THE MAGAZINE OF

NEW LAIGH KIRK

Church of Scotland
KILMARNOCK

Scottish Charity No.:SC031334

Christmas 2026



"A caring welcoming church at the heart of Kilmarnock reaching out to all"

Minister: Rev. David S Cameron, 1 Holmes Farm Road, Kilmarnock (525416)
Session Clerk: Mr Derek I'Anson
Depute Clerk: Mrs Margaret Patterson
Community and Families: Amy Tanner

CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY

11.00 a.m. **MORNING WORSHIP**

11.00 a.m. Ignite Children's Church (Age 4 --Primary 7)
Trekkers (11-17 years)
Contact: Amy Tanner (07980 665432)

MONDAY

7.15 p.m. Guild (every second Monday)
Contact: Lesley Wright (523039) or Elspeth Dale (01292 541240)

7.30 p.m. Highlights (Mondays as per syllabus)
Contact: Eileen Murphy (543488)

TUESDAY

10.00 - 11.00 a.m. Little Seeds (Babies - 4 year olds)
Contact: Amy Tanner (07980 665432)

7.00 p.m. Session Meeting (Dates as arranged)
Contact: Mr Derek I'Anson (07989 473142)

WEDNESDAY

6.00 to 7.15 p.m. Rainbows
Contact: Sheena Baillie (07749 617204)

6.00 to 7.30 p.m. Brownies*:*
Contact: Fiona Malcolm (07903 212703)

7.45 to 9.15 p.m. Guides
Contact: Fiona Malcolm (07903 212703)

THURSDAY

7.00 p.m. Vestry
Contact: Rev. David S Cameron (525416) /
Mr Derek I'Anson (07989 473142)

FRIDAY

6.00 to 7.00 p.m. Boys' Brigade Anchor Boys (5 to 8 years)
St. Marnock's Halls
Contact: Mr Stewart Chapman (07745162694)

7.15 to 9.00 p.m. Boys' Brigade Junior Section (8+ to 11 years)
St. Marnock's Halls
Contact: Elaine Park (533464)

7.00 to 9.30 p.m. Boys' Brigade Company Section (11+ to 18 years)
New Laigh Kirk Hall

7.00 to 9.00 p.m. Ranger Guides (14-18 years)
Howard Centre
Contact Erin Malcolm (07821 549508)

Safeguarding Coordinator: Ian Anderson

Safeguarding Panel Members: John Dale and Ellen Stewart



New Laigh Kirk Manse
December 2026

Hello folks,

The Advent season is upon us. Where did the summer go? The year flies in and we're heading toward the Nativity of Christmas. As you know I love unusual nativity scenes. I have quite a wee collection at the manse.



I love the nativity, its tradition and familiarity, the way the characters journey to Bethlehem, the stable, the shepherds, the angels and the child lying in a manger. We hear it year after year, from Matthew and Luke's Gospel, sing of it in carols and act it out in nativity plays. Despite its familiarity the story of Christmas has never been more important or more needed than it is today.

We celebrate Christmas in a world that is anything but peaceful. We see conflict and war, communities struggling with poverty, families facing uncertainty and people carrying burdens of loneliness, grief and anxiety. There are times when the darkness around us can seem overwhelming and the temptation is to wonder whether things will ever change. It is into this world the nativity story speaks.

The first Christmas was not a picture of perfection. There was no room at the inn, a young couple far from home, an uncertain future and a child born in circumstances that were far from ideal. The shepherds were ordinary people, working through the night, while the powerful and influential went about their business totally unaware of what was happening in Bethlehem. Into that ordinary troubled world God chose to come.

God comes into the messiness of human life, sharing our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows. In Jesus we discover a God who is not distant from our struggles but present in the midst of them. The angels' message to the shepherds was simple and yet life changing, "Do not be afraid; for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people."

It was a message of hope. Hope grows from trusting that God's love is at work even when life feels uncertain. Peace comes through the assurance of God's presence amid the challenges we face, and joy is found in the knowledge that we are held in a love that endures.



I hope you'll put out a small nativity set somewhere in your home where it can be seen by you and your family and visitors to your home. If it prompts a question as to why you have one, you'll have the opportunity to answer with confidence, the reason.

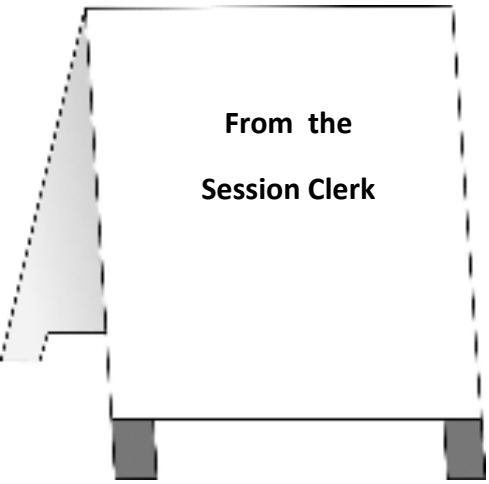
Every time I look at mine, I know the first Christmas took place in a world facing uncertainty, hardship and fear. My wee nativity set is a visible reminder of the hope we are called to share, the kindness we

are invited to show and the light we can bring into the lives of others. It encourages me to look beyond the busyness of Christmas and remember that the child in the manger is the reason we celebrate. That's why I keep putting it out every year. The story is familiar but its message is always fresh. Our world still needs the hope of Bethlehem, and so do our homes, our families and our town.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.
May you know that light in your homes, your families and your hearts this Christmas and may you carry it with you into the year ahead. Wishing you all a joyful, peaceful and hope-filled Christmas.

David





The following is an excerpt from the Kirk Session Minutes of the meeting held on 13th October:

"Kilmarnock Town Centre Master Plan and Vivid Vision

Ms Pamela Clifford gave a presentation on Kilmarnock's Town Centre Master Plan. This will be a phased programme between 2026 and 2040. Its aim is "*to create a vibrant, accessible and sustainable destination. A town that connects people and places, celebrates heritage, embraces town centre living, and strengthens green and blue networks to bring nature and water back into the heart of the town.*"

The overall theme is "a Sense of Place". Kilmarnock should have a unique identity and its citizens should be proud of the environment in which they live. Four concepts feature in this theme:

- Connectivity – easy links between bus and rail stations and between parks and the town centre.
- Vacant buildings, retail and business development.
- Heritage, leisure and public spaces, including parks and the riverside walk.
- Town centre living – repopulating the town centre to bring life back to the heart of Kilmarnock.

After an illustrated description of how this might be achieved, Ms Clifford answered questions from the audience. Many of these related to how the developments would be funded. The Council has identified potential funders, but at this point the plans have not been fully costed.

The Moderator responded with details of the Church of Scotland's Vivid Vision campaign, which has been embraced by New Laigh Kirk. This aims to grow churches which are fit for the future.

New Laigh Kirk's Vivid Vision working group has identified six themes for development:

1. A historic building with a future.
2. A town centre shaped around people and belonging.
3. Investing in children, young people and families.
4. A community hub contributing to a more active town centre.
5. Accessibility, environmental responsibility and long-term sustainability.
6. Partnership in delivering Kilmarnock's regeneration.

The Moderator pointed out how Kilmarnock's Town Centre Master Plan and the Vivid Vision are inter-related. The former deals with improvement of the town's physical infra-structure, while the aim of the latter is to contribute to regeneration of the social and spiritual well-being of citizens, especially those who are most needy and vulnerable.

Councillor Cowan expressed interest in using the refurbished church as a community hub for many purposes. It was agreed that the Moderator would meet Ms Cowan and Ms Clifford to give more information about the Vivid Vision."

Quiz Night – Postponement
The quiz night, which was scheduled to take place in November, has been postponed until February. This is due to the considerable amount of preparation and work currently taking place in the church and halls ahead of the refurbishment.
We will announce a new date for the quiz night in due course.

Derek

New Laigh Refurbishment Project Overview:

What We Are Doing and Why?

Work on the church refurbishment is scheduled to commence, hopefully, in mid-January 2027. During this period, the congregation will worship in the halls, probably for around six to eight months. This is an exciting project which will see a transformation of both the church interior and the Session room to equip it for the future.

A considerable amount of preparation has already taken place over the past few weeks. Items which have accumulated over the years have been donated, wherever possible, to outside organisations, charities or taken to the recycling centre. This exercise will continue.

It has also been necessary to create storage space in the halls, resulting in a two large van loads and multiple car runs of unwanted items being taken to the Western Road recycling centre. Thanks to everyone who has assisted in the preparation to date. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

The plan is to carry out refurbishment in the church sanctuary, Session room and toilets:

- New sanctuary lighting to replace obsolete sodium lamps with environmentally-friendly lighting.
- New environmentally-friendly heating system
- Redecoration of the Sanctuary and the replacement of existing flooring
- Improved accessibility to the chancel for those with disabilities.
- The replacement of pews with seating to create a multi-purpose, flexible space and improve accessibility
- An additional accessible toilet installed in the Vestry corridor
- A new kitchen and catering facility will be installed in the Session Room

The modernisation of our heating and lighting systems is to ensure a more cost effective way of delivering these utilities and also align with New Laigh's aspiration to reduce our carbon footprint and reflect our eco-strategy.

Replacing traditional fixed pews with high-quality, flexible seating represents a major shift from a Sunday morning only model to a dynamic community model of church life. By removing the physical barriers of rigid pews, the Sanctuary can then serve as a multi-functional hub across the week that can serve the diverse needs of modern ministry and allow us to better implement our Kirk's ambitions. One of our Vivid Vision priorities is to engage with external organisations and this flexibility allows the space to transition seamlessly from formal Sunday worship to a community hub and meeting space for charity groups, messy church, Music for All concerts, partner organisation meetings and workshops etc. Seating improvements, when combined with more accessible toilet facilities, will remove the final barriers to participation, allowing us to offer a welcome to everyone, regardless of their physical needs - allowing those with wheelchairs, mobility aids or prams to sit and move more easily within the sanctuary.

This transformation will be further enhanced by the addition of modern kitchen facilities in what was the Session room, ensuring the building is modernised and equipped re. hospitality to better suit the catering needs of a much wider range of groups. The new kitchen will also enable the congregation to eat together, moving beyond the current limitations of serving tea and coffee in the sanctuary from a tiny cupboard kitchen. Currently, congregational "meals" at the church are restricted to outdoor picnics, with food purchased or prepared offsite. The new kitchen will open up a range of eating options for fellowship and special occasions both for the congregation and other community partners. A detailed work plan and site drawings, provided by our architect David McCall, will be displayed when these are finalised.



Pastoral Care Group news

The role of the Pastoral Care Group in our church is to keep in touch with our older members, many of whom can no longer come regularly to Sunday services. We do this in several ways. Each month we send a letter, which usually begins with "a walk down memory lane". Anyone who would enjoy our letters can be added to our mailing list, even if they don't need our other services. Over 80 people receive it currently.

Four times a year we host afternoon events, with door-to-door transport provided for anyone who needs it. Two of these events are Silver Sunday afternoon services in our church. These are shorter than a Sunday morning service and friends and family members are welcome to join us.

Other events are for afternoon tea and entertainment in our halls. The next event will be our **Christmas Afternoon Tea on Friday, 11 December from 2 to 4 p.m.** Musicians will perform a medley of well-known tunes and after our tea they will lead us in carol singing. If you would like to join us, please phone the number stated below. Once a month on a Thursday afternoon we lead a short worship service in Argyll House and Crossgate Care Homes. This is a joyful time for residents and volunteers. It is amazing to hear people who don't speak much beginning to sing as their brain recognises a favourite, well-known hymn. Volunteers who can swell our singing or accompany us on a musical instrument be very welcome to join us.

Anyone who is mainly confined to home may request occasional visits from a Pastoral Care Group volunteer. This is a good way of hearing what is happening in our church. If you would like to access any of our services, we'll be pleased to add you to our mailing list and to arrange for someone to visit you if that is appropriate. If you would like to join us as a volunteer, we shall be happy to welcome you on board. We are sure that you will enjoy this opportunity.

Barbara Graham, Pastoral Care Group Convenor Tel. 01563-522108

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THANK YOU

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the folk at New Laigh Kirk for all the cards and flowers and good wishes which I received during my recent stays in hospitals. They were much appreciated, as were the visits.

Thanks also to those who sent me birthday cards when I turned 80, when I was in rehab in Redburn Wing. It wasn't the way I wanted to celebrate the landmark birthday but we had a good time nevertheless with all my children making the trip to Irvine. Redburn Wing were very helpful and we had the use of a dining room to eat our carryout lunch.

Babs Brockie



Church Flowers



As we approach the end of the year, I need to make up a new list of people who are willing to arrange flowers and those who are willing to deliver flowers after the service on a Sunday in 2027

I want to thank everyone who has helped in any way with the flowers this year and I hope that they will continue to do so. However due to various circumstances some people are now unable to carry on and we NEED more help both arranging and delivering. It is a very worthwhile part of the ministry of the church and I would ask everyone to think about volunteering to help. We try where possible to give the deliveries to places near to a deliverer's home but this depends on who is being remembered and supported by the gift of flowers on that day.

Please speak to either Janice Grant or myself [Sheena Macpherson] if you can help or if you want more information about the ministry of flowers.

I will of course be speaking to all the regular helpers as regards dates for next year.

Thank you to everyone who has helped and I wish you every blessing for Christmas and the year ahead.

Contact Details
Sheena Macpherson 01563/524660
Janice Grant 01563/542202

Save The Date - Jazz by Candle-light

It is some way off but for those of you who like to plan ahead, keep the evening of **Saturday 6th March 2027** free for a *Music For All* event in our lower hall – ***Jazz By Candle-Light***.

Spring 2026 was our first jazz evening and this new venture was very well received. It sold out very quickly and made £1444 (£900 towards our refurbishment project).

Back by popular demand in March 2027 is the **Lorna Reid quartet**. We are absolutely thrilled that Edinburgh-based Lorna has agreed to appear again at NLK. A widely acclaimed vocalist and recording artist, Lorna has been described as having the blues of Bessie Smith; the swing of Ella Fitzgerald; the heart of Billie Holiday and the soul of Nina Simone. She has appeared in jazz festivals in London, Edinburgh and New York and will be joined on stage again by hugely talented jazz instrumentalists – Campbell Normand on electric keyboard, Andy Mitchell on string bass and Jim Drummond on drums.



It will be candle-lit tables of six to eight and a b.y.o.b. event. Group bookings can be requested but not guaranteed. Paper tickets will be available but online sales will also be possible via Ticket Source.

Get this one in your new diaries and if you are determined not to miss out Noel Patterson will be happy to take a note of names for a waiting list before tickets are available in the new year.



Eco Congregation – Gold Award Success

I am delighted to share the news that we were successful in obtaining our Gold award from Eco Congregation Scotland in September. This was celebrated during our Harvest Thanksgiving service ,where we recognised the linkage between climate change, effect on our planet and our efforts as a congregation to do our bit to reduce the impact. The work does not stop here but we are moving to a programme of maintenance.

We have secured funding to support our bio diversity project into another year where we encourage community groups and our youth organisation to grow their own vegetables to use when cooking. This not only raises awareness and improves the skills of our young people, but also helps to address food poverty in the local communities.

As a church, we are continuing to improve our energy efficiency where possible, and the new lighting in the halls will demonstrate this before our sanctuary refurbishment begins.

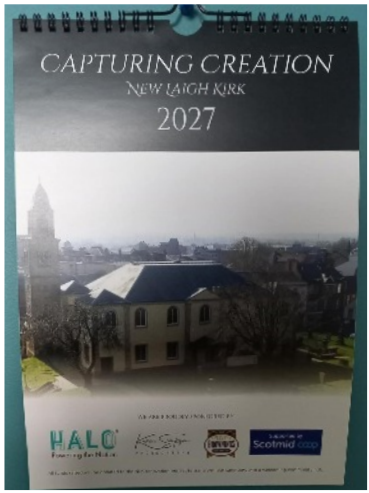
Ideas on recycling continue to flow from the congregation, and we have linked up with our 15th Kilmarnock Rainbows for the recycling of ink cartridges from printers. This is a fund-raising activity for the girls, so please bring along old cartridges and place them into the box beside our battery collection point.

The broader recycling continues – I am on almost first name terms with the pharmacy team – and our glasses are returned to Specsavers; mobile phones and cabling to Currys.

As we move into 2027 and the refurbishment of our sanctuary, this brings new opportunities for us. We may need to be mindful of our limited space in the halls for some of the recycling, but this will be maintained as much as possible, given what will be available.

And as the clear out of the church begins ahead of the work, it has been amazing to see how much has been recycled or redistributed to other locations or other uses – a huge thank you to the team for this!

And lastly – our Creation Calendar is for sale. This showcases our 12 winning images from the photography competition and is available from the church, priced at £6.50. An ideal Christmas gift!



Elaine Paton

Highlights Club

Our new session got underway in September with a cookery demonstration and tasting of Caribbean food, courtesy of Reggaelicious.
Derek gave an interesting and entertaining talk on their journey to where their business is now, with a restaurant in the town centre, and also how his faith had influenced that journey. He and his assistant Rebecca went on to demonstrate how to prepare and cook plantain. The ladies were then able to taste not only the plantain, but also a variety of other Caribbean food, which he had prepared earlier. The food was delicious, with many of the ladies commenting that they loved plantain, having never tasted it before.







The food theme (which is close to our hearts) continues with our Christmas night out on Monday 30th November, when we are going to the Park Hotel for a festive afternoon tea (in the evening!) The menu looks delicious and we are looking forward to this lovely start to the festive season.

If you are a member of the Highlights, and are not in our WhatsApp group, please contact me with your mobile number and I will be delighted to add you. If you do not use WhatsApp, please let me have your email address so that we can keep in touch.

For more information on the Highlights, please contact me on 543488 or 07887 541651, or any of the committee.

On behalf of the committee and all the Highlights ladies, we would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas when it comes, and a happy, healthy and peaceful new year.

Eileen Murphy, Chairperson

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YOGA

Are you looking to improve your physical well-being in the new year? Interested in some gentle movement and breathing practices along with deep relaxation? Then the weekly Thursday evening yoga class at New Laigh Kirk Halls might be for you!

Yoga classes restart on Thursday 7 January 2027, in the upper hall, from 7.30 to 9 pm. They cost £7 and are run on a drop-in basis. Beginners welcome. For further information please contact Fiona Hayes, yoga teacher, on 07887 840957 or fionadhayes@hotmail.com.

Fiona Hayes



As we begin to look forward to Christmas and seeing our Nativity sets with baby Jesus lying in the manger, it occurs to me that there is a big chunk of Jesus' life that is missing from the bible. It jumps more or less from the Christmas story to the beginning of his ministry at the age of about 30. I suppose this is because it concentrates on him being the Son of God, come into the world to atone for our sins and bring us into eternal communion with God.

However, Jesus is described as being fully human as well as fully divine. So what about Jesus, the man? I have always enjoyed hymn 166, "Lord of all hopefulness" which says, 'his strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe.' I imagine that Jesus learned his trade as a carpenter from his father Joseph and presumably took over the family business after his father's death. I remember a lady in my district used to speak fondly of how her father was proud of his own trade because, as he used to say, "Jesus was a joiner."

This surely adds to our appreciation of scripture. For example when Jesus tells followers, "Come to me all who are weary and heavy-laden, for I will give you rest. My yokes are easy and my burdens light." Was he having a little joke with them about his job and the fact that he made good yokes for cattle, which helped them bear the loads they carried and pulled? If they could trust his work as a carpenter, then perhaps that helped them to trust his words as a preacher. I wonder if he made mangers for cattle too!

We continue to meet in prayer online on the first Wednesday of the month, usually at 6.30pm, led by our minister, David. There is also an

in person meeting at Inspire! on the second Wednesday of the month at 11am in the session room at the church. Although these groups are small, we believe that where even a few are gathered in his name, Jesus is there with us. Anyone is very welcome to attend, just ask for details.

In the meantime, here are some suggestions for your own prayer times:

- Please pray that the work on our church building, which we hope will start in the new year, will go smoothly and well.
- Pray for all the extra work that Advent entails for our minister and others in our church. May it be a blessing to us all.
- Pray that the Christmas message may flood out from our church and all churches in our town, into the community round about us. We have a Gospel to proclaim!
- Pray for all those who approach Christmas with sore hearts – the bereaved, the lonely, those dealing with serious illness, those suffering family breakdowns. It is not a happy time for everyone. Let us try to be supportive and loving.
- And let us continue to pray for Peace on Earth. Let there be peace, joy, hope and love, in Jesus' name.

Happy Christmas and may God bless us, every one!

Lesley Wright

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The Guild

The Guild Coffee Morning took place on Saturday, 29th August from 10 till noon and raised the sum of £920. This allows our guild to support the four projects linked with our 3 year "Let us build a house" theme. A big thank-you to all those who supported our efforts in any way, especially those who came along on the day!

This was an encouraging start to our session. After "Sure Foundations" and "Living Stones", our theme this year is "Beyond the Walls." Our speaker for our opening meeting on 14th September was Barbara Urquhart and she made the point that we do not have the confidence to move out of our comfort zone unless we are first sure about our standpoint. She asked us to share our first memories of going to church after she recalled that she had often wished her mum could not go one Sunday, so that she could sit beside the lady who looked after unaccompanied children and passed them sweets during the service! She also recalled her first Guild committee meeting when she was age 4 and her mum could not get a baby-sitter! Several members also shared their memories, mostly amusing rather than religious! However, from these early influences and later invitations, our faith has been nurtured and made us the people we are today. Barbara's words reinforced the words of the Moderator at the Annual Gathering which four of us attended, that 'mission' might just be speaking to a friend about the church or inviting someone to the Guild. And we have two new members!

At our meeting on 28th September, we welcomed James Fraser who told us about Operation Hope which is one of the current Guild

projects. The charity running this project used to be Release International but has now been changed to Voice of Persecuted Christians. They support Christians in 30 different countries but Operation Hope is based in Egypt. This country is of course mentioned in many parts of the bible and at one time had a strong Christian community, the Coptic Church. However, Islam is now the main religion of the country and its government, and Christians are very much treated as second-class citizens. Operation Hope helps improve their houses and living conditions and provides start-ups for small businesses, such as sewing machines, so that women have some extra money to provide food, medicine and education for their families. James was an excellent speaker who had been to Egypt to see the work in progress. I enjoyed it so much I forgot to take a photo! It's good to know how our donations are used and we were also urged to remember all those involved in prayer.

We were supposed to have a speaker from Centrestage at our next meeting on 12th October but unfortunately he took ill at the last moment and had to cancel. However, we managed to organise a wee beetle drive and a pleasant evening was had, after much explanation of the rules for those who had not 'beetled' for many years! Moving tables also caused much confusion, but there was a great deal of fun and laughter and the prizes went to Margaret Taylor and Janice Grant. Then we enjoyed tea, coffee and cake together and swapping places meant we had chatted to even more folk than usual.

October 26th was a big day for me. My younger son arrived from America with his girlfriend to visit his old mum and be best man at my older son's wedding on Hallowe'en. Because of this, I was unable to attend the Guild that evening. However, Janice Grant agreed to lead the meeting, ably assisted by other guild members. The speaker was Jon Herd who spoke about his visit to Spain to take part in the 'Camino di Santiago' pilgrimage. I am assured that Jon described it so well that the members felt they had been on the journey with him. But not so hard on their feet!

We are now well into the session and as I write this there are still two meetings and our Christmas lunch to go this year. However, I take this opportunity on behalf of the Guild of wishing you all the blessings of the Christmas season. And in case you were wondering, the wedding was wonderful!

Lesley Wright

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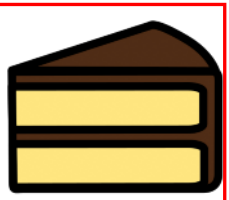
THANK YOU



As we approach the year end, I would like to say a massive thank you to all the volunteers who help with tea and coffee after church on Sundays.

It is very much appreciated by myself and all who participate in this time of friendship and fellowship.
If anyone feels they could help please speak to me at church or phone me on 01563 53381 to discuss.

Thanks once again,

Anne Kidd



Amy - Community and Families

Hello everyone!

I hope everyone has enjoyed a wonderful autumn season. At New Laigh Kirk, we are excited and preparing for an eventful festive season ahead, with music and concerts and pantos…oh my!

Our Christmas Light Switch On takes place on Sunday 29th November, from 12:30pm–4:30pm in the church. We have a fantastic afternoon planned, with festive live entertainment from a variety of our community music groups, helping to get everyone into the Christmas spirit, as well as seasonally themed activities and stalls that might help with your Christmas list. It promises to be a wonderful afternoon for all ages!

The festive celebrations continue with our NLK Christmas Concert on Friday 11th December at 7:30pm. Join us for an evening of Christmas music, familiar favourites and festive cheer. Our worship band, as well as some exceptionally talented singers, are gathering to perform some of your favourite Christmas hits that the whole family can enjoy! So come along and unwrap the magic of Christmas together! Tickets are only £6 and can be purchased directly from me or online through our Ticket Source link: www.ticketsource.com/new-laigh-kirk-kilmarnock

Our youth are also getting into the festive spirit! Trekkers are selling a Christmas recipe book to help raise funds for our youth activities. These make a lovely addition to any kitchen and are a great way to support our young people. Further details will be shared through our website and social media channels, and copies will also be available to purchase in the church.

Away from the Christmas preparations, our community groups and outreach work continue to flourish. Little Seeds Baby and Toddler

Group is still thriving, supported by a fantastic and busy team, with our waiting list continuing to grow. It is wonderful to see so many families connecting and enjoying time together through the group.
I have also been enjoying my work within two of our local primary schools, delivering Religious and Moral Education (RME) to classes across different age groups. This includes a special Nativity series with Primary 1 pupils, which has been going well. It is a real joy to be able to share Bible stories, explore faith and build connections with children in our local schools.

There is certainly plenty happening at New Laigh Kirk, and as always, we are grateful for the many people who give their time, energy and enthusiasm to make our church such a vibrant part of the community. Whether you are joining us for a festive event, getting involved in one of our groups or simply coming along for a visit, there is always a warm welcome waiting for you at NLK! Let's celebrate the season together!

Amy

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THANK YOU

Following my fall earlier this year I would like to thank everyone for the cards, flowers and other gifts given to me. The love, support and encouragement were greatly appreciated and meant so much.

It's lovely to be back at Church with you all and feel part of our Church family.

Very many thanks again.

Anne Kidd.


NLK
CHRISTMAS CONCERT!
Come and unwrap the magic of Christmas
DECEMBER 11TH
7:30PM
NEW LAIGH KIRK
JOHN DICKIE STREET
Scan for tickets
OR VISIT
www.ticketsource.com/new-laigh-kirk-kilmarnock
Celebrating Christmas Together

Post A Poem

New Laigh has a proud history of encouraging and inspiring the arts and local artists, most recently with a photography competition on the theme of creation, organised by our gold award Eco group, as well as numerous music for all and drama events.

Perhaps some of you have noticed an exciting new Scots poetry competition organised by *Ayrshire 360* in collaboration with local organisations and businesses. Our Kirk celebrates the written and spoken word routinely and famously the Bard himself alluded to the church and the minister in his 1786 poem – " *Swith to the Laigh Kirk ane an' a'* " (The Ordination)

We at *New Laigh Kirk* have partnership as a key element of our *Vivid Vision,* and we were very pleased to be involved in the first of these *Post A Poem* monthly competitions which took place in August of 2026. The theme of **FAITH** was selected and the competition attracted numerous quality entrants. After a lot of discussion, the worthy winner was selected by a panel of judges. Margaret Patterson, our Depute Session Clerk, represented NLK on the judging panel.



Congratulations go to **Fiona Johnson,** pictured here, who received the top prize for her topical entry **'Coorie Doon'** in the **'Faith'** category of the *Post A Poem* competition.

"**Coorie Doon**" – *Fiona Johnson*

Whan yer cooried doon in yer
couthy bed the nicht,
wull ye spare a thocht
fur a wummin an hur weans,
sleepin oan the subway flair

efter the sirens soondit oot
oan another nicht in Kyev?
Dae ye ken whit it's lik,
listenin oot fur Shahed drones
as thae terget yer hame?
Whit maun it be lik nicht efter nicht
waitin fur the aw-clear tae soond?
Wid ye still be staunin,
Impossible to brek?
Wid ye still hink Scotland's
Best days wur still aheid?
The strangest wappon Ukraine
ever hud is no a missile –
it's folk wha will nae gae in.
They're the proof thit courage an hope
can become a Nation.
Coud ye lie there hinkin o
the wildflooer meadows o Ukraine,
kennin that the day wull come
Whin you'll gang there agin?
The wummin an her weans are
wauchtit, but wull never kneel.
Hope, faith an courage ar
their silent wappons.
Slava Ukraini!

Another, related competition is now taking place to invite art work inspired by Fiona's poem and Margaret represents NLK again in the *Ayrshire 360* judging panel at the Dick Institute.

Iain Sandison - A visit to Israel

For a long time I wanted to visit Israel, but there were always reasons not to go. Eventually I decided there was unlikely to be an ideal opportunity, and I travelled in early October.

Israel and Palestine together amount to only about one third of the size of Scotland, yet such huge significance attaches to that small part of the world, largely composed of desert.

The three religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam all have claims, particularly in the city of Jerusalem. The old city is divided into four 'quarters' for Jews, Muslims, Christians and Armenians (who are also Christians). Within the old city is the Western Wall, which is what remains of the temple complex of King Herod the Great. Above that is the compound including the Dome of the Rock, the third most holy site of Islam. In the Christian Quarter is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built on the site of the crucifixion, burial and resurrection. That all adds up to a constant state of tension and sporadic violence within the old city. The narrow alleys are one thing in daytime, but as a stranger I would be very reluctant to wander there after dusk.

A huge contrast is West Jerusalem. It feels less like the Middle East and more similar to a prosperous city in Europe or America. There is a lot of development taking place, and everything feels a bit expensive.

On a prominent site in West Jerusalem the Church of Scotland has a church with adjacent hotel. It is all beautifully maintained, but when I went there I was told 'there is no priest', contrary to the website suggesting there would be a service at 10am.

The YMCA Three Arches Hotel is a lovely building, but that also appears to be underused at present.

A visit to Bethlehem underlined the current state of affairs. Previously the town benefited from considerable tourism, but since the attack by

Hamas three years ago there are much fewer visitors to the Church of the Nativity, and it is clear that the local economy is suffering greatly.

Even in our own country, far from Israel/Palestine there are strong views on events there. It has been going on for a long time, and there is no peaceful solution in sight. The local people may be accustomed, but as a visitor it is disturbing how many guns are carried by army, police, even by Jewish civilians. The watchtowers, barriers and fortified checkpoints erected by the state of Israel are intimidating.
With a Palestinian Christian guide I was able to visit the West Bank including some time at the River Jordan. The Greek Orthodox Church of St. John the Baptist is directly across the river, in the country of Jordan. There has been very little rain and the river is diminished by water being drawn for use in irrigation etc, with the result that the Dead Sea is drying out.

Since I was there an election has been held in Israel. Candidates were elected for 13 different parties (I think). The Palestinian Israeli citizens seem fairly united, but the Jewish support is spread across a rainbow from parties representing the ultra-Orthodox religious communities through to secular socialists. What the election results will mean for the future of Israel and Palestine is difficult to say.

The Christians in Israel are no more united. Disputes at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre resulted in a bizarre deal between the Greek Orthodox, the Roman Catholic and the Armenian denominations each having responsibilities for parts of the building, services and rituals that do not coincide.

The original Christian sites I visited in Israel, apart from the baptismal site at the River Jordan, are extremely elaborately decorated, and coming from our background this made me feel slightly uncomfortable. All the gold, jewels, lanterns etc. detracted from the original simplicity. Having said that, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be there. It clearly showed, despite falling numbers in Scotland, Christianity continues as a highly powerful force in the world.



All three sections of 4th/5th Kilmarnock BBs have restarted after the summer. There are still spaces available for any boys who are interested - come along and bring a friend too!

Age groups, meeting times and locations are below:

Anchor Boys: Ages 5+ to P3
St. Marnock's Halls on Fridays from 6pm to 7pm.

Junior Section: ages P4 to P6
St. Marnock's Halls on Fridays from 7:15pm to 9:15pm.

Company/Senior section: P7 to S6
Laigh Halls in John Finnie Street on Fridays from 7pm to 9:30pm.

The Junior section visited Kilmarnock Police station to get an insight into how the police keep the streets safe. A Police Officer, Sgt. Woodley, also visited the Company Section to talk about the police's role in the community.

The Heartstart organisation, who train people in CPR and life-saving skills, visited and demonstrated how to respond in an emergency and help save a life.

The 4th/5th participated in the community litter pick, organised by the New Laigh Kirk, and tidied up the area around the Howard and Kay parks. The boys especially appreciated the tubs of ice cream donated by the Forum ice cream shop as a reward for their efforts.

The boys enjoyed a Battalion trip to the Airsoft and Assault Course at Ayrshire Assault Courses ,just outside Galston , and 3rd Galston

Company organised a well attended Archery day at their halls. Our boys turned out to be naturals at this and placed first!



Our victorious archers.

The Company dedication and enrolment parade to St. Marnock's Church was cancelled this year because of the atrocious weather but the service itself went ahead. The Company would like to thank Helen Cuthbert and the congregation for making us feel so welcome,



The Company parade service

We are having a Coffee Morning to raise funds for the Company on **Saturday 14th November** at the **Howard Centre from 10am to 12 noon**. Tickets are available from Elaine Park or any boy or leader.

The Company have entered the full gamut of BB national competitions and hope to repeat the successes of previous years in these.

It was with deep regret that we learned that our Captain, David McDonald, passed away on Wednesday 7th October. David was an outstanding Captain of 4th/5th Kilmarnock Boys Brigade, who was totally committed to the Company and the boys within it. David served for over 50 years, initially as Officer In Charge of Junior Section, then as Company Captain and will be sadly missed.

Please hold David's family in your thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.

Sure and Stedfast
A Tribute to David McDonald, Captain
4th/5th Kilmarnock Company, The Boys' Brigade

Some people join the Boys' Brigade. Others become part of its very fabric. David McDonald was undoubtedly one of the latter. His commitment was a lifelong passion to the extent that the boundaries between family life and BB life were often blurred!

It began in 1974, when his brother Stuart persuaded him to become a helper in the Junior Section. David became Officer in Charge, moving to the Company Section in 1988. More than fifty years later, his influence remains woven into the Company's history.

David believed the BB offered something special because it welcomed boys of different interests and abilities. There was something for everyone – football, badminton, table tennis, pool, chess, competitions, Bible Class, camps and countless other activities. David made sure there was always plenty to do!

His dedication was extraordinary, often spending seven nights a week travelling around Kilmarnock and beyond. He personally encouraged boys through their awards, including the President's and Queen's Badge programmes, helping generations discover abilities they never knew they possessed.

David had a particular gift for recognising potential. He would encourage you, challenge you and, if necessary, give you a push in the right direction. Sometimes he would even volunteer you before you had the chance to volunteer yourself! If you thought you were Mr McDonald's favourite, Dave's favourite, Davie's favourite or McDee's favourite, you might well have been right. Every boy mattered.
His philosophy was simple: "You only get back what you put in."

David certainly led by example. He was never content to stand on the sidelines, making himself the personal nemesis of generations of boys. Whether football, badminton, pool or Bulldog, he was always ready for a contest. Competition was a passion, with the 4th/5th enjoying success at Battalion and national level, including repeated UK National Masterteam victories and national five-a-side competitions. David was particularly proud of the Company, which he believed had become one of the finest in the country.

Camps at Lendalfoot, Girvan and Largs, and legendary summer adventures in Spain, created memories of pillow fights, football, beach runs, swimming pools, teenage romances and David's occasionally questionable culinary contributions, which will live long in the memory!

Yet trophies and competitions were never the real objective. They were simply a means of helping boys discover what they could achieve. David was also fortunate to have the support of countless officers, helpers, drivers, cooks, tea ladies, ministers and, of course, his own family, including Marilyn, Steven, Mark and his grandsons, who shared his love of the BB.

The Boys' Brigade speaks of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and Christian manliness. David may never have made great claims about his own faith, but through more than fifty years of service, encouragement and generosity, he quietly lived those values. Hundreds of boys passed through the 4th/5th Kilmarnock Company. They carry friendships, experiences and memories that will last a lifetime.

David may no longer be organising the next adventure or guarding the pool table, but his legacy lives on in every life he helped shape.

Sure and Stedfast.

David certainly was.

East Ayrshire Churches Homelessness Action
Scottish Charity SC052257

Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen;
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke.
To set the oppressed free
and break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6

EACHa held its AGM in October, and how far we have come in 21 years!

Our Chair, David, illustrated the ethos of what we do at EACHa by reading the parable of the Good Samaritan. In contrast to the others who walked by, the Samaritan saw someone in need, stopped, tended to the man's wounds and made arrangements for his care. He didn't ask if the man deserved help, or checked to see if helping him was convenient.

The Samaritan reflects EACHa's commitment to meeting people where they are, responding to immediate crises, and working with others to maintain a pathway to recovery.

Who is my neighbour? Our neighbour is the person who needs us to stop, to notice, to care and to act. Without exception. Each Person Matters.

Our Chief Executive Officer Steph reflected that it was five years since his appointment, when he was the first Recovery Hub employee, and we had no premises. We outgrew the John Finnie Street hub, and the



EACHa staff at the AGM

new hub in John Dickie Street is bursting at the seams.
The past year has been one of rapid growth in the numbers supported daily by hub staff. But every number is a person asking for help, rebuilding trust and finding the confidence to try again. The groups, peer support, outreach and digital lifelines help people maintain connections, attend appointments and deal with the practical difficulties that can hinder recovery.

He paid tribute to support worker Alistair Wyllie – Ally – who was presented with Homeless Network Scotland's Viki Fox Heart of Support at their conference in October. Ally was one of the first people EACHa supported, and today he uses his experience, compassion and determination to help others find stability and take their own steps towards recovery.

As Steph said, 'When someone who once needed support begins offering support, this is what we're aiming towards.

While Ally's award is richly deserved, it has also given national recognition to our work. We're even on the Church of Scotland website!

Michael, our Café Manager, reported on his first full year in post. This year saw the move of all Community Friends projects from the church hall to the John Dickie Street hub, although a hot lunch is still provided in the hall on Wednesdays. Breakfast is served on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, with especially high numbers on Monday mornings. This may reflect the situation where some folks have very little to eat at weekends.

During the year the social enterprise café, open to the public, opened for sit-in and takeaway lunches, as well as the Community Café on Wednesday evenings, offering a three course meal for £4, children eating free. These initiatives are staffed mainly by volunteers, offering opportunities for people to gain practical experience and build confidence. The lunches are highly recommended, as is the coffee – the best in town!

Michael's thoughts now turn to Christmas. Plans are taking shape for the EACHa Christmas lunch in our halls on Thursday 17th December. Photos in the next issue of the magazine!



Ally at Homeless Network Conference in Perth



EACHa staff at Perth, Ally with his award in the middle

At the AGM we said goodbye to John Boyle, retiring after 11 years with EACHa. We will miss John. Nothing was ever too much trouble for him.

He interacted well with everyone who came through our doors, chatting quietly and picking up any issues they might have, and referring individuals to the appropriate agency. He also kept an encouraging watch over people who had been assisted, and had turned their lives around. John has seen our charity grow out of recognition over the 11 years, and can be rightly proud of the part he has played.



John making his leaving speech



David congratulates John on his retirement

As ever, our heartfelt thanks for all for your support – your donations of cash and goods, your time as volunteers, and most of all your prayers.

Michael Smith tel 07484 432790
Janice Grant tel 07581 722331

Fellowship of

Kilmarnock & District Churches

Carols at the Cross

Saturday 19 December 11 a.m. 12 noon



Sing favourite carols with the Salvation Army in the town centre.

Warm up with hot drinks & music at New Laigh Kirk at noon!

Church Register

Baptism

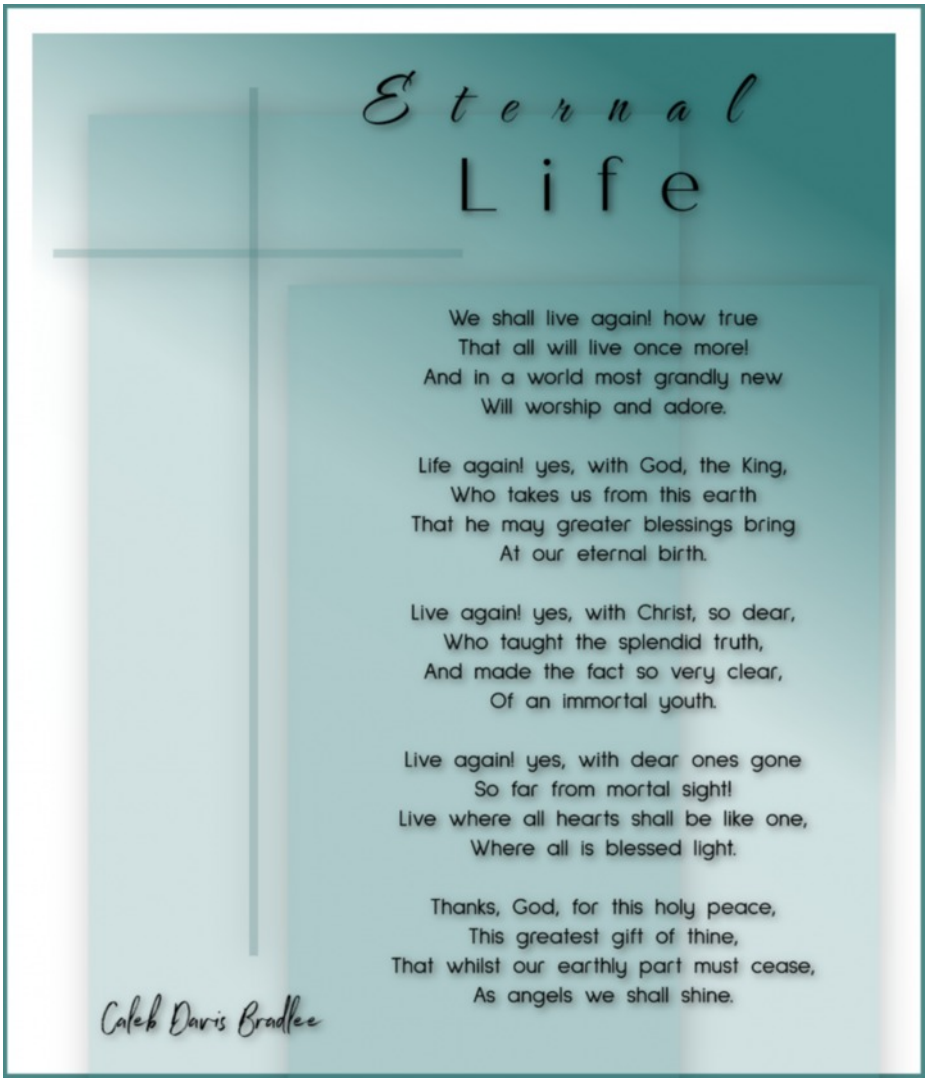
25th Oct 2026

Abbey Hastings	11 Dungavel Road, Kilmarnock
Luca Godlewski	11 Dungavel Road, Kilmarnock
Lara Godlewska	11 Dungavel Road, Kilmarnock

Funerals

1st Sept 2026	Andy King (E)	20 Largs Ave, Kilmarnock
7th Sept 2026	Catherine Marshall	96 Altonhill Ave, Kilmarnock
24th Sept 2026	Ian MacDonald (M)	17 Grange Terrace, Kilmarnock
29th Sept 2026	Bill Turner (E)	59 Loudoun Ave, Kilmarnock.
8th Oct 2026	Robert Taylor (E)	28 Bridgehousehill Rd, Kilmarnock.
20th Oct 2026	Jean Gibson (M)	116 Dundonald Road, Kilmarnock
27th Oct 2026	David McDonald (M) BB Capt	3 Carmel Place, Kilmaurs
28th Oct 2026	Joyce Smyth (M)	2 Toponthank Lane, Kilmarnock

4th Nov 2026	Mary Dale (M)	Howard House Nursing Home, Kilmarnock
16th Nov 2026	Maud Lochhead (M)	6 Charles Street, Kilmarnock
26th Nov 2026	Michael Ross	Argyll House Nursing Home, Kilmarnock



Christmas Services

at New Laigh Kirk

11.00am Each Sunday Advent Worship

6 Dec 7.00pm Christmas Memorial Service

11 Dec 7.30pm Christmas Concert

13 Dec 3.00pm Nine lessons and Carols

19 Dec 11.00am Carols at the Cross King St.

20 Dec 11.00am Christmas Nativity Service

20 Dec 6.30pm Christingle Service

Christmas Eve 11.00pm Carol Singing

11.30pm Watchnight Service

Christmas Day 11.00am Family Service

http://www.nlk.church/

