

DORNOCH FIRTH PARISH MAGAZINE

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Photo: Robert M. Wilson

OUR CATHEDRAL AND TOWN CENTRE ON A SNOWY WINTER'S NIGHT

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AN Tobar

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Minister's Thoughts

Dear friends

I DON'T KNOW if anyone else is weary.

[Puts hand in air] Me. I am.

I'm weary of the first item in the news invariably being about a certain world leader and the latest offence to fall out of his mouth.

I'm weary of the ways people seek power for themselves and pretend not to notice whom they hurt along the way. Okay, so maybe that's just more of the above.

I'm weary of the scramble for high moral ground when there is more than enough grace down here to go round... and then some.

I'm weary of the stuff that keeps us from really seeing and bearing with each other.

I am weary... but... I am stubborn too. And I continue to refuse weariness when it tries to hang around too long or, worse still, make my heart its home address. Because I am not made for this. We are not made for this. We are made for love and generosity and kindness and humility – and joy. We are made for joy.

Wendell Berry, says in his poem, Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front,

*So, friends, every day do something
that won't compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it....
Ask the questions that have no answers...
Expect the end of the world. Laugh.
Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful
though you have considered all the facts.*

I wonder if anything stands out for you in those lines? For me, right now, it is Be joyful/ though you have considered all the facts. Joy rises up... or slips in maybe... though we've considered all the facts. Because we know... God did not set the world in motion and turn the other way. God is here... meeting... making... mending... throwing in a few facts of God's own maybe... like... however it seems for now, evil is overcome already... and... love has the last word... it always does... it always does.

Friends, I pray a little stubborn streak take root, the good sort, the sort that refuses weariness anything more than to pass through. And joy. I pray joy for you, right where you are, to free you to do something that won't compute. To love the Lord. To love the world. To be... now... what you're made for.

With you,

Carol Anne



Faith Journeys

AS WE APPROACH Lent and the journey towards Easter, it feels an appropriate time to make everyone aware of the newly formed Faith Journeys Team.

The aim is to provide opportunities to explore faith and discipleship, bringing people together to learn, reflect and venture questions, and to create space for 'timeout' from the 'busy-ness' of life.

Last summer many enjoyed walks around different areas of the parish which allowed us to simply take a breathing space and put ourselves in each other's company. Others have watched "The Chosen" or followed books together. These preceded this group but was certainly a good stepping stone enabling us to get to know each other better and share with each other.

So where does it go from here? We would hope to create opportunities, both formal and informal, to broaden and deepen our personal and corporate faith. These could take a number of forms. For example:

- Invitations to read or study together
- Times to share our own faith journeys thus far
- Reflective time or retreats
- Prayer walks around parts of the parish
- Pilgrimages (actual and virtual)

In the past some congregations have logged their steps and together taken an Advent journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

The Very Rev Dr Susan Brown previously designed a prayer walk for the Dornoch area, but it would be good to have similar guides for around the parish (like the summer walks but with suggested places to pause and reflect/pray/give thanks). Perhaps you are a walker or local historian (or both) and could help with this project. Or do you have any other ideas?

As you journey through Lent this year, think about other ways we could be journeying together. Please speak to me or email alasdairmackay1870@gmail.com

Alasdair Mackay



Prayer Group

A Prayer for Hope around the world

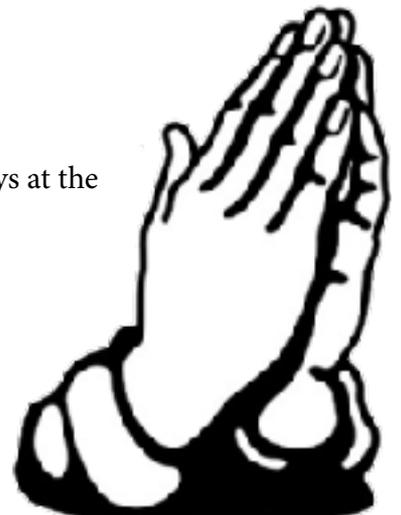
God of creation, God of compassion
You call us to be bearers of hope.
We lift those suffering around the world to you,
Those who long for safety, healing and peace.
Spirit of life and love
Renew our strength to believe Your promises
And give us the courage, wisdom and will
to work towards a world transformed by your love.

Blessings from Prayer group which continues to meet from 10am on Sundays at the West Church Hall, before the morning Service. All welcome.

Prayers for the Parish

All are welcome for coffee and prayer from 10am on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

- February 19th (An Tobar)
- March 19th (West Church Hall)
- April 16th (An Tobar)



Life Events

Marriage

31st January Donna Taylor & David Anderson

Baptism

Jane Hadley

New Members by Profession of Faith

Clare Fyfe
Jane Hadley
Wilf Hadley
David Reid
Hannah Young-Sharpe

New Members by Transference

from Lossiemouth Church of Scotland
Annie McKee
Geoff McKee

Funerals

11th December Peter Gordon
17th December Henry (Harry) Russell
7th January Ida Gane
16th January Johan (Joy) Matheson
20th January Barry Watson

Burial

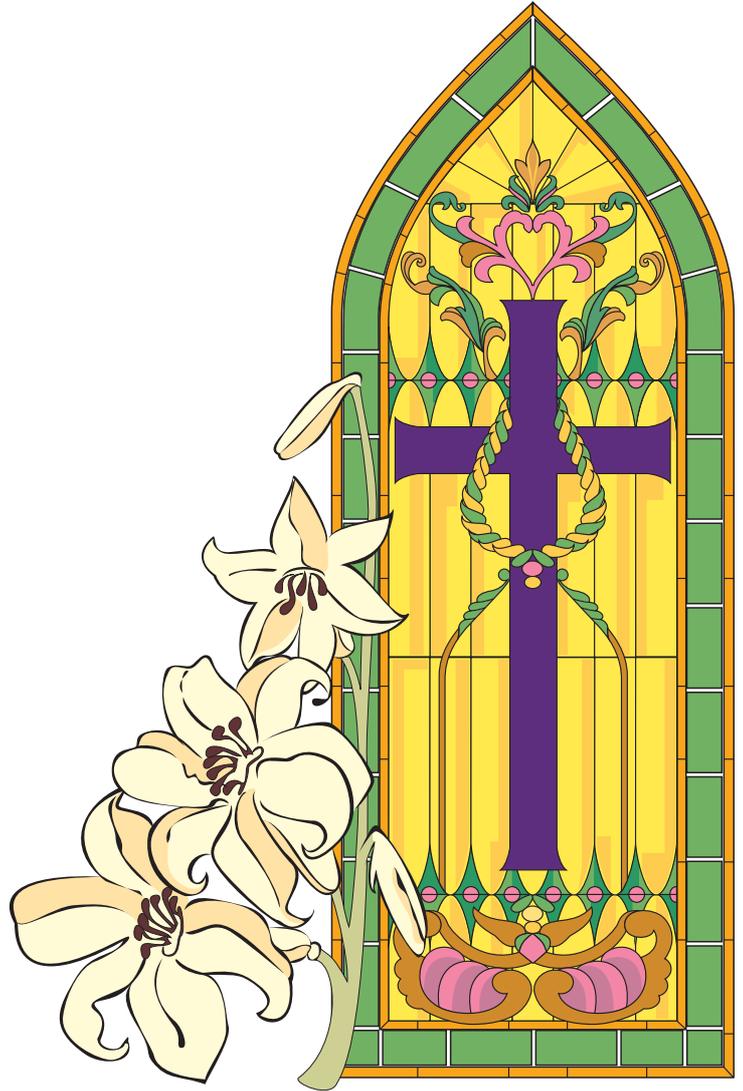
15th January Ronald Linkstone Frew

Interment of Ashes

15th January Wilma Anne Frew

*To everything there is a season,
a time for every purpose under heaven...
but God has made everything beautiful in its time.*

From Ecclesiastes



Ardgay Hall Teas



EACH YEAR Ardgay Hall Committee asks a local group to look after teas at the village Christmas Fayre, raising money for themselves as they go.

We were pleased to accept this year but decided any money raised would go to the charity Mikeysline.

Thank you to all our volunteers and those who enjoyed the teas and baking they provided. Together we raised £337.15 for the charity.

Christine Mackay

(L-R) Christine Mackay & Gladys McCulloch, Dornoch Firth Parish and Charlotte from Mikeysline

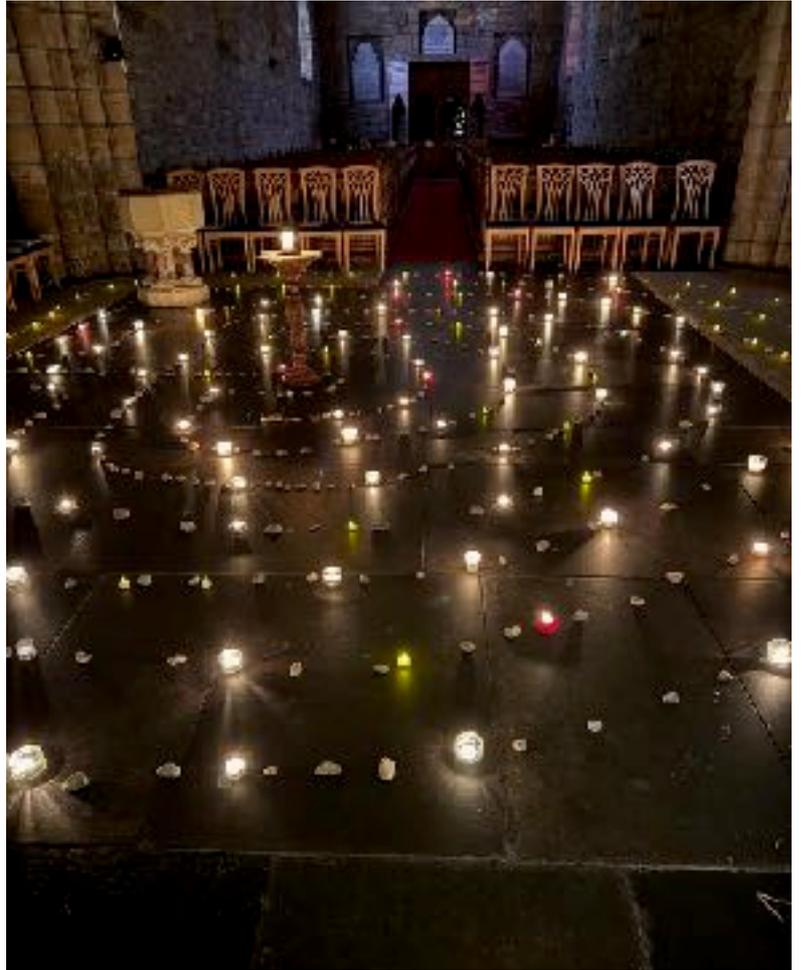
The Labyrinth

THE PROSPECT of four hours in the Cathedral on Hogmanay as the temperature was dropping outside and in, wasn't particularly attractive. But under the guidance of an experienced labyrinth designer the setup progressed surprisingly well with candles and pebbles suggesting a way in and around.

It wasn't long before the effects of the biting chill receded in the view of a sparkling crossing which invited us to be still and to reflect. There were times as we sat and others walked quietly that our presence seemed to impose on their space and still other moments when there was a sense of shared experience as folks smiled or offered a word of thanks for the opportunity.

The peace was occasionally broken by excited children stumbling their way round, stones scattering with screamed excitement. Other children took their time, asking their questions of the grown-ups and carefully placing their feet, finding confidence and pace as they neared the centre. After a steady flow of pilgrims the Cathedral quietened and as the candles were extinguished so the chill returned.

It struck us that as people were preparing for a night of shared revelry to come, or a quiet time with family and friends, or maybe even just holding on through the end of a difficult year with hopes of better days to come, so those who took time to come to the Cathedral and experience the labyrinth would have found the welcome of God into the New Year and hopefully would have left the better for it.



Annie and Geoff McKee

Social Committee

WE WISH YOU all good health for 2026. Thank you to everyone who supported our Christmas Gift Project which raised £454.00.

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Friday Coffee Mornings, 10.00 to 12.30 - dates for your diaries:

- February 20th
- March 20th
- April 17th
- May 15th
- June 19th

We look forward to seeing you and sharing a friendly chat, tee, coffee and freshly prepared pancakes and scones.

Please invite your friends and people who are new to the area, everyone will receive a warm welcome.

The Social Committee Team



Christmas time in the West of the Parish

AN Tobar

BEFORE CHRISTMAS the Bradbury Centre enjoyed visits from Bonar Bridge Primary and also Gledfield Primary pupils.



Bonar Primary Pupils



Gledfield Primary pupils

Carol Singing and Stories

On Sunday before Christmas more than 50 people gathered at Drovers Square, Ardgay. After a few carols were sung they were led on a walk through Gearrhoille Community Wood by Carol Anne and her puppet, Sheepy McSheepface and the Macfarlane family's ponies Twix and Oreo.



Fay Wilkinson appeared as the angel Gabriel, Roger Boyce told the story of Joseph and Geoff McKee was the innkeeper. Young Holly Sangster performed O Holy Night, followed by Santa making an early appearance.



Christmas Day at An Tobar

A wonderful festive Christmas day lunch was served to 24 locals who otherwise might have been on their own. Neil and Valerie Graham plus Valerie's mother, Christine Mackay once again cooked and served an excellent meal enjoyed by all. Thanks are also due to the Rotary Club of Tain and Easter Ross who funded the meal.

Carol Anne's words capture the atmosphere, *"There is nowhere else I would rather have been on Christmas Day. The food was excellent and so was the company. It really broadens the definition of spending time with 'family' at Christmas."*



An Tobar Christingle Service

On the Sunday after Christmas we gathered in An Tobar to join together making Christingles which symbolise the coming of Jesus who brings life, light and love into the World.

The orange, encircled with a red ribbon signifies the sacrifice of Jesus and symbolises the world. The inclusion of sweets and fruits represents God's generosity. The candlelight is reflected in the foil as a sign of our ability to take the light of Christ out into the World.

A lovely way to reflect on and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas.



Mary Stobo with her Christingle

Womens' Group

AFTER THE HILARITY of our games night at An Tobar in November, our group were keen to meet up again once more before Christmas and so we chose to have an evening around a kitchen table making festive table centre pieces. Our hostess may well have regretted her kind invitation as her kitchen floor very soon began to resemble Camore woods after a storm had blown through!



Making Christmas table decorations

Rhona kindly provided the equipment as well as the expert tuition, and we all enjoyed using greenery, holly, ivy, baubles, berries and candles to create our table decorations. In fact, we enjoyed ourselves so much that we managed to make enough of them to be used on the windowsills of the Cathedral for the Carol Service on the 19th Dec, where they provided a gentle light and some festive cheer.

The Women's Group meeting for January fell foul of the weather, but we plan to meet on February 2nd and March 2nd to prepare Easter gifts and then we will hold our AGM (the formal, business matters of which are usually slotted in between the main course and pudding of a nice meal out!) in April. All are welcome to join us for any of these get-togethers, more details are usually in the Order of Service.

Caroline Gilchrist

Flowers

WE THANK John & Agnes Morran and Tim & Sheena Kirtley whose donation to celebrate their daughter and son's wedding in 2007 allowed our Floral Team to create these wonderful displays we enjoyed on the Sunday before Christmas.

As a congregation thanks are due to our small team of ladies who arrange the flowers every week and ensure they stay fresh. Thank you Stella, Linda, Susan and Clare.



Finance Update 2025

IT'S BEEN ANOTHER busy financial year, particularly with the ongoing implications from the union of the various churches.

Unrestricted funds come mainly from the weekly Sunday offerings and are supplemented by any unrestricted donations, the safe, the sales tables and fundraising.

These funds are used first and foremost to pay our Giving to Grow payment, the first £50k of which pays the cost of paying our minister. The cost of paying the minister is not the salary figure, it includes various admin costs, employer's NI and employer's pension contribution. The amount we pay is income based and this coming year has been set at £81k which is a significant increase on last year's figure of £61k. This covers the total cost of paying our minister, a significant contribution towards wider ministry and a contribution to shared activities of the wider church.

Over and above that unrestricted funds are used to pay our running costs such as heat, light, repairs and maintenance, insurance, and a myriad of other costs. It's what keeps our buildings open for worship.

Some of our donations are given specifically for the Cathedral building. While we greatly appreciate these restricted donations it would be much more helpful to us if they weren't given as restricted funds. Until Kincardine Church and Dornoch Manse are sold we have 5 buildings all requiring on going routine maintenance and, being part of the union, they are all our financial responsibility.

This has been an expensive year for repairs and maintenance. Having been given permission to keep An Tobar - formerly called Kincardine Church Hall - as a base in the west end of the parish, a significant amount of our funds have been spent on making it safe, more accessible and in good repair. Most of the money spent on this came from funds that the legacy congregations brought with them at the point of union.

The Cathedral repairs and on going maintenance seem to have been never ending this year and there is still more work to be done.

We have increased our collections for 3rd parties in 2025, having held collections and a concert for Christian Aid, soup lunches for ShelterBox and various fundraising events for Mikeysline.

The accountant has not yet checked the 2025 accounts and as yet the Women's Group and the Guild accounts have not been incorporated, but so far it looks as if we will end the year somewhere around the break even point.

Thanks to the Finance Team for their work and support, the Fundraising Team for all their hard work and their contribution towards keeping us solvent for another year, the Sales Tables team for their ongoing work and financial contribution to church funds.

Our heartfelt thanks must go to you all for your on going support, whether it be in monetary form, fundraising, practical support or moral support. Thank you all.

Kim McCarthy, Finance Convener

Natter and Nosh

OUR CHRISTMAS LUNCH was on Monday 15th December when over 40 sat down to a lovely meal in full festive spirit. There was a real Christmas atmosphere and everyone enjoyed themselves.

The Monday dates for 2026 are:

February 2nd & 16th

March 2nd, 16th & 30th

April 13th & 27th

May 11th & 25th

June 8th

We meet in the West Church Hall Dornoch at 12.30pm , £5 for a two course meal and all are welcome.

Trish Geddes

Pre-Christmas in Dornoch

OUR JUNIOR BAND had a busy time as they played at the Christmas Fair held on the Cathedral Green. There was story telling in the Cathedral by Maggie Hope. Santa made an early appearance and several craft stalls filled the area. Thanks to ERSA's Antony Hope and Neil Dalton and their volunteers who set up the layout. The afternoon was very popular and might well be an annual event.



Photos: Andy Kirby



On the 4th Sunday of Advent the Junior Band played for our Hymns during our Sunday Service.

Dornoch Campus held their Carol Services on Tuesday 22nd with the primary pupils in the morning and the secondary pupils service in the afternoon.



Harry Fleming was one of several readers



Secondary pupils in the West Aisle

Our New Highland Home & Garden

FOLLOWING the lovely service in the Cathedral on 30th November last year (when my wife, Jane, was firstly baptised and then, together, we both became members of The Church of Scotland), Carol Anne asked if, as a new member of the congregation having recently moved to Dornoch from Wombourne in South Staffordshire, I would contribute to the Dornoch Firth Parish Newsletter. Why such a seemingly extreme move for us after thirty nine years of married life in Wombourne? - and, indeed, what has this to do with a garden?

When I retired in 2018 from my first (40 plus years') career as a chartered surveyor I decided to pursue, as a second career, my life-long love of gardening. This quickly mushroomed with my tending gardens in Wombourne and surrounding area (including Dudley, Sedgley, Wolverhampton, Brewood, Claverley, Highley and Bridgnorth). I learnt a lot over the ensuing seven years, but of course when gardening, you are learning every day.

Jane had always lived in Wombourne; attending Westfield, Blakeley and Ounsdale Schools. I am a native of Dudley, going to St James's Infants School (now relocated to the Black Country Museum), Jesson's Junior School and Dudley Grammar School. After three years in the mid-1970's at Reading University, I returned to live in Dudley until my marriage to Jane in 1986. I was happy to move the six miles from my beloved Dudley to Wombourne for a much greater love! With such strong lifelong connections to South Staffordshire and the Black Country why did we move to a remote coastal town called Dornoch in Sutherland located midway between Inverness and John O' Groats (nearly five hundred miles distant)? Also, what had this to do with gardening? The answer is a house named Woodgate in Station Road and its garden, extending to over one third of an acre.

My mother (Christine Hadley nee Johnstone), who sadly passed away in 1966 when I was nine, was Scottish. Christine's paternal grandfather (Roderick MacRae) was a native of Dornoch and her maternal grandmother (Christina Ross) was from Tain. Christine therefore was 100% a Highlander (with her father, William Johnstone; from Cromarty), so I have Highland blood coursing through my veins! Roderick MacRae was a tradesman and, in 1897, built Woodgate, and it has remained in the family to this day. In the 1940s and early 1950s my mother, who was a teacher prior to her marriage, taught at both Embo School and Dornoch Academy.

In 1942 my father, Raymond Hadley (who was born in Netherton near to Dudley and 100% a Black Country lad), having completed initial training at Halfpenny Green Airfield near Wolverhampton as an RAF signals operator, received his first wartime posting. In his excitement, he misread the posting note as RAF Everton, so thought he was going to Liverpool. Wrong! Actually, it read Evanton. In those pre-Google days Raymond had to consult a map to ascertain where Evanton was and discovered, to his initial disquiet (as he'd hoped for somewhere more exciting/exotic), it was an air base in Northern Scotland on the Cromarty Firth. Raymond had never been to Scotland but so began the chain of events that led him to Dornoch and, poignantly for me, to Woodgate.

Upon arrival at RAF Evanton Raymond was told his duties involved weekly visits to Dornoch where he had to take charge of signals operations at the wartime airfield. There was a shortage of service accommodation available in Dornoch so the locals routinely volunteered to billet newly-posted servicemen. One such volunteer was my maternal grandmother (Christina Johnstone nee MacRae) who in 1942 was living with Christine (and her sister, Rhona) in Woodgate.

There was a spare box room in Woodgate in which Christina regularly housed servicemen. This is where in August 1942 my father initially stayed in Dornoch, and is how he met Christine, his future wife and my mother. Accordingly, without Woodgate I wouldn't be writing for Carole Anne, or indeed for anyone, today!

In my next contribution to the newsletter I will continue the story of my lifelong connection with Woodgate and explain a little about the relevance of all this to gardening (remember Woodgate has over a third of an acre of land to challenge the most avid horticulturist).

Wilf Hadley



Wilf, youngest daughter Amy, wife Jane at Woodgate, Station Road, Dornoch.

New Year Concert raises over £1000 for Mikeysline

WITH ALL THE PROCEEDS going to Mikeysline, nerves were fraying as the weather did its best to spoil everything! The New Year snow and ice of last year were bad enough, but this time things were even worse. The organisers feared an almost empty Cathedral. How wrong they were! The start had to be delayed to get everyone in!

First to perform was the Dornoch Firth Junior Band which, despite half the band being absent, still managed two contrasting instrumental tunes - a Gaelic air and the rousing Mrs Macleod of Raasay, followed by a fine vocal performance of Neil Young's, "After the Gold Rush."

Isla Robertson followed with a dexterous and uplifting piano performance of "Comptine d'un Autre Ete" and "Nuvole Bianche".

Next was Polly Noble who wowed the crowd with a mixture of self-penned songs and a memorable cover version of Shania Twain's "You're the One."

Young mezzo-soprano Isla Swanson, celebrating her recent promotion to the prestigious National Girls' Choir of Scotland, transfixed the audience with her versions of "Maybe This Time" from "Cabaret" and "Panis Angelicus."

Next came the "modern" traditional trio, The Eejits, who played four sets of tunes to an extremely high standard (and sometimes extremely fast!). Their togetherness spoke of dedicated practice as they transmitted a real sense of fun to a very appreciative audience.

Returning this year was the Ross-shire band "High Street". Bringing their electric mix, they entertained with self-penned songs as well as their own take on the Beatles classic, "In my Life" - as relevant now as ever.

Clarsach player Lucy Robertson brought the concert to a close. The cathedral's timeless acoustic suits all stringed instruments and Lucy exploited these to the full from gentle flowing melodies to a blur of finger-picking in her faster tunes. In all, everybody was agreed - this was a concert with something for everybody. The young performers - all under twenty - relished the opportunity to play in such a wonderful venue and put on an evening of music to remember.

As is always the case, the sound and lighting provided by Stephen Macintosh was superb; the sound allowing the young people to shine, and the lighting creating a truly atmospheric backdrop. A thank you to John Wright who provided an excellent series of photos of the concert.

A total of £1023 was raised for the charity, Mikeysline - quite remarkable considering the dreadful conditions outside.

Graham McCarthy



A very full West Aisle



The Junior Band started the concert



Photos: John Wright

Flyn Wilson, Ruaridh Stewart, Polly Noble, Emma Racionzer

The Darkest Midnight Concert

ON FRIDAY 19 December I was in the audience for singer, songwriter Gareth Davies-Jones' concert in the candlelit Cathedral. The atmosphere was serene as we waited for the performance to begin; a calm and considered start to Christmas week. Gareth is a natural and relaxed storyteller who was almost at the end of his tour taking in venues from Oxfordshire to Caithness before heading home to Northumberland.

'Love Came Down at Christmas' was the first carol we enjoyed; throughout the concert Gareth played guitars, ukulele and harmonica - the Cathedral providing not only a stunning backdrop but excellent acoustics too.

'Audience participation' can instill dread but not on this occasion - we were invited to join in with refrains, choruses and even a bit of humming. A beautiful In The Bleak Midwinter rounded off the first half and the Women's Group provided hot drinks and Stollen cake during the interval.

The second part included '2000 Miles' (a favourite of mine), 'The Holly and the Ivy' and Gareth's own arrangement of 'The Darkest Midnight In December' before ending with us all singing 'Silent Night.'

Donations collected on the door raised over £600.00 for Christian Aid, a very worthwhile cause and a delightful way to contribute.

I suspect I'm not the only audience member who promptly went home and downloaded some of Gareth's music - he's a good addition to my Christmas playlists.

Clare Fyfe



Gareth Davies-Jones (photo by John Wright)

Oversteps

Several relatives joined in the fun at the Christmas Party.



Having a rest after a lovely Christmas dinner

The Meadows



A game of dominoes after their Knit & Natter session

The Guild

ON TUESDAY 25th November 2025 the Guild was led by Myra Campbell and Kathleen Greer. It was a bright and sunny afternoon and the worship was about St Andrew, our Patron Saint whom we recognize on 30th November each year. Our hymns had a Scottish flavour.

Myra introduced Linda MacMurray who had come along to show us some Christmas craft ideas. We then gathered round tables and amid great concentration, some hilarity, a very happy afternoon unfolded as Linda showed us how to make brooches or tree ornaments shaped like Christmas trees. We all felt very proud of the results. Gwen thanked Linda for giving us a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

We held our Christmas Afternoon Tea on Tuesday 9th December for members and friends. Margaret welcomed us all and we enjoyed a sumptuous tea with sausage rolls, mince pies and lots of other goodies provided by committee and members.

Roddy MacLean entertained us with Christmas Music and we enjoyed some songs from Ann, Lizzie and Carol. Myra and Elspeth performed some amusing and thoughtful poems and Mary Stobo gave a heartfelt Christmas Reflection. This was all topped with some Carols sung by us all and led by Roddy to whom we extend our heartfelt thanks.

Our Tuesday meeting schedule:

10th February- Chilean Adventures with Fay Wilkinson

24th February- ILM Handyman services in the Highlands. Held at An Tobar, Ardgay.

10th March- Paint and Pray - Julia Tryon.

24th March- AGM and Daffodil Tea with Rev Carol Anne Porter.

Trish Geddes



Carol MacLean, Lizzie Campbell, Ann Creed entertaining the Guild



Tree ornaments made with Linda McMurray's support



Christmas Afternoon Tea

1st Dornoch Girls' Brigade

ON SUNDAY 23rd November, the last day of the church year, we had the privilege of welcoming 1st Dornoch Girls Brigade to the Cathedral for their Company Re-dedication. Last year on this Sunday they were dedicated for the first time, a brand new Company, just starting out. Now they're a year old and as it was a birthday of sorts we celebrated with cake which I'm pretty sure was half eaten before the girls got back to their seats!

They brought new Colours to be dedicated too. The girls had obviously been practising raising and lowering them as they made an extremely professional job of it all! Thank you Marianne and Jane and all the girls for the part you played in worship. We loved you being about and hope you'll come back! A big thank you to the parents and congregation who supported the Dedication Service.

Carol Anne

We've had a busy time over this Festive period. The Explorers continued with their "planets" badgework whilst the Juniors completed their sign language session. A big super thank you to Debbie Miller whose expertise made our signing informative, interesting and most of all FUN.

Another big thank you to Maureen MacKay who organised our unusual and innovative Christmas Craft session. We are looking forward to next year's already!!

After all that snow we had our "after Christmas" Party which involved a lot of balloon bursting.

Marianne MacLeod



Carol Anne with Brigade Leaders Marianne MacLeod & Jane Mackay with girls



Enjoying a birthday cake for being one year old

Edderton Afternoon Tea

LADIES from both the west and east corners of the parish organised an afternoon tea at Edderton Community Hall making use of the excellent facilities. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for the next one and also at other venues.



See what you missed if you couldn't manage afternoon tea at Edderton

1st Dornoch Brownies

OUR STALL at the Christmas Market in Dornoch Academy was very successful. A big thank you to the girls for their fantastic baking and their sales efforts. We had a lovely Christmas movie pyjama night to end last term

This session we are focusing on our Skills Builder Badges and also have a new range of Interest Badges to explore with a Christmas themed movie night.

Julie Herbertson



Brownies stall at the Christmas Market

Dornoch Firth Group

WE ENDED last term with lots of shared festive moments across our groups. Knit and Natter enjoyed a sociable visit to Dalmore Farm; Tuesday Tots celebrated with our biggest Christmas parties yet. Little Otters had a special visit from Santa in the barn. Families gathered outdoors for Seaside Story walks to create a nature wreath on the beach, while Mamas' Club enjoyed festive crafts and decorations. Our Christmas Fair was another lovely success, thanks to everyone who took part!

Groups resumed the week beginning 19th January, with families at Tuesday Tots looking forward to exploring our Bird topic, Burns Night activities, and messy process art. This term, Little Otters continue to embrace winter, spending time outdoors and in the barn at the farm as part of our seasonal learning.



Santa gave the Little Otters an early call at the farm

Dornoch Gatherings Events

BOOK EARLY for two events to be held in Dornoch Cathedral. Also more to come during the year.

**Saturday 7th March
7.30pm**

An evening of music and conversation. The story of singer, actor, film maker and vocal coach – Chris Manning.

Tickets on the website

<www.dornochgatherings.com> or pay at the door - £10

Wednesday 15th April 7.30pm

280th Anniversary of The Battle of Littleferry – Experience the history told by Lord Lieutenant of Sutherland, Patrick Marriott with Rachel Campbell, April Sutherland, Ruairidh Mackay and Ross Little.

Tickets on the website

<www.dornochgatherings.com> or pay at the door - £12



Welcome & Sales Table

“THANK YOU” - two words much repeated in the West Church Hall on the 28th November, when we asked our lovely volunteers to join us for coffee, tea and a treat. We wanted to thank everyone for their amazing efforts during the 2025 season. The happy buzz that morning was a joy to hear.

Apart from welcoming thousands of visitors into the Cathedral during the summer, our team achieved a sales and direct cash donations Profit of just over £9,000 towards Dornoch Firth Parish funds, maintenance and running costs! An immense THANK YOU was truly required for a “best ever” effort and the added bonus is that we all really enjoy ourselves during our shifts; it is such a rewarding use of time.

As usual, our 2026 season will open in early May. Thankfully most of our volunteers remain in this year’s team but for various reasons a few are having to retire. We are therefore urgently looking for new recruits, to make up a team totalling 25 - 30 pairs.

What does it entail?

Working in teams of two: friends, partners, husbands & wives, or making a new friend. We know that this last pairing has resulted in some happy and lasting friendships.

Time commitment: A two or three hour shift, once a fortnight. The length of the shift depends on the number of volunteers we have. (If you can possibly do a shift once a week instead of fortnightly - as several members already enjoy doing - this really helps). We are open on week days only from 10.00 am - 4.00 pm, May to September.

Duties: Welcoming visitors, taking payment for purchases and recording sales.

A training session will be held at the end of April which will be open to all those interested in learning more.

Please, please contact us if you can help, or want to learn more.

WE REALLY DO NEED YOU.

Thank you

Sue (01862 810415/07833 698040), Anne (01862 811520), Lisa (01862 810973)

Sue Boyce



Celebrating a successful year with calories



Sue, Anne & Alison invited the volunteers for afternoon tea

Dates for your diary

WORSHIP

FEBRUARY

- 1st 11.00 am – Morning Service in the West Church Hall
- 8th 11.00 am – Morning Service in the West Church Hall
1.30 pm – Afternoon Service in An Tobar, Ardgay
- 15th 11.00 am – Morning Service in the West Church Hall
Livestreamed to An Tobar, Ardgay
- 22nd 11.00 am – Morning Service in the West Church Hall
1.30 pm – Afternoon Service in An Tobar, Ardgay
2.15 pm – Oversteps Service and 3.15 pm The Meadows Service

MARCH

- 1st 11.00 am – Morning Service in the West Church Hall
- 8th 11.00 am – Morning Service in the West Church Hall
1.30pm – Afternoon Service in An Tobar, Ardgay
- 15th 11.00 am – Morning Service and Communion in Dornoch Cathedral
2.30 pm – Oversteps Service and 3.15 pm The Meadows Service
- 22nd 11.00 am – Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
1.30pm – Afternoon Service in An Tobar, Ardgay
- 29th 11.00 am – **Palm Sunday** Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
- Holy Week** – Monday 30th March through to Thursday 2nd April
Short services at 6pm in the West Church Hall

APRIL

- 3rd 7.30 pm – **Good Friday** Service in Dornoch Cathedral
Walk of Witness Ardgay to Bonar – Time T.B.C.
- 5th 6.15 am – **Easter Sunday** Dawn Service at Dornoch Beach
8.30 am – Service at ‘The Stones,’ Bonar Bridge
11.00 am – Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
- 12th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
1.30 pm – Afternoon Service in An Tobar, Ardgay
- 19th 11.00 am – Morning Service in the West Church Hall
Livestreamed to An Tobar, Ardgay
2.30 pm – Oversteps Service and 3.15 pm The Meadows Service
- 26th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
1.30 pm – Afternoon Service in An Tobar, Ardgay

MORE DATES TO NOTE

Dornoch Gatherings

- Saturday 7th March 7.00pm - Concert in Dornoch Cathedral
- Wednesday 15th April 7.30pm – The Battle of Littleferry - story, music & songs
- Friday 24th April – Gift Day in Dornoch Cathedral

Groups

- Coffee Mornings West Church Hall – Fridays 20th February and 20th March
- Guild Tuesday 10th (WCHall) & 24th (An Tobar) February & 10th & 24th March AGM (WCHall)
- Prayer Group Thursday 19th February (An Tobar) & 10th & 24th March (WCHall)
- Natter & Nosh Mondays 2nd & 16th February 2nd 16th 30th March (WCHall)