

# The Link—Easter 2024

The Church of Scotland Parishes  
of Ardoch and Blackford



Ardoch Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC000139  
Blackford Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC005594  
[ardochparishchurch.org](http://ardochparishchurch.org) | [blackfordparishchurch.org](http://blackfordparishchurch.org)  
[facebook.com/blackfordparishchurch](https://facebook.com/blackfordparishchurch)

## **2024 Sunday Services:**

Blackford 10:00am | Ardoch and Livestream 11:30am  
Sunday 19th May | Joint Service at 10:00am in Ardoch  
For July and August, see centre pages

# Office Bearers in the Parishes of Ardoch & Blackford

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## Ardoch

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## The next dates for The Link are as follows:

Issue	Articles in by	Copies come out
Autumn 2024	16th August	23rd August
Advent 2024 (1/12 1st Sunday)	20th November	26th November
Easter 2025 (Easter Day 20/4)	23rd March	30th March

Editor: Gordon Roy, 01764 682356, [gordon.roy@outlook.com](mailto:gordon.roy@outlook.com)

## Dear Friends,

Is your journey to the foot of the cross made easier or harder because you know the outcome? Because you know the pain, the darkness, and that all the uncertainty will give way to light and joy on Easter morning.

Our Lenten journey this year has been a little different as we have met in the halls around tables discussing and taking an active part in our discernment of the Bible passages in work by Stephen Cottrell *The Things He Carried*. Far too often we are merely submissive spectators at our Sunday services.

It has been a joy to watch and to listen to each congregation as you have immersed yourselves more and more as the journey unfolds. I want to thank you all for your willingness to enter into new ways that challenge and at times push you out of your comfort zones.

The message in the Bible never changes but the ways in which we engage with it must change if we are truly to take God's message out to as many people as possible in as many different places and ways that we can find so that everyone has the opportunity to engage with Christ and can come in time to declare him,

"My Lord and my God!"

May I wish you God's blessing this Easter time.

*Rev Mairi*



## Our cover photos for this issue



Charlie Mackesy is best known for his book and Oscar winning film *The boy, the mole, the horse and the fox*. We have also seen him in the ALPHA course and, one Sunday morning, in his *Christianity in a nutshell* video clip which is on the Blackford *Sunday Worship* webpage. His *Jesus at the Door* is on the front of the Blackford Links as well as the Easter card going round the village.

Ardoch's Hub has been running throughout the winter (see page 15) and three photos from their weekly event are on the cover of the Ardoch Link shining a light on great company and activity during the darker months.



## **Ardoch Kirk Session**

It seems no time since we were celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas but here we are, in the middle of Lent, about to celebrate his resurrection at Easter.

During the Lenten period the church activities continue, ranging from a six week Bible Study course based on the "Healing and Hope in the One Household of God" study guide, through Easter Makaton videos available on the web-site and one post a day on Instagram till Easter Sunday and to the Easter Services: Maundy Service 28 March at 7.00pm; Easter Sunday Services at 8.00am on the hill at Blackford Old Church and 11.30am in Ardoch Church. The service on the hill is highly recommended as it is a profound experience to celebrate Easter morning in the tranquillity of an open-air service.

I am delighted to let you have advance notice that the Rev Dr John Ferguson, Perth Presbytery Clerk, will be joining us for worship on Sunday 12th May. This has necessitated moving Communion and the Stated Annual Meeting from the 12th of May to the 5th of May.

The Sunday services during January to March have been held in the Church Hall to reduce energy costs. Our Minister took this opportunity to introduce a more informal and participative style of worship with groups of about four congregation members sitting round individual tables laid out in café style. Participation is encouraged by asking the groups to discuss questions relating to the theme of the service. Services will return to the Sanctuary on 24th March when we will celebrate the baptism of Molly Lambie.

Whilst on the topic of the Sanctuary, your Kirk Session is considering the pros and cons of removing the pews there, to create a multifunctional space. You are encouraged to let your elder know your views on this new arrangement for seating.

The discussions on the Presbytery Mission Plan continue, albeit slowly. The meeting arranged for members of the Presbytery Planning and Deployment Committee to meet with the Kirk Session went ahead as planned in November. One of their recommendations was that there was no need to wait for the Union between Ardoch and Blackford before discussing the Linkage with Muthill and that Rhona Nicol, the Presbytery Congregational Support Officer, was willing to facilitate discussion among the three parties. Your Kirk Session took up this offer and with the agreement of the Blackford and Muthill Kirk Sessions we are awaiting Rhona suggesting dates for a meeting.

Perth Presbytery hosted a meeting in Logierait Church for the trustees of rural churches to meet with the Church of Scotland General Trustees, and members of Perth Presbytery Planning and Deployment and Property Committees to discuss rural buildings. Four of our Trustees attended the meeting but did not find the issues raised to be especially relevant to Ardoch's situation.

In the Easter copy of the Link last year it was mentioned that the Ardoch Development Trust had appointed a consultant to manage a Community Action Plan for the villages of Braco and Greenloaning. The Action Plan for 2024 to 2029 has now been published. It is very pleasing to note that references to church activities and facilities feature widely in the report. Singled out for mention on several occasions was the "invaluable outreach service and pastoral care including visits to the housebound". Also featured were the church hall facilities and recreational activities, Youth and IT Teams, Church Warm Space Hub, Craft groups and IT classes.

It is quite clear from the report that Ardoch Church has a central and vital role in the community. This is summed up in the view expressed in the Action Plan that "The Community Council, school and church make it a vibrant place (to live)".

**Bob Aitken,  
Joint Session Clerk**

### **Blackford Kirk Session**

Our eight serving elders on the Kirk Session meet regularly to discuss all matters relating our own and the wider church. The Five Marks of Mission are our primary focus in everything we do to help us grow and spread the good news of the gospel across our parish and beyond!

After seven years in the role of Joint Session Clerk, Gordon Roy has taken the decision to stand-down from this position. Gordon will continue to serve as an active elder, leading our youth groups, producing The Link, organising community lunches and many other activities. We would like to express our sincere thanks to Gordon for all the tremendous work and service which he has given and continues to give in the life of our church and community.

Blackford and Ardoch joint elder meetings will resume soon to continue our dialogue towards progressing the implementation of the Presbytery Mission Plan. We will of course share with you relevant information regarding discussions and agreed actions as we move forward.

Our church, like numerous others, is facing many challenges. We are thankful to our congregation for their support and commitment and ask that you continue to keep the work of our minister Mairi and elders in your prayers please. Thank you.

**Sandy Marshall, Session Clerk**



## Ardoch Church Foodbank

Since the New Year we are aware that there has been an increase in foodbank referrals in Braco. The congregation is very conscious of this and are contributing to the donation hamper weekly. At the end of each month the contents from the hamper are taken to the Blue Door Food Bank at Auchterarder Parish Church for distribution.



Jackie Mahoney and her team are very grateful for all the donations received and thank the members of Ardoch Parish Church most sincerely for their continuing support.

## Ardoch Pastoral Care (Outreach Team)

The Pastoral Care Team is a group of dedicated members whose aim is to support the minister through regular visitation of the elderly, hospitalised, bereaved, lonely or isolated in our community.

Please tell us of any problems and we will deal with them when they arise. Good communication is a key factor to the success of all Pastoral Care Work. The contact phone numbers are listed below.

We welcome new residents to our community and offer transport to people to who have difficulty attending appointments. The wheelchair lending service is available to anyone requiring assistance. Easter gifts will be delivered to deserving members of our community.

The Community Lunches over the winter months continue to be a success story. The last one of the season (Easter Themed) is on the 22nd March. The new season will start in September.

We send best wishes for a Happy Easter.



**Team contacts: Charles 880947, Barbara 880509, Lilian 880438, Heather 880556, Anne 880347.**



Last week's Daily Services from BBC Radio 4 LW\* (9:45am) were based the hymn: **In Christ Alone, my hope is found.** This week it's another we know well, **Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.** Find them on BBC Sounds app or webpage by searching "Daily Service."  
\*Moving to Radio 4 Extra on DAB radio from April.

## Hug in a Mug

Blackford Church's new community coffee morning kicks off on Wednesday 24th of April and will run monthly throughout the year.

It's a chance to chat, enjoy some company and have coffee and a cake.

This free event will continue on the last Wednesday of the month so put these dates in your diary:

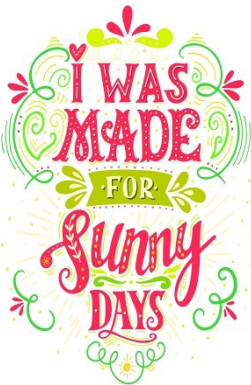
29<sup>th</sup> May, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 28<sup>th</sup> Aug,  
25<sup>th</sup> Sept, 30<sup>th</sup> Oct, 27<sup>th</sup> Nov



## Blackford Sunshine Bags

I can't believe we are nearing the end of March and it's time to look out our box of Sunshine Bags all ironed and ready for filling again. Please look out for delivery of your bag if you participate in this fun church fundraiser. Our team aim to drop them off during April in anticipation of lots of sunshine and a wee catch up. Please know we are here to help in any way. We really appreciate how people are willing to take part; last year our total was £1,035 plus 25% as Gift Aid. This is brilliant! Thank you.

Our holiday club is free for the young people in our village so this is just one example of how we can use some of the money whether it be buying the fruit and juice for their break time or paying for the craft materials. In addition to our summer week of holiday club we do in-service day holiday clubs plus we had an open door in the church on Shrove Tuesday where many pancakes were flipped and eaten. Each child was also given a card with 40+ QR codes to click on plus a surprise butterfly that flew out.... all pointing to the deeper meaning and significance behind Easter. So.....every penny does count. If you know of anyone else who is interested in receiving a bag to fill with copper coins for every sunny day, then please contact me on 682356.



PS I still can't sew (!) so if you have some spare material and would like to make some new bags that would be great. Just get in touch with me. Thanks. **Jane Roy**



**Blackford Community Lunches**  
 With such a mix of people involved, we've not sought permission for photos but here we are set up for our 27 diners and 16 additional singers from the school last month.

We completed a survey to help report to the



Blackford Community Fund that week and are looking to a further application this month.

Our pattern is less predictable until the summer but they are at 1pm on the dates in the village diary and bin rota: Thursday 28th March, then Fridays 26th April, 17th May and 7th June. Sign up at the shop, at church or with Gordon & Jane in the run up to each lunch.

### Blackford Holiday Club

TV Chefs Salt 'n' Pepper were back on duty making pizzas at our February in-service day holiday club. Our *Rocky's Plaice* theme had moved from Peter in the summer to Paul in November and last month we arrived in Rome with him eager to tell more people about Jesus—a good enough reason to enjoy pizza and chips to finish the day.



### Stacks of pancakes

It was quite a foody week in mid-February as Shrove Tuesday fell the day before our Holiday Club. Around 50 folk came through the doors to enjoy the pancakes they made, the worship music and the chat. All the children left with an envelope to open carefully when they got home. The card offered a 40+ day journey through God's Story videos and then songs on Sundays. We'll explain the butterflies at the school Easter Assembly at 2:45pm on Maundy Thursday.



**Pancakes for the start of a journey**  
 Pancake Day—Shrove Tuesday—is a day to use up all the rich food before starting a 40-day journey to Easter.  
 How about travelling with us this year—through to Easter Day at the end of March?

Scan a QR code each day and enjoy a different part of the Bible (where God's Story) Complete the 40th of each film then bring it to us on Easter Day and we give you a free bag for you.

Sundays are always days of celebration and don't count in the 40 days of Lent. So serve a song of celebration for you each Sunday.

1. Shrove Tuesday (Jan 26)	2. Thursday (Jan 28)	3. Friday (Jan 29)
4. Saturday (Jan 30)	5. Sunday (Jan 31)	6. Monday (Feb 1)
7. Tuesday (Feb 2)	8. Wednesday (Feb 3)	9. Thursday (Feb 4)



## **Ardoch Youth Team**

Hot Chocolate Club is 6.30 – 8.00 on the second Friday of the month and is for young people in P7 and above. Forest Mission is 2.00 – 3.30 p.m. on the Saturday after Hot Chocolate Club – and is for children in primary school, or pre-school year.

With all our children and young people we've been thinking about our impact on the world and the climate crisis. We've done lots of fun activities which helped us learn about how rubbish is dealt with around the world; for example, in Uganda, youth centres have been built from bricks made from plastic bottles. We took part in **THE BIG PLASTIC COUNT** 11-17 MARCH The Big Plastic Count 2024 and wrote to the UK Government to ask them to sign a global treaty on tackling the global plastic crisis.

Hot Chocolate Club also had fun on Red Nose Day, when all the proceeds from our tuck shop were given to Comic Relief and we had a bake sale of red nosed cakes and biscuits.

We're having an Easter Family Fun afternoon on Sunday 24th March, 2.30pm–4.30pm with a short, family friendly service in the church at 4.30pm. We'll explore the Easter story through games and crafts. All are welcome, and if you don't want to come along to the whole afternoon, why not join us for the service at the end?

We'll also be raising money for Christian Aid with our now annual Big Brekkie on Saturday 11th May. Looking forward to seeing you all there.

We've been sharing daily reflections on Instagram throughout Lent. Using material from At Home In Lent, by Gordon Giles, we've learned how we can see God in many everyday objects in our homes, prompt ourselves to have Prayerful showers, and make putting the kettle on a time to think about God. It's not too late to join us. You can find us on Instagram [@ardoch\\_youth](https://www.instagram.com/ardoch_youth).



### **Dates for your diary:**

Sunday 24th March 2.30 – 4.30 Easter Family Fun afternoon  
4.30 – Family friendly Easter reflection service

Hot Chocolate Club: 12th April, 10th May, 14th June

Forest Mission: 13th April, 11th May, 15th June

Saturday 11th May 9.00 – 10.30 Christian Aid Big Brekkie

**Lyndsey Thomas and the Ardoch Youth Team**

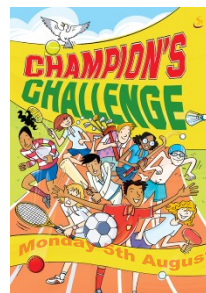
# The Five Marks of Mission in Blackford: Who's leading? Are we showing the marks?

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom (Gordon)
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers (Moirira)
3. To respond to human need by loving service (Laura)
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation (Bruce)
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth (Sandy)



## Blackford Summer Holiday Club

With it being another Olympic year, we have found another sports theme for this summer's club. In **Champion's Challenge**, we'll meet Jesus as selector, trainer, team-mate, substitute and winner over our five mornings from 5th to 9th August.



See any good news?

## Why does Easter keep moving?

Easter, like the Old Testament feast of the Passover still marked by Jews today, is determined by calculations involving the lunar calendar—but not the same calculations.

Passover marks God rescuing his people from Egypt in Exodus 12. As determined then, it is always on the 15th day of Nisan - the first month of the Jewish year. But being a lunar calendar, the date moves across our calendar between March and April. This year Jews will mark the Passover from 22nd April. Scan this QR code to view *God's Story: The Passover* which has been part of our video journey through Lent.



The Council of Nicaea in 325AD, as well as giving us the Nicene Creed, determined that Easter should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring equinox (21<sup>st</sup> March).



Some years, the two feasts coincide and that first Easter they most certainly did. Jesus ate the Passover meal a day early with his disciples. The Jewish leaders who took Jesus to Pilate on the Friday morning “did not enter the palace, because they wanted to avoid ceremonial uncleanness and be able to eat the Passover.” (John 18:28) Jesus then died on the cross at the time the Jewish Leaders were sacrificing Passover Lambs in the temple. As John the Baptist had said from the start, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) and as Paul would write later, “Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

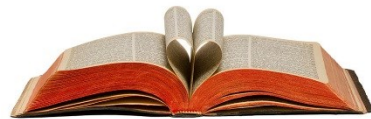
Just as God rescued the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, through the death of the lambs, Jesus—by his death—rescues us from the bondage of sin and death. And just as God freed the Israelites out of his love for his people, so too does Jesus free us out of his great love for us.

The movement of Easter also impacts the dates of Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday (the start of Lent), Mothers’ Day in the UK (three weeks before Easter) and the dates of Ascension (40 days after Easter) and Pentecost (50 days after Easter.) So here’s a good example of the degree of variation.

	Shrove Tuesday	Mothers’ Day	Easter	Ascension	Pentecost
2024	13 Feb	10 March	31 March	9 May	19 May
2025	4 March	30 March	20 April	29 May	8 June

# Our Bible Readers

## And a possible pattern for personal Bible reading using the Lectionary



Date	Ardoch/Blackford	Lectionary readings
 24th Mar	Sally Young Laura Peacock	Isaiah 50:4-9; Psalm 31:9-16; Phil 2:5-11; Mark 14:1-15:47
 31st March	Lyndsey Thomas Robyn Peacock	Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 118:1-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; John 20:1-18
7th April	Maureen James William Hensley	Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31
14th April	Dorothy Johnston Moira Hanslip	Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4: 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48
21st April	Pat Duncan Sandy Marshall	Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23: 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18
28th April	Phyllis Macleod Richard Bolton	Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8
5th May	Michael Boxer Jacqui Crawford	Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98: 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17
12th May	Heather McDonald Karen Shaw	Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1: 1 John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19
19th May	Irene Robertson Joint service in Ardoch	Acts 2:1-21; Ezekiel 37:1-14: Psalm 104:24-35; Romans 8:22-27
26th May	John Souter Laura Peacock	Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17
2nd June	Joyce Wighton Gala Queens	1 Samuel 3:1-20; Psalm 139:1-18: 2 Corinthians 4:5-12; Mark 2:23-3:6
9th June	Peter Scott Robin Peacock	1 Samuel 8:4-20; Psalm 138 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35
16th June	Liz Paterson Bruce Tarbet	1 Samuel 15:34 - 16:13; Psalm 20; 2 Corinthians 5:6-17; Mark 4:26-34
23rd June	Charles Robertson John McNaught	1 Samuel 17:1-49; Psalm 9:9-20; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41
30th June	Morag Smillie Thelma McNaught	2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27; Psalm 130; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 5:21-43

Our thanks to John Graham who has organised the Blackford Bible readers' rota for 20 years. He stepped down from this devoted service this month. The words of Paul are our tribute. (1 Tim 4:13)

Until I come, devote yourself  
to the public reading of  
Scripture, to preaching and to  
teaching.



**Our summer services are all at 10:00am.**

**In July we're worshipping together in Ardoch with Blackford readers.**

**In August we worship in Blackford with readers from Ardoch.**

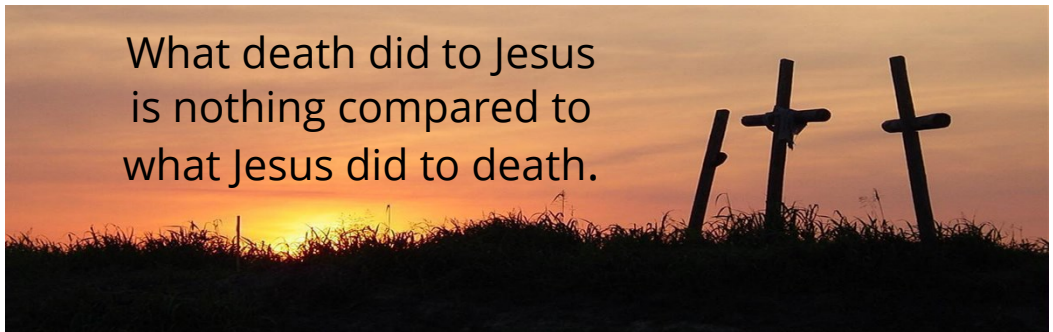
7th July	Shona Stewart	2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48; 2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13
14th July	Jeannette Barr	2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19; Psalm 24; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:14-29
21st July	Gordon Roy	2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Psalm 89:20-37; Eph 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56
28th July	Jane Roy	2 Samuel 11:1-15; Psalm 14; Ephesians 3:14-21; John 6:1-21
4th August	To be arranged	2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13; Psalm 51; Ephesians 4:1-16; John 6:24-35
11th August	To be arranged	2 Samuel 18:5-33; Psalm 130; Ephesians 4:25-5:2; John 6:35-51
18th August	To be arranged	1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14; Psalm 111; Ephesians 5:15-20; John 6:51-58
25th August	To be arranged	1 Kings 8:1-43; Psalm 84; Ephesians 6:10-20; John 6:56-69

Should Bible readers be unable to find a replacement, please contact Gordon Roy on 01764 682356 or [gordon.roy@outlook.com](mailto:gordon.roy@outlook.com) or Christine Souter on [csouterbraco@aol.com](mailto:csouterbraco@aol.com) or 07767 380011.

**From Sunday 1st September, we'll return to our two scheduled services at Blackford at 10:00am and Ardoch with Livestream at 11:30.am The next issue of The Link will be out in late August.**



What death did to Jesus is nothing compared to what Jesus did to death.



**Thanks to all those who serve on our  
Flower Rotas led by  
Jenny Kemp and Helen Laing.**

**The flowers are appreciated during  
our services and when gifted on  
across the villages thereafter.**



<b>Date</b>	<b>Ardoch Flowers</b>	<b>Blackford Flowers</b>
24th Mar	Heather McDonald	Moira Hanslip
31st March	Jenny Kemp	Helen Laing
7th April	Sheila MacGregor	Fiona Smeaton
14th April	Morag Smillie	Laura Peacock
21st April	Barbara Young	Margaret Earle
28th April	Anne Walker	Helen Laing
5th May	Ann Spiers	Rita Marshall
12th May	Pat Duncan	Sheila Wight
19th May	Ann Graham	Ardoch
26th May	Jenny Kemp	Rita Marshall
2nd June	Stuart Brannen	Doreen Taylor
9th June	Christine Souter	
16th June	Scott Dawson	Pat Graham
23rd June	Moira Hay	Sheila McDonald
30th June	Andrew Muir	
7th July	Linda Dawson	Ardoch
14th July	Moira Hay	Ardoch
21st July	Ann Spiers	Ardoch
28th July	Christine Souter	Ardoch
4th August	Blackford	Moira Hanslip
11th August	Blackford	Margaret Earle
18th August	Blackford	Jeannette Barr
25th August	Blackford	Jean Robertson

## The Hub at Ardoch Church

This operates on Tuesdays from November to March inclusive and has a regular routine that is enjoyed by everyone. Many come along for elevenses – tea, coffee and biscuits and a chat at 11am. This easily transitions into lunch at noon with a choice of two soups often accompanied by sandwiches, a filled roll or a cheese scone with home baking to follow.

Lunchtime is relaxed but eventually gives way to a variety of activities – a different selection of activities is offered on a rotational basis each week of the month: 1: jigsaws and games; 2: bingo and singalong; 3: Mega Quiz and 4: live entertainment.

We have regular volunteers who come along to help serve food and drinks and help organise activities. We are indebted to these helpers who generously give of their time and energy and help make everything happen whilst creating a convivial atmosphere. We also have some villagers who are happy to occasionally make soups and/or bake for The Hub. These donations are much appreciated not only by folks who attend the Hub but also by those who usually make soups and bake on a weekly basis.



Grateful thanks to Ardoch Church for applying for and administrating the funding awarded by P&K Council to run this Warm Space and Social Club. We also thank Ardoch Church for their continued support and enthusiasm for this project and the provision of facilities that are very good. The Church Hall is a very good location for the Hub – warm and with very good kitchen and dining facilities, toilets etc.



In our second year of operating The Hub we now have a balance of 50:50 men:women with approximately 20 arriving each Tuesday – but often more than that.

Folks who come along generally love the chat and friendliness of the warm space and social club. They love the home made soups and home baking too! And they love the activities, entertainment and fun!

**Pat Duncan**



## Ardoch Fundraising Team

The Team organised four very successful and well supported events in 2023 raising a total of **£3781.50** for church funds. The final fundraiser of the year was the Quiz Night on 16th December raising a total of £457.00. By all accounts everyone who participated had a fun night (to be repeated again in 2024!).

We feel organised for the year and below is the proposed fundraising and events for 2024. The Whist Drive in February was, as always, a successful night, we were so pleased with the response and support from players joining us from Auchterarder and Dunblane as well as the Braco players. A total of £350 was raised for our church funds.

Our next Event, which is in the planning stage, is a Songs of Praise Evening in the church on **Friday 17th May** so please make a note in your diary for this which should be a pleasant evening of music, singing and fellowship ...not forgetting teas and homebaking to follow! Get your thinking caps on for your favourite hymn, a request form will be available soon.

Below is the proposed fundraising for 2024. So let's look forward to some fun and enjoyable events throughout the year.

Please continue to use [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://easyfundraising.org.uk) when ordering online.

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

Grateful thanks from the Fundraising Team.

**Maureen, Fundraising Co-ordinator**

Date	Event
8th February	Whist Drive
17th May	Songs of Praise Evening + Refreshments
23rd June	Duck Race
21st September	Cheese, Wine & Dessert and Silent Auction
7 th December	Quiz Night
Ongoing	Easyfundraising (internet shopping)
Ongoing	Loose change box appeal



## Ardoch Special Retiring Collections

The total raised in special collections by the congregation during 2023 was £1868.52. Here is the calendar for 2024 special collections.

Date	Collection
14th April	Scottish Red Cross
12th May	Christian Aid
23rd June	Scottish Bible Society
6th October (Harvest)	Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) - New for 2024
10th November (Remembrance)	PoppyScotland Fund
24th December (Watchnight service )	Church Action for the Homeless and Christian Aid



The Hot Chocolate Youth Groups will each be hosting Big Brekkies during May's **Christian Aid Week**. Head to Ardoch from 9:00-10:30 on Saturday 11th and to Blackford from 9:30-11:00 on Saturday 18th.

## Blackford Prayer Boxes

As Christians we care about our neighbours, and we want to be able to help where we can. One way we can do this is to pray for people.

We would love to be able to pray for you or those you love so if there was something worrying you or something you would like us to take to God for you, please drop a note in the metal post box on the railings to the left of the church gate.

This is checked weekly before the Sunday service and a prayer group meets at 9.30 to pray through any requests. Of course, this is done confidentially so we will only include your name if you want us to.

The wonderful thing is that God knows our needs even before we ask him, but Jesus asked us to pray in his name and bring those needs and thankfulness.

If you need any practical help, you can also put a note in the same box and we will do what we can to help which can include visiting.

**Laura Peacock**



## Hope for when you are going through the storm

God never promised us this life would be easy, but He does promise this: He is bigger than any storm we face in this world, and He's always working for our good, even in the places where we can't see, even in the circumstances that we don't fully understand; he is with us right in the midst of all we walk through.

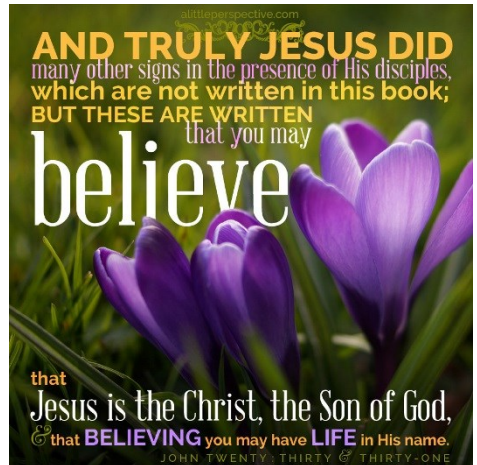
Our storms might look different in this life, but they all have the opportunity to change us forever. God is the only one who has the power to take what seems tragic and devastating to turn it around for good. It may not happen as quickly as we'd like, it may feel like a struggle, we might find ourselves longing for another way, but blessings will come from it. For it's the way God works. The "good" will shine through.

In some of the difficult times in life, we have learned the power of praying God's words back to him. It alone holds the ability to sooth our souls, to refresh our spirits and causes hope to rise above the pain we might be feeling. And though our circumstances may not be changed immediately, though our hearts may still be hurting, we are reminded through His truth to set our eyes on him, and that's the best place for them to be - in all of life.

Be assured today, He knows your way, He sees your pain, He hasn't forgotten you, and He's still at work, even through difficult times.

Thank you, Lord, for your word that says you give us the power to come out of this storm. Thank you that the storm will not last forever, but we are only passing through. Thank you that nothing has taken you by surprise. You know our journey better than we know it ourselves and you will use this time of testing for good.

**Charles Robertson**



## Ardoch Church of Scotland Guild

In February, Bruce Tarbet gave us a very interesting presentation on Asylum Seekers, and he left with several large bags of undergarments etc to distribute to refugees in Falkirk. Thank you.



Our March meeting was held on Friday 1/3/24 at 2pm to coincide with groups worldwide taking part in The World Day of Prayer. The service was written by women in Palestine, before the present escalation of troubles, but portraying the extreme hardship these people face on a daily basis, and have done for over 75 years. The service was much appreciated by the good number who attended, and several also said how enlightening it was, compared to the many news bulletins which offer no real explanation of the war.

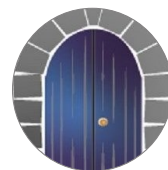


Liz Paterson also set up a sales table of goods made in Palestine, from the Hadeel Fairtrade shop in Edinburgh; the sum raised being £418. The collection on the day was £132.



We also enjoyed date and walnut cake, and date slice made from date paste bought at Emmaus.

Our final meeting and AGM will be on 4/4/24 at 2pm and will be Jackie Mahoney speaking about the Blue Door Foodbank in Auchterarder.



All welcome and new committee members are urgently required .

**Heather McDonald, President Ardoch Guild**

**Are you on email? Do we have your address?**

Can we keep in touch with you this way?

Please email your Session Clerk (addresses on page 2)  
or talk to us one Sunday morning.



## Keeping up to date

Neither congregation produces a printed order of service now with all the "intimations." We each do some emailing (see page 18) and run a series of slides on PowerPoints at the start of our services.



You're able to catch up on some Ardoch news posted on the home page of their website. Blackford share the week's news by scanning this QR code which is also available in the church building or click on it on the home page of Blackford's website.

## Ardoch, Muthill and Blackford Church Golf Outing

Hello Everyone. We hope you can join us for our ladies' and gentlemen's annual outing to Muthill Golf Club along with any friends you feel would enjoy our company.

Sunday 7th July 2024. Tee off 2.00pm. Meal approx 5.30pm. No handicaps required. 18 or 9 holes can be played. More details to follow.

Names to John Souter, 07767380010 or jsouterconsult@aol.com



## Blythswood Care Shoebox Appeal

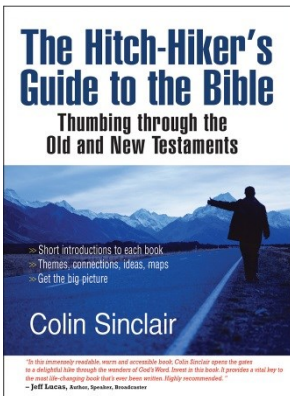
It's never too early to start adding an extra soap, toothbrush, socks or other items to a weekly shop ready for the Christmas boxes.

## All Scripture is God-breathed and useful,

wrote Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16, but how does it all fit and flow together?

Colin Sinclair, a now retired minister and former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland wrote his book *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Bible* to help us thumb through the Old and New Testament in a more informed and purposeful manner.

Over the autumn and winter he's been teaching the material in his local church and, thanks to YouTube, we can view it in our own time. The six sessions are on the Hitchhiker page of the Blackford website ([blackfordparishchurch.org/hitchhiker](http://blackfordparishchurch.org/hitchhiker)) Gordon also has copies of the book if you'd like to beg, steal or borrow one.



## Blackford Root66

With spring in the air, we'll soon be getting back in the garden again and continuing progress on our prayer labyrinth project, "Root66". We will be planting biblical themed plants and working on other special features to enhance the garden.

There is a lot of work to be done so if you or someone you know would like to help with either this project or looking after our grounds then please speak to Sandy or one of our elders. Even if you are able give an hour or two occasionally then that would be a great help. Thank you. **Sandy Marshall**



Prayer Labyrinth

## Blackford Ways and Means

Many thanks to everyone who has already responded with ideas for different activities to be considered. These are all displayed on our white board in the Session Room and you can add your ideas and suggestions at any time. There is no closing date! We intend to host at least one event every month so please look out for information on posters around the village, the church website and on Facebook.

These are a few ideas of potential events being planned: -

April	Tarneybuckle Concert
23rd May	Music Club with Trebsen guests
15th June	Pizza Picnic
July	Family BBQ
August	Afternoon Tea in the garden
September	Fun Quiz Night
23rd – 27th October	MusicFest24
5th November	Sparkling Sausage Sizzler
30th November	St Andrew's Celebration Afternoon Tea
9th December	Christmas Social



## Blackford Music Club

Another hugely successful Burns Supper on 25th January got our monthly Music Club off to a great start in 2024. The Club normally meets in the church on the last Thursday of every month from 8pm. Everyone is welcome to come along and either join in or listen and enjoy a cuppa! Here are our Music Club dates coming up through spring and summer.



28th March	25th April	23th May* Highland Games
27th June	25th July	29th August



## Alpha and Christianity Explored

Our first Alpha course included a January day away at Lendrick Muir—SU Scotland's Activity Centre on the other side of the Ochils. In amongst the three sessions from Alpha, we took in the crisp winter sunshine and had a shot at one of their activities.



As you can see, we seemed to hit the mark with the day, the material and the archery.

We're now using the **Christianity Explored** material in a less structured way, with sessions on **Sundays@Seven** worked around work and family commitments for those involved. Over the seven sessions (and the

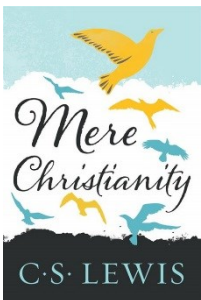
weeks in between) we are reading and discussing Mark's Gospel to find out more about the life of the person at the heart of the Christian faith – Jesus Christ.

As part of our **Sundays@Seven** series, we've also got two films coming up. **Risen** sees the crucifixion and resurrection through the eyes of a nonbelieving Roman soldier ordered to disprove the rumours of a risen Messiah and prevent an uprising in Jerusalem.

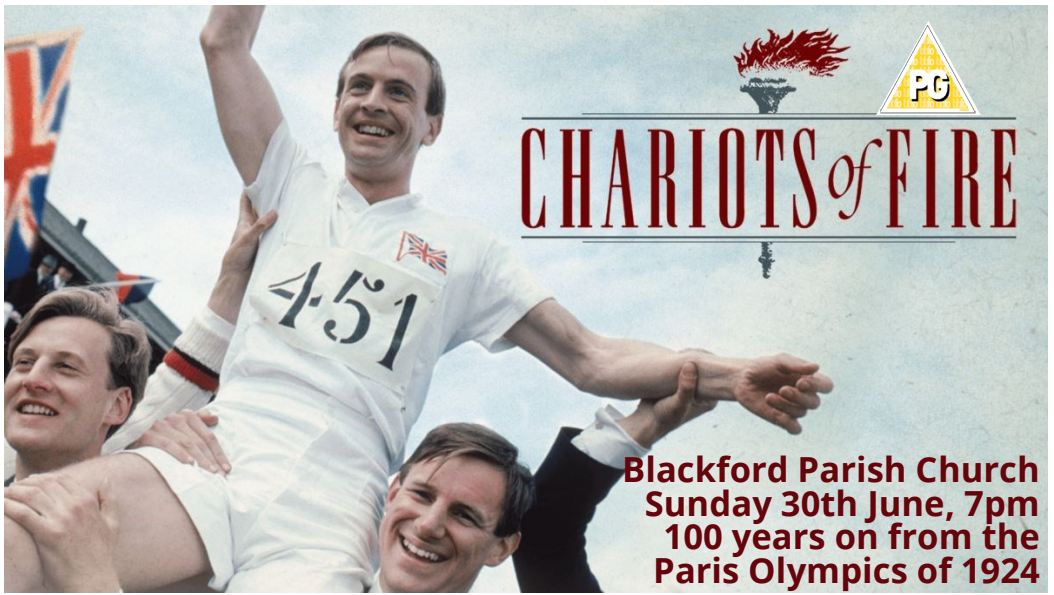
At the end of June, we'll show the 1981 classic **Chariots of Fire** as an opportunity to enjoy it again or to view for the first time.

## Mere Christianity

C.S Lewis was famous for writing *The Chronicles of Narnia* with children in mind however he also wanted to appeal to adults and convey a larger message. In *Mere Christianity*, one of his many books for adults, he wrote:



"You must make your choice: either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."



This summer the Olympic Games return to Paris from the 26th July followed by the Paralympics from the 28th of August.

For many of us, absent though we were, the Paris Olympics of 1924 are best remembered for Eric Liddell's Gold Medal in the 400m on Monday 7th July as his first choice event was on a Sunday. Chariots of Fire shortened the timeline for dramatic effect—he knew the schedule and had ruled out the 100m long before going up the gangplank—but it still shows the impact of a life lived to serve and honour God in the big and the small.

As the note handed to Eric on the day of his race said, "For those who honour Me, I will honour."

1 Samuel  
2:30

We are able to enter the presence of God because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

Isn't that amazing good news?

As noted in Christianity Explored, if you don't think this is the best news ever, then you've not fully understood it!

Who needs help to understand it? Try this.

*How did someone like me end up in a place like this?*

STEPHEN NEAL

## Exploring Easter Together

### Palm Sunday—24th March

Both congregations move back into their sanctuary & live stream restarts from Ardoch

### Maundy Thursday

2:45pm Blackford PS Assembly  
7:00pm Communion (Ardoch)


### Good Friday

8:00pm Reflection service  
(Blackford)

### Easter Day

8:00am Early service  
(Blackford old church on the hill followed by bacon rolls)

10:00am Blackford  
11:30am Ardoch & live stream



Aucherarder Parish Church

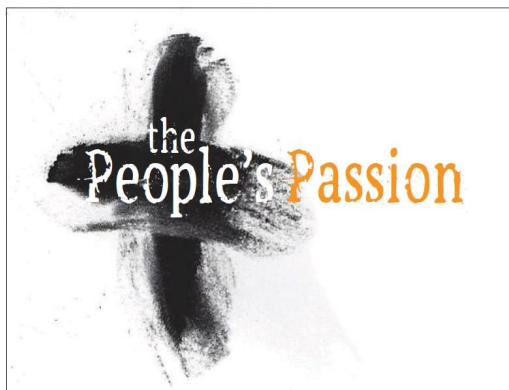
## THE EASTER STORY

A musical journey through Holy Week

LIBRETTO: Ernie Dick  
MUSIC: Stephen and Sandra Miller

**PALM SUNDAY**  
**24TH MARCH 2024 AT 7:30 PM**

Donations to UNICEF



the  
**People's Passion**

Be part of the Easter story

Created by Riding Lights Theatre Company

Good Friday - 29 March: 6-7pm

Aucherarder Parish Church  
24 High Street, Auchterarder, PH3 1DF

For more information see - [www.aucherarderparish.org](http://www.aucherarderparish.org)  
[ridinglights.org/peoples-passion](http://ridinglights.org/peoples-passion)

Witness the manhunt that changed the course of human history



JOSEPH FIENNES  
**RISEN**



Blackford Parish Church  
Sunday 7th April, 7:00pm