

# Contact



**EK South Parish Church**

**Advent 2024**

## **UPDATE ON CHURCH PROPERTY**

Since the closure of our Church buildings for safety reasons on 30 January 2024, the process of decommissioning and putting the buildings up for sale has moved at a slow pace. I thought it therefore appropriate to let you know where we are at present.

Following the emergency closure (and given the fact that our buildings were scheduled for closure in 2025) the Kirk Session and Congregational Boards voted that the buildings should be permanently closed and put up for sale. This was intimated to Forth Valley and Clydesdale Presbytery in late February 2024.

Following a meeting between our Kirk Session and Presbytery Representatives in late July 2024, it was agreed that the buildings could be closed permanently and that the process of selling the buildings could move forward. This decision was raised and passed at the Presbytery meeting on 31 August 2024 and was approved by the Church of Scotland General Trustees on 10 September 2024.

The General Trustees are responsible for all matters relating to the sale of the premises and grounds. The buildings have been visited by the General Trustees Legal Team to survey the property and get the necessary information to put the buildings and land onto the market for sale. The timescales for the sale are unknown at present and will be dependent on interest shown by prospective buyers.

Once the site has been sold, legal and other costs incurred in the sales process will be deducted from monies obtained from the sale. 10% of the monies obtained from the sale will go into the Church of Scotland central funds to support the wider Church. The remainder of the monies raised will be put into a fund which can be used by our new union for property (and possibly mission) matters.

Whilst the legal work has been proceeding, there has also been significant practical work undertaken at the Church. Water, heating and gas supplies were cut off in February and March 2024 just leaving the electricity supply live to maintain the lighting, CCTV and intruder alarm systems in operation for the security of the building.

During August the building contents were removed leaving only a few items in place which we hope can be relocated to other churches. These include the two stained glass windows in the Church sanctuary, the Minister's and Elders' chairs, Communion table, baptism font, standing lectern and communion silver. Many other items within the church such as tables, chairs, crockery and musical instruments were donated to others. In the end we required nine skips to remove the unwanted or unusable contents within the Church.



It was a monumental effort to clear the Church of its contents in just four weeks and would not have been possible without the help of members of the congregation, relatives and friends who gave generously of their time and energy to manually handle, clear, transport and find new homes for the contents and the cleaning thereafter. A big thank you to all who helped. Without you it would not have happened.

Finally, wishing you and your families all the peace and joy that the Christmas story brings and please keep the South Parish in your prayers and ask God to show us his vision for our new beginning in 2025.

*Andrew Brown (4<sup>th</sup> November 2024)*

## Snippets from Elizabeth

I found this little snippet in an old, well-worn book tucked away at the back of a bookshelf. It got me thinking that no matter how awful a day has been, tomorrow is a clean slate, another chance.



Have you ever made a mistake? Ever wanted a “do-over”? Louise Fletcher who lived at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, knew the feeling.

In her poem “The Land of beginning again”, she wrote:

*“I wish that there were some wonderful place, the land of Beginning Again,  
Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches and all of our poor selfish grief  
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door, and never put on again!”*

The good news is that there is such a place! The Land of Beginning Again is tomorrow. Each bright new day is a chance to start afresh!

Father, hear the prayer I pray  
Give me courage every day,  
Send your love and healing too  
For everything I have to do.  
When the future’s looking bleak,  
Let me find the hope I seek,  
Wrap me safely in your care  
And show me you are always there.

(Iris Hesselden)  
*Elizabeth Crawford*

## TWO BOXES

I have in my hand two boxes  
Which God gave me to hold.  
He said "Put all your sorrows in the black  
And all your joys in the gold."  
I heeded his words, and in the two boxes  
Both my joys and my sorrows I store,  
But though the gold became heavier each day  
The black was as light as before.  
With curiosity I opened the black.  
I wanted to find out why,  
And I saw in the base of the box, a hole  
Which my sorrows had fallen out by.  
I showed the hole to God and mused aloud  
"I wonder where my sorrows could be."  
He smiled a gentle smile and said,  
"My child, they're all here with me."  
I asked, "God, why give me the boxes?  
Why the gold and the black with the hole?"  
"My child, the gold is for you to count your blessings,  
The black is for you to let go!"

*Anon,*

*submitted by Elizabeth Crawford*





I read this somewhere a long time ago and thought it might make you smile!

A four year old boy was asked to give thanks before Christmas dinner. The family all bowed their heads and the little boy began

“Thank you, God, for my Mummy, my Daddy, my brother, my sister, my Grandma, my Grandpa.” Then he began to say thank you for the food. He gave thanks for the turkey, the stuffing, the gravy, the mince pies. Then he paused and everyone waited expectantly. After a long silence the young boy looked up at his Mum and whispered, “If I thank God for the sprouts, won’t he know that I’m lying?”

*Elizabeth Crawford.*

### Ways and Means

The Ways and Means Committee is meeting in Rena Nimmo’s house for a get together on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December, for a party and a few quizzes starting 1300hrs.

*Douglas Johnston*

Amidst all the preparation and busyness that this season brings, it is good to take time and meditate on things eternal.



Wishing our dear church family HIS Peace and HIS Joy for Christmas and beyond.

Iain and Ishbel



Fiona McEwan wishes to send Christmas greetings to all the folks in the South Parish and wishes you all a happy and peaceful New Year.

## Getting to know you

### **Claire Johnston our magazine editor talking to Sandra MacKenzie**

I'm not one for name dropping normally but did you know that we have two graduates of Cambridge University in our congregation?! I didn't either until I interviewed Claire for our magazine. And their names are CLAIRE and her husband MICHAEL! Those lights were well kept under a bushel!

Claire grew up in Huddersfield with her mum, a pharmacist, and her dad, an electrical engineer. Her granny played a big part in her life and introduced the young Claire to church.

Claire lived with her mum and dad until she was 18 when she went off to Cambridge to study Natural Sciences. It was while she was there that she met Michael who was also studying there.

"We probably wouldn't have met," said Claire, "as he was two years ahead of me but we both ended up at the same church."

It was also while she was studying that Claire found she had a call to be a nurse. She finished her degree and went off to London to do a post graduate qualification in nursing. Michael had moved meantime to work in Berkeley in Gloucestershire as an engineer in the Nuclear Industry.

"Michael and I did a lot of travelling," she remembers with a wry smile

Three weeks after she qualified as a nurse she and Michael returned to the church in Cambridge where they had met to get married. A romantic end to their courtship and a romantic start to their married life.

Claire commuted to Cardiff to begin her nursing career and they continued to live in Gloucestershire from 1994 to 1998.



Michael's job was relocated to East Kilbride in 1998. Claire got a job in The Victoria in Glasgow helping to implement evidence based clinical guidelines. This was a part time post and she worked in hospitals the rest of her working week.

Two years after they moved to East Kilbride their daughter Sarah was born on January 2, 2000. "I remember reading about couples trying to have a 'Millenium baby' in the year 2000 and thought it was nonsense but it turned out that Sarah was to be a surprise in store for me!" laughed Claire.

Claire and Michael joined Mossneuk Church and Sarah was baptised there. They all became very involved in the life of the church. "It was a church with so many talented people," reminisced Claire. "The young people, including Sarah, organised themselves and contributed so much to the worship and the life of the church."

In 2017 Claire felt the need to move to another church. She had reached the stage where she felt she could no longer be useful in Mossneuk and so she and Michael visited various churches in the town and eventually, luckily for us, they settled in The South Parish. They have both been very much involved in the weekly Bible Study working closely with Ishbel Campbell. Now that Iain and Ishbel are so often away from East Kilbride to play their part in the childcare of their grandchildren Claire has been leading the weekly session when they are away.

"I take a different approach from Ishbel but complementary to hers," said Claire. "I enjoy looking at the historical, cultural and geographical issues relating to Scripture alongside how Scripture applies to us."



Claire now works part time in the NHS with NHS 24. She enjoys working with the variety of callers.

“One day you can be dealing with a young man who phones because when he had been making himself a smoothie he managed to put his hand in the blender. When he saw the mess he went to bed for four hours before he phoned for advice!!!! And on another day you can get a call from a woman who is really just wondering what she should do because she has managed to take her dog’s antihistamines because she kept the dog’s medicines beside her own.

“She told me though that she felt fine,” said Claire. “I made a call to one of the helplines we have access to as I was unsure what to suggest. I was a bit taken aback when the man I spoke to said, ‘Are you kidding?’

“It turned out this was the second consecutive call he’d had about the very same issue. He thought it was one of his colleagues having a laugh!

“And you’d be surprised at the number of calls we get at the May Bank Holiday weekends,” continued Claire, “when the sheep farmers are busy inoculating their sheep and manage to inoculate themselves at the same time. Although even I was a bit surprised when I got a call from a llama farmer who had done the same thing!”

Claire and Michael’s daughter Sarah is currently studying in Durham on a post graduate course in Astrophysics and is very much involved in her local church there, helping children with additional support needs in a group called “The Sparklers”.

I asked Claire what interests she and Michael have outside work. Michael is currently working on Nuclear decommissioning. She told me that they both enjoy reading and a visit or two to Murrayfield to watch the rugby.

In September of this year Claire started working on a Royal School of Needlework Certificate in Technical Hand Embroidery.

She told me, “There are four modules to be covered and I’m on my first which is crewel work- stitching with wool on linen. There are three more: canvas work, silk shading and finally gold work.”

She has five years to complete the modules but she hopes to do it in two. That’s Claire!

*Sandra MacKenzie*

Postscript: If any of you have ever received an email from Claire and wondered about her name in her address – e.claire.johnston? The e is for Elizabeth.



This has been a difficult year for many, but as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, let us put our trust in God, for our lives are in his hands, and there is no safer place to be!

Wishing all our friends of the South Parish congregation a blessed and happy Christmas and a new year filled with hope and promise.

With love and all good wishes  
from Elizabeth, Barrie, David (and Lesley)

## **The Murray Community Hub-** **a South Parish outreach initiative**

Since the closure of the South Parish Church Building in February, we have been working hard to ensure the continuation of the various community activities that we operate. We want to make sure that we continue to connect with and serve the people of The Murray, which presents a challenge with no building of our own.

We are very grateful to the congregations of East Kilbride that have been generous in coming to our aid, including the congregation of Claremont Parish, who have welcomed us with open arms for Sunday morning Worship and so many other activities. We have tried to keep our organisations within our neighbourhood where possible and they have now settled into their new homes. Our two Boys' Brigade Companies have now joined together to form the 2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> East Kilbride Boys Brigade and seem to be thriving with the joint resources and activities.

South Parish Kirk Session appointed a steering group which meets regularly to guide our existing activities and to look at future opportunities for serving the people of The Murray. Some of us visited an initiative in Calderwood called 'The Kettle's On', operated jointly by Moncreiff Parish and Calderwood Baptist churches who together participate in 'Connected Calderwood'. We felt that having a similar activity in The Murray might help tackle the isolation that is felt by a lot of our residents, while giving us the space to connect with them. Through connecting, we can identify any gaps in service provision that might be met by existing groups or by something new.



St Mark's Episcopal Church, who have also been very welcoming, have agreed to let us operate 'The Murray Community Hub' in their hall every Tuesday from 1 to 3pm. We have been running for several weeks, providing bowls of soup, playing board games and just sitting chatting. We have been assisted with funding and expertise by the staff at 'Healthy & Active', a charity which forms part of the umbrella organisation, 'Connected East Kilbride'.

We would ask you to keep this fledgling initiative in your prayers and if you feel that this is something that you'd like to get involved with then please contact Fiona 07985 595167 or Wendy 07941 848360.

Thank you.

*Wendy Kerr*



## **Bible Study**

The somewhat obscure and sadly neglected book of the prophet Habakkuk has been our encouragement these past few weeks. Despite his 'complaints' to God and his distress in the first two chapters, Habakkuk's resolution is to pray in worship and adoration as he expresses his faith in the saving power of the creator God and rejoices in HIM.

Whatever our 'complaint' may be, we all need to look upwards to the God who does not change and rest in HIM. When we are praising we are not complaining.

Iain and I have been away a lot and we are all so grateful to Claire (and others) for graciously, willingly and beyond capably stepping in. Finally, we will continue to meet on Wednesdays, 7-9pm in Claremont's Primrose room.

We still want YOU to be with us.

*Ishbel Campbell*

## A Gift

*I found this little story in a very old book  
and thought I would share it*

Today is truly a gift – find the good in it. If you are feeling down, make a list of blessings that God has given to you. Are you eating a warm meal today? Did you have a good night's sleep last night? Is there a family member or friend for whom you are thankful, whom you are glad to have in your life? All of these are blessings straight from God's hand. There is an old song that reminds people to count their blessings and name them one by one. God is not a withholder of any good gifts. He pours out blessings in our lives. Instead of seeing only what you lack, focus on what you have. It will lift your spirits. A grateful heart is so attractive to those around you. They will see God through your thankfulness even in the midst of grim circumstances.



*This is the day that the Lord has made,  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.  
(Psalm 118;24 NLT)*

*Elizabeth Crawford*

Greetings to all of the South Parish  
from June and David McCamlie.



## **A message from Gary Brough, our mission partner**

### **in Malawi**

*"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." - James 1:17*

We look back on 2024 and forward to 2025 with gratitude and confidence.

We give thanks for:

1. A smooth transition back to school for Eilidh and Morven. They enjoyed celebrating International day and both have had a positive outlook during recent class assessments despite missing the start of the year.
2. A significant grant towards the building project at Zomba Theological University.
3. The first national women's leadership conference under the CCAP General Assembly being held this week

Please pray for:

1. Gary as he travels back to the UK (4-11 December) to be with his family for the funeral of his Nana near Manchester. Pray for Jacqueline and the girls at home in Mzuzu, too.
2. An end to the fuel crisis in Malawi which has been going on for over a month with no end in sight. This has a huge impact on the life of the country.
3. Re-commencement of building works in Zomba when funding is confirmed.
4. Final planning and preparation for the 2025 ministry year which will include a fresh cohort of the emerging leaders programme, development of the tree planting and writing a handbook on stewardship and fundraising for local congregations.

## **God Will Make a Way**

Since our church building was closed earlier in the year, we have been waiting to see what the future will bring once the presbytery plan has been implemented. As I write this we are still seeking a way forward and a hymn we used to sing in the South Parish keeps coming into my mind. That hymn is 'God will make a way', written by Don Moen.

I decided to look into the background of the hymn.

Don's sister-in-law and her husband, Craig and Susan Phelps, were involved in a car accident during a ski trip they were taking with their four children from their home in Oklahoma. An 18 wheeler truck hit their van with such force that all the children were thrown out. Three of the children were badly injured but their son, Jeremy, was found lying by a nearby fence. He was already dead, as his neck had been broken.

The family asked Don to sing at the funeral. As he sat on the plane travelling to the funeral, wondering what he should say to them, he began to read in the book of Isaiah. His eyes went to chapter 43, verse 19, '... I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.' Instantly, the Lord gave him a song to sing to them. He sketched it out on a legal pad, intending to sing it at the funeral. However, they had already planned to ask him to sing another song, so he sang their request instead.

After the funeral, he was sitting with them, holding them in his arms. He cried with them, and through his tears he said, 'The Lord gave me a song for you.' And he began singing...





God will make a way  
Where there seems to be no way  
He works in ways we cannot see  
He will make a way for me

He will be my guide  
Hold me closely to His side  
With love and strength for each new day  
He will make a way, He will make a way

By a roadway in the wilderness, He'll lead me  
Rivers in the desert will I see  
Heaven and earth will fade but His Word will still remain  
And He will do something new today

*lyrics © Integrity's Hosanna! Music, Ninth Avenue Music*

For a while, that song remained a private message for his family. But slowly, he began sharing it with others and soon found that it was a message for the whole church - a message to cling to when “there seems to be no way.”

As we wait to see what the future holds, pray and think about the words of the hymn, confident that God will make a way for us and that He will build His church.

*Barrie Crawford*

## Douglas Johnston writes:

As we all get ready for the Christmas rush, presents, holidays and meals we should take some time to reflect on the work being done by many people on the Presbytery mission plan to unite churches in East Kilbride.

As a hymn says “the labourers in the fields are so few” but we are committed and the Christian fraternity in East Kilbride will continue to be strong and resolute.

I would also like to thank Claremont for the fantastic welcome they have given members of the South Parish-a testimony to faith and understanding.

As I get older I listen less to what people say but watch what they do. The new Church set up will go from strength to strength as we combine skills.

So let’s all enjoy Christmas and remember what we are really celebrating-“Christ’s birth”-and the platform he has given us here in East Kilbride to blossom and be an example to others in unity.

*Douglas Johnston*



### **Mission Statement**

By the grace of God,  
In the spirit of Christ,  
We are a people called by God  
To live and act by His Word,  
And spread the Good News  
In our community and beyond.

After the Summer break, we returned minus one of our helpers, Stephanie, who has moved away. However, as she still works for SPELL (Support for Play and Early Learning Lanarkshire), we do still get to see her when she comes along with one of her play activities. Last month we had a circus themed session, with everyone playing all sorts of carnival themed games.



If you have a few hours to spare a month and think that you would be able to help us out, even to be in the kitchen, preparing snacks, then please contact me on 07941848360.

As Christmas fast approaches, we would like to take this opportunity to wish you a blessed time, in whatever way that brings you peace

and joy.



Here at toddlers, we will be having our Christmas party on 11<sup>th</sup> December and our last session before the break on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

Thank you all for continuing to keep us, and all the activities that we do to serve our community, in your prayers.

Wendy Kerr

## Sunday School and Pastoral Care

As yet another Christmas approaches, here is a quick update of the Pastoral Care and the Sunday School now that we have been worshipping in Claremont for most of the year.

### **Sunday School:**

Our small number of children have settled very well into the Claremont Sunday School which is something we should be thankful for and as it works on a rota system for teaching, they get to see my familiar face every now and again. The young ones get on well with the children of Claremont as we still move forward hoping to become one congregation in, hopefully, the not too distant future.

### **Pastoral Care:**

It is lovely to see so many of our South Parish people attending Claremont services and enjoying a coffee and a chat with each other as well as getting to make new friends from Claremont. Our house-bound members are still being looked after by visits, phone calls etc. We are doing our best to make sure they are kept up to date with developments and, more importantly, to let them know that they are still part of the church family. As always, many people in the congregation are active in this, which is lovely, and is what we are all called to do.

We continue to send or deliver a “South Parish” Christmas card to those unable to get out to make sure they know they are in our thoughts and prayers. Let us all continue this important work into the New Year.



*Elizabeth, Barrie (along with Jeanette, Jean, Alison, June and all who help in pastoral care)*

[www.eastkilbridesouthparish.org.uk](http://www.eastkilbridesouthparish.org.uk)

Church of Scotland

Scottish Charity No 008332

