

Ardrossan & Saltcoats

Kirkgate Messenger

PARISH CHURCH

Chapelwell Street
Saltcoats, KA21 5EB

March 2026



Find us online:



www.kirkgatechurch.org.uk

Message from our Minister

Dear Friends,

As we enter the season of Lent, we do so carrying both sorrow and hope. In recent weeks we have continued to remember families who are walking through difficult and trying times. We hold each one in prayer, asking that the Lord, who is close to the broken-hearted, would surround them with his peace.

At the same time, we give thanks for signs of quiet encouragement among us. It has been a joy to welcome new members into our fellowship, fresh faces, new stories, renewed energy. Their presence reminds us that Christ is still building his church, still calling people to himself, still drawing us together as one body.

During Lent we are reflecting again on Paul's letter to the Romans. Few books speak more honestly about struggle, weakness, and hope. Paul acknowledges suffering; he does not deny it. Yet in Romans 8 he lifts our eyes to one of the most powerful assurances in Scripture: ***"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."***

And later:

"If God is for us, who can be against us?"

And finally: ***"Nothing... will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."***

These are not shallow words. They are words forged in hardship. Paul writes as someone who knew uncertainty, opposition, and personal suffering. Lent invites us to walk that same honest path, to face our frailty, our need, and our dependence, while clinging to the certainty of Christ's love.

In these challenging days, when the world feels unsettled and many carry private burdens, Romans calls us not to despair but to perseverance. Having begun in faith, we are urged to continue in faith. We keep trusting. We keep praying. We keep gathering. We keep serving.

I am particularly encouraged that our elders will soon gather for a retreat, a time set aside to pray, reflect, and seek God's direction for the months ahead. Please pray for them. Pray for unity, wisdom, and renewed vision. Leadership in the church is never about control; it is about listening, listening to God and listening to one another.

As a congregation, we are not defined by ease or comfort. We are defined by belonging to Christ. Lent reminds us that our hope rests not in our strength but in his finished work. We come empty-handed and discover again that his grace is sufficient.

So I encourage you in these forty days: Spend time in Romans. Bring your anxieties honestly before God. Encourage someone who may be struggling. Pray for our new members as they settle among us.

Pray for our elders as they retreat in March.

Above all, keep trusting the God who has already given us his Son. If he did not spare him, Paul says, will he not also graciously give us all things?

May this Lenten season deepen our confidence that even in hard and trying times, Christ holds us fast.

Yours in Christ,

Nigel

Rev Tichaona Nigel Chikanya

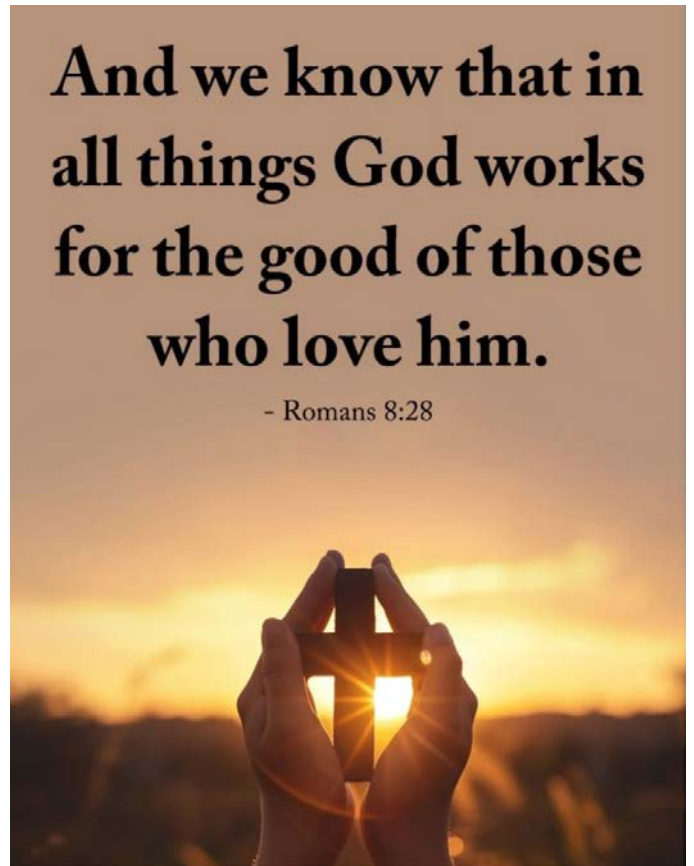
Tel: 01294 683379 Mobile: 07566 278132

Email: NChikanya@churchofscotland.org.uk



**And we know that in
all things God works
for the good of those
who love him.**

- Romans 8:28



Message from Rev Katrona Templeton, OLM

Dear friends in Christ,
As we step toward Lent 2026, I find myself thinking less about what we must give up and more about what God longs to give us. Lent is often imagined as a season of scarcity, but at its heart it is a season of invitation—an invitation to slow down, to breathe, to notice, and to return to the One who calls each of us beloved.

This year, the world feels noisy. Many of us carry quiet burdens that others never see. Some of us are weary from caring, from hoping, from holding things together. Others are searching for direction or longing for a deeper sense of God's presence. Wherever you find yourself, Lent meets you there—not with pressure, but with grace.

Lent is not a test of spiritual strength. It is a journey of honesty.

It is not about proving ourselves to God. It is about remembering that God has already chosen us.

It is not about becoming someone else. It is about becoming more fully who God created us to be.

Over these forty days, I invite you to make space—just a little—for God to speak into your life. That might look like a moment of quiet before the day begins, a walk in the fresh air, a simple prayer whispered in the car, or a small act of kindness

offered to someone who needs it. It might look like letting go of something that drains you, or taking up something that nourishes you.

It might look like resting, which is sometimes the holiest thing we can do.

As a church family, we will walk this path together. We will listen for God's voice in Scripture, in worship, in silence, and in one another. We will hold space for lament and for hope. We will remember that Jesus meets us not at the finish line but on the road—dusty, ordinary, and full of grace.

My prayer for you this Lent is simple:

That you may know God's gentleness,

That you may feel God's nearness,

And that you may discover, in small and surprising ways, the deep joy of being loved.

May this season draw us closer to Christ and closer to one another.

With love and blessing,

Rev. Katrona

The Season of Lent



From the Editor

Articles for the April magazine to be in by Sunday 29th March at the latest please.

If you are not already on the postal list and would like to have a magazine posted out to you, please speak to myself or Stuart.

Please feel free to email us at elizabeth.mcmahon@talktalk.net or stuart@md93.co.uk or send a written copy if you don't use a computer.
Elizabeth McMahon,
Editor



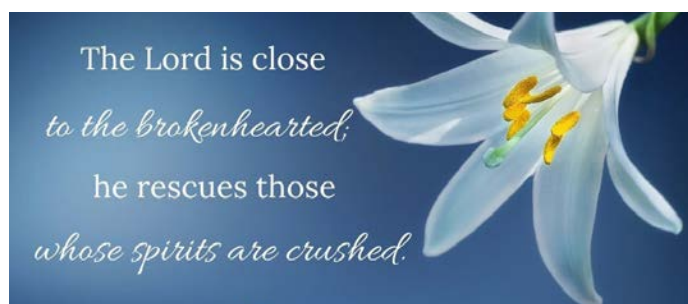
Church Register

FUNERALS:

"In my Father's house are many mansions"

14/2/26 Mr James Grant, Glebe Place, Saltcoats
Funeral planned for Wed 18 March at
10.30am at Holmsford Bridge Crematorium

21/2/26 Ms Anne Aitken, Cunninghame Road,
Ardrossan
No details of funeral arrangements yet.



Kirkgate Pastoral Care



The Church is wherever God's people are seeking to reach out and touch folk wherever they are.....

A reminder of the information/workshop day on Monday March 16th when Katrona Templeton will be talking on ADHD and Autism. Meeting at 10.30am to start at 11.00am.

Pleased to report that two men have agreed to serve on the team, John Kerr and John O'Hare. Andrew Bruce has agreed to visit when necessary.

Susan Gill

PASTORAL CARE CONTACTS

The Pastoral Team are working very hard behind the scenes. Please keep the team up-to-date with information about people who need pastoral care or support at this difficult time for everyone. Please don't assume they already know - they would rather hear several times over than not at all.

The main contacts for Pastoral Care are:

Mrs Susan Gill, (07884 957389)
Mrs Ruth McMartin (01294 602942)
Mrs Evelyn Green (07737 225943)
Mrs Moira Cooper, (01294 468851)
Mrs Jean Hay, (01294 469986) and
Mrs Jennifer Fox (01294 465947).

For flower recipients please contact co-ordinator:

Mrs Morag Forsyth (01294 463762)

Prayer Shawl Ministry



If anybody is interested in starting a Prayer Shawl Ministry, or would like a shawl to give to somebody, please speak to me on a Sunday morning or phone 07884 957 389 or email gillsusan529@gmail.com

Please note my new email address.

Susan Gill

Personal Observations

PASSING BY ON THE OTHER SIDE

If you are like me you, will be reluctant to turn on the TV news or read the newspaper headlines knowing that "Epstein files" will be the majority of the content.

Recently I was challenged about my attitude to these events when, by coincidence, one evening we watched a podcast "The Rest is Politics" in which Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart interviewed representatives of IJM UK (International Justice Mission) in Davos at the recent G7 meeting. IJM were there to highlight the online sexual exploitation of children via social media and the internet. This is a very dark topic, and it was evident that Alastair was disturbed by the details. Later that evening we watched a film "# Caged no More" which was based on real life events. The story was about the rescue of two American teenage sisters who had been sold into prostitution in Greece.

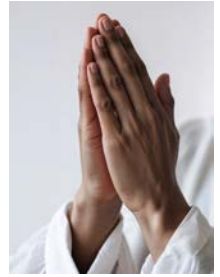
During our time in Cambodia Helen and I had a number of contacts and colleagues working with NGOs (non government organisations) in the development community who were involved in rescue and rehabilitation of girls sold into prostitution. That is now almost 30 years ago, (pre social media). What progress has been made in the digital world since then? These advances apparently have been more than matched in the trafficking of women and children. At a time when anti-slavery efforts should be on the rise, funding is limited more than ever due to the cuts to Overseas Development by UK and USAID.

Was viewing these two programmes on the same evening a coincidence? I am left asking myself am I the Priest, the Levite or the Good Samaritan?

I conclude with a quote from 'A Man for All Seasons' when Sir Thomas More informs Cromwell. **"Not so, Master Secretary. The maxim is "Qui tacet consentire"; the maxim of the law is "Silence gives consent".**

If, therefore, you wish to construe what my silence betokened, you must construe that I consented, not that I denied".

John Kerr



IS THERE NO HOPE OF CHANGE

Loving God when we look at people's lives and find it hard to believe things can ever change for the better – we see them racked by illness, weighed down by anxiety, tormented by depression, crippled by debt, broken by alcohol, destroyed by drugs, scarred by bereavement, shattered through unemployment, and we wonder what their prospects really are, what hope we can realistically offer them and what help we can really give.

Transforming God may your light shine where there is darkness

We pray for such people known to us now - family, friends, members of our fellowship, colleagues at work, neighbours, acquaintances as well as the countless people unknown to us.

We pray for our world - for those many people who face suffering, injustice, hardship and death. Reach out to all who are in despair, we pray for all who long for change but see only hopelessness. Touch their lives and bring help, hope and healing.



May light shine where there is darkness

Loving God, it is hard sometimes to believe those around us, still less the world around can ever change for the better. We see countries broken by war, people consumed by hatred and thousands living in fear. We see nation against nation and multitudes made homeless by disaster or facing famine. We wonder what the prospects really are and what hope and help can possibly be given.

Help us to see that you are at work and that things can change, Help us to see beyond appearances, recognising you are a God able to transform even the most hopeless of situations.

May your light shine where there is darkness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Legacy Giving 'Lasting Generosity'

As I am sure you are aware many charities receive a large percentage of their overall funding through gifts in wills.

I am fully aware that for some people this is quite a sensitive issue so I am simply bringing it to your attention.



The Church have produced a leaflet entitled 'Lasting Generosity' which I would be happy to obtain for you if you are interested or you could email stewardship@churchofscotland.org.uk for further details.

John Stewart, Treasurer



Getting to Know our Members:

Rufaro Savior Chikanya

Rufaro Savior Chikanya is known by different names in different spaces. At work she is called Rufaro, while at church she is known as Savior. When she moved to Cape Town, many people struggled to pronounce "Rufaro," and she found herself called variations such as "Farero" or "Rafero." As a result, she began using her second name. Today, she is comfortable with both.

She was born on 13 December in the small town of Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe. The youngest in a family of four, she was often described as the "unexpected child" due to the significant age gap between her and her sister. She recalls a happy childhood filled with precious memories, including visits to her grandmother (gogo), where she enjoyed eating wild fruits. She does not remember her grandfathers on either side of the family, as they both passed away when she was still a baby.

Her mother, Angeline, played a significant role in her upbringing and is remembered as one of the most patient and quiet people she knows. She taught her many practical skills, including knitting—although sewing did not quite take root. Rufaro fondly remembers sitting on the kitchen floor while her mother helped her with homework, all while sewing and cooking. Her father, Morris, worked at Thomas Meikles supermarket and has recently retired. He enjoys keeping busy and, by her account, is still adjusting to retirement. Both her parents continue to live in Zimbabwe and are now retired; her mother was a dressmaker by profession.

Rufaro attended Lomagandi Primary School and later Chinhoyi High School, where she served as a prefect. She has always loved mathematics, a passion that began in her school years when she once imagined becoming an accountant though she says that is a story for another day. She pursued her undergraduate studies at the University of Pretoria in Biochemistry and completed her postgraduate studies at the University of Cape Town specialising in Medical Biochemistry.

Her first job was as a mathematics teacher in Bulawayo, where she taught Forms 2 to 4 (S2–S4). With classes of at least 40 students, the experience was demanding yet deeply rewarding. She thoroughly enjoyed teaching and found great fulfilment in the classroom.

She grew up in the Methodist Church and later joined the Presbyterian Church after marriage. Among the hymns she treasures, "Blessed Assurance" remains her go-to hymn. She also enjoys the song "I Won't Let Go" by Rascal Flatts. Singing, dancing, reading, and sleeping are among her favourite pastimes—she readily admits she loves a good sleep. Although some may find it surprising, she considers herself an introvert who values the safety and comfort of home. She is not a morning person, which makes early starts for her commute to Airdrie particularly challenging.

Her favourite meal is sadza with beef stew (haifiridzi). When asked to choose between the seaside and the countryside, she finds it impossible to decide, as she loves both. Mauritius remains her dream holiday destination, a place she has long hoped to visit since childhood. She continues to dream that one day it will become a reality.

A devoted reader, she is a committed admirer of Francine Rivers and Philip Yancey, and she would especially love the opportunity to meet the latter.

Above all, she finds deep joy in her family, particularly in seeing them happy and thriving. She describes herself at present as navigating emotional and critical decisions. Two Bible verses sustain her: Psalm 46:10 and 2 Timothy 1:7, which continue to give her strength and peace.



Photo taken in 2018 at Savior's graduation from University of Cape Town: Nigel, Morris - her father, Savior, and her mother Angeline

Treasurer's Report

Balances – as at 16 February 2026 were as follows:

General Account - £26,545
Fabric Account - £11,438

The amount collected by standing order, cheques and plate collection for the period of January was as follows:

Standing Orders – £4,004

Plate – £1,892 Average - £473

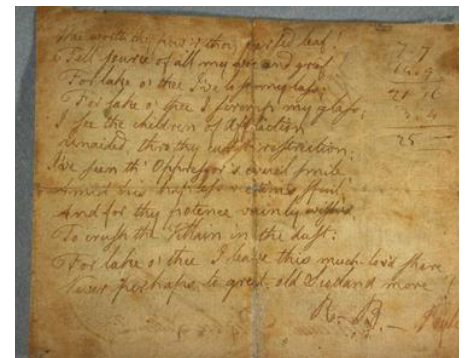
Our February retiring collection for Fabric raised £395 which was a great total. Most of the kitchen renovation has been paid for – still a few smaller bills to come in.

The proceeds from the very successful Burns Night was £484 – thanks to all who contributed and especially the Fund Raising Team and the Chana catering team.

A Burns reference vaguely connected to money – something you don't see often in my report!

"In 1786, Burns scrawled the following lines on the back of a Bank of Scotland guinea note:

*Wae worth thy pow'r, thou cursed leaf!
Fell source o' a' my woe and grief!
For lake o' thee I've lost my lass!
For lake o' thee I scrimp my glass!
I see the children of Affliction
Unaided, thro' thy curst restriction:
I've seen the Oppressor's cruel smile
Amid his hapless victim's spoil;
And for thy potence vainly wish'd,
To crush the Villain in the dust:
For lake o' thee I leave this much-lov'd shore,
Never perhaps, to greet old Scotland more!*



The banknote, with the original verse penned in Burns's hand, is in the collection today at the National Trust of Scotland's Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway."

Proceeds from magazine postage and advertising in the magazine are coming in steadily – thanks again to Elizabeth and Stuart for their work on this.

On the subject of income I will say more about this later, at the AGM and in the magazine but we do lose significant potential income through the plate – in 2025 Ordinary givings (cash in the plate) was over £8,000 - obviously we cannot claim Gift Aid on this money. This represents close to £2,000 lost in potential income. I realise that some people are not in a position to give by envelope or standing order and may not be eligible for Gift Aid giving but, if it is possible I would ask you to consider giving this way.

If you would like details of giving via envelopes or Standing Order please let me know. To gain the financial benefits of Gift Aid it is necessary for givers to use envelopes or Standing Order – we have to be able to prove the giving, if required. Please see Moira Cooper for envelopes and myself for Standing Order details.

Thank you - John Stewart, Treasurer



Connect with Kirkgate

In addition to meeting in person for our Sunday (10.45am) and short midweek Thursday (10.30am) services you can also find us online.



Website:

www.kirkgatechurch.org.uk

Contains our Sunday service, intimations, magazine, church history, contact details.



Facebook:

www.facebook.com/Kirkgatechurch

A link to our Sunday Service is usually published around 10.30am on Sunday mornings on Facebook. Also regular posts about our other events and Sunday School activities, along with other Church of Scotland news.



Podcast:

An audio version of our Sunday service is usually available shortly afterwards on Spotify, Apple Music and other podcast providers. Search for Kirkgate Church.



YouTube:

www.youtube.com/@kirkgatechurch

[@kirkgatechurch](https://www.youtube.com/@kirkgatechurch)

Watch live or catch up later with all our live broadcasts and some special events (available on request for funerals and weddings). A recording of the Sunday Service will usually be available by mid-afternoon on the Sunday in the event of the livestream failing. Subscribe to our channel for free to get updates on the latest content. Thanks to the 186 subscribers we now have.



Email:

We send a monthly email with a link to a digital version of this magazine to our members and friends for whom we have an email address. Contact messenger@kirkgatechurch.org.uk to be added to our mailing list.

Online Fundraising

A wee reminder that if you make any purchases online as we approach the end of the year, then please consider signing up with easyfundraising.org.uk and making 'Ardrossan & Saltcoats Kirkgate Parish Church' your chosen cause. We now have 19 supporters who have raised a total of £163.94 to date at no extra cost to themselves.



**Raise regular donations
for Ardrossan and
Saltcoats Kirkgate Pa...
with your weekly food
shop!**



How to get involved

- 1 Download the easyfundraising app
- 2 Choose us as your cause
- 3 See retailers donate whenever you shop



SCAN ME
for website

Jim Grant Tribute

Former organist of New Trinity Church and Kirkgate Church, Jim Grant, sadly passed away on Saturday 14 February. He also played at the former North Parish Church and EU Congregational Church in Ardrossan.



Presentation to Jim Grant when he retired in 2015 from his role as organist at Kirkgate.

As a small tribute we've published an audio compilation of Jim playing some of his music, recorded during our week of lunchtime organ recitals back in 2016 as part of our 150th Anniversary celebrations.

You can listen to the recordings, lasting 45 minutes, at kirkgatechurch.org.uk/jimgrant

The weekly intimations will contain details of Jim's funeral arrangements once known.

Kirkgate Diary:

REGULAR WEEKLY MEETINGS

Sunday, 10.45 am:	Morning Worship Sunday School/Creche
Tuesday, 1.00-4.00pm:	Craft Team
Wednesday, 11am-12 noon & 7.00-8.00pm:	Bible Study
Thursday, 10.30am:	Midweek Service
Thursday, 2.30 & 7.30pm:	Country Dance Club (alternate weeks)
Friday, 12.30-2.00pm:	Care & Share Lunch

MARCH

Sunday 1st: 10.45am
Morning Worship - Sacrament of Holy Communion

Monday 2nd: 10.45am - 1.00pm
Pastoral Care Meeting

Thursday 5th: 10.30am
Midweek Service - Sacrament of Holy Communion
2.30pm
Country Dancing Club

Friday 6th: 2.00pm
World Day of Prayer
South Beach Baptist Church, Saltcoats

Saturday 7th: 10.00am - 12 noon
Craft Team - Easter Coffee & Cards

Monday 9th: 2.00pm
The Guild - Three Towns' Churches - Alan Pettigrew

Saturday 14th: 10.00am - 1.00pm
Elders Retreat - West Kilbride Parish Church,
Lunch TBC

Sunday 15th: 10.45am
Morning Worship - Mothering Sunday

Monday 16th: 10.30am
Pastoral Group Workshop - Katrona Templeton

Thursday 19th: 10.30am
Midweek Service
2.00pm
Kirk Session Meeting
7.30pm
RSCDS Committee Meeting

Monday 23rd: 2.00pm
The Guild - Life of Jesus Christ - Susan Gill

Wednesday 25th: 2.00pm
Musical Memories

Sunday 29th: 10.45am
Morning Worship - Palm Sunday
**No Tea/Coffee after morning service
Material required for 'The Messenger'



APRIL

Thursday 2nd: 10.30am
Midweek Service - Sacrament of Holy Communion
7.00pm
Holy Week Service - Sacrament of Holy Communion
** No Country Dancing

Friday 3rd: 7.00pm
Holy Week Service for Good Friday

Sunday 5th 10.45am
Easter Worship - Sacrament of Holy Communion
Tea/Coffee fellowship after morning service

Thursday 23rd: 10.30am
Midweek Service
7.30pm
Country Dancing Club resumes

Sunday 26th: 10.45am
Morning Worship
Tea/Coffee fellowship after morning service
Material required for 'The Messenger'

Wednesday 29th: 2.00pm
Musical Memories



**During Holy Week there will be a short
meditation each morning in
Ardrossan Parish Church at 11.00am**

Congratulations - 90th Birthdays

The Kirk Session and congregation sent their love and congratulations along with flowers and cards to two ladies who celebrated their 90th birthdays in February

Thanks to Isobel Passway for delivering the flowers to Margaret Collins, Queens View Harbour Care Home, Troon on 13th February.

Thanks to the Thursday Team who surprised Anne Stalker with an orchid and birthday cake before her birthday on 22nd February.

We hope you enjoyed your special day and we pray for your continued good health in 2026.



Freewill Envelopes

It was brought to my attention that someone's free will offering envelopes box had some blank envelopes in them. Could people using envelopes please check and if you find any blanks please write the date and your number on the front. Thank you, sorry for any inconvenience.

Moira Cooper

Hear the Pennies Dropping

I recall, in my early years of Sunday School, singing this song as we lined up to put our collection in the wooden box:-

***Hear the pennies dropping, listen as they fall
Every one for Jesus, He shall have them all
Dropping, dropping, dropping dropping
Hear the pennies fall
Every one for Jesus, He shall have them all***

I would like to say thank you to everyone who collects their small change in the mission boxes. I took over the counting of these boxes from Alastair Colquhoun in 2020 and use the same notebook that Alastair used from 2006, although he was treasurer way before then. I thought I would count the amount that has been banked from 2020 till now and it came to the fantastic sum of £850.

So all the pennies count! Please continue to collect your coppers in the boxes, I am more than happy to count them.

Thanks again, Moira



Burns Supper

Thanks to the Fundraising Team for holding the succesful Burns Supper on Friday 13 February. The CHANA ladies did a wonderful job with the catering, and made full use of the new kitchen.

Thanks also to all who took part – Angus Dodds (Chair), Stuart Dunbar (Address to the Haggis), Angus Middleton (Immortal Memory), Willie Clark (Toast to the Lassies), Lesley Richardson (Reply from the Lassies) and Alex Blair (Thoughts on some poems). Music by Peter Martin (piper), Mary Stewart (saxophone) and Stuart McMahon (accompanist).

A video of the evening (which lasts for about 2 hours and 16 minutes!) is available to watch on our YouTube channel at the following link:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zJ21ojtKlQ



Care & Share



**Another month gone already!!
And hasn't it been a cold one? The
Lunch Club is always ready with a
hot meal for anyone who needs it.**



It was nice to have a wee change with the sandwiches and wraps but it's great to be back making our usual fare of delicious soup, rolls & sausage and apple crumble. I'm sure you agree that the new kitchen is lovely however we are still getting to grips with the workings of the new double hob and ovens.

The recent donations from Aldi have been very welcome as always. We have received a variety of items, some of which have us scratching our heads about what they actually are! But Google is a great help. One week we received a lot of daffodils which all found grateful recipients across the three towns. Another time there were a number of duvets which have been distributed to those in most need. The surplus foodstuffs are very popular and people can choose items they are able to make use of.

I end with my usual appeal for volunteers. Please earnestly consider giving a few hours a month to help us continue to deliver this vital community asset

Love and Blessings

Pam x

HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN CRISIS



**John Stewart, 07561 340886, is happy to
collect any donations and deliver to the
Foodbank HQ in Ardrossan.**

**If you would like to contribute some items for
the foodbank at any time, there is always a
collection box in the hallway at the church.**

Food
UHT milk
Tinned meat (Hotdogs, Meatballs etc.)
Tinned fish
Tinned fruit
Sponge/Rice puddings
Coffee (small jars)
Long-life juice
Pasta sauce
Tinned veg (potatoes, carrots, green beans, tomatoes)
Tinned meals (Spaghetti, Chilli, Chicken or Veg curries)
Tinned soup
Jam and Spreads

Non-food items
Shower gel
Shampoo/conditioner
Deodorant
Toilet rolls
Washing up liquid
Laundry detergent pods



Kirk Session



**The Kirk Session met on
Thursday 29th January at
2.30pm.**

We agreed to hold Communion services on Sundays 1st March, 5th April, 3rd May and 7th June, and on Thursdays 5th March, 2nd April, 7th May and 4th June. During Holy Week there will be a short meditation each morning in Ardrossan Parish Church at 11.00am, and we will also hold services at 7.00pm on Thursday 2nd April (Communion) and Friday 3rd April. We will have tea and coffee after the service on Sunday 5th April (Easter Sunday) instead of 29th March.

Nigel had planned to hold a short retreat for elders on Saturday 28th February, but this has had to be rearranged for Saturday 14th March, from 10.00am until lunchtime. The venue will be West Kilbride Parish Church.

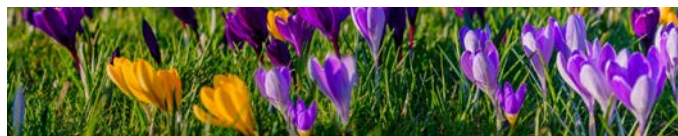
Kirk Session meetings will take place on Thursday 19th March at 2.00pm, and on Thursday 21st May at 7.00pm.

It is lovely to see the crocuses appearing in our garden, and I am sure that the daffodils will be flowering soon too. If you would like to help with looking after the borders and planters please speak to me.

Work is almost finished on the kitchen, and I hope you will agree that it looks much bigger and brighter than before. Many thanks to all who have contributed in any way to making this happen.

It has been most encouraging to see the continued growth in numbers attending our services. We are aware that there are still some who have come from either St Cuthbert's or the North Parish who have not formally 'joined' our congregation. You should be aware that unless you have asked to 'lift your lines' these will have gone automatically to Ardrossan Parish Church. If you would like to change this please speak to myself or to Stuart. If you are not yet a member of the congregation but would like to find out more about what this involves please speak to Nigel.

Vivien Bruce, Session Clerk



Letters of Appreciation

Heartfelt thanks to all in Kirkgate for the beautiful church flowers given to us recently. The thoughtful gesture meant a great deal at a sad time. Thanks also to Sandra for delivering them on such a wild wet day and we really appreciated her visit.

Evelyn & Brian Green



I had a trip to A&E after sustaining a nasty gash on my shin stepping onto a bus and a horrible eye injection a few days later. So I was down but not out when beautiful flowers arrived from church on Sunday. Such a lift to the spirit and an absolute joy. Special thanks to Moira for the delivery and to Evelyn for informing the Pastoral team of my mishaps. Such kindness from Nigel and a caring congregation is much appreciated.

Noreena Elwell

I would like to thank all the congregation of the Thursday service for their cards, good wishes and visitation whilst I was in hospital. It was greatly appreciated.

Marglen Simm

Thank you so much to everyone for the flowers I received on my recent 'big' birthday. They were very much appreciated.

Isabel Boyd

I would like to thank all at Kirkgate for the beautiful flowers I received on 1st February. They are gorgeous. Thanks also to Eunice for delivering them.

Margaret Fullerton

JESUS' ETERNAL SACRIFICE

God almighty, our holy one
Conquering, victorious and risen Son,
Saviour, redeemer, Lord of light,
You saved me, freed me, and gave me life
Is there a way that I can repay
What it cost you, my Lord, that fateful day
When you gave your life upon the cross
For all mankind eternally lost?
For I know I could never pay the price,
The cost of your eternal sacrifice
For salvation is a gift that you freely gave
When you died and arose from the grave
The hope that came from your sacrifice
Is the hope we have of eternal life.

© By M.S. Lowndes

Fundraising 2026



Our first event of 2026 was the Burns supper which was a great success.

The catering was done by Pam and her team who provided a beautiful three course meal which was enjoyed by all of us. The speakers were very entertaining as were the musical interludes.

Photos on page 11.

We had a planning meeting to arrange dates and activities for the rest of this year which we hope to fulfill. The proposed events can be seen below.

Next event will be the Ragbag which will be sometime in April (we haven't been given a date yet for collection). So now is the time to sort through your cupboards in readiness. Just remember no duvets, pillows, cushions or books. Shoes and bags are acceptable but need to be put in a separate bag. Once again we look forward to your support.

Phyllis Armstrong

Mark these Dates
on Your
Calendar

2026

April - Rag Bag (collection date to be arranged)

Friday May 8th - Quiz and supper

Saturday June 13th - Strawberry Tea

September - Clyde Coast Fiddlers (to be arranged)

Friday October 23rd - Fashion Show

Saturday November 28th - Christmas Fair

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



If anyone brags, he should brag about the Lord.
1 Cor 1:31.. Like a grandma showing off her grandkids.

Letter from Ethan Fidler - The Year of Obstacles

For me as a 17 year old getting the news I'm being rooted from my home came as a shock but I think I'm starting to like my life even without my people. I've never done anything like this before and I wouldn't do it again.

Lets go back to the year 2025 where this all began. My brother leaving for Scotland had my family and I considered the idea that I go with him but I shut that down fast. Then my family and I get the news that my dad is going to be stationed in Mpumalanga on the border of South Africa and Zimbabwe and no, he is not in the army - he is a minister but going to Mpumalanga would mean splitting the family up and no one wanted that to happen so my parents made the decision with all of us to emigrate to Scotland which they said was my choice but in my head I thought staying back would mean letting everyone down and I couldn't live with that so I said I would leave.

Back home I had a life, friends, a place to call my second home and I had a future. In that year I accomplished a lot. I got my learners license, I got awards from my school, I got good marks and I was set for my final year. I had planned my whole matric year all the way down to what car I'm driving when I write my finals I planned everything and then I chose to transfer schools and don't get me wrong I love it here but I'm an outsider looking in and I won't be able say this place is for me because I'm still in the early stages of my African-Scottish life.

The month is December which back home would mean partying and hanging out with friends and listening to amapiano which is a South African genre of music. I lost my home on the 3rd of December and then gained a new home on 4th of December so everything turned out ok on the surface but no one can prepare you for the heart break of moving across the globe and leaving everything behind that pain stays with a person because it shows you have loved where you come from and willing to embrace the journey ahead.

The only feeling that could compare to the feeling of leaving your world behind is being told you've lost your gran or grandpa and I use this because in my experience that's how it felt because during the day you can be the calm and collected self you have to be, but at night everything changes because I am able cry and remember the fond memories I've made over the years that's why I'm here writing this piece because I made the decision to leave my comfort zone and embrace the world that not a lot of people back home are able to experience.

My mother and I made the journey from home to our new home that we are still trying to piece together but that doesn't matter because we have

each other. I started at Ardrossan Academy two weeks before the Christmas break and boy, was I overwhelmed by the size of the buildings and the people around it, but I am happy to say that I do not regret my decision at all because I would not have been able to meet the amazing people in my community and school.

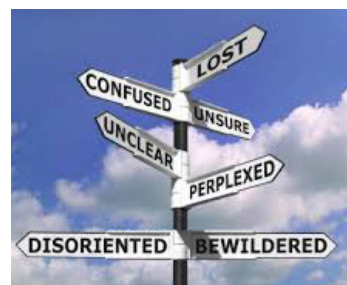
There are regrets I have about leaving my home but I know it was for the best for me, but there are things I'm never going to get ever again and that pains me because I came to a fantastic school in the middle of the year which is my final year, but for me it's just school because I missed out on my last first day, my last inter-house athletics, my last first assembly and I'm going to miss out on more, but people say that is the price I have to pay for my better future.

Today I got the news that the rest of my family is nearly on their way to join me and my mom here in Scotland and when that message showed up on my screen I started tearing up because I've not seen the rest of my family for nearly three months and in that time my sister got married to my now brother-in-law. I wasn't there for my sister when she might've needed me but I'm glad she took that step forward into her future.

I am navigating something heavy in the sense that I have no back up plan - this is my one shot and nothing else and sometimes I take for granted of what my parents have done for me, but I now see that my parents have done nothing but sacrifice for me and my siblings by taking a risk and running with it no matter what because there is no back-up plan and now that I realise that I have taken nearly everything I was offered for granted and then lost - I can now see I was being selfish and unreasonable.

I am ashamed that it's taken me moving across the world to see all that I've lost and for that I'm grateful because it means I've grown as a person and now I'm able to see my mistakes and own up to them. Scotland is my new home and for that I'm grateful it shows me that I'm loved and cared for beyond measure. I am proud to be a South African now living in Scotland; I am able to learn new cultures, heritage and meet family I haven't seen in a few years and for all that has happened and the decisions, risks and opportunities that have come, and that are coming, I am forever grateful and in debt to my parents.

**Thank you
Ethan**



Musical Memories

Musical Memories will be on as usual during 2026 and we hope not to miss any of the months during the year. Just a couple of bits of information and a few dates to keep in mind.



March 25th - Hamper raffle for Church Fabric Fund

June 24th - Our Marie Curie charity day.

The next few dates for music at South Beach House are:

March 4th and 18th, April 8th and 22nd.

Thanks to Fiona for coming along to support these afternoons. A communion will take place at South Beach House on **Wednesday 1st April at 2.30pm**. All are welcome to come along to support the singing and have some fellowship time with the residents and they are also holding a **Day of Prayer Service on Friday 6th March - Time to be arranged**

Mary x

The Guild

We got off to a good start on Monday 9th February despite the awful weather that day. Helen's topic was on the Guild theme 'Let's Build a House' and she tasked us with discussion's about various aspects of how we perceived the subject. With the kitchen still out of commision Fiona did a splended job somehow supplying our cup of tea.

By the time you read this our speaker Alison Burnett had to cancel but Helen Kerr was able to step in and told us about her life in Cambodia on 23rd February.

We hope that some you were able to attend the Ayrshire Guilds Together meeting on Wednesday 25th February .

The World Day of Prayer is on Friday 6th March at 2.00pm at South Beach Baptist Church, Ardrossan Road, Saltcoats to which all - men and women are invited. The focus is on Nigeria this year.

On Monday 9th March we look forward to hearing from Alan Pettigrew about the history/photographs of the Three Towns' Churches.

Our last meeting in March is on 23rd when Susan Gill is giving a presentation on 'The Life of Jesus Christ' very appropriate given that Holy Week starts on Sunday 29th.

We conclude our meetings for this session on Monday 20th April which will be our AGM followed by a Quiz compiled by Stuart and enjoy an afternoon tea.

if you have any ideas for next year's syllabus please bring them along and we will arrange a meeting to discuss next session in fuller detail. If you would like to volunteer to take on a position, please consider it as it is always good to have new faces at the helm so don't be shy in volunteering, it's refreshing and enjoyable to have someone new to help spread the load. Teamwork is the name of the game!!

How time flies, can't believe we're now talking 2026/27 and we are only in March!! However as you know speakers have to be booked and plans made.



Youth Club

This week, for the first time, the Kirkgate Youth Group met to discuss what activities they could do during the time - such as games night and bible studies. We enjoyed pizza during our time on Friday.

This youth club is a very exciting opportunity for the young people to have fun and enjoy themselves.

Elijah Rowe



Thursday Service

Thursday services continue to be well supported.

We surprised Anne Stalker, one of the ladies with a birthday cake to celebrate her forthcoming 90th birthday, a photo can be seen on page 10.

Please drop in, everyone is welcome.

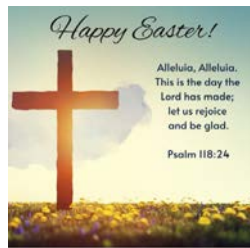
The Thursday Team



Prayer Group

The group meets in the small hall every second Sunday in the month after morning worship.

Please feel assured you that you would be made most welcome and you don't need to speak, just listen and join us in prayer.



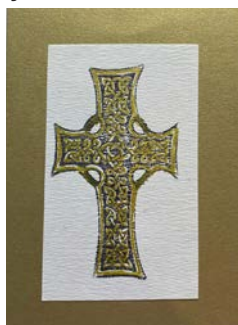
Craft Group

The group are all so sad to lose another member in such a short time with the death of Anne Aitken

It was because of Anne that the original Barony St. John's Craft Group began. Anne and Christine had attended a Sunday School exhibition in Glasgow where Anne bought our first ever stamp and a tub of embossing powder. We thought the children would love to learn to stamp at the Easter Holiday Club however the adults tried it first and were hooked and so in 1997 the group began in the church kitchen using a toaster instead of a heat gun. Twenty nine years later Anne's legacy has grown into the group we have today.

Anne's death will leave a huge gap in the group and in all our lives. She was such a caring person, sharing her love with everyone she came in contact with.

An inspiration to all of us.



Property Report



The kitchen fitters have now completed the new kitchen and we think you will agree they have made a great job of it. The electrics have all been updated and the floor has been screeded and new flooring has been laid.

Next steps in the kitchen are the alteration to the doors which need to be rehung, walls, ceiling and paintwork to be painted.

Unfortunately the urn developed a fault when it was plumbed back in but pleased to report that it has sorted itself out, it is now working properly. We would ask that anyone using it should make sure it is switched off after use. Thank you.

Electrician is due to do PAT testing at the manse and change a bedroom light.

Jean Rainey - Joint Convenor

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Kirkgate Craft Team

Easter Coffee & Cards

SATURDAY 7th MARCH

*10am - 12 noon
in the Church Hall*

*A wide selection
of handmade
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greetings cards
will be available*

A white ceramic cup filled with dark coffee, with a wisp of steam rising from it, sitting on a white saucer.

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Church Rotas

SUNDAY DOOR DUTY & COUNTING ROTA

1 March	M. Cooper	P. Armstrong	G. Armstrong
8 March	E. McInnes	D. MacLeod	E. Howie
15 March	J. Rainey	P. Martin	S. Gill
22 March	J. Stewart	B. McCracken	B. McWilliam
29 March	M. Cooper	L. McDougall	E. Green
5 April	E. McInnes	M. Hunter	F. Liddell
12 April	J. Rainey	P. Armstrong	G. Armstrong



CHURCH FLOWERS VACANT DATE 13 DECEMBER



	DONATED BY	DELIVERY
1 March	M & J O'Hare	J. O'Hare
8 March	A. Dailly & I. Diamond	E. Breakenridge
15 March	R. McLay	M. Cassidy
22 March	M. Darroch	C. Ewing
29 March	J. Mumford	D. MacLeod
5 April	M. Forsyth	M. Hunter
12 April	L. McDougall	J. McTavish



Since you have chosen a date which is relevant to you it will continue to be your date unless you tell Chrissie otherwise.

Should you wish to contribute flowers for the sanctuary, please speak to **Chrissie Baillie**,
Tel: 01294 463903.

Should you be unable to do your delivery of Sunday flowers, please contact someone else on the team and try to do a swap to avoid the distribution team having to find someone last minute after the service. Contact Elizabeth McMahon 01294 464428 should you wish to volunteer to deliver the flowers or should you wish to retire from this duty as the list is being updated for 2026. June McTavish has volunteered to go on to the delivery rota and we hope she will enjoy her new role.

Pastoral Team member Morag Forsyth, Tel: 01294 463762, is co-ordinating the names of recipients for flowers and will keep Agnes Wilkie and her distribution team informed of those in need.

MONTHLY TEA ROTA

	Organisers
5 April Easter	Margaret & John O'Hare
26 April	Anne Dailly & Isabel Diamond
31 May	The Guild
28 June	Nikki & John Cairns
26 July	Agnes Wilkie & Team
30 August	The Craft Team
27 September	Evelyn Long
25th October	Eunice McInnes
29 November	Pam Martin
20 December	Mima McSwan & Margaret Cassidy

Please note that there is no tea on 29 March as the following week is Easter and a happy day to enjoy the fellowship .
Please speak to Mary Stewart should you be unable to fulfill your duty Tel: 464526

Recycling Old Specs Again

It seemed such a shame that Blythswood could no longer recycle your old specs.



However after making some enquiries with Urquhart's Opticians across from the church I discovered that they are happy to recycle old spectacles.

A box will once again be available for you to drop them off and Sandra or Eleanor will uplift them every so often and take them to Urquhart's or just drop them into the shop yourself.

Ed.

Used Stamps

From now on your used stamps will be sent to Marie Curie as the Church of Scotland are discontinuing this scheme.



I am sure you will agree that Marie Curie are an excellent organisation, So please pop your used stamps into the box in the hallway.

John Stewart

Who's Who in Kirkgate

Church Address: Chapelwell Street, Saltcoats KA21 5EB. Tel: 01294 472001

POSITION	NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Minister	Rev Nigel Chikanya	10 Seafeld Drive, Ardrossan KA22 8NU	Tel: 01294 683379 Mob: 07566 278132	NChikanya@churchofscotland.org.uk
Session Clerk	Vivien Bruce	57 Dockers Gardens, Ardrossan KA22 8GB	01294 605113	sessionclerk@kirkgatechurch.org.uk
Deputy Session Clerk	Mima McSwan	23 Springvale Court Saltcoats KA21 5LY	01294 602410	

POSITION	NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Pastoral Care	See magazine article for various contact details		
Organist, Rollkeeper, Data Protection, Website	Stuart McMahon	93 Montfode Drive, Ardrossan KA22 7PH	07588 665191
Treasurer	John Stewart	5 High Road, Saltcoats	01294 464526
Gift Aid Convenor	George Armstrong	46 Whitlees Court, Ardrossan KA22 7PD	01294 466867
Freewill Offering Envelopes	Moira Cooper	1A Bridgepark, Ardrossan KA22 8BQ	01294 468851
Property Convenors	Jean Rainey	12A Caledonia Road, Saltcoats KA21 5AE	01294 464933
	Mary Stewart	5 High Road, Saltcoats KA21 5RX	01294 464526
Safeguarding Convenors	Christine Ewing	31 St Marys Place, Saltcoats KA21 5NY	07815 163292
	Elizabeth Howie	93 Argyle Road, Saltcoats KA21 5NE	01294 467881
Magazine Editor	Elizabeth McMahon	8 Kennedy Road, Saltcoats KA21 5NJ	01294 464428
Flower Convenor	Chrissie Baillie	40 Gladstone Road, Saltcoats KA21 5LD	01294 463903
The Guild	Elizabeth McMahon	8 Kennedy Road, Saltcoats KA21 5NJ	01294 464428
Prayer Group	Margaret Cassidy	3 Eglinton Street, Saltcoats KA21 5DE	01294 605535
Craft Team	Jean Hay	18 West Doura Avenue, Saltcoats KA21 5NS	01294 469986
Country Dancing	Elizabeth Howie	93 Argyle Road, Saltcoats KA21 5NE	01294 467881

Kirk Session Committees

PASTORAL CARE:

Co-ordinators*: Mrs Susan Gill*

Mrs Moira Cooper*	Mrs Jean Rainey
Mrs Jennifer Fox*	Mrs Morag Forsyth
Mrs Evelyn Green	(telephone contact elder)
Mrs Maureen Hunter	Co-opted:
Mrs Fiona Liddell	Jean Hay*
Mrs Elizabeth McCracken	Phyllis Armstrong
Mrs Eunice McInnes	Christine Ewing
Mrs Ruth McMartin*	
Mrs Barbara McWilliam	

PROPERTY:

Convenors: Jean Rainey & Mary Stewart

Mrs Vivien Bruce	Mrs Maureen Hunter
Mrs Jennifer Fox	Mrs Margaret O'Hare
Mr John O'Hare	Mrs Margaret Cassidy
Mrs Pamela Martin	

COMMUNICATION:

Co-ordinator: Mr Stuart McMahon

Vivien Bruce. Co-opted: Mrs Elizabeth McMahon

CHURCH & COMMUNITY:

Convener: Mr Andrew Bruce

Mrs Margaret Cassidy	Co-opted:
Mrs Pamela Martin	Mr David MacLeod
Mrs Mary Stewart	Ms Fiona Wright

FUNDRAISING & SOCIAL:

Mrs Eunice McInnes, Mrs Evelyn Green
Mrs Jean Rainey, Mrs Fiona Liddell

Co-opted:

Mrs Phyllis Armstrong, Mrs Jean Hay
Mrs Carol Gilmour, Mrs Allison O'Neill
Miss Elizabeth Breakenridge

FINANCE:

Convener: Mr John Stewart

Mrs Moira Cooper
Mrs Jean Rainey
Co-opted: Mr George Armstrong

Church Website: www.kirkgatechurch.org.uk



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