Team

The Team want to acknowledge their grateful appreciation and thanks to Drew Muir, our Treasurer, for his valued contributions to all matters financial pertaining to Ardoch's fundraising activities over the recent years. Drew has tirelessly given his time and expertise to our fundraisers and his work is very much appreciated. We now welcome aboard Andrew Sinclair as our new Treasurer who has kindly accepted invitation to be on the Fundraising Team to help with all things financial.

The Fundraising Team finished off 2025 with the Quiz Night in October and a fun night it was raising £415.00 for church funds.

Here we are with Spring 2026 upon us and the Fundraising Team have started well again with its first fundraiser being the annual Whist Drive. Once again it was well supported with 36 players. The night went well with plenty of chat and card-playing followed with supper and raffle. Total raised for church funds came to £389.00.

The Team is currently organising its next event (back by popular demand) a *Songs of Praise* evening hopefully in May or June **but date still to be confirmed**. Look out for posters and details in early April. To ring the changes we are giving the ducks a holiday this year so no duck race. We will put on a Summer Fête on Saturday 22nd August; watch out for news on this nearer the time. The events calendar and ongoing fundraising is set out below.

Event	Date
Whist Drive	Thursday 12 th February
Songs of Praise Evening	May June TBC
Summer Fête	Saturday 22 nd August
Quiz Night	Saturday 10 th October
Easyfundraising (internet shopping) and loose change box appeal	ongoing

I can report that the 2025 Ardoch Fundraising events, including [Easyfundraising internet shopping](#) and the loose change boxes in total raised **£3,159.63** for church funds.



I'll finish as I usually do by saying a huge thank you to the Ardoch Church community for always greatly supporting the fundraisers we organise along with kindly donating to our Retiring/Special Collections throughout the year.

Maureen, Fundraising Coordinator

Ardoch Retiring/Special Collections Calendar 2026

Dates for 2026	Collection	Raised in 2025
12 th April	Scottish Red Cross	£165.00
3 rd May	Scripture Union (SU) Scotland	*£500.00
10 th May	Christian Aid (includes Big Brekkie)	£435.00
12 th July	Scottish Bible Society	£94.50
13 th September	Blythswood Care	£100.00
11 th October (Harvest)	Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)	£120.00
8 th November (Remembrance)	PoppyScotland Fund	£96.00
24 th December (Watchnight)	Church Action for the Homeless and Christian Aid	£74.00
Total: (Includes £150 for special collection for Myanmar Appeal)		£1,234.50

*Our Blackford congregation has been supporting Gordon Roy's work with SU Scotland since 2013. Last year the Ardoch and Blackford Kirk Session agreed to continue the annual pattern of sending £500 to SU Scotland and enabling members to contribute directly to that through a retiring offering. This will happen again at our United Service on 3rd May.



Easter is clearly a key opportunity for churches to work with schools to share the biblical events. Gordon's working with 12 partnerships from Auchterarder to Strathblane, across Stirling and Clackmannanshire. You'll recognise his car at this time of year as it contains temple pillars, Roman soldiers' costumes, Mark's Gospels, basins for Jesus and Pilate, bird cages, craft tablecloths, hi-viz jackets, Passover food, five-foot wooden crosses and a large boulder.



On Easter Monday Gordon, Jane and the dogs go to North Berwick as part of the team to lead an SU Holiday for 28 P5 to S1 pupils. The prayer letter for that event will come out to those on the Blackford Weekly email list. To sign up for Gordon's more general termly prayer letter visit www.suscotland.org.uk/gordonroy

The Power of Prayer

Never underestimate the power of even the smallest prayer – the whisper breathed between heartbeats, the silent plea folded into a sigh, the wordless hope lifted from a weary soul.

Not all prayers are spoken. Some are simply felt – a reaching, a trusting, a surrendering into something greater than fear.

The world measures power in noise and scale, but the sacred often moves through the quiet and the small. A single sincere blessing can shift a moment. A single intentional prayer of love can soften a hardened place. A single act of compassion can interrupt a long chain of sorrow. Miracles rarely announce themselves with thunder – more often they arrive like light through a crack: gentle but unstoppable.

Pray in the language of your truest intention. Bless with your whole heart. Love on purpose. What is offered in sincerity never disappears – it multiplies in unseen roads and finds the places that need it most.

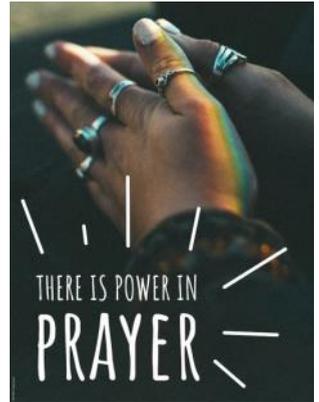
Small prayers are seeds, and seeds, given faith and care, split stone and become forests.

Charles Robertson

The place of prayer in our church

The weekly prayer gathering in Blackford is from 9:30am each Sunday morning. We meet over at the side of the church where this poster is a reminder of the place of prayer.

Some pray audibly to allow others to be part of that conversation with God. Others keep their prayers between God and themselves. All are welcome in this place.



Arsenal's 'Bible brothers' use faith to strengthen team

After scoring against Bayern Munich in the Champions League, winger Noni Madueke credited prayer and Bible study with helping the squad stay close on and off the pitch. Around ten Arsenal players, including Madueke, Jurrien Timber, Bukayo Saka, and Eberechi Eze, have formed a group nicknamed the "Bible Brothers."

Madueke told the Premier League in December 2025 that the group prays before games and holds Bible studies at team hotels.

premierchristian.news



Ardoch Food Bank Appeal

The congregation continues to support the Auchterarder Blue Door Foodbank. The hamper filled with donations is delivered at the end of each month.

In return the Foodbank deliver a supply of rolls and bread to make sandwiches for the lunch at the Tuesday Warm Space Hub.

The Foodbank co-ordinators are very grateful for all the donations they receive and thank the church members for their generosity.

No one has ever become poor from giving. Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.

Ardoch Pastoral Care (Outreach Team)

As always the **Community Lunches** have been well attended with new residents joining us on the last Friday of the month during the winter. Our last Lunch of the season is on the 27th March. Thank you to all the volunteers who have prepared such a variety of soups, baking etc for the lunches. After Easter people are busy doing other things, holidays, gardening etc. The new season will start in September.

Pastoral care is a ministry that has many different expressions in the work of the Christian Church. The team support Rev. Mairi in all aspects of this, by offering practical support, visiting the housebound, the sick, the lonely, those in hospital or bereaved and making time to chat.

Always remember help can be arranged with transport for people having difficulty attending appointments, and there is a wheelchair lending service available to anyone requiring one temporarily.

Easter Gifts will be delivered to deserving people in the Parish.

A smile is one of God's beautiful gifts. It can brighten hearts and bring hope to someone's day. Use it often and share kindness everywhere. May God bless your lives with peace and grace.

Team contacts: Charles 880947, Barbara 880438, Heather 880556



Are you on email? Do we have your address?

Can we keep in touch with you this way? Please email Sandy or Charles or talk to them one Sunday.



Bible Study

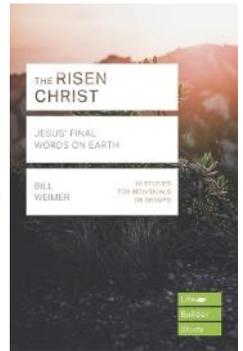
In Blackford we've spent the past few months *Unpacking the Bible* with Fiona Stewart and Colin Sinclair, slowing ourselves down to read whole books (the one chapter letters) and find the passages our presenters allude to in drawing out the narrative of the Bible book by book. Good use has also been made of resources in book form (*The Hitchhikers Guide to the Bible*) and Colin's sermon series still available on the Blackford book table and [website](#) respectively.

In Ardoch, the Lent series of studies into the book of Acts, continues on Monday mornings at 10:30am.

With three weeks to Easter when we finished *Unpacking the Bible* in Blackford, we're taking in three Easter themed sermons on Wednesday evenings in the Session Room.

Between Easter and Pentecost, we'll look at what Jesus did between Easter and Pentecost returning to the Lifebuilder series of resources to meet *The Risen Christ: Jesus' final words on earth*. Ask Gordon for a copy or have a sneak peak on [Amazon](#)—you can even order your own copy there. We'll start on Wednesday 15th April at 7:30pm in the Session Room.

In our Mission Action Plan discussions, our Kirk Session has identified Bible Studies and small groups as key to our growth as followers and disciples of Jesus. All are welcome to any of these Bible Studies.



Blackford Music Club

The first Music Club of 2026 was our Burns Supper on Thursday 29th January. It was another very busy and hugely successful evening and massive thanks go to Jane and Gordon Roy for preparing the delicious meal and to all who donated and contributed to this special celebration of the Bard.



Our monthly sessions normally take place on the last Thursday evening of the month in the Blackford Church from 8pm. The sessions are very relaxed and informal with different genres of music and songs to enjoy. Everyone is welcome to come along and join in or listen and enjoy a cuppa!

Music Club dates for the next 6 months of this year are as follows.

26 March | 29 April | 28 May | 25 June | 30 July | 27 August

Sandy Marshall

Makaton

We have renewed Blackford's *Makaton Aware* Membership for 2026. Makaton symbols label everything from the Bible to the IT desk and Makaton signs are used in every service.



Our Makaton *Nativity and Carol Service* was very successful. We welcomed new friends from outwith Blackford who were delighted to be able to attend a service which was so inclusive.

I was asked by the Music Club to sign the address to the Haggis in Makaton at the Burns Night Supper. This took a lot of thought and preparation, but was a huge success and was a fantastic opportunity to highlight the work we are doing on inclusion in our church.

I was delighted to be invited to talk about our use of Makaton at the Presbytery of Perth *Inspiring Mission* webinar. Around 20 other churches attended and were interested to hear about the work we are doing.

We are very grateful to the Presbytery of Perth Mission Fund for awarding us a grant which is enabling us to provide free *Know and Grow* training over the next year. The first course ran on 14th March and another course is planned to run in Kinross soon.

Sing and Sign is on the 2nd Thursday of each month. We sing a wide variety of songs, from hits from the musicals to The Proclaimers. We always assume that people don't know any Makaton and teach slowly step by step, so if you've been thinking about coming along please do, everyone is welcome.

In our accessible services at the end of each month we have used Lego to demonstrate the parable of the wise and foolish builders and we had a multi-sensory introduction to Lent. We're looking forward to Palm Sunday on 28th March; 26th April will take us back to the parables; and 31st May will be with our visitors from Trebsen who will be over for the Highland Games.



For news of upcoming activities and the *Makaton Sign of the Week* follow us in Instagram @blackfordchurchmakatontutor.

Lyndsey Thomas

How's the print size?

Most people read The Link in an A5 size which fits nicely inside a Bible. If you'd prefer the larger version printed to A4 size, please ask.



Our Flower Rotas

Thanks to all those who serve us, and subsequently our communities, in this way led by Jenny Kemp and Helen Laing.

Date	Ardoch Flowers	Blackford Flowers
April 5	Sheila MacGregor	Sophie Malory
April 12	Ann Spiers	Laura Peacock
April 19	Barbara Young	Margaret Earle
April 26	Heather McDonald	Helen Laing
May 3	United at Blackford	Rita Marshall
May 10	Maureen James	Sheila Wight
May 17	Ann Graham	Stuart Laing
May 24	Jenny Kemp	Richard Bolton
May 31	United at Blackford	B'ford Highland Games
June 7	Stuart Brannen	Rita Marshall
June 14	Scott Dawson	Fiona Smeaton
June 21	Moira Hay	Jane Roy
June 28	Phyllis Macleod	Sheila MacDonald
July 5	Rhoann Bickerton	-
July 12	Moira Hay	-
July 19	Ann Spiers	-
July 26	Christine Souter	-
August 2	-	Vacant
August 9	-	Margaret Earle
August 16	-	Jeannette Barr
August 23	-	Jean Robertson
August 30	-	Helen Laing

Blackford Kitchen Matters

We appreciate those who shape our fellowship by catering for us on Sunday mornings and at other times in the week, month or year.



To hold onto our food safety approval with P&K Council, we need to follow key procedures and record that we're doing so. We've therefore been asking all those who lead the Blackford kitchen to speak to Gordon for updated training notes for those who lead and those who help out. If you've not done that, please do so by Easter.

Our Sunday Service Bible Readers

Thank you to those who help lead our worship each week by delivering the Bible reading.

When we send you the reading, we also include our notes and guidance to help you prepare to open and read the Word of God and encourage us as readers in the pew to do the same.



Should you be unable to arrange a replacement, please contact Christine Souter for Ardoch on csouterbraco@aol.com or 07767 380011 or, for this rota, Jane Roy for Blackford on 682356, janeroy7@outlook.com



Date	Ardoch Blackford
April 5	Charles Robertson Julie Tarbet
April 12	Hazel Duncan Sandy Marshall
April 19	Irene Robertson Jacqui Crawford
April 26	Maureen James Lyndsey Thomas
May 3	Shona Stewart
May 10	Ann Gordon Richard Bolton
May 17	Peter Scott Jeannette Barr
May 24	Dorothy Johnston Lisa Sinclair
May 31	Lyndsey Thomas
June 7	Pat Duncan Gala Queens
June 14	Michael Boxer Thelma McNaught
June 21	Heather McDonald Joyce Scobie
June 28	Liz Paterson Lyndsey Thomas
July 5	Fiona Lyle
July 12	Irene Robertson
July 19	Sally Young
July 26	Pat Duncan
August 2	Sophie Malory
August 9	Jane Roy
August 16	Gordon Roy
August 23	Laura Peacock
August 30	Lyndsey Thomas

The Cross—Hidden in Plain Sight

Keep our eyes open and we'll find a cross in architecture, nature or elsewhere—hidden in plain sight. Take a photo and send it to gordon.roy@outlook.com by 9pm on Good Friday. We'll view the entries at Easter Sunday morning breakfast in Blackford.

Ardoch IT Report

We will soon be returning to holding our church services in the main sanctuary and so we will be live-streaming again as from Easter Sunday, 5th April. We are hopeful that all the technology will be working well when we restart the system. Services this year start at 11:30. There are joint services at Blackford on 3rd and 31st May. These services will be at 10:00 and will not be live-streamed.

The team will be on duty for the Easter School Service at 9:30 on Thursday 2nd April. This will not be live-streamed, but all are invited to attend. The school staff put such a lot of effort into these occasions and the children are all very enthusiastic.

Meanwhile, many thanks as always to Christine for keeping the Ardoch website updated, and to Gordon for maintaining the Blackford website. Both websites can be accessed through the other. Also grateful thanks for all the efforts in preparing The Link and in a format that is easily readable on the screen.

Thanks also go to our team of wonderful volunteers who control the technology from the back of the Church. If you would like to sit with the team to see how it's done, please feel free to come and watch. Hopefully, one day you will want to join our team.

Ardoch IT Team

Find our services at: ardochparishchurch.org/live/blackfordparishchurch.org/sundayworship

Search our back catalogue at: www.youtube.com/@ardochparishchurch938

Church financial news

Our bank details can be used to set up a standing order or make a one-off donation through internet banking or at your bank.

Account Name: Ardoch and Blackford Parish, Church of Scotland

Sort Code: 80 - 22 - 60

Account number: 28398863

Donate to this congregation

Card donations can be made through the Church of Scotland website at cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/donate/. Type *Ardoch and Blackford* into the box in the *Donate to a Congregation* section.

Alternatively, scan the QR code to be taken to the page on your phone or tablet.



Muthill Parish Church (From the mid-winter Bridge)

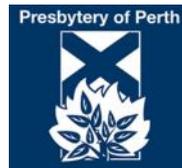
Sixteen people registered for the ALPHA course that runs until the end of March. It was very encouraging that five are from outside the congregation and three to four are new comers to church attendance.



They are working on a proposed development of a new kitchen and additional toilet provision to be undertaken in the summer.

Presbytery of Perth Mission Plan

The February meeting of the Presbytery of Perth (made up of ministers and elders from the 100+ churches from Montrose to Strathblane) reviewed and approved the latest version of the Presbytery Mission Plan. This working document references our part of the plan as follows:



Ardoch Church and Blackford Church:

Presbytery Planners wish to reduce the number of buildings in this charge to one. It has been decided to retain both buildings for the duration of this Plan but that a review of buildings to be undertaken with the closure of one church building to be agreed during the lifetime of this Plan.

Deadline for decision – end December 2027.

Ardoch and Blackford have united and shall then link with Muthill. Should the linkage take place under the present incumbent, (*i.e. Mairi*) the 0.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) post will continue until her demission, after which it shall be a 0.5FTE post.

Our Stated Annual Meeting

We will meet as a congregation after a United Communion Service in Blackford at 10:00am on Sunday 3rd May. This important gathering is for all members of our congregation and you're warmly invited.

As well as delivering the annual accounts and reporting on other aspects of ministry including our new Mission Action Plan, we'll hear of the *Bearing Fruit: Financial Health Check for Growth* that we're undertaking and there will be an elders' panel talking the floor to answer and discuss questions raised by members.

As the C. of S. Faith Action Programme Leadership Team **put it:**

The future of the Church of Scotland lies in God's hands.

We believe this to be true, and so we look to the time ahead with faith.

*We also believe we each have a significant part to play
in the future of the Church of Scotland
and so we give ourselves to listen, learn, plan and act.*

Lord, send revival, start with me!

Many chapters of Tommy MacNeil's book *Sleeping Giant** are written around and from within a passage of scripture. In chapter two he virtually leads a Bible Study on the opening verses of Isaiah 6 reprinted below. In our church Bibles you'll find them on Old Testament page 572 (Ardoch) or p691 (Blackford) to read the wider context.

In the meantime, how about using the text below to scribble, underline or highlight to your heart's content as you explore the passage using the Bible study method in the graphic that we had in the Advent link.

Ray that God would speak to you as you read the passage.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a very high throne. His long robe filled the Temple. ²Heavenly creatures of fire stood above him. Each creature had six wings: It used two wings to cover its face, two wings to cover its feet, and two wings for flying. ³Each creature was calling to the others: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord All-Powerful. His glory fills the whole earth." ⁴Their calling caused the frame around the door to shake, as the Temple filled with smoke.

⁵I said, "Oh, no! I will be destroyed. I am not pure, and I live among people who are not pure, but I have seen the King, the Lord All-Powerful."

⁶One of the heavenly creatures used a pair of tongs to take a hot coal from the altar. Then he flew to me with the hot coal in his hand. ⁷The creature touched my mouth with the hot coal and said, "Look, your guilt is taken away, because this hot coal has touched your lips. Your sin is taken away."

⁸Then I heard the Lord's voice, saying, "Whom can I send? Who will go for us?" So I said, "Here I am. Send me!"

HIGHLIGHT

What stood out or grabbed you?



QUESTION

Did these verses raise any questions?



INSIGHT

What did you learn about God?



THEME

What are the key themes in this passage?



ACTION

What can you pray, say or do this week?



**Now have another look at the passage;
Can you see Tommy's ten points within the passage?**

- 1) Revival happens during times of personal and corporate difficulty
- 2) Revival begins with a fresh revelation of God
- 3) It's more of God we need!
- 4) Revival reveals God's holiness and reignites our passion for worship
- 5) In revival, God will share with us His heart and passion for the world
- 6) In revival, we must be prepared for the unexpected and the unexplainable
- 7) In revival, we don't have time to judge others as we're too aware of our own sin
- 8) In revival, we have a fresh awareness of what Jesus has done for us and all he has secured for us
- 9) In revival, God calls us into partnership with Him
- 10) In revival, we fully surrender our lives to God and serve His passion

Finally, we are offered questions to reflect on and pray into.

- a) What comes to mind when you hear the word *revival*?
- b) What comes to mind when you think about God?
- c) Are you mindful of all that Christ has done and secured for you?
- d) Do you pray for revival? If so, what do you think it will look like if it comes?
- e) Do you live with an expectancy of God speaking to you?
- f) Are you prepared for God to move in any way he chooses?

*At least 20 members of our united congregation took up Mairi's offer of a copy of this book last summer. If you've not got access to a copy, you can get it from [Amazon](#), [St Andrew's Bookshop](#), [eBay](#) or other booksellers.

Tommy MacNeil is a minister in Stornoway and the Convenor of the Church of Scotland's Faith Action Programme which exists to equip people to live out the mission of God.



Head back to page 26 of *Sleeping Giant* where Tommy unpacks the thermometer and thermostat illustration.

Blackford Fundraising

It has been a busy few months of events in Blackford with our Christmas Social, Burns Night Supper, February Giveaway event and our Perth & Kinross Foodbank Prosecco and Puddings night. At the time of printing, we are also about to have our Spring Craft Fair on 21st March and a Bingo night on 24th March to support [Perth & Kinross Foodbank](#).



Our fundraising is in two parts – events fundraising for the work of the church and events fundraising for other organisations. Both however are tied with our mission of spreading the word of God, welcoming people into our church and reaching out to those who need help or support in any way. We are grateful to all those who have attended events, supported our aims and donated items or money to help make the events a success.

Our next event for Perth & Kinross Foodbank is on Saturday 23rd May and will be a Rioja and Tapas night. It may sound a little incongruous to have a food and wine night when raising funds for others who have little food to spare, however, it allows us to come together, raise some money, bring our food donations and have an enjoyable evening together. For example, our last event raised £340 and we gave 96 kilos of food to the Foodbank. A good night was had by all and we were able to support others in need. If you would like to come on the 23rd May, please contact Laura on laura@andrewandlaura.co.uk or on 07551 700197.



We will have events during the summer but as yet, these are not written in stone. If you have any ideas of events you would like us to hold, or how we could further our mission through fundraising, please contact Sandy or Laura and we can have a chat. We welcome any and all ideas, help and contributions.



Blackford Community Café

We open the doors for tea, coffee and cake one Wednesday morning per month and welcome a range of regulars and those who drop in. Thanks to everyone who helps with the baking and who serve. Café dates during this period are:

15th April | 20th May | 17th June

Blackford's Younger People

We had a smaller mid-term holiday club, moving on from the summer's *Tale of Two Kings* theme to explore a couple of Jesus' miracles with the help of clips and SU Scotland resources from the [King of Kings film](#).

The Blackford Castle décor stayed in place for *Stacks of Pancakes* the following week. There we welcomed around 80 people of all ages who cooked and ate very well over the afternoon while Holiday Club songs and other age-appropriate worship music played across the different sections of the afternoon. Many primary pupils left with our Holy Week sticker book to try and fit it all together.



We'll use the King of Kings film and an SU Scotland Resource again as the starting points for the Blackford PS Easter Assembly focussing on symbols of Easter. Join us from 2:30pm on Thursday 2nd April.

The Hot Chocolate group has seen around 15 secondary pupils meet with Sophie, Jane, Gordon and Bruce since Christmas. We'll adjust in April to meet on Good Friday then on 8th May and probably Gala Car Treasure Hunt on the 12th June.

The P7 servers at our recent Community Lunches have even gained personal "name checks" in the Blackford Carers Facebook Group. Our next lunches—no pressure on the servers—are the 27th March, 24th April, 29th May and 26th June—a slightly different pattern this summer with schools working through to Thursday 2nd July. Our grant application has gone in to the Blackford Community Fund for next session and we also acknowledge the support of the P&K Council Warm Welcome Fund.



Our Holiday Club plans focus on the week of Monday 10th August. The most likely theme is currently **Wonder Zone: Discovering God's Wonderful World** which Gordon's doing in a work capacity earlier in the summer. We have some team signed up already but we're always looking to recruit a few more. **Jane & Gordon Roy**

Ardoch Guild

We began 2026 by presenting Charles Robertson and John Duncan with Guild Tartan ties for all their support, moving tables and chairs, and musically. Our first meeting of the year was our own Fiona Lyle, with slides and a talk about her fundraising cycles to India, Vietnam and Cambodia for '[Young Lives Vs Cancer](#)' (formerly Clic Sargent). Claire came from the charity to tell us more about their work. We had 30 people attend this very interesting meeting and raised an additional £200 for Young Lives Vs Cancer.



February's meeting was open to other Guilds in the area and we had 21 attending [Bear Necessities](#). The speakers Cathey and Christina, all the way from Alness, told us of their mission to help build a church in Bulgaria, inspired by delivering Blythswood Christmas shoeboxes in 2010. They brought their own sales table with lovely Christian artefacts with record breaking sales of £173. This is one of the Guild Projects this year and our collection raised £100 for them.

In March Norman Lazonby joined us from North Berwick to tell us about the origins and work of [The Leprosy Mission](#): "Together We Can End Leprosy." This was a quieter meeting with illness and holidays, but we still collected £137 which we shall round up and send to the charity at our next committee meeting.

I just wanted to say at this point how much we shall miss Honor Halley. She was such a great source of village stories past and present, with her own brand of humour.

The Guild's last meeting and AGM will be on Thursday 2nd April, with the speaker Winnie Duncan on [Pets as Therapy](#).

We are delighted Fiona Chalamanda has agreed to bring her classes of violinists to the church to play for the Guild and the community on Friday 5th June at 3.15pm

Looking ahead, Guild Week begins with the Annual Gathering in Perth North Church, our new home, on Saturday 12th September followed by our rededication service in Ardoch on Sunday 13th.

Show us your ways, Lord, because we are good at losing the path. In this Lenten walking we slow down, we listen, we place our steps again into the quiet path of grace, trusting that the God who is teacher is still leading. Abridged - E Hamilton

Heather McDonald, President

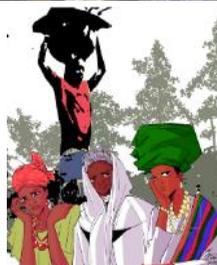
Word Day of Prayer

Thanks to all who attended the United Service in Ardoch to celebrate World Day of Prayer on Sunday 8th March— International Women's Day. The Nigerian women wrote a lovely service and included some nice recipes. We appreciate all those who took part so ably. Our collection for the World Day of Prayer was approximately £200.



Starmer urged to challenge Nigerian president over Christian persecution

The Prime Minister has been urged to challenge the President of Nigeria over the persecution of Christians in the country, during his state visit to the UK.



Bola Tinubu, and his wife Oluremi, were hosted at Windsor Castle for a state banquet on Wednesday 18th March meeting Keir Starmer in Downing Street the next day.

Parliament's all-party group for freedom of religion or belief has highlighted the case of Leah Sharibu, who, as mentioned in our World Day of Prayer service, was abducted by Boko Haram in 2018 and has not been released as she refuses to renounce her faith.

More Christians are murdered for their faith in Nigeria than anywhere else in the world, according to anti-persecution mission [Open Doors](#). Last year, 3,490 believers were killed in Nigeria, with at least 4,849 killed around the world. (www.premierchristian.news)

Ardoch Burns Supper

In response to several members of the community saying they had never been to a Burns Supper, I decided to rectify this!

Friday 23rd January appeared to be free! Eight speakers volunteered with little persuasion even when I said "maximum ten minutes per speech." Haggis, neeps and tatties, dumpling and tablet appeared by magic with a little help from some family. Everyone had a great time and we may have to do it again next year. Quite an easy £650 for church funds.

Heather McDonald



Are you a map reader or a satnav user?

How do you navigate? Do you prefer pondering over a map gaining the overview and then locating your destination from the surroundings and signposts that you've anticipated. Or do you want to type in an address and be led there, surprised at where you have ended up and how you got there?

As a Kirk Session, we recognise that, for those who are able to do this, learning to navigate a physical Bible (to then help us use a Bible to navigate through life) is an important aspect of Christian nurture and discipleship. So if you're a map reader, when you see the reading each Sunday you're maybe going to use your Bible's index to locate the passage with reference to other key features.

If you prefer the short sharp clarity of the satnav, use the page numbers on our screen to get you there as directly as possible. But do join us on the journey.

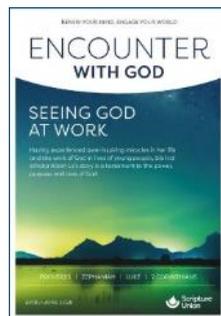
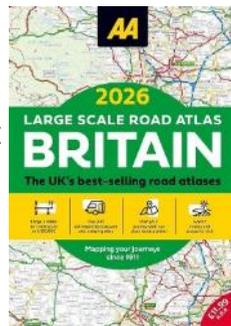
- Admire the view as you look across the page and identify the surroundings that we're passing as we read.
- Bring back memories when you realise that's a passage nearby that you read during the week, or which you highlighted a few years ago.
- Make new memories by underlining what strikes you and will catch your eye as you look for it again.
- Make and renew friendships as people's names pop up in the surrounding text and we make the connections to other family members, roles and geography in the person and work of God.

And ultimately arrive at our shared destination—meeting God together in his house.

Reading the Bible Personally

As we finished *Unpacking the Bible*, our host, Fiona, asked our tour guide, Colin, about his own pattern for reading the Bible. In a three minute clip which we'll show in our services on Sunday 12th April he talks us through his various methods and motivations for personal Bible reading.

Encounter with God is a daily Bible reading guide designed to lead us to a deeper understanding about what God is saying today. Copies cost £6.25 for three months from content.scriptureunion.org.uk/product/203 or see Gordon for samples at our Easter services or drop him an email.



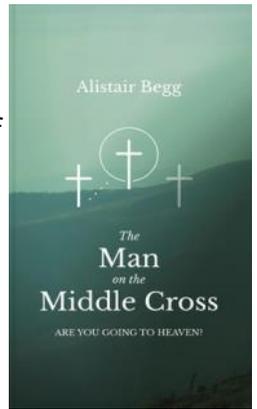
The Man on the Middle Cross

By now you'll have found the book that comes with this issue, but have you worked through the question on page 3 of The Link? Go back there now if you've not formed an answer.

If we start, "Because I..." we've immediately gone wrong and misunderstood the grounds of our salvation. The book was written to address this after so many people appreciated a short clip on YouTube entitled *The Man on the Middle Cross* from an Alistair Begg sermon. You can find it by searching on YouTube, visiting blackfordparishchurch.org/easter or scan the QR code from your phone or tablet.

In addition to the encounter that one man had with the Man on the middle cross, in this short book we also meet a man and a woman whose lives are changed having met Jesus in a house and by a well.

We've added the book in with The Link so that members of our congregation have it to read and reflect on. Feel free to pass on to anyone else who would appreciate it. It's mentioned in our Easter card so others may ask you for a copy but don't feel you have to wait to pass it on; there will be more copies in our church buildings.



Blythswood Shoebox Appeal 2026

Items are now being accepted for this year's appeal - the usual things e.g. soap, facecloths, toothbrushes, toothpaste etc etc. A full list is available on request.



If you would like to knit for the appeal - gloves, hats, scarves or even squares for the blankets - wool and needles are available. Please contact me. Please note we can no longer pass on knitted jumpers.

The size for the squares for the blankets is 60 rows of 30 stitches with every row knit. If you knit five squares without casting off in different colours, the strips will then be sewn together to make a blanket and this saves having to sew up lots of squares.

Any questions please get in touch.

Many thanks for any help you can give for this appeal.

Shona Stewart, 07986 614 027



Our Sunday Services

Blackford: Prayer 9:30am; Service 10:00am
Ardoch: Service (Live streamed from Easter) 11:30am.

Easter 2026 Services

Thursday 2nd April	Communion Service	Ardoch	7:00pm
Friday 3rd April	Good Friday Service	Blackford	7:00pm
Sunday 5th April	Early Easter Morning	Blackford Hill	8:00am
	Breakfast	Blackford	8:30am
	Easter Worship	Blackford	10:00am
	Easter Worship	Ardoch and Livestream	11:30am

Our other United Services during this period

Sunday 3rd May	United Communion	Blackford	10:00am
	Stated Annual Meeting	Blackford	11:00am
Sunday 31st May	United Worship	Blackford	10:00am
Sundays in July	United Worship	Ardoch	10:00am
Sundays in August	United Worship	Blackford	10:00am

“I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.”

~ CHARLES COLSON



I BELIEVE IN **CHRISTIANITY** AS
I BELIEVE THAT THE SUN HAS RISEN
NOT ONLY BECAUSE I SEE IT
BUT BECAUSE BY IT I SEE
EVERYTHING ELSE

C. S. Lewis



This issue of The Link runs through to the end of August. Copy date for the Autumn issue is Sunday 16th August with the magazine available later that week and running to the start of Advent.