

THE BRIDGE



Lent 2026

Smart Phones

Break The Debt Blues

Pastoral Care Questions



Muthill Parish Church
MID WINTER EDITION FEBRUARY 2026

Key Articles In This Edition:

Pastoral Letter	Page 3
Editorial	Page 5
Lent 2026	Page 8
Smart phones	Page 12
God in the Sciences	Page 14
Developing Pastoral Care	Page 16
Kirk and Community News	Page 18
Jane Haining	Page 25
Latest Books Review	Page 28
Breaking the debt blues	Page 31

Important Notice

Moderator's Visit, Sunday 22nd March, 2026



On Sunday 22nd March, we will be privileged to welcome Rt. Rev. Rosemary Frew, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to take part in a celebration of the bi-centenary of the laying of the Church's foundation stone. The Moderator will be preaching at our morning

service starting at 10.30am and at this service, there will also be presentation of long service certificates. Afterwards, she will join us for a congregational lunch. We are naturally hoping for a big attendance and that members of the church family will be willing to help with the catering for this important event. **Please put this date in your diary.**

Pastoral Letter

Dear friends,

There was a meeting of the Presbytery of Perth in early February. One of the items on the agenda concerned the future of the parish of Muthill. The wishes of the Kirk Session have been conveyed to the Presbytery representatives who have visited us over the last year or so and it is good to



report that our views have been listened to. The proposal now is that the congregations of Ardoch and Blackford, which are now united, are to link with Muthill. The new charge will have an allocation of 0.5 of a full-time minister. The linkage will become effective on the demission of the present incumbent at Ardoch and Blackford. Until The Rev. Mairi Perkins demits her charge, Muthill will remain as a vacancy and operate as it has been doing for the past three or four years. The effect of this is that, when the vacancy at Ardoch and Blackford

occurs, we will share with them in the choice of a new minister. Until then we continue as at present, and I should like to take this opportunity of thanking the ministers and others who have been making themselves available to us to conduct our services. We are very fortunate in those that we have coming. A special word of thanks to Ian Roy who has now left us and is giving help at Crieff Parish Church, which is his home congregation. He has been a good friend to Muthill in the past and his services have been greatly appreciated.

In the past year or so, we have seen a slight increase in the size of our membership roll and in the attendance at worship services. This is in the right direction, and we welcome those who have joined us recently.

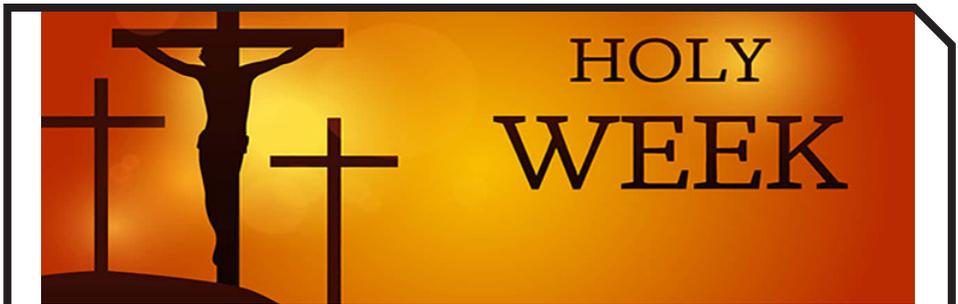
As to the more immediate future, the month of March this year marks the bicentenary of the laying of the foundation stone of the present church building. The local masonic lodge holds much relevant information about the church building in the last two hundred years, and they have offered to

come and share some of that with us at the service on Sunday 15th March. On the following Sunday 22nd March, I am delighted to say that we are having a visit from The Rt. Rev. Rosemary Frew, who is Moderator of the General Assembly of The Church of Scotland. This is a great honour for our church, and I hope that everyone will make a special effort to be present that day. There is more about the visit elsewhere in this magazine. Meantime, please note the date in your diary and keep it free.

Finally, can I pass a word of thanks to everyone who is involved in running or leading any of the organisations of the congregation? There are many people who have one, or sometimes more than one job to do. I am very much aware of the enthusiasm with which tasks are addressed, and it bodes well for the future. Please do know that whether you serve coffee, wash the dishes, help with sound and vision, help with the community lunches or any of the dozens of jobs that need to be done, your work in God's service here in His Church is hugely appreciated.

With every blessing and good wish,

Iain F. Paton- Interim Moderator.



Special Services for Holy Week, Easter and Beyond

Sunday 29th March	Palm Sunday	10.30am
Friday 3rd April	Good Friday	07.00pm
Sunday 5th April	Easter	10.30am

Holy Communion

Sunday 10th May	Holy Communion	10.30am
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Editorial

I have now been Editor of The Bridge for over 4 years and sadly I feel a bit disillusioned when I reflect on the state of our national church at the present time. This also applies to our own church, where, despite increasing attendance, I still see no evidence of new families and younger folk. We also continue to lack enough people willing to help with mission work our church.



The future of both our national and local church lies in gaining families and younger membership who bring new ideas and liveliness to our proceedings. Indeed, as we saw so clearly in the series of Alpha videos on growing churches, shown at morning worship towards the tail end of last year, there is a fundamental choice for all Kirk Sessions and congregations faced with ageing congregations as to whether they want a future or not. If we, in Muthill Parish Church, want this, then our church leaders, of which I am one, must address this now and adjust priorities accordingly. I know that this will not be easy but drifting and complacency or even waiting for higher authorities in the Church of Scotland to dictate our way forward could be a route to an end that none of us want. God, I feel sure wants us as the current wbody of committed Christians in our church to take innovative decisions on how to engage with our community telling them of His love and of the benefits that come from being a believer and part of a church family. Few, I think, would question that a balanced all-age church family is a must for our church's future.

In so saying, I must stress that I am not in any way being critical of the efforts that are made by those who are currently active in our church mission. Rather, what I would like to see is a clearly defined plan in our church towards enlarging our congregation with families and younger folk

leading to a better balanced church family. Nor am I saying that we should shirk any responsibilities we have to our current older membership which makes up the majority of our church family. I am amongst that majority but I do want to feel that I am part of a healthy all-age church family. I am also confident that the vast majority of our older age members would agree with me and would confirm that our primary efforts should therefore be focused on the future of our church and that means on gaining families and younger people.

At present, I sadly do not see this happening, and any initiatives taken I have always felt have been more reactive in nature than part of a clearly produced plan. We have no youth committee. We have no convener for adult or youth education and the regular families that attend church services continue to rightly express concern about the nature of our worship, the lack of any consistent infusion of modern joyful praise and concerns still continue with the style and content of worship which remains heavily weighted towards an older congregation. There are also virtually no activities for families and younger people that encourage their active participation and growth in the church family.

I accept that achieving an equitable balance of provision for different age groups is not easy to achieve and this is further limited by the fact that we do not currently have the benefit of leadership from an incumbent minister day by day engaging with the community we are seeking to serve. What is also worrying from my viewpoint is that this status is likely to continue for at least another couple of years. It is also now about 9 months since our Congregational Away Day very clearly raised concern on these matters seeking more all-age experimentation and yet there is little evidence to date that this is happening or indeed there is any planning. Resources, I accept, are always tight in any small organisation and I have also heard “we have tried that before”. Nevertheless I feel the time is ripe for the creation of a clear plan with clear objectives which the congregation can be enthusiastic about even if it means discarding some aspects of our current activities to make it possible. Balanced growth in our church family will only be achieved, I feel, if our congregation knows that there is a clearly thought-out strategy that they can support and which they see is being actioned step by step. It will, of course, require each member of our congregation to be involved in whatever way they are able. Cultural change can only ever be properly achieved when we all move in the same direction and act together with enthusiasm.

The Big Bash!



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ONE STORY WAS ABOUT A RICH MAN WHO DECIDED TO HAVE A PARTY

HE SENT OUT LOTS OF INVITATIONS



OH! NO!!

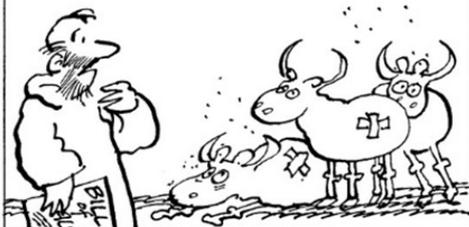


BUT PEOPLE STARTED MAKING EXCUSES

ONE MAN SAID HE HAD BOUGHT A FIELD, BUT NEEDED TO MEASURE IT



ANOTHER MAN SAID HE NEEDED TO TEST DRIVE THE OXEN HE HAS JUST PAID FOR



ANOTHER MAN SAID HE HAD JUST GOT MARRIED - AND HIS WIFE WOULDN'T LET HIM OUT!

SO THE RICH MAN INVITED ALL THE POOR AND NEEDY INSTEAD.



YES - I CAN COME TO YOUR PARTY

THE PARABLE MEANS WE SHOULDN'T MAKE EXCUSES FOR NOT FOLLOWING JESUS.

Lent 2026

Lent, the 40 day period running up to Easter in 2026, runs from Wednesday 18th February, the day after Shrove Tuesday to Thursday 2nd April, which is



the last day of Epiphany. Lent is celebrated as a season for Christians to reflect on the suffering and death of Jesus so as to enter into the joy of His resurrection.

Many of Christians fast during Lent or give up some of their usual routine to give time to personal examination and to reflect on their relationship with God. A recent survey on fasting during this period found the following:

94% Black Majority Churchgoers give up all food for a set time.

85% of Orthodox churchgoers cut out specific foods and/or drinks.

83% of Pentecostal churches give up all food for a set time.

79% of Roman Catholics cut out specific foods and/or drinks.

76% of New Churches give up all food for a set time.

57% of C of E cut out specific foods and/or drinks

30% or less of Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists cut out specific foods and/or drinks.

The survey was done by the charity Green Christian

There will be no Lent reading sheets at the Welcome Desk this year but the attached letter may help you to reflect on this season:

'Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me.' (Luke 9: 23)

These words of Jesus are spoken at a turning point in the gospel. Jesus challenged the disciples about His identity and their commitment to Him: *'who do the crowds say I am?'* (Luke 9:18). It is at this point that He *'resolutely set out for Jerusalem'* (9:51). On our journey through Lent, as we look to the events of Good Friday and Easter, what are our priorities as Jesus' disciples?

To deny ourselves: this means to saying *No* to ourselves and *Yes* to God,

as we humbly submit our will to His. Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane *'not My will but Yours be done.'* (Luke 22:42). It means putting Jesus first in everything: our work, family, ambitions, possessions, marriage, finance and future. We will not be guided by self-interest, but by allowing God to show us how to live in His way.

To take up our cross: this reminds us that the disciple is not immune from suffering, as we follow Jesus along the way of the cross. Just as He carried His cross to Golgotha, we cannot avoid experiencing suffering in a fallen world. Every day we are to live in a way that demonstrates to everyone that we have died to ourselves, our selfish ways and ambitions, and seek to live for God. It means breaking old selfish habits and ways of thinking, as we allow God to renew us by His Spirit. In all of this we cannot lose, because like Jesus, it is only through death that we find God's new life. *'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.'*

Kirk Roll

Our Kirk Roll now stands at 206 following the addition of:

Fiona MacMichael
Peter Clark
Isabel Clark
Lynne Janssen

We give our new members a very welcome to the church family.



St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 that the Spirit speaks within our hearts to call out our gifts, so that we may use them to build up the Church. But we must learn to hear the Spirit's voice; it is like a gentle whisper, a song, and it can easily be overwhelmed by our doubts, our lack of faith, and the cares of the day. Yet the song of the Spirit can make the ordinary person extraordinary. But it is our job to listen out for God's Spirit, as He sings:

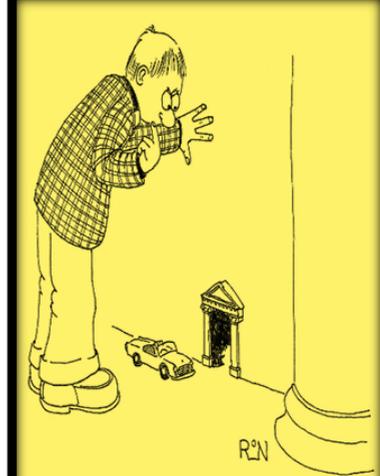
The Song of the Spirit

*O when Your Spirit softly sings
Within our hearts of stone
Lord, speak to us of godly things
And make our hearts Your home.
Sometimes our doubts like briars grow
Sometimes our faith is weak,
O Spirit, sing, that doubt may go,
Lord, help us hear You speak.
Transform us through Your Spirit's voice
And set our hearts alight,
So truly may our hearts rejoice
And shine with Godly light.
For those who hear the Spirit's song,
Are filled then with His power!
Their light shall shine the whole day long
And praise fills ev'ry hour!*

Time To Smile



Henry is making a real effort for Lent – he's giving up the remote control and walking to the TV



...and yet the Church Mice still put it about that they were poor



...er... apart from this little hiccup... it was an excellent church pancake supper...

Smart Phones - Help Or Waste Of Time?

I have been stimulated to write this short article by the considerable discussion in government and across the media on the need to ban access to Apps on the internet for under sixteens. Australia has taken a brave step



politically in this field and its action, coupled with recent controversy about Ai images being broadcast without people's consent, has added much fuel to a fire which is rapidly igniting.



My personal concern is that I am rapidly becoming addicted to use of my smart phone. As a person who came to mobile phones later in life, I firstly have to admit I still have difficulty in using the technology to its full benefit, with the consequence I spend a lot of time deleting promotions that land up on my phone and exploring things that I really don't need to research. This results in wasting a lot of time flipping through images as well as probably straining my eyes.

Another factor I have noticed is there is an increasing tendency for people to communicate briefly and unnecessarily by vehicles like Whatsapp, frequently replacing face to face discussions or phone calls and thereby diminishing use of what I call "proper" communication. Handy though this is in terms of saving time, it is starting to alter the value of full interaction. This trend may also limit socialising which potentially could increase

isolation and all the problems that this can bring with it.



Of course, I can see many values in having such an instrument for safety, emergencies, ease of access to information, taking photos, Ai etc. The list of pluses is endless but, at the same time, we have to balance this with a darker side which creates potential for scamming, access to underworld sites and maybe even health risks from constant usage. So whilst smart phone usage remains important for modern living and what is

called progress there are inherent dangers which need to be controlled by society as well as personally.

Having said all this, I still doubt whether I will give up my smart phone, but I do need to put greater structure into the way I use it. Strangely enough it has also made me start to re-enjoy the more traditional ways of communication which certainly in my case produce greater thinking before acting. One result of this is that I am enjoying a decision to move back to using a fountain pen.

Wow, is this a sign of ageing or could it be there is just more inner satisfaction in using some of our classic ways of communication such as writing letters?

We need to find people from our Church family willing to help us with the following tasks:

Youth and Education Convener

Minute Clerk to Kirk Session

Fire Officer

Overseas Mission (Christian Aid) Coordinator

Summary job descriptions are available from Welcome Desk.

Please give a few hours to help us.

God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

A Bucket of Tadpoles: Springtime, Curiosity, and the Theology of Science

When I was nearly three, I knocked a bucket of tadpoles all over the patio. Those unfortunate creatures must have been collected to educate my brother and I on



where frogs came from, but a toddler can't just stand by and watch. Can I see up close? Or maybe I was 'helpfully' moving it to another place. I just remember doing something I shouldn't have done, and tadpoles on the ground. I was sad that I wouldn't get to see those creatures grow up.

I might have been great at destroying things when I was a child (my family would probably say I still am), but I absolutely love watching living

things up close. The more I learn, the more my sense of wonder grows. For a tadpole to become a frog, large sections of its gut, salivary glands and muscles must die, as well as the gills. The cells in those tissues are programmed to curl up and disintegrate, and are then swallowed up by a specialised kind of white blood cell. Legs grow from small sacs of cells on the tadpole's body, and one of my textbooks says that 'The nervous system is also remodelled' - which I suspect is a bit of an understatement.

This knowledge removes a little of the mystery of how a tadpole turns into a frog, but there is plenty more to discover. These few details also reveal the cleverness of the process. Metamorphosis is surprisingly common in the animal kingdom. How is that an efficient way to grow up, or is efficiency not the most important thing for an animal?

Scientists are essentially grown-ups who are still very much in touch with their inner two-year-old. They refuse to stop asking questions, even when finding an answer becomes decidedly more awkward than opening a textbook.

Many scientists are people of faith, and this also drives their questioning. They believe that God created a world that was very good, that the purpose of all Creation is to praise Him, that we are made in God's image, and that we are tasked with looking after Creation. So Christians, of all people, should be enjoying and investigating our surroundings. These are the bones of a theology of science which serves some of us very well, and keeps us looking into things like buckets of frogs – that is, until a two-year-old comes and knocks them over.

Sudoku

							7	2
					9	5		3
6	7			3	2	9		
9				1				
4	1	6				7	9	5
				6				1
		3	1	8			4	6
2		7	4					
8	4							

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How should our Pastoral Care Be Delivered

As we were reminded in one of our recent January sermons we all have a duty to contribute in a meaningful way to our church's mission using whatever talents we have been given.



There are many roles within a church and in its outreaches. Some are small, some are larger and sharing them all fairly lightens everyone's burden. If a role is not important to our mission, it should be dropped to enable us to concentrate on those roles deemed essential for the growth of our church and its future. We

each have to ask ourselves what are we doing to help our church beyond attending Sunday services. A church that relies only on a willing few will surely fail in time!

Pastoral care is one of the important roles in any church as it is an important part of demonstrating our faith. This means we must care as effectively as we are able for our church family and the community beyond which we are seeking to serve. In Muthill Parish Church we used to have Elders' districts and it was one of the Elders' duties to visit their assigned parishioners. This system no longer exists as it was felt that many households did not

need or want to welcome Elders into their houses, the timing of visits was often difficult to arrange and visiting was viewed by some Elders as an uncomfortable part of their responsibilities with the consequence that it was not done regularly or meaningfully. Whatever the pros and cons of this system, it is now defunct and we are faced with continuing to provide effective pastoral care in others ways.



Being a small congregation, the approach that continues in Muthill is to have a Pastoral Care Team that maintains contact with and visits the housebound and more vulnerable members of our church family. We also organise home communions, special services and arrange transport to and from church

where practical for those who want to attend our services. Our Elders further continue to review the status of people considered vulnerable and in need of support and the wider congregation is also encouraged to do this. However, there remain gaps from the former system. The service needs to be expanded beyond service to the elderly



and infirm to encompass families and new comers. The PCT currently providing the main thrust of our pastoral care service is currently only 6 in number and cannot realistically meet any expansion. This, however, is necessary if we are to increase our pastoral support to families and new comers beyond our current informal arrangements. We also need to define what and how such care can best be delivered.

Your views and ideas on this important subject would be very welcome. Further, if you might be interested in joining the PCT, we would be happy to discuss this with you. Training is provided through quarterly team meetings and also through attendance at regional meetings where appropriate. We have so far covered specialised topics like bereavement, use of prayer and we are now anxious to expand to issues such as addiction and suicide. Age is not a barrier to being part of the PCT. Rather it is more of a willingness to provide a helping hand that we are seeking. We are eager to be a church that demonstrates its pastoral care in practical ways as well as giving spiritual support. There can be small and larger roles within the team's remit. Please consider speaking to Irene Foster.

Kirk And Community News

Alpha is launched

Our Alpha Course started on 15 January and we are pleased to report that 16 people are registered, which is a very encouraging response especially as 5 are from outside the congregation and 3-4 are new comers to church attendance at Muthill. The hosts for the course, which runs until the end of March are Alex Mitchell, Helen-May Bayne, Eleri Benefield and Sandy Hutchison. There are 11 sessions in all on the course which is being held in the Bruce Hall on a Thursday night with an away day at Dunblane Cathedral in early March. We are also very pleased that the congregation has rallied to support the course with prayer and the formation of catering teams headed by Irene Foster and Sheena Plummer to support the course as fellowship over an evening meal is an important part of the course structure recommended by the Alpha organisation.



In 2024, Alpha saw over 2.1 million participants globally representing the biggest annual uptake since the course began in 1977. 81,000 courses have taken place in 146 countries and there were 8,000 courses across the UK. Research has shown that Alpha builds a culture of invitation in the church and that it is a great way of getting a whole church involved and in building a church's confidence in inviting friends and family into church life. This was confirmed in the series of videos shown at our Sunday services on growing churches in Scotland from as far afield as Edinburgh to Stornaway, Midlothian and Glasgow. In essence Alpha provides a series of interactive sessions that explore life, faith and meaning. It is hoped that our experience of running the latest course in Muthill Parish Church can be translated into an ongoing invitational culture and that Alpha courses will continue to be an important part of our mission programme.



We are also pleased that this major effort is being supported financially through the Anderson Trust.

Training for Ministry

The Church's People and Training Team has provided more information about a proposal to select an academic partner to take the leading role in the delivery of ministry training. The recommendation of the Church's Selection Panel announced on 12 January, is that Trinity College (University of Glasgow) would become the Lead Academic Partner of the Church in the training of national Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Deacons. Their recommendation is subject to certain agreements being in place and the approval of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and the General Assembly.

This is the latest step in a long trajectory of the Church to re-shape ministry training to ensure that it is more strongly focused on personal, spiritual and ministerial formation to nurture candidates in their apostolic and missional vocation and calling, in order to form them well in readiness for ministry in today's world.

The Panel will provide a full report for the General Assembly in May 2026. All of this anticipates a new and dynamic scheme of ministry training which will begin in September 2027 and will be delivered both 'in person' and via online distance learning.

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It will be set out in outline for the General Assembly as part of a revised Training Act.

The Gathering, 24 February 2026

The Gathering, Christian Aid Scotland's annual supporter event, returns on 24 February 2024 at 10.30am, online. We'll be hearing from Christian Aid's partners in Kenya, celebrating the difference we've made together over the last year and getting ready for Christian Aid Week 2026 and the year ahead. Details of how to sign up for this event can be found on the Christian Aid website under "The Gathering 2026".

The Rt Revered Rosemary Frew, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, has named Christian Aid as her chosen charity this year. She invites us all to reflect on how we show extravagant love to our global neighbours, and to join her in donating to the works of Christian Aid.

Kirk And Community News

Looking Ahead to the 2026 Scottish Parliament Elections

The 2026 Scottish Parliament elections will be a vital moment for shaping Scotland's future on poverty, justice, and climate. Christian Aid Scotland has prepared a manifesto to highlight our vision for a fairer world. Alongside this, the SIDA (Scottish International Development Alliance) Policy Priorities 2026-2031 set out key development goals, while the SCCS (Scottish Carbon Capture and Storage Research Group) Climate Manifesto offers a roadmap for urgent climate action. Together, these resources provide churches and individuals with practical tools to engage with candidates and advocate for policies that put justice, equality, and sustainability at the heart of Scotland's next chapter.

Village Celebrates Burns Night



It was good to see the village celebrating the annual anniversary of Burns Night at the Commercial Hotel on Saturday 24th January. There was a full house with the traditional meal of haggis, neeps and tatties provided by Lenka and Scott and by all accounts it was delicious!

There were also various toasts including the Address to the haggis given by Sandy Black. Robin then gave one to the Laddies and Dave McCallum toasted the lassies. The Immortal Memory was given this year by David Finnan.

The evening was also accompanied by some great music with one or two solo songs and as always the evening finished with the whole company joining in singing Auld Lang Syne.



Muthill in Bloom

Green roots volunteers together with representatives of Perth and Kinross Greenspace Team were hard at work alongside Muthill in Bloom recently on a very cold February day clearing a section of Highlandman Park to prepare a wild flower meadow. This is being constructed along with another one as part of the early plans for flowering the village over the coming Spring and Summer. After the success of last year's floral decorations around the village, Muthill in Bloom has decided once again to enter the Beautiful Scotland competition. To help with this big effort ahead it is good to note that the



Muthill team were also successful in gaining a good grant from Perth and Kinross which will go towards replacing their buggy which is needing replacement. We wish them well and hope that this will attract further volunteers so that the village will have a worthy entry and another year of beautiful floral displays.

Supporting our Red Squirrels

It was good to see our Muthill Community Council's Davie and Katy doing sterling work along Station Road to help support our red squirrel community by installing squirrel bridges. This is apparently a hot spot for them crossing the road sadly with some calamities.

You may also want to know that if you see red squirrels, any sightings should be reported to <https://scottishsquirrels.org.uk> as this helps them plan their strategy for safeguarding this endangered species.

Kirk And Community News

Kirk News

Whilst Alpha and the Presbytery Plan are probably the biggest events happening in our church at the present moment, our organisations continue their normal activities and our Kirk Session will have met by the time that this edition of the Bridge is published. Key amongst the Kirk Session's activities over the next couple of months will be the preparation of a **five year plan**. This is now required by the Church of Scotland and, with annual review and updating, it is required to cover a host of categories in our church's life including :

- Worship & Teaching
- Pastoral Care & Fellowship
- Youth & Children
- Local Mission/Community Outreach
- Wider Mission, including Ecumenism, Interfaith Relations and relationships with the World Church (as applicable)
- Finance
- Communications
- Property
- HR/Staffing within the charge e.g. MDS, Reader, locally employed staff
- Relationship with provisions of Approved Mission Plan for Presbytery

On the **property** front, our Property Convener, Graham Donaldson, has now met with the Presbytery's Property Officer on our proposed development of a new kitchen and additional toilet provision. He has confirmed that that he agrees that the proposed project is in line with our mission priorities and our outreach to the village and will be recommending to the central Church authorities that it should go ahead. It is hoped that the project will be undertaken over the summer of this year. We have also had a fire risk assessment undertaken of the church building and various more minor works have been undertaken such as the repair of a section of wood in the North Lounge which had disintegrated due to woodworm, updating of fire appliances, replacement of the kitchen water heater, and the provision of whin dust for the potholes in the church driveways. The church has also a scheduled quinquennial inspection by the Presbytery Property Officer which will take place in February.

Finally, on **Finance**, our Finance Convener, Willie Bell, reports that we ex-

Kirk News -Continue

pect a response from OSCR in March to our request for an updating of the Anderson and Hall/Red Cross Trust remits to meet modern conditions. Our various bank accounts have also almost been amalgamated to save bank charges and our investments produced a 17.3% return to the end of December 2025.

Accessible funds from the Church of Scotland's Consolidated Fabric Fund and reserve funds under the MKS Trust are healthy. We also hope to receive funds from the sale of Kinkell and Trinity Gask Church. Disbursements from the Burtenshaw Trust before Christmas 2025 amounted to £3250.

The overall position remains healthy but, as the Finance Convener reports, we are currently not paying for an incumbent minister.

Social Outreaches

Our weekly **Exercise Class** is sadly currently in abeyance due to the trainer from LiveActive Wellbeing being incapacitated due to a ruptured tendon suffered when playing netball. We are keeping our members of the class updated on the position but it may be another month before we can resume sessions. Our **Movie Nights** with St Kessog's and St James' churches continue though we miss the input of Duncan Strathie, the Rector, who ably chose movies over the past year and led our discussions. This has resulted in MPC playing a more prominent role in organising these events. We continue, however, with this year's schedule up until Easter when a longer term review will be undertaken over the recess created by the light nights. Our **Men's Group** continues to be well supported with an average attendance now of around 10 persons for our coffee chats. We have also added indoor bowls to our twice monthly activities, the other being a quiz session. When the better weather returns in Spring and Summer, we will also add excursions and coffee meets in members' gardens. Finally, our **Book Club** continues to enjoy its monthly review meetings whilst continuing to grow in membership. In all the outreaches we hope to keep growing and new members of each group are always more than welcome.

Kirk And Community News

Have you visited our Church Online Website?



We have recently spent some time updating our website, www.muthillparish-church.co.uk. Now we hope it is place that you can check out things like, our listing of visiting preachers, who's who in the church, our church history, coming events, our mission and various organisations, and a gallery of photographs. We also place past and present copies of the Bridge there together with video links to our recordings of Sunday

services. We thank Raffie Bakar for his input in this exercise and also Elaine Wallace and Sandy Hutchison who have added the script and continue to assist in updating.



Lodge St John 192 Muthill

OPEN DAY

Saturday 21ST FEB 2026

10AM - 4PM

ALL WELCOME

COME HAVE A LOOK AROUND AN
(ALMOST) 300 YEAR OLD LODGE, MEET
SOME MEMBERS AND ASK QUESTIONS
REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE
LODGE IS UP A FLIGHT OF STAIRS.

MUTHILL BOWLING CLUB FUND RAISER COFFEE MORNING

Location: MUTHILL VILLAGE HALL
Date: SATURDAY 7TH MARCH 2026.
Time: 10 AM to 11.30 AM

TOMBOLA
CAKE AND CANDY
RAFFLE
OTHERS

ALL DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

ENTRY : £3.00 (60+ : Free) INCLUDES COFFEE/TEA & CAKES

Jane Haining

The artwork for a striking new mural in Paisley to commemorate the bravery of a Scot who died in Auschwitz has been unveiled.



Jane Haining was the matron of the Scottish Mission School in Budapest, Hungary during the Second World War and refused to abandon Jewish girls in her care.

She was arrested in April 1944 and eventually deported to the

Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in Nazi-occupied Poland where she died in a gas chamber a few months later.

The town was chosen for the first wall mural in Scotland in her memory because she worked as a secretary at J&P Coats' Ferguslie Mill for 10 years before moving to Budapest in 1932 to take up her role at the Church of Scotland school.

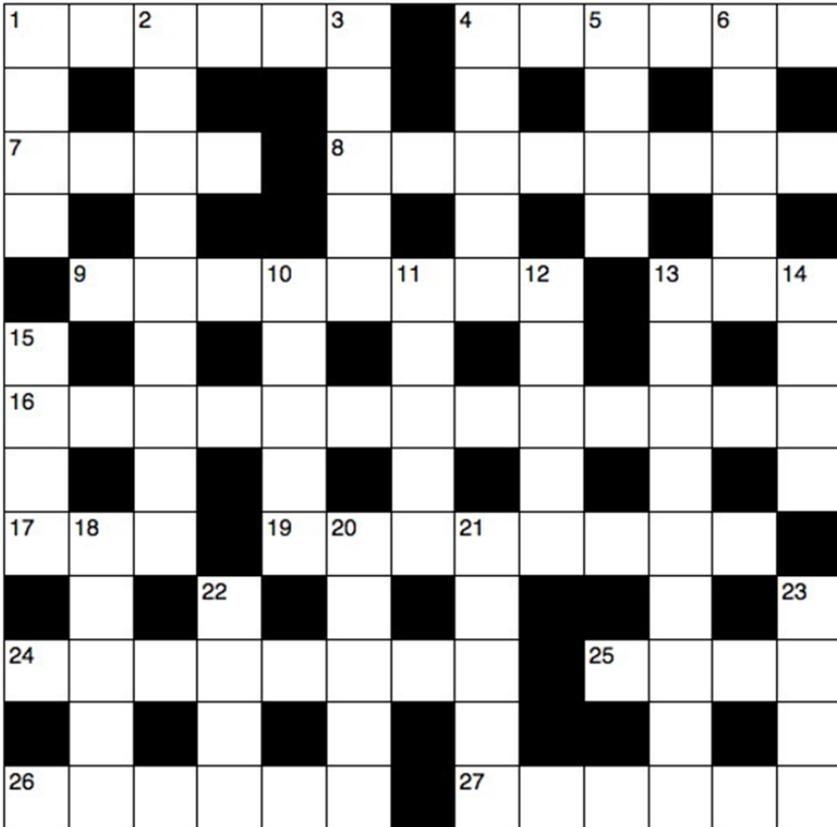
The Scottish Mission School had around 400 day and boarder pupils aged from six to 16 years old, a mixture of Jews and Christians.

Miss Haining helped keep the children safe for more than four years after the war broke out in 1939, until she was betrayed by the cook's son-in-law, whom she scolded for taking scarce food meant for the girls, some of whom were orphans or abandoned by their parents.

She was determined to stick to her post and repeatedly ignored Church of Scotland requests to return home, saying: 'If these children need me in days of sunshine, how much more do they need me in days of darkness?'

Miss Haining was arrested by German officers in April 1944 and former pupil Agnes Rostas said her haunting last words to sobbing children were: "Don't worry, I'll be back by lunch".

Crossword



Across

- 1 'If you love those who love you, what — is that to you?' (Luke 6:32) (6)
 4 'They threw the ship's — overboard' (Acts 27:19) (6)
 7 The first murderer (Genesis 4:8) (4)
 8 He was the head Levite in charge of the singing when the ark of God was brought back to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:22) (8)
 9 Samson was noted for this (Judges 16:6) (8)
 13 Solicit money or food from passers by (Acts 3:2) (3)

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- 16 What William Booth's Christian Mission became in 1878 (9,4)
17 Alliance of Religions and Conservation (1,1,1)
19 'I will praise your name for ever and ever. — I will praise you' (Psalm 145:1-2) (5,3)
24 Simon had (anag.) (8)
25 Desperate (Deuteronomy 28:48) (4)
26 Elisha witnessed the boy he was seeking to resuscitate do this seven times before opening his eyes (2 Kings 4:35) (6)
27 The belly and thighs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream were made of this (Daniel 2:32) (6)

Down

- 1 'Before the — crows, you will disown me three times' (Matthew 26:75) (4)
2 Relating to the books of the Bible between Acts and Revelation (9)
3 'They have — the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' (John 20:2) (5)
4 Belief (5)
5 'Take the following fine spices: ... 250 shekels of fragrant — ' (Exodus 30:23) (4)
6 'Do not — Jerusalem, but wait for the gift' (Acts 1:4) (5)
10 A seer (anag.) (5)
11 'Even there your hand will — me' (Psalm 139:10) (5)
12 The wild variety was part of John the Baptist's diet (Mark 1:6) (5)
13 A non-Greek speaker who was looked down on by civilized people (Colossians 3:11) (9)
14 Famous 1950s musical whose characters included members of
16 Across, — and Dolls (4)
15 The province from which Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:19) (4)
18 'He was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring — his hand' (Ezekiel 40:3) (3,2)
20 'Today, if you hear his — , do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion' (Hebrews 3:15) (5)
21 The Jericho prostitute who hid two Israelite spies on the roof of her house (Hebrews 11:31) (5)
22 'And now these three remain: faith, — and love. But the greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13:13) (4)
23 'God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end' (Daniel 5:26) (4)

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*Solution on page 31

Book Reviews



Dancing to the Heartbeat of God, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2026, SPCK, £11.99

With a foreword and an afterword by the Archbishop of Canterbury designate, an introduction by the Archbishop of York, and chapters by around thirty authors drawn from across the globe, the volume creates a sense of excitement, dynamism and faithful witness in its gloriously diverse writers and readers alike.

Its testimonies and stories aim to encourage people in the Church of England and across the Anglican

Communion to share their faith with others.

Draw Near – Life-Giving Habits for Lent

By Kate Bruce, Michael Leyden and Jessica Martin, CHP, £22.99

This is the official Church of England booklet for Lent 2026. It invites you to develop a rhythm of life that will help you grow as a disciple of Christ day by day, especially as we prepare to celebrate the mystery of God's saving love at Easter.

Each week a different contributor explores an activity central to Christian discipleship: worship, prayer, Scripture, communion, service to others and sharing the good news. For each day of Lent, it offers daily Bible readings, images, short reflections, prayers and practical responses to help you draw near to God this Lent and beyond.

Meeting God in John – a Companion for Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Beyond - By David F. Ford, SPCK, £10.99

Whether you are completely new to John's Gospel or have read it many times before, this book offers an accessible and absorbing introduction to the main message of John's Gospel, packed with compelling



observations into the personality and impact of Jesus, both in the first century and today.

It will leave you with a renewed appreciation of and enthusiasm for John's writing. Each chapter includes questions for reflection or discussion.

Reflections for Lent, Holy Week and Easter 2026 (18th February to 11th April) By Isabelle Hamlet, Ben Quash, and Carlton Turner, CHP, £5.99

This book could enhance your spiritual journey through Lent. It offers reflections from respected Christian authors on daily readings from the Common Worship Weekday Lectionary. It is aimed at both individuals and groups and provides a simple but profound daily prayer companion throughout Lent. There is also a guide to building your daily prayer into your daily life by Bishop Rachel Treweek.

Giving It Up: Daily Bible Readings from Ash Wednesday to Easter Day By Maggi Dawn, BRF Lent Book, £9.99

We all know about the practice of 'giving something up for Lent'. But how many of us know that the Lenten fast had several purposes? It was designed to be a reminder of our daily dependence on God for all our needs, to draw us closer to God in prayer, to reconnect us with the idea of community, and to help us follow Christ's journey through the wilderness and on to Jerusalem.

In this series of daily studies, Maggi Dawn shows how, throughout Scripture, people were radically changed by encountering the true God.

Wardrobes and Rings – Through Lenten Lands with the Inklings By Julia Golding, Malcome Guite, and Simon Horobin, Canterbury Press, £12.99

This book could help enrich your Lenten journey with the insight and imagination of the Oxford Inklings - a group of writers who reshaped Christian thought and storytelling in the 20th century, and who included C S Lewis and JRR Tolkien.

Wardrobes and Rings draws on their writings – their fiction, poetry, and essays – and offers daily readings and reflections that illuminate the path to the Cross and Resurrection. Weekly themes such as temptation, time, nature and creativity guide the way.

Dappled Beauty - Through Lent with Gerard Manley Hopkins
By Carys Walsh, Canterbury Press, £12.99

Gerard Manley Hopkins is one of English literature's most celebrated religious poets and a powerful companion through the Lenten season. This book takes readers on a journey of reflection and renewal, guided by Hopkins' vivid imagery, inventive language and deep theological insight.

Whether you are new to Hopkins or a long-time admirer, *Dappled Beauty* opens a poetic and prayerful path through the season, from Ash Wednesday to Easter Day.

In Quietness & Trust – Lent Devotions from the Beatitudes
By Matt Searles, 10Publishing, £6.99

Early in his ministry, Jesus gave His followers a description of how He wants His people to live. Rather than seeking to ascend to God, Christian discipleship is a downward flourishing; a counter-cultural way of blessing.

And so these 40 devotions will guide you through the beatitudes Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount. Join Jesus on His path to the cross, and see that His way – though so different to the way of the world – leads to freedom, joy, and life.

This book has eight groups of five devotions, with each group focusing on the theme of one of the beatitudes from Matthew's gospel. Each day there is a verse or passage from Scripture with an accompanying devotion, a prayer and a song.

The Man on the Middle Cross - Are You Going to Heaven?
Alistair Begg, 10Publishing , £3.99

This book focuses on three people who had their lives changed when they met Jesus. Each was given hope, restoration and a way back to God: the woman at the well, the paralysed man, and the thief on the cross. With characteristic clarity, Alistair Begg explains how this offer is open to all who come to Jesus, the man on the middle cross.

Break the Debt Blues:

Your Path Out of Debt to a Fresh Start This Year

As the post-Christmas bills continue to pile up, many of us feel under financial pressure. It can be a lonely time, but you don't have to face it alone. For Christians Against Poverty (CAP) have launched a new Five-Step Guide which is a roadmap to get you from financial worry to a fresh start.



The First Step: Reach out to CAP for free, expert advice, tailored to your specific situation. **Friendly Support:** Their local team will provide face-to-face visits and a supportive hand to hold. **An Expert Plan:** CAP helps you build a realistic budget that prioritises your essentials, like food and housing. **A Fresh Start:** CAP can handle the process of creditor negotiations, so that you can focus on building long-term financial stability. **CAP assures people that:** “We believe that no one should have to stay awake at night worrying about money. Our local debt coaches are ready to listen, help you organise the paperwork, and walk with you every step of the way. Don't let the “Debt Blues” define your year. Discover how simple it is to start your journey toward peace of mind.”

More info at: <https://capuk.org>

Sudoku Solution:

3	5	9	6	4	1	8	7	2
1	2	4	8	7	9	5	6	3
6	7	8	5	3	2	9	1	4
9	3	5	7	1	4	6	2	8
4	1	6	3	2	8	7	9	5
7	8	2	9	6	5	4	3	1
5	9	3	1	8	7	2	4	6
2	6	7	4	5	3	1	8	9
8	4	1	2	9	6	3	5	7

Crossword Solution:

ACROSS:

: 1, Credit. 4, Tackle. 7, Cain. 8, Kenaniah. 9, Strength. 13, Beg. 16, Salvation Army. 17, ARC. 19, Every day. 24, Admonish. 25, Dire. 26, Sneeze. 27, Bronze.

Down:

1, Cock. 2, Epistolic. 3, Taken. 4, Tenet. 5, Cane. 6, Leave. 10, Erase. 11, Guide. 12, Honey. 13, Barbarian. 14, Guys. 15, Asia. 18, Rod in. 20, Voice. 21, Rahab. 22, Hope. 23, Mene.



Our Church Mission is to be a place of peace and welcome; a people growing in Christian faith and love and a presence at the heart and soul of the community.

Registered Charity
Number
SC004984

Church Contacts:

Address: Station Road, Muthill, Crieff PH5 2AR
Church website: www.muthillparishchurch.co.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/muthillchurch
Email: muthillparish@yahoo.com
Bridge Submissions: macahiph@gmail.com

Useful Telephone Numbers

Emergencies:

NHS 24	111
Emergency	999
Water	0800 0778 778
Floods	0345 988 1188
Environment	01738 476476

Hospitals:

Crieff Comm.	01764653173
PRI	01738623311
Ninewells	01382660111

Crieff Medical Centre:

Blue Practice	01764652283
Red Practice	01764657060

PKC: 01738 475000

Church of Scotland:

Perth Pres.	01738451177
Central HQ.	01312255722

Police:

Emergency	999
Non-Emergency	101
Action Fraud	101



Our Cover theme for this edition is “Longing for Spring”

Thanks go to Raffie for sourcing the graphics and helping in the

Our Aim

The Bridge seeks to give updates on church activities and to be thought provoking on issues affecting delivery of our mission

Submission Deadline for Next Edition
Friday 10 April, 2026