



# The Brig

December 2023



## A Word From the Minister...

I often get asked how long I've been in ministry for. Since our last magazine, I've sailed past the four year mark as minister in Erskine ...though it doesn't feel like it. In some ways it feels like more. The pace of change we have seen in four years has been astounding - particularly going from a low tech in person service to hi tech multi platform live streams every Sunday! We have seen plenty of challenges Covid being a massive one, but also amazing opportunities to co-operate in outreach with our neighbouring churches. In that time we have sadly lost some dear friends at the church, but happily welcomed new ones who have become members.

In other ways, it feels like just a few short months, or two years at most. I was sharing with a friend recently that the pandemic seemed to create a black hole of time, where it seemed like an other worldly experience that we aren't sure where to place in our memories. The other effect has been a bit of a loss of time. So many plans and visions had to be shelved as we learned to survive to get through it all.

And so, in many ways it feels as though only this year we have started the engine of ministry again to get some momentum. But I hope you agree it really has started. We have many of our regular links back with our youth organisations through the week. The Hub continues to be a vital meeting point for our community through the week. We have launched two new boxing outreach programs, one to the high school and one for the community in the church hall. We worked together to raise funds to replace our failing projectors and screens, meaning our sanctuary will be future proofed for some time to come. We have begun to appoint new elders starting with our treasurer Marion and looking to further develop how we lead the church in the coming year.

But perhaps above all, even though we cant always all see it or perceive it, God has continued to work by leading us, growing and developing our folks in their Christian walk, and even drawing new folks - from all over the world - to join our fellowship.

Advent is a time we celebrate waiting the arrival of the birth of our Saviour. Time is in His hands with hindsight it is heartening to be able to look on the last couple of years as seasons of waiting, followed by movement.

Maybe this is relevant to you. Does God have you in a time of waiting, which may not be comfortable? Or, has that time come and gone, and perhaps it is now time for movement into what God is calling you to?

As we close out this year, let me assure you of my prayers for God's guidance, and His goodness to be with you and your loved ones in the coming year.

Every blessing  
David



## A Word From the Kirk Session...

Like many people as we approach the Christmas season, my thoughts are on the year just gone and looking ahead to the potential of the New Year.

Thinking back, I remember those wonderful members of our congregation who have lost during the year. Those who had given so much of their selves to help our church community here in Erskine. Their support as elders, teachers, volunteers and so much more. Gentle conversation full of experience, smiles and laughter that broke through tough days. We can only hope to live up to their spirit and their faith, as we share the Christian love, they showed with all of us.

Looking ahead to 2024, I think of the plans the Kirk Session has been discussing to take us forward in improving worship and making more of our church building. Previously, the church sat alone beside the roundabout, clear to see from a distance in its clean white stone-dashed appearance but with the addition of the shelter homes and Robertson House, the church is now hidden and no longer has any outstanding features to identify it as God's house.

As we have already announced, between our fundraising, the grants we have received and an unexpected legacy gift, we have been able to move ahead to replace the projectors and screens in the Sanctuary and in the large hall. For those who join our worship online, we are improving our website and our streaming services, so they can feel more a part of our worshipping community.

For our building, we are looking to add a mural with scenes of worship to go on wall between the front doors and the large window of the small hall, another a second mural demonstrating the services we provide to the community for the side wall of the large hall. Both these walls can be seen from a distance and should make us stand out again and proclaim us as a place of worship in the community. We have already started, by replace our previous church panel at the front steps, with a bright new sign.

On behalf of the Kirk Session, I would like to thank all those who have raised funds for these developments and especially to Karen & Irvine Bain for their great success in applying for grants.



For now, I'm looking forward to our church service during Advent and Christmas. These I feel bring us closer together as a church family, especially our Christmas Eve service that we share with the other churches in Erskine, reminding us that we don't stand alone in our faith during the dark days of winter.

From all of us on the Kirk Session, have a very Merry Christmas and Peaceful New Year in the love of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Willie McGregor  
Session Clerk

# WHAT'S ON

September

On the 24th of September we had our annual Harvest Service. As always, there was a tremendous amount of donations made, which were gratefully received by the Trussell Trust. A massive thank you to everyone who donated.





## October

In October a number of generous donations were made to the Church.

1st Erskine Boys Brigade donated £500 to the Church.

We are always so grateful for donations made by organisations within the Church.

We also received a fantastic donation of £1,400 from the Sunday Hub team. We are so fortunate to have volunteers who are willing to give up their time to provide teas and coffees after our Sunday Services.

Many thanks to everyone who is involved.

## November

In November we held our Remembrance Day Service. This is always a poignant Service which is very close to many of our hearts. We would like to thank everyone who was involved in making the Service so special.



## Improvements Project

At the start of 2023 we launched a fundraising project to raise £12,000 for improvements to our website, audio-visual equipment and the church's external walls and signage.

Thanks to a combination of contributions to the Mile of Pennies account, grants, donations from church groups and a generous legacy, we have now reached and exceeded our original target.

We would like to thank everyone involved in making this possible. Hopefully you will see all the improvements take shape in the New Year.

## Gift Aid

We are very grateful for the ongoing freewill offerings from the congregation, especially in these difficult times. The running costs of the church have increased in recent years and the additional funds we can claim through HMRC's Gift Aid Scheme are very welcome.

If you are a UK taxpayer, we can claim 25% of your offering from HMRC if you have paid tax to that value. So for example, if your weekly or monthly payments add up to £300 over a year, we can claim £75 from HMRC if you have paid at least £75 in income tax during that year.

Gift Aid authorisation forms are available from the Treasurer (Marion Menabney), the Session Clerk (Willie McGregor) and the Deputy Session Clerk (Stuart Boyne). The form asks for your full name, address and postcode. The personal information on the form is only accessed by the Treasurer or Freewill Co-ordinator (Margaret Rhoddan) and used for Gift Aid claims; it is not disclosed to anyone else in the church.

If your circumstances change and you stop paying income tax, you should let us know and we will remove you from the Gift Aid register. This will make sure we don't make a claim for tax you haven't paid.



## The Hub Listening Service

Sometimes it can be hard to find someone to talk to, someone who will really listen.

Maybe you have an issue or a concern and don't want to bother family and friends with it. Perhaps you think they are too busy or have their own problems to deal with.

Talking it over with a trained listener in a safe and confidential setting can often bring some clarity and may help you to find a way forward.

The Hub café at Erskine Parish Church has recently launched a new service which can offer just that. Working in partnership with the charity Listen Well Scotland, the service provides Listening Time For You (LT4U) a free, confidential, one-to-one service, offering people the opportunity to meet and talk over anything that is on their mind with one of our trained listeners.

Two local volunteers, Morag Moffat and Aileen Robb have completed

advanced training with Listen Well Scotland and are available to provide Listening Time For You by appointment during Hub opening hours.

There is no charge for the service which takes place in a private room and is totally confidential.

We cannot offer counselling or advice but we believe that good quality listening enables others to tell their story and find their own solutions.

If you feel that you, or someone you know, may benefit from listening time, you can phone Morag or Aileen on 07778 719735 or email them on [erskinehublistening@gmail.com](mailto:erskinehublistening@gmail.com). They will get back to you as soon as possible to arrange a time to talk.

If you would like to know more about Listen Well Scotland, you can go to their website at [www.listenwellscotland.org](http://www.listenwellscotland.org), or pick up a leaflet in the Hub café or church foyer, from EBI Unites Community Pantry or Erskine Library.

If you would like to talk, we have time to listen well.





# Playgroup

Erskine Parish Church

1 Rashielee Ave

Erskine

PA8 6HS



## Stay & Play

9:45 - 11:30

Every Wednesday

£3

per week



Includes a snack

Hot drink & biscuits for grown ups

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## **LISTENING SERVICE**

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