

THE BRIDGE

SPRING EDITION 2024



Women's Conference Rocks
The Songs We Sing
The Knock-On Effects of Kindness
Muthill Community Transport Group



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Muthill Parish Church Register

Death:

Helen Hardie Stewart on 11th March 2024

Dougie Watson on 22nd March 2024

The Scotsman newspaper recently published an article about the Church of Scotland's empty churches causing a troublesome legacy and stating that around a third of its churches would be closing "as congregations dwindle to nothingness". The article, written by a non-churchgoer, was not a pleasant read. Equally so were the reactions on social media with many reflecting that we are in a post Christian era and we have to accept that



churches are unnecessary. Reading such comments hits home hard when you are a believer and a member of the Church of Scotland but they undoubtedly reflect a widespread view in society towards religions and places of worship. There were, of course, some positive defences of the Church amongst the reactions with one or two commentators citing the fact there was growth in some churches with a more evangelical agenda. It is

sad that our national church is portrayed often as demoralised and seen as over-traditional. Certainly, for many of us within the Church, resources do seem over-extended because of its national status, its various tiers of government and a need perhaps for more inspiring leadership.

However, while adverse comments are always uncomfortable to read, what needs to be remembered is that it is the people of the church, the church family, that ultimately counts and not the buildings. Let's not forget that in Jesus' time there were only house churches like we have house groups today. With many church buildings, inherited from the past century or earlier by today's modern congregations, probably the right way forward is to make them more flexible and more integrated with their communities. This makes sense financially wherever it is possible but my feeling is that this will only work for the growth of the church if the message of Christianity is at the same time promoted outwards in more engaging ways. That is where our minds and talents must be focused!

Message From Our Interim Moderator

Dear friends,

Leader: The Lord is risen.

Response: The Lord is risen indeed. Halleluiah!

The declaration and response above constitute the traditional call to worship of the Christian Church on Easter Day, which has been used over many centuries. We used it here at Muthill on Easter Sunday when we also decorated an empty Cross with flowers. The Cross is empty, to signify that Jesus is not there; He is risen. The flowers suggest a message of new life after His death on the Cross and hope for the future. These symbolic actions have been around since about the 6th century and it is good to keep the traditions alive. We are now past, Easter, of course, and the theme of the services over the next few weeks will be on resurrection and new life. Within the cycle of the Christian Year, there are ups and downs, times of trial and sorrow, and also times of uplift and joy. We are in one of the latter

phases just now, so let's reflect that joyful spirit as we worship God in our services over the next few weeks.

There were a number of Sundays before Easter when there was an appeal during the intimations for friends who attend church at Muthill to make sure that they have their name on our church membership list. This is to ensure sure that we have a note of everyone and that nobody misses out on details about activities coming up and important information about the life and work of the congregation. If you think you might not be on the list, please check with Helen-May Bayne or myself, so that we can make sure that your name is there.

In that connection, it has been a great joy to welcome some members from the former

congregation of Trinity Gask and Kinkell Church into our midst. The war memorial from within Trinity Gask Church is also being moved to Muthill, since such addresses of the fallen as can be identified would seem to have



come from the area around Muthill. It is important that these names continue to be recognised.

As is mentioned elsewhere in this magazine, there is major upgrading work about to take place, which will make the interior of the sanctuary brighter and more user-friendly. During the weeks that the work is being done, the Sunday service will be held at the usual time of 10 am in St. James's Church (on the opposite side of the street)). We are indebted to The Revd. Duncan Strathie and the congregation of St. James's for lending us their building.

We continue to give God thanks for the life and work of our congregation. Quite apart from the worship services, there is a real buzz of activity during the week from the very young to the young at heart, much of which is referred to in the following pages. Thanks are due to our editor, Sandy Hutchison for the way that he brings everything together.

As interim moderator, can I just say a sincere 'thank you' also, to the many office bearers and helpers who, with God's help, give unstintingly of their time and expertise to maintain the level of enthusiasm which is so evident.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Rev. Iain F. Paton (Interim Moderator.)

Church Pews

If you read under the Kirk News section of this magazine, you will see that the church pews are being removed and being replaced by new chairs in work to be undertaken over a period of 6-8 weeks starting 17th May. If you are interested in purchasing any of the church pews before they are removed and disposed of, please contact **Willie Bell on 0715371913 for further information.**

Women's Conference Rocks



If you've spent any time listening to Christian music, the chances are you've already heard Lou Fellingham sing. Not only as a songwriter and worship leader but as a woman who has been an ever-present in the music industry for the last 28 years. An internationally known worship leader, ten albums in to a firmly-established ministry, she is known for her prophetic edge, distinctive voice, unwavering energy to see lives changed through the power of music and word.

Lou is married to Nathan and they have 3 children. They live in Brighton where they enjoy being outdoors, food, hanging with friends and family and movies. Lou would call herself a 'feeder' and together they love to host people in their home and share life with them. They are part of Emmanuel Church in Brighton and are actively involved in leading worship there.

The above information is taken from Lou Fellingham's website : <https://www.loufellingham.com>

On Friday 8th March, Lou Fellingham held a 2-hour concert in the church known as P's and G's, Edinburgh. This was a great experience and a chance to hear the latest music that she and her husband have written together for their new album called 'Never Stop Loving'.

The following day 3 of us from Muthill Parish Church attended a one-day conference for women in the same amazing venue. This event was hosted by the Scottish Bible Society.

P's and G's (St Paul's and St George's Church) is an old church which has been modernised in a sympathetic way to conserve the older more beautiful features, whilst allowing for modern seating and options for holding events such as this. The day was sold out and attended by



hundreds of women of all ages.

The day started with praise in the form of prayer and singing a good mixture of Lou's songs, modern Christian songs and old favourite hymns. It was great to find that we could pick up and learn the new songs quickly. There is always something awesome about hearing voices lifted to the Lord in unison, and the singing was remarkable.

This time was followed by a thoughtful and inspirational address by Lou which she based on the theme of Endurance, linked to Scriptural readings from Hebrews 12 and Philippians 3.

Cath Madavan was next, an inspirational speaker who has written several books such as

'Digging for Diamonds', *'Why less means more'*, *'Irrepressible'* and *'Living on purpose'*, who is also a pastor's wife. She shared her testimony with warmth and wit, making us laugh and draw breath in equal measure.

There was fellowship around coffee and lunch where women bumped into old friends throughout the day, and there were opportunities to explore the stalls around Compassion UK, the Scottish Bible Society and their *'Bibles for Bairns'* campaign which we hope and pray to write about at a later date in *'The Bridge'*.



In the afternoon we started with a one hour singing session lead by one of the Kingdom Choir gospel singers called Ayanna Grey Mitchell. She is a gifted singer and teacher, who managed to teach the hundreds of women there 2 new songs in 3-part harmonies-no words provided! It was an incredible feat which ended in beautiful praise. A question-and-answer session happened next, which was engaging and entertaining, delving into testimony, faith journeys and motivational lived



experiences. One example was Ayanna sharing her performance in the Kingdom Choir, from its lowly origins of meeting in a home to sing for themselves whilst supporting each other through the usual highs and lows of life, to performing for Megan and Harry's wedding in Windsor. The conference ended with a one-hour session of praise...lots of singing, almost raising the roof at times, and prayer for each other and our different churches. It was a precious opportunity to step back from daily life and focus on God for a whole day.

You can find out more about Lou's music, website and Facebook Page. She and her husband host a half session called *Worship Wednesdays* from 8.30 to 9am every Wednesday on Facebook and Youtube -these are live praise sessions which can be watched back later on too.

The experience was hugely inspirational, motivational and potentially life-changing. We all hope and pray that when the next event is available that more of us from the church are able to attend and we will do our best to advertise the event well ahead of time.

Becky Davidson



Used Stamps



The World Mission Stamp Appeal run by the Church of Scotland raises funds for a different cause each year. The 2023/24 appeal supports the Malawi Project helping the Church of Central Africa (CCAP) to improve nutrition, improve agricultural productivity and mitigate the impact of the climate crisis. The CCAP firmly aims to establish self-sustaining tree nurseries to nurture and protect the environment and help protect livelihoods for households and communities. There is a collection box for your used stamps at the entrance to the Church. All I ask is that you leave a margin of ½" around the stamps.

Sheena Plummer

Two Financial Things

By now most of us know that the Bank of Scotland branch in Crieff is closing on 29th May this year leaving us with no direct facilities west of Perth. This branch is also our Church's bank and is used to deposit our weekly offerings. If it is possible and practical for you to set up a monthly standing order from your own bank instead of your weekly offering this would be of great help to us, as it would reduce the frequency of our trips to Perth branch. Please speak to me about this and I can help you get this up and running.

Our refurbishment of the Sanctuary will commence in Mid-May and I have had many offers to sponsor chairs. We are buying 150 at a cost of £175 each. If you would like to buy one or more, on your own behalf or in memory of family members then please contact me.

Willie Bell (07715 371913)

Communion Service

The next Worship Service with Holy Communion will be held at 10 am on **Sunday 28th April**. Following consultation with the congregation we will be returning to use the traditional communion vessels. It will also be the last communion served with the current church pews. Please put this date in your diary.

WaterAid

Due to living in an almost cashless society it is becoming increasingly difficult for charities to raise funds. If, however, you come across copper coins or even those pesky 5p coins do consider donating them to our WaterAid bucket at the entrance to the Church. No matter how small the amount "a little soon mak's a muckle" and £30 was recently sent to the charity which is such a worthwhile cause.

Sheena Plummer

Christian Aid



As many of you no doubt know, Christian Aid week is held in May each year and is the major fund raising event of the year. There are so many people struggling just to although most of us here in Perthshire are finding difficulties due to the rising cost of living, many in the developing world would no doubt consider us very fortunate in life.

Plans for the Church events to raise funds this year include the usual collecting tin on the coffee table each Sunday morning after the service so all contributions to that are always gratefully received. I am also hoping to have a 'breakfast' for anyone who would like to partake of some cereal, juice, and 'bacon butties' with tea or

coffee. For this I would like to have some idea of how many would come to it so that I can cater for numbers. Plans are to hold this on **Saturday 11th May at 10am** in Bruce Hall and I will put a list on the notice board for names to be added. Finally I plan to hold another 'Beetle Drive' on the evening of the **Saturday 18th May at 7pm** which is good fun for all ages so anyone who fancies coming along to that would be very welcome. Cakes and biscuits with Tea/ coffee or squash will be provided halfway through the evening and silly prizes for the winner of each game with a better prize for the overall winner. Entry for this will be by donation and all donations gratefully received for the evening.

Let's see if we can beat last year's total and help to really make a difference for those less fortunate than we are.

Thank you,
Alison Hockly

Bible Parable

The tale of the Tower Builder



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ON ONE OCCASION JESUS EXPLAINED HOW IT WOULDN'T ALWAYS BE EASY TO FOLLOW HIM.



JESUS BEGAN, IF ONE OF YOU PLANS TO BUILD A TOWER....

...YOU'LL FIRST NEED TO WORK HOW MUCH IT WILL COST.



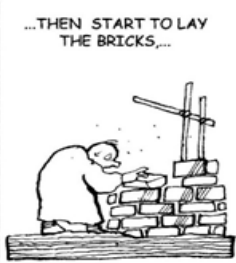
IF YOU DON'T DO THE SUMS....



...YOU MIGHT MAKE A START,



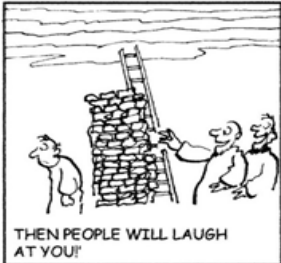
...WORK VERY HARD ON THE FOUNDATIONS.



...THEN START TO LAY THE BRICKS,...



...BUT SUDDENLY RUN OUT OF MONEY!!



THEN PEOPLE WILL LAUGH AT YOU!!



WE NEED TO REALISE THAT ALTHOUGH FOLLOWING JESUS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO, IT'S ALSO A GREAT CHALLENGE.

The Knock-On Effects of Kindness



How many times have you had a conversation about buses recently, and, in particular, about the fact that often no buses come for ages, and then two turn up at once? My sociology lecturer explained this to us once. Apparently it's less to do with bad timetabling, or even laziness on the part of the drivers. The main cause of this mysterious phenomenon, which is very much part of our daily lives, is kindness.

His explanation went something

like this –

- When the first driver see's someone running for their bus, they have a choice to drive on without them or to stop and wait for them to get on board
- If they choose to stop and wait for them, this will add an extra minute to the bus's journey time
- This will mean that, it will arrive at the next stop a minute later, and so another minute's worth passengers will have arrived and be waiting for it
- Processing these additional passengers will also add to the journey time, and, as a result, the number of passengers waiting at subsequent stops will also increase
- Their bus will, therefore, get more and more behind in its schedule
- In the meantime, the driver of the following bus will have less and less passengers to pick up – because they now are being picked up more and more by the first bus driver
- The second bus will, therefore, inevitably catch up with the first

Of course, if the first driver hadn't chosen to wait a minute for the person running for the bus, none of this would have happened in the first place. The fact that their bus is now late is due to their act of kindness. Kindness is not a bad thing. I often feel that civilization survives, not because of its

rules and regulations, but because of individual acts of kindness.



time.com

ID:39198993 P: Rudies

Kindness, along with love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness and self-control, is one of the 'fruits of the Spirit' (Galatians 5.22). Kindness is also one of the virtues we are encouraged to clothe ourselves with, along with compassion, humility, gentleness, and patience (Colossians 3.12). Kindness doesn't cost us anything, but it can have a big impact on someone's life, especially if they are having a hard time.

So, let's be kind to our bus drivers, and especially the ones who's buses are a bit late. Who knows, maybe it will help to make their day.

This article is printed by kind permission of John Young, Minister of Liberton Kirk, Edinburgh



Muthill Community Transport Group



The future of rural transport is an ever-changing story. For those without the independence of a car for their transport needs, living in a rural community generally means relying on the bus services for all journeys to local amenities. These days our bus services are infrequent, unreliable, and for paying passengers, relatively expensive. There is also a disconnect between services resulting in longer journeys being difficult to plan and accomplish.

Communities across Scotland are beginning to address these problems by providing a local service which fills in the gaps left by infrequent or withdrawn local services. Kirkmichael and Glenfarg are two notable examples in Perthshire. When the 55 service from Kinross was withdrawn, the Glenfarg community took the bold step to replace it. With a bus borrowed from Perth & Kinross, they started with a team of 15 volunteer drivers. Today, they operate five vehicles – three buses and two 8/9 seaters. Glenfarg Community Transport now employ three paid drivers supported by a large number of volunteers carrying more than 750 passengers each week. The Kirkmichael operation is much smaller, operating a single vehicle to take community members to village events and to Blairgowrie.

Muthill Community Transport Group has been formed to bring a similar service to our community, starting with a single 8/9 seater vehicle which Perth & Kinross Council hopes to be able to supply to us in the near future. The Group will operate as a registered Scottish Charity (SCIO) organised and operated by volunteers.

There are currently five Trustees who will oversee the management of the Group, and approximately 12 volunteers offering their services as drivers, assistants and organisers. In addition to their application for charity status, the Group has applied for membership of the Community Transport Association which actively promotes and supports many hundreds of similar organisations across the UK.

The Group will provide a transport service specifically to the community of Muthill and the surrounding area. It will not compete with any of the other organisations providing scheduled bus services or taxi services in the area, but will provide a flexible alternative of particular benefit to the less able and less affluent members of our community.

Muthill Community Transport Group is a membership organisation. Anyone wishing to use our services will need to join the Group and pay an annual membership fee of £5. Membership will also be available to other Community Organisations which might wish to use our services for an annual fee of £20. At the discretion of the committee, membership fees may be waived in cases of hardship. A membership card will be issued to each member. No charge will be made for our services, but a small donation towards the running costs of the service would be appreciated.

Members will require to book their seats for transport in advance and it is envisaged that this will be done by telephone to a dedicated number on which you will leave a message stating your name, destination, travel date and time, and any other information necessary. You will receive a return call from that number to confirm availability of transport and pick-up time. All pick-ups and drop-offs will be at or near your home so you must be ready at the agreed time.

The service will be operated to meet the needs of the community and is likely to include transport to/for:

- Medical and other official appointments. Where the appointment is at a hospital in Perth or Dundee, free seats on the vehicle will be available to other members who wish to visit these destinations.
- Direct to specific shopping locations, regularly to Crieff and occasionally to further off destinations.
- Village clubs, organisations, churches and other village events for

those unable to walk there.

- Excursions to events outside the village as requested/arranged by Group members or other organisations who are also members of the Group.

The list is not exhaustive and can be extended at the request of members subject to the approval of the committee. All travel is subject to the availability of the vehicle and a registered volunteer driver. All drivers will be required to undergo basic training and have a clean driving license which will be checked with DVLA every six months.



Where a vulnerable person requires transport in the vehicle, it is recommended that they be accompanied by a carer or friend. The vehicle will be able to transport a

folding wheelchair.

It is anticipated that demand for the service will increase over time, and the Group will hope to expand their activities in line with changing needs.

Joe Knowles.

Inter Church Golf Outing



Attention all Golfers! The annual inter-church golf outing of Ardoch, Blackford and Muthill parish churches to Muthill Golf Club will take place on Sunday 7th July, 2024. As usual it will take the form of a Texas Scramble with tee off at 2.00pm and finishing with a meal in the Club House at approximately 5.30 pm. No handicaps are required and 18 or 9 holes can be played. More details will follow and our local contact is Elaine Wallace or you can email jsouterconsult@aol.com.

The Rice Challenge

A further local collaboration will take place next month when Muthill Parish Church and Muthill Primary School will combine to take part in the 90kg Rice Challenge. Organised by ***Just Trading Scotland*** this challenge is a great community project for schools, churches and other local organisations to work together in tackling current issues including sustainability, free trade, social enterprise and citizenship. So far over 800 organisations have participated in such schemes and Muthill will join that number.

The challenge is to sell 90 x 1 kg bags of Kilombero rice! This is the amount of rice that would be needed to enable a Malawian famer to pay for a year's basic secondary school education for one child.

In our local scheme we will be establishing a stall for the sale of rice which will be available in the Bruce Hall after Sunday Worship services and at the Wednesday soup and sandwich lunches. Look out for further information on the AV screens at Sunday services.

Volunteers Needed for Church Ground Maintenance

It will soon be the growing season and last year we successfully maintained the church grounds through volunteers from the congregation undertaking some grass cutting and edge trimming. There was a roster which covered the season with those on it undertaking the grass cutting roughly once every 4-5 weeks. We would like to continue looking after the grounds on this basis again this year but need one or two extra volunteers. The work entailed takes about one hour approximately using the power equipment held by the Church. If you might be able to help in this, please contact **Willie Bell on 0715371913**

The Songs We Sing

I wonder if you have noted the inclusion of more Mission and Junior Praise songs in recent Sunday services in Muthill Parish Church. This, I am told, stems from an after-service meeting in early February of some of the congregation interested in the musical part our worship.



It is difficult to find the right balance of hymns ancient and modern as people love singing hymn songs with which they are familiar and, our congregation being mainly of the older generation, there is undoubtedly a wealth of love for traditional hymn songs. On the other hand, it is certainly true that, for some church attendees particularly the young and future of the church, many older hymns can come across as turgid and lacking in joyful all-age celebration. Some too contain words or images which are difficult to

understand. Against this, of course, others will argue that some modern Christian songs are over demonstrative, often repetitive, and some people find that any 'happy-clappy' rhythmic style of singing is not their idea of reverent worship.

I guess I fall between these divisions of reaction. Whilst I can be moved by some traditional hymn songs and melodies often because they hold special memories and fondness for me, I can also be greatly uplifted by the vibrancy and engaging nature of many modern melodies and their lyrics expressed in today's language.

For me, singing in church is a not only the joyful experience of united congregational worship, but, more importantly, it is a very personal expression of faith through song. I am, therefore, never put off by worshippers celebrating by raising their hands in awe of God as their mood or the words urge them to do so. Indeed, I have an admiration for such acts of open expression of personal faith and often wish I had the inclination to do so more myself. However, I do get turned off if I am asked to sing lyrics I do not understand or which are archaic in form. I also feel that many of the

older hymns are best suited for the accompaniment and majesty of a pipe organ, whereas modern Christian songs are more suited to a music group, lead soloists and the flexibility of an electric organ.

CH4, which is still the mainstay of songs for Sunday worship, contains many examples of language and imagery that are not immediately easy to relate to modern life and therefore they can negatively affect my personal response. Some people will say that is because I do not know my Bible sufficiently well and I would accept that, but to properly engage in worship, I need to understand and believe the words that I am being asked to sing out aloud with others. I guess that is why I am also generally more comfortable with the simpler forms of worship found in Presbyterian churches compared to worship in churches that use prescribed and very elevated liturgy. Worship from the heart too



involves emotion and that abounds with many new Christian songs. Equally I accept that repetition of choruses can intensify feeling and, through that, can encourage self-worship as well as rousing congregational singing.

So, where does this leave me in relation to our changing approach to worship and singing in Muthill Parish Church? I guess I like the fact that we are experimenting and I hope that continues. Whether we use a singing group and electric organ as now, or move, as many churches are, to more individual lead singers accompanied by a range of musical instruments, I am all in favour of anyway that encourages all-age congregational singing. And today, we have such a wonderful range of worship songs, beyond CH4 and Mission Praise, which have gained great popularity from around the world. The more we can attune our approach to worship with popular singing styles which engage with the all-ages, the more I feel we are likely to make it easier for new comers to the worship experience. I also feel that Sunday service stalwarts would only be encouraged by a growing worshipping church family.

Sandy Hutchison

Kirk And Community News

Easter Celebrations for The Risen Lord



This year's Easter Celebration was memorable. Some of us joined friends for Holy Week services elsewhere such as Maundy Thursday at Auchterarder Parish Church and Good Friday with the South East Edinburgh Churches at Gracemount School. Then, on Easter Sunday, 31st March, it was back to Muthill Parish Church where we had a great service in our own Church. With the sanctuary specially bedecked with glorious Spring flowers and a partially decorated daffodil cross, it all provided a stirring start to a glorious celebration with Easter hymn- songs, a drama sketch and some stirring messages from Iain Paton and Elaine Wallace. The flowering of the cross completed a moving spectacle enabling each of the congregation to come forward with their own daffodil contributions and with their own special prayer thoughts. Gilbert on the organ enhanced the singing of the wonderful Easter Hymns and with some powerful images of Jesus depicted on the AV screens it was indeed a very joyous worship! Thanks are due to the many who donated daffodils, to those who collected the hundreds needed the day before and for those who contributed in other special ways in welcoming a very good congregation.

Village Events

The last few weeks have seen a succession of village events held in the village hall. The Strathearn Horticultural Society was first up with its coffee morning, followed by The Table Top Fundraiser in aid the village Christmas lights, and finally there was the Bowling Club coffee morning. It was good to see the village turning out in number to support these events! They provide a great opportunity for residents to socialise and as well as providing stalls to display local crafts and great baking. It is equally encouraging to report that each event raised good funds for their interests including the coffee morning held later at the golf club.

Christians Together

There was a good turnout of folks (about 70) from the churches in Crieff and Muthill together on Easter Sunday morning for the service of celebration of the wonderful Gospel message of Jesus' resurrection and our salvation. The birds sang and the air was calm and clear around the bandstand in Macrosty Park as this year's service was led by members of Crieff Baptist Church with contributions from Crieff Parish Church and St Columba's Episcopal Church providing the excellent breakfast thereafter.

Rev Ann Ballentine has now stepped down from organising these opportunities for Christians in Strathearn to come together for worship but the events will continue as Ann hands over to the existing committee. The next Service will be on **Sunday 19th May** at 7 p.m. in St Columba's Church. Please put that date in your diary! Further details will be sent to all the local churches nearer the date.

Vivian M Donaldson

Pastoral Care

Several members have been earmarked to join the new Pastoral Care Team and work continues on the necessary documentation needed for the safeguarding process where needed. This will include interview, and completion of various forms by the new team members as well as induction. The coordinators will be attending a taster course to further assist in the overall process. We have also earmarked the members of the congregation who might like regular visiting and they will be shortly be contacted and consulted on whether they would appreciate regular contact or visitation. The Pastoral Care Team, once fully functioning will report quarterly to the Kirk Session through the Coordinators.

Kirk And Community News

Mens Group

The Men's Group continues to meet over coffee on Wednesday mornings. Up until now the emphasis has been on developing plans for the proposed Muthill Community Transport Group. Plans for this are going well with an application already being submitted to OSCR to establish a charity. There have also been further discussions with Perth and Kinross Council and with Glenfarg where a similar scheme has been working for some time. A separate report on the Transport initiative appears in this magazine under Muthill Community Transport Group.

The Men's Group is also planning to do some upgrading of the vestry area of the church so that it can provide a more comfortable area for small meetings as well as an effective office space. The Group also hope to explore further how it can work in liaison with the new Pastoral Care Team in providing practical support in simple household tasks. To this end we are seeking the advice of an Edinburgh church which is already operating an Artisans Group.

Book Club

Wow! I never realised how much being a member of a Book Club could develop your reading skills. The discussion at our Book club is so lively and informative and helps so much with the greater understanding of the book you have read on your own. We continue to increase in number adding new members at each session and it is our hope that this will continue, Just let Sandy Hutchison know if you are interested and come along to one of our review meetings which last about one and half hours. The next review meeting over tea and cake in the North Lounge will take place on **Friday 19th April at 3pm**. The current book is "Queen of the Desert" by Georgina Howell. Even if you have not read this book, you are still welcome to join the group to get the feel of the Club.

Kirk Session

Normally there would be a fuller report on the Kirk Session's deliberations but with their meeting delayed by a couple of weeks on this occasion, it is not possible to report on decisions taken in this edition of the magazine. It can be reported, however, that in addition to considering regular reports from Conveners and their recommendations, the Kirk Session will be considering the following at its next meeting

- The Mission and Objectives for the year ahead
- New proposals for updating our church logo
- Proposed modernisation of vestry and use of upstairs lounge as possible location for church museum

Membership of Muthill Parish Church

The church congregation is increasing. Praise God! We are seeing one or two regular attenders taking out church membership and we hope that this increases. We are currently just under 200 and it would be great if we can exceed the 200 mark as we approach our bi-centenary.

One or two have asked what are the benefits of membership?. They can be listed as follows:

- Your name will appear on all Muthill Parish Church communication lists and this means you will be notified directly about church matters of importance
- You will receive the church magazine, The Bridge, every two months by post or by email
- You will be entitled to vote on decisions taken at congregational meetings
- By joining the church you will feel more part of the church family and will be making the congregation stronger in number and thereby making its future all the securer.
- You can also arrange to support the church financially through freewill offering envelopes or standing order through your bank.

Are there any disadvantages? There is really only one and that is we would miss you as part of our family. Your membership details are of course held confidentially, and if you have any further questions please speak or make contact with our Church Roll Keeper, Gregor Elliott.

Congregational Outing

Keep the date of **Saturday 8th June** free if you want to be part of a summer congregational outing. We are planning a leisurely day trip to Dumfries House near Cumnock, Ayrshire, part of King Charles' Foundation and reckoned to be one of Britain's most beautiful stately homes. Set in a stunning 2,000 acre estate, the House itself is a very fine example of an 18th century house and it possesses an unrivalled collection of Chippendale furniture as well as fine gardens including attractions such as a Maze, Valentin's Educational Farm, the Queen Elizabeth Walled Garden, the Rothesay Garden and woodland walks.



The plan is ideally to hire a bus for the trip. There will be a list in the Bruce Hall and if we can achieve the requisite number, made up of church family and friends, we will go by hired bus. If not, then consideration will be given to going by several cars. As for cost for this exciting away-day, we are planning to charge for the travel only and leave it up to the individual as to whether they wish to pay for entry to the House. The outside attractions, we understand, are free. For eats, people can also choose individually between booking a place in the restaurant, using the Coach House café serves serving a wide range of light eats or its outside kiosk is they wish to purchase food to eat elsewhere on the estate. Further details of these things will be provided once we know we have a viable number for transport arrangements.



We need to know that we have sufficient numbers by the end of April so please place names on the list on the Bruce Hall noticeboard as quickly as possible.

St James Episcopal Church

It was good to see the array of pictures posted on Facebook of Easter celebrations at St James Church alongside ours at Muthill Parish Church. It is also good that both churches are now serving and attending the Wednesday soup and sandwich lunches organised in the Bruce Hall of Muthill Parish Church. We greatly appreciate these opportunities to share our Christian service to the local community, and readers of The Bridge should remember that there are great film nights held monthly at St James usually on the first Tuesday of each month following by discussion.

Another important date to note for your dairy is the Midsummer concert organised by St James which this year will take place on **Saturday 15th June**. Last year's event was an outstanding success with drinks and canapes beforehand in the Millenium Park between the two churches followed by a superb concert provided by singers of the Guildhall School of Music, London. Further details will be provided nearer the actual date so that people can confirm their attendance.

Muthill Community Hub Project



In the latest communication on the Community Hub Project, the Muthill Village Trust share some images of the current design of the Hub. The next step will be to progress the planning permission stage. The Village Trust is hoping to have confirmation of funding for this stage shortly.

The Stage Two report can be found on the Village Trust website.

<https://www.muthillvillagetrust.org/>

Muthill in Bloom

With Spring officially now here, and as we start to get our gardens into some order with tidying up after winter and with new plantings, our Muthill in Bloom volunteer group which adds so much to the enhancement of our village will be looking for new volunteers to help over the growing season. There are several ways that you can help including the following:



- Helping with the summer planting
- Helping with watering some of the village tubs once planted over the watering period
- Helping with the maintenance of our two village cemeteries

If you can spare any time to help with a one-off or on a regular basis the Group would love to hear from you. Contact should be made with **Susan Crawford** through the Muthill in Bloom site on Facebook or by email johnalancrawford@hotmail.com



It was great to see the innovation of an Easter Tree with around 250 decorated eggs in Highlandman Park which was provided with the help of Muthill Beavers, Monday Club, Crieff Building Bridges Club, Mother and Toddlers, St Dominic's and Muthill Ladies and Friends. Well done to everyone involved - a great start to the season ahead! The group's Blooming Shed in the Millenium Park continues to provide books, games fruit,

vegetables and home baking at the weekends. Truly worth a visit!

Finally, please note that the group's annual coffee morning and plant sale will be held on **Saturday 11th May in the Village Hall, 10.00-12.00 hrs.** Everyone's support is needed for this event if we want our village to sparkle over the summer ahead as this is the major fund raiser of the year for Muthill in Bloom

Messy Church Is Back!

The first Messy Church day in 2024 took place on Sunday 24th March in Muthill Parish Church from 4-6pm.

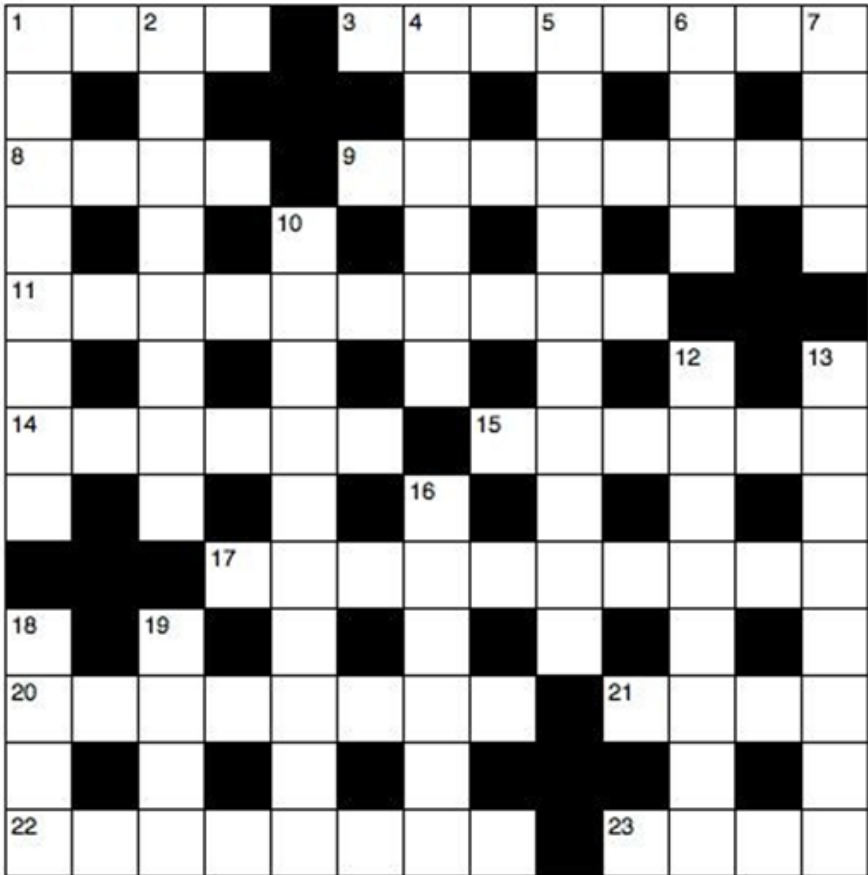
For those of you who may not be aware, Messy Church is a form of church for children and adults that involves creativity, celebration and hospitality. It's for people at all stages of their faith journey and of any age. A small team of inspired church-goers met twice earlier in the year to plan and prepare a busy 2 hour session including a delicious 2 course meal. On this occasion, we used the theme of Easter to base our activities and worship. The activities included making an Easter garden, taking part in a science activity colouring eggs, following a scavenger hunt around the church, decorating delicious biscuits and making dough pictures of the Easter story. Worship took place in the main church using the scavenger hunt as a format to tell the Easter story with animated songs and the Easter story in a child-friendly format.

The event was attended by at least a dozen children and their respective families who all appeared to have a fun time, and whilst previous Messy Church days in the past have attracted more children, it was felt by all that this was an encouraging start.

Further Messy Church days are planned for the end of June to tie in with the Muthill Gala week and then in September and December. We would appreciate your prayers for more people to volunteer to join the team (it takes preparation and commitment to provide activities, worship and a meal) and for more families to engage with the Messy Church days. We hope you enjoy the photographs which were taken on the day with permission from all involved.



Crossword



Across

- 1 Made from the fruit of the vine, symbol of the blood of Christ (4)
- 3 'You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on — — ' (Joshua 8:4) (3,5)
- 8 Seep (4)
- 9 Celebrated by Jesus on the night of his betrayal (Luke 22:15) (8)



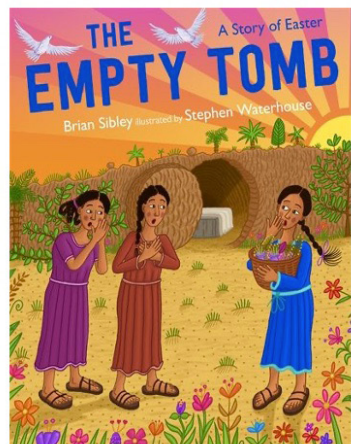
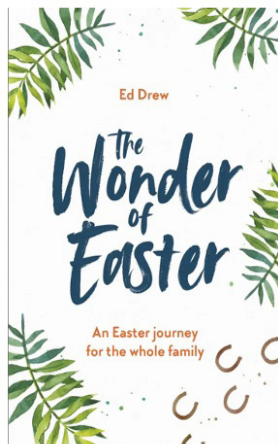
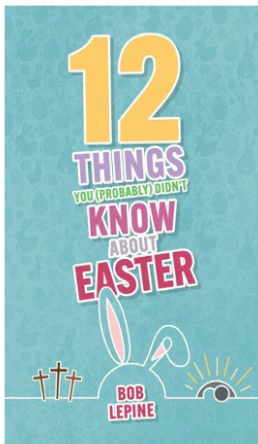
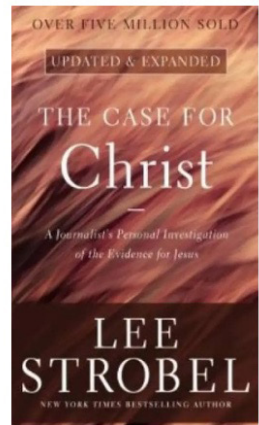
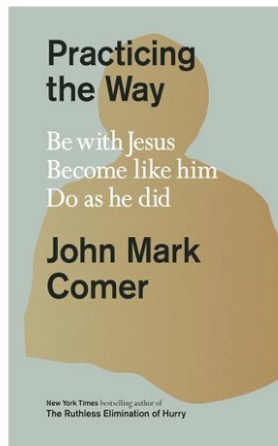
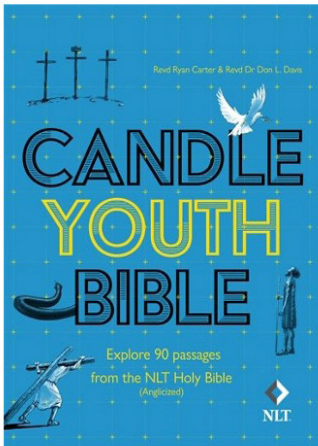
-
- 11 One of the supposed sites of Christ's burial place in Jerusalem (6,4)
14 'A city on a hill — be hidden' (Matthew 5:14) (6)
15 He inherited Elijah's mantle (2 Kings 2:12–13) (6)
17 Where Jesus prayed 'Not as I will, but as you will' (Matthew 26:36, 39) (10)
20 'Only in his home town and in his — — is a prophet without honour'
(Matthew 13:57) (3,5)
21 Sail (anag.) (4) 22 How Jesus was punished before his crucifixion (Matthew
27:26) (8)
23 Eye sore (4)

Down

- 1 Can't grow (anag.) (5,3)
2 A servant girl to Peter, 'You also were with that — , Jesus' (Mark 14:67) (8)
4 Well-being (Proverbs 3:8) (6)
5 Pentecostal denomination, — of God (10)
6 One of the 'obvious' acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19, 21) (4)
7 'I preached that they should repent and — to God' (Acts 26:20) (4)
10 ' — — , the world will not see me any more, but you will see me' (John 14:19)
(6,4)
12 He betrayed Jesus: Judas — (Luke 6:16) (8)
13 Jesus to Peter: ' — — of my sheep' (John 21:16) (4,4)
16 The centurion said, 'Surely this man was — — of God' (Mark 15:39) (3,3)
18 Baked bread (Mark 8:14) (4)
19 'Blessing and honour, glory and power, be — Him' (Handel's Messiah) (4)

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Book Reviews



The Empty Tomb - A Story of Easter

By Brian Sibley, SPCK, £6.99

This easy to read and engaging retelling of the Easter story is a perfect introduction for 6+ year-olds to the stories of Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, the death and resurrection of Jesus, His Ascension, and Pentecost. They are written to be read alone or read aloud.

Learn about the procession of the singing crowd as Jesus entered Jerusalem, and

the moment Jesus shared the bread and the cup at the Passover meal. Discover how the disciples sorrow turned to joy and wonder when they saw Jesus once again in their presence after His death, eating and drinking with them. Be immersed in the excitement of Pentecost and the inspiring speech by Peter that led to the baptism of 3,000 people.

Practicing the Way - Be with Jesus. Become like him. Do as He did

By John Mark Comer, SPCK, £16.99

Do you feel like there's more to life than this? You're right. This book will help you discover and cultivate the countercultural practices to connect you with a vibrant lifelong faith.

John Mark Comer, *the New York Times* bestselling author of *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* and *Live No Lies*, shows readers what is holding them back from authentically following Jesus - and reveals the counter cultural practices to connect us with a vibrant lifelong faith. We all have experienced unwanted parts of our spiritual journey: distance from God, gaps in our character, the fear that our lives will be trivial and empty... **Jesus is calling us into more.** Calling us to be shaped in His likeness. To experience His abundance of life. Buthow, practically, can we do that?

By becoming His apprentice. By practicing the Way. Outlining the timeless process of being with Jesus, becoming like Him, and living as He did, bestselling author and pastoral voice John Mark Comer delineates God's vision for the journey of our soul.

Candle Youth Bible - explore 90 passages from the NLT Holy Bible (Anglicized) SPCK, £11.99

The Candle Youth Bible provides an ideal introduction to accessing and understanding the entire story of the Bible. When viewed as a whole, the Bible is a wonderful story full of images and drama. 90 key Bible events are featured that show how the Bible's story unfolds and is connected, conveying how the Gospel of Christ and the Kingdom of God binds all of Scripture together. Each carefully selected story is retold with Bible verses supporting information about the theme, setting, characters, and key plot outlines of each passage.

12 Things You (Probably) Didn't Know About Easter –

By Bob Lepine, 10Publishing, £3.99

The perfect, light-hearted book for showing a friend the true meaning of Easter. It pops up in a seemingly random Sunday each year, easing you gently into spring. The promise of candy and chocolate eggs makes it popular with kids, but it's hardly in the same league as holidays like Christmas.

... But perhaps it should be? Here are 12 weird and wonderful facts, spanning all the way from its origins through to the present day, that show the enduring significance of Easter for Christians.

The Wonder of Easter - an Easter Journey for the Whole Family

By Ed Drew, 10Publishing, £5.86

This flexible, easy-to-use Lent devotional will allow the whole family to celebrate the limitless wonder of Easter. It is a discussion-based resource with differentiated questions for 3-4s, 5-7s, over 7s, teens and adults. At just 10 minutes each, these devotions are an achievable joy, not an unrealistic burden.

The Case for Christ - a Journalist's Personal Investigation Of The Evidence For Jesus

By Lee Strobel, Zondervan/10Publishing, £7.19

Is there credible evidence that Jesus of Nazareth really is the Son of God?

Retracing his own spiritual journey from atheism to faith, Lee Strobel, former legal editor of the Chicago Tribune, cross-examines a dozen experts with doctorates from schools like Cambridge, Princeton, and Brandeis who are recognised authorities in their own fields.

Strobel challenges them with questions like, How reliable is the New Testament? Does evidence for Jesus exist outside the Bible? Is there any reason to believe the resurrection was an actual event?

Winner of the Gold Medallion Book Award and twice nominated for the Christian Book of the Year Award, Strobel's tough, point-blank questions read like a captivating, fast-paced novel. But it's not fiction. It's a riveting quest for the truth about history's most compelling figure.

The new edition includes updated material on archaeological and manuscript discoveries, and an interview with the author that tells dramatic stories about the book's impact, provides behind-the-scenes information, and responds to critiques of the book by sceptics.



Sudoku Puzzle

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

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*Sudoku Solution on page 34

Editor's Note

The next edition of the magazine will be our Summer 2024 edition. The magazine will be published on Sunday 9th June, 2024, and so the deadline for submitting articles, intimations, letters etc. will be Friday 31st May, 2024.

Please submit this to macahiph@gmail.com or send to Sandy Hutchison, GreenBrae West, Pitkellony Street, Muthill PH5 2AF.

Please also understand that all articles submitted have to be subject to possible adjustment to suit the balance of the magazine's content and its physical confines. If space does not permit, submissions will be considered for the next edition. All submissions will be acknowledged. It is our Publishing Policy to publish factual clarifications or corrections in the next edition of the magazine.

The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Kirk Session. Editorial comment and signed articles do not necessarily contain the official views of the Church of Scotland which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.

Sudoku Solution:

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

Useful Contacts

Useful Local Telephone Numbers

NHS 24	111
NHS Emergency	999
Hospitals:	
Crieff Community Hospital	01764653173
Perth Royal Infirmary	01738623311
Ninewells Hospital, Dundee	01382660111
Crieff Medical Centre:	
Blue Practice	01764652283
Red Practice	01764657060
Crieff Pharmacies:	
Boots	01764652310
Davidsons	01764652177
Strathearn	01764654876
Torlum	01764652727
Police:	
Emergency	999
Non-Emergency	101
Action Fraud Scotland	101
Schools:	
Muthill Primary School	01764661466
Crieff High School	01764657600
Crieff Primary School	01764657888
Morrison's Academy:	
General and Secondary	01764653885
Primary	01764657196
Ardvreck School	01764653112
Veterinary Practice:	
Crieff Vets	01764652086
Broadley Vets	01786824400
Struthers & Scott Vets	01786841304
Tower Vet Centre	01738583083

Crossword Solution:

ACROSS: 1, Wine. 3,

The alert. 8, Ooze. 9,

Passover. 11, Garden Tomb. 14, Cannot. 15, Elisha. 17, Gethsemane. 20, Own house. 21, Lisa. 22, Flogging. 23, Sty.

DOWN: 1, Wrong act. 2, Nazarene. 4, Health. 5, Assemblies. 6, Envy. 7, Turn. 10, Before long. 12, Iscariot. 13, Take care. 16, The Son. 18, Loaf. 19, Unto.



Muthill Parish Church

aims to be
A place to find peace and welcome
A people growing in Christian faith and love
A presence at the heart and soul of the community

Church Website: www.muthillparishchurch.co.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/muthillchurch>

Email: muthillparish@yahoo.com

Magazine Graphics & Cover Photo

Our cover picture theme this month is of Easter Celebrations. Thanks to Raffie for providing the graphics for the magazine and helping in the production.”.

Registered Scottish Charity

Muthill Parish Church - SC004984