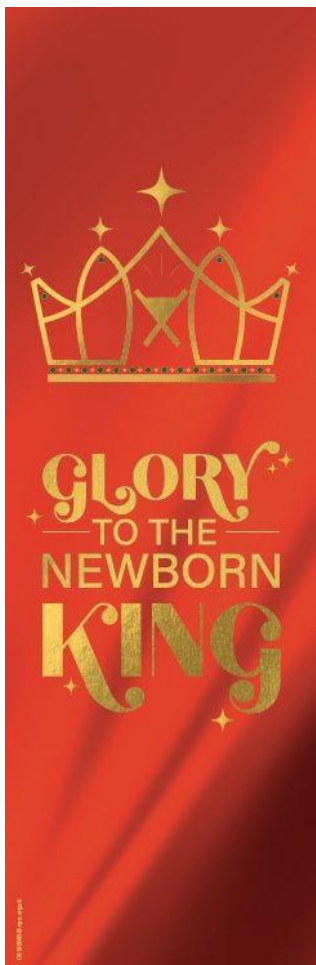


The Link—Advent 2024

The Church of Scotland Parishes
of Ardoch and Blackford



Ardoch Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC000139
Blackford Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC005594
ardochparishchurch.org | blackfordparishchurch.org
facebook.com/blackfordparishchurch

2025 Sunday Timings:

Ardoch and Livestream - 10:00am

Blackford - Prayer 11:00am, Service 11:30am

Office Bearers in the Parishes of Ardoch & Blackford

Minister: Rev. Mairi Perkins

Ardoch Manse, Feddal Road, Braco, FK15 9RE

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Ardoch

Session Clerks:

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Treasurer:

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Organist/Choirmaster:

John Duncan

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Safeguarding:

Joyce Wighton

01786 880606

Blackford

Session Clerk:

Sandy Marshall

01764 682354

sessionclerk@blackford.org.uk

Treasurer:

Mo Shedden

treasurer@blackford.org.uk

Organist:

Moira Hanslip

Sunday School:

Robin Peacock

Safeguarding:

Jeannette Barr

01764 682825

Church Officer & Property:

Shona Stewart

01764 682221

From 31st December 2024 we will become one united congregation with two places of worship.

Ardoch and Blackford Parish Church will have one Kirk Session and one charity number—SC000139. A formal Service of Union will mark this in early 2025.

See the Kirk Session reports for more background and detail.

The next dates for The Link are as follows:

Issue	Articles in by	Copies come out
Easter 2025 (Easter Day 20/4)	23rd March	30th March
August 2025	21st August	28th August
Advent 2025	23rd November	30th November

Editor: Gordon Roy, 01764 682356, gordon.roy@outlook.com

Dear Friends,

Advent is upon us again.

I wonder what does Advent mean to you and your family? Is it a time of family celebrations, food, drink and tinsel with some well deserved time off work? Or perhaps a time of sadness as you remember loved ones no longer with us or families split and going their own way?



I want to give you the Hope of the Advent season and invite you to journey together with your brothers and sisters in Christ, to journey through this Advent season together. I want you to focus on the hope that Christmas brings not only for one day but for the rest of your lives. Take time to enjoy your Advent journey as you pray and meditate, as you worship God and listen for His word speaking to you and give thanks for Him giving us His Son.

Advent is not only about waiting for a baby to be born in a manger in Bethlehem. In 2024, Advent is still—if not *more*—relevant in our lives. The Advent journey is also about that wonderful hope of the Son of Man returning and making all things new.

Have a wonderful Christmas

With love

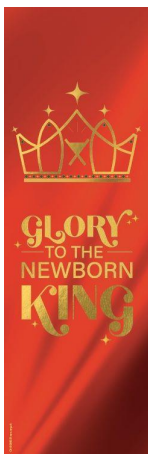
Rev Mairi X

01786 880948



Our cover photos for this issue

As the November snow associated with Storm Bert settled in the Ardoch churchyard it highlighted the berry colours in the trees.



These three images are associated with Christmas in Blackford this year. The red banner sets the tone for our village Christmas card with its quote from Hark the Herald Angels sing! This nativity scene makes its only appearance here this year as a new gifted set of figures will be part of our Advent services. Our Carols By Candlelight Service will be remaining at 6:30pm this year bringing a more diverse group into our Christmas Eve celebration.

Ardoch Kirk Session

It has been an eventful period since the Autumn issue of The Link regarding the implementation of the Presbytery Mission Plan. Following the



instruction from Presbytery to move ahead with the Union with Blackford Church, a 'Basis of Union' was prepared and the congregations of Ardoch and Blackford both subsequently voted in favour of the Union. That was the easy bit - the real work starts now to create a United Church focussed on delivering a joint Mission Plan. The elders of both congregations are meeting in early December to continue discussions on the management structure for the newly united congregation. As part of the Basis of Union it has already been agreed that the elders of Ardoch and Blackford Churches will be the elders of the United congregation and that the financial assets and liabilities of the churches will be amalgamated. Action is underway to merge the bank accounts and members will be kept up to date on the need to alter the details of their Standing Orders or Direct Debits for their 'Givings' due to the change in name of the congregation to 'Ardoch and Blackford Parish Church'.

The Perth Presbytery Buildings Officer has indicated that the present Ardoch Manse does not meet the current Church of Scotland standards for manses: for example, the requirement to have an energy performance rating of 'C' or better. The Kirk Session has agreed that the existing manse should be sold, and a new one purchased. Work is on-going to facilitate the sale and purchase of suitable accommodation.

As part of the Kirk Session's duty of care for the congregation, it has been agreed that the wine served with the Elements should be alcohol free and that the bread should be gluten free.

Last year various groups within the congregation led worship in the Advent services leading up to Christmas. This arrangement is being followed again this year and members of your Kirk Session will lead the service on 'Peace'. There will be a Watchnight service at 11.30pm in Ardoch Church on 24th December and a Christmas Day Service at 10.00am.

The Kirk Session would like to thank all members of the various congregational groups for their dedication and hard work over the past year and wish all members of the congregation a peaceful and uplifting time at Christmas.

Bob Aitken

Blackford Kirk Session

There has been a lot happening in our church since the previous Link report in August. On the 1st October our Kirk Session voted unanimously to agree on the draft Basis of Union with Ardoch. This draft Basis of Union was then voted on by members of our congregation on Sunday 20th October with 24 votes in favour and 3 votes against. The result of the vote from both congregations was taken to the Planning and Deployment Committee of Perth Presbytery who duly approved the Union under powers and this will take effect from 31st December 2024.

The next step in this process of the Union will see the formation of the new Kirk Session with elders of Ardoch and Blackford combining into one group. This new Kirk Session will be tasked with ensuring that all the required changes are managed as effectively as possible. Throughout this on-going process, we will endeavour to keep our congregation informed as to our progress so that everyone has the best understanding on what is happening. Please speak to any of our elders if you have any questions or queries.

The congregation and elders of Blackford Church will continue to focus on "The Five Marks of Mission" which encompasses everything we do to help us grow and spread the good news of the gospel across our parish and beyond.

In October internet connectivity was installed in the church with a contribution towards costs provided by the Blackford Community Fund. This will be a valuable asset for our church and our community organisations using the building. We are most grateful to the Blackford Community Fund for their support.

Over the past 3 months, we have welcomed four new members to our Church roll, namely Richard Bolton, Lyndsey Thomas, Eleanor Thomas, and Karen Shaw. We feel privileged for their support and commitment to our church and to God's work in our community.

At our November meeting of the Blackford Kirk Session, we were delighted to have the Rev. Dr. John Ferguson, our Presbytery Clerk with us and give an insight into the work of our Presbytery.



On closing, the Blackford elders' team would like to extend our grateful thanks to Mairi for all her work and support in caring for our church community. Please continue to pray for our minister, our church, and our service to all in our community. **Sandy Marshall**

From the writings of CS Lewis

"I remember once when I had been giving a talk to the R.A.F., an old, hard-bitten officer got up and said, 'I've no use for all that stuff. But, mind you, I'm a religious man too. I know there's a God. I've felt Him: out alone in the desert at night: the tremendous mystery. And that's just why I don't believe all your neat little dogmas and formulas about Him. To anyone who's met the real thing they all seem so petty and pedantic and unreal!'

Now in a sense I quite agreed with that man. I think he had probably had a real experience of God in the desert. And when he turned from that experience to the Christian creeds, I think he really was turning from something real to something less real.

In the same way, if a man has once looked at the Atlantic from the beach, and then goes and looks at a map of the Atlantic, he also will be turning from something real to something less real: turning from real waves to a bit of coloured paper. But here comes the point. The map is admittedly only coloured paper, but there are two things you have to remember about it.

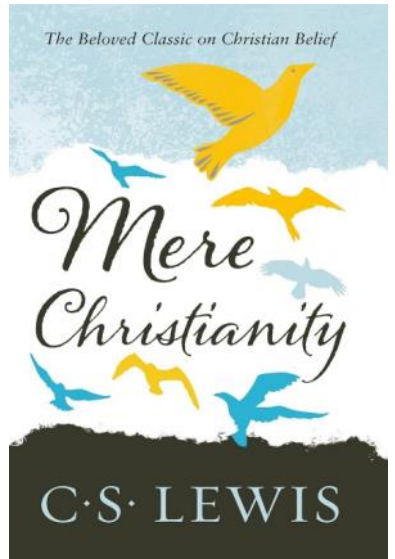


In the first place, it is based on what hundreds and thousands of people have found out by sailing the real Atlantic. In that way it has behind it masses of experience just as real as the one you could have from the beach; only, while yours would be a single glimpse, the map fits all those different experiences together.

In the second place, if you want to go anywhere, the map is absolutely necessary. As long as you are content with walks on the beach, your own glimpses are far more fun than looking at a map. But the map is going to be more use than walks on the beach if you want to get to America."

Contributed by Jeannette Barr. Explore this more: at bradhambrick.com/lewisonthology/

Buy the book from [The Good Book Company](http://TheGoodBookCompany.com), [Eden Amazon](http://EdenAmazon.com), or the Mustard Seed Christian Book & Gift Shop and Café, National Christian Outreach Centre, Riggs Road, Perth, PH1 1PR



Ardoch Manse

The Church of Scotland has updated the Energy Performance Certificate requirements for Manses and they now all require to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which is in Bands A, B or C. The EPC for Ardoch Manse is in Band E. The Buildings Officer for the Presbytery was invited to visit and report on the suitability of our manse. His comments were that he could see no way in which the manse could be brought up to the required standard and he recommended that we sell the manse and buy a more suitable house.



The Kirk Session of Ardoch have agreed to the sale and the purchase of a new manse and Perth Presbytery agree that this should go ahead as soon as possible. An Extract Minute of this decision was sent by the Presbytery to the General Trustees who have indicated that they agree to this decision.

A suitable house to replace the Manse is therefore being sought. The Church of Scotland will assist us with a Bridging Loan if required so that if a suitable house does become available it can be bought before selling the current Manse.

Liz Paterson

Braco Community Choir

After weeks of preparation and practice, Braco Community Choir is ready to 'go on the road' with a varied programme ranging from "Love is all Around" to "White Christmas."



The choir, accompanied on the piano by John Duncan, will be entertaining at Parkdale, Auchterarder; the Guild Christmas Party and at The Hub, between 28th November and 10th December.

The Choir practises in the Church Hall from 2-3pm on Thursdays (except for the first Thursday of each month) and will resume in the New Year.

We would love to have some new members. At the moment, the choir consists solely of ladies, but some guys joining us would be great. Why not come along and give it a try?

John Duncan.

Blackford Music Club

The last music session of 2024 is on Thursday 19th December from 8pm. There are sure to be few favourite festive songs and tunes to enjoy that evening so come along and join in or just relax and listen with a hot cuppa! The club was delighted to receive funding from the Blackford Community Fund recently towards the purchase of musical equipment and this has already been put to great use at Musicfest24. We are very grateful to the Community Fund for their support. Music Club normally meets on the last Thursday of the month and everyone is welcome to come along. Dates for early 2025 are as follows:



30th January (Burns Supper)

27th February

27th March

24th April

For further information contact Sandy Marshall 01764 682354

Blackford Fundraising News

Musicfest24 was another very successful event over the last weekend in October and huge thanks go to everyone for their support and help.

At the time of printing this edition of "The Link", our next fundraising event is the St Andrew's Christmas Fayre on Saturday 30th November.



Our final fundraising activity for this year is the ever-popular Christmas Social on Monday 9th December from 7.30pm. Festive music, party games and much more together with mulled wine and mince pies makes this a really enjoyable evening in our Christmas celebrations. Tickets are £5 and are available from Laura or Sandy.

How's the print size?

Most people read The Link in an A5 size which fits nicely inside a Bible.

If you'd prefer the larger version printed to A4 size, then please mention it to your elder or Session Clerk.

Ardoch Fundraising Team



2024 has been a good year with fun, enjoyable fundraisers. We started with the Whist Drive in February, followed by the most enjoyable evening of fellowship and songs of praise in May, quickly followed with the annual duck race and fun day in June.

Our next fundraiser is almost upon us. After the success of previous years we are holding another Quiz Night in the Church Hall on **Saturday 14th December**; please note change of date. Doors open 7:00pm, eyes down 7.30pm. Please come along for a fun night. Teams of 4, BYOB, nibbles provided, raffle and prizes for the winning team.



Preferably please book your team before the night by contacting any Team member (Charles, Maureen, Sue, Lilian, Dorothy, Ann, Barbara, Drew) to book your table. Be quick as last year the hall was bursting at the seams!

Our final Retiring Collection for 2024 is:

Date	Collection
24th Dec. 2024 Watchnight service	Churches Action for the Homeless and Christian Aid  

With Christmas fast approaching please remember to use easyfundraising.org.uk when ordering online, it really does help and is a painless way to raise funds for the Church.

Going into 2025 we are scheduled to have our annual Whist Drive, date to be confirmed but probably early February with more fundraisers still to be arranged.

I'll finish as I usually do by saying a huge thank you to Ardoch Church community for always greatly supporting the fundraisers we organise along with kindly donating to our Special Retiring Collections throughout the year.

Grateful thanks and Season's Greetings from the Fundraising Team.
Maureen, Fundraising Coordinator

Are you on email? Do we have your address?

Can we keep in touch with you this way?
Please email your Session Clerk (addresses on page 23)
or talk to us one Sunday morning.



Our weekly rota for Bible Readers

Should our weekly service Bible Readers be unable to find a replacement, please contact Christine Souter for Ardoch on csouterbraco@aol.com or 07767 380011 or Karen Shaw for Blackford on 682684, 07505 081873 or kshaw05@yahoo.com.



Date	Ardoch/Blackford	Luke's Gospel
1 Dec	Advent—Congregation Robin Peacock	Luke 1:1-20
8 Dec	Advent—Kirk Session Jane Roy	Luke 1: 21-28
15 Dec	Advent—Guild Richard Bolton	Luke 1:39-80
22 Dec	Advent—Choir Gordon Roy	Luke 2:1-21
29 Dec	Ann Gordon Karen Shaw	Luke 2:22-52
5 Jan	Michael Boxer Sandy Marshall	Luke 3
12 Jan	Charles Robertson Moira Hanslip	Luke 4
19 Jan	Fiona Lyle Lyndsey Thomas	Luke 5,6
26 Jan	John Souter Jeannette Barr	Luke 7,8
2 Feb	Heather McDonald Jacqui Crawford	Luke 9
9 Feb	Liz Paterson Laura Peacock	Luke 10
16 Feb	Pat Duncan Karen Shaw	Luke 11
23 Feb	Bruce Tarbet	Luke 12
2 Mar	Dorothy Johnston Thelma McNaught	Luke 13, 14
9 Mar	Peter Scott John & Ben McNaught	Luke 15
16 Mar	Joyce Wighton Robin Peacock	Luke 16, 17
23 Mar	Maureen James Shona Stewart	Luke 18, 19
30 Mar	Sally Young Jeannette Barr	Luke 20, 21
6 April	Ann Gordon Richard Bolton	Luke 22

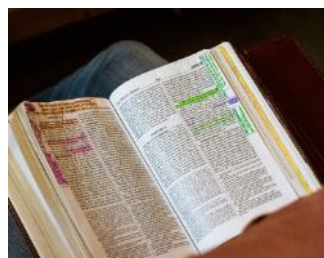
Our Flower Rotas

Thanks to all those who serve us, and subsequently our communities, in this way led by Jenny Kemp and Helen Laing.

Date	Ardoch Flowers	Blackford Flowers
1st Dec	Ann Spiers	Stuart Laing
8th Dec	Marrion Dawson	Jeannette Barr
15th Dec	Pat Aitken	Rita Marshall
22nd Dec	Christmas Tree	Billy Gardner
29th Dec	Christmas Tree	Billy Gardner
5th Jan	Jenny Kemp	Fiona Smeaton
12th Jan	Marrion Dawson	Jennifer Davidson
19th Jan	Liz Paterson	Margaret Earle
26th Jan	Margaret Ferguson	Karen Shaw
2nd Feb	Gillian Scott	Robert Millar
9th Feb	Anne Walker	Sheila Wight
16th Feb	Lilian Ayre	Jean Robertson
23rd Feb	Christine Souter	Jane Roy
2nd Mar	Phyllis Macleod	Jeannette Barr
9th Mar	Moira Hay	Shona Stewart
16th Mar	Muriel Cathcart	Jessie Wilson
23rd Mar	Dorothy Scott	Moira Hanslip
30th Mar	Vacant	Helen Laing
6th April	Sheila MacGregor	Vacant

In the table opposite, we've offered a personal reading plan that uses Luke's Gospel rather than the usual Lectionary readings. It's a possible way to get into Luke's Gospel by doing a little bit each week right through to Easter—20th April. Shorter sections could be read several times each week or longer chapters broken down over the week.

Pause to pray asking God to speak before you read. Have a pen handy to mark what stands out, or use the Bible app on your phone or tablet to read from different translations. This pattern does not connect directly with our Sunday service teaching, but Luke's Gospel is a focus of the Lectionary year.



Responsibility

Taking responsibility is one of the most important factors that defines a person's real character. It is an indication of the type of person you truly are. Although failing to accept responsibility might work to your advantage on occasion, this poor choice will catch up with you eventually; it will typically cause more pain or loss for you down the road than if you'd stepped up to the situation and taken responsibility.

You're responsible for your journey in life, no one else. You have to know the destination to go there. Others can help show you the way, but no one can take you there. A sign of wisdom and maturity is when you come to terms with the realisation that your decisions cause your rewards and consequences. You are responsible for your life and your ultimate success depends on the choices you make.

Dear Lord, Give us a sense of responsibility to ourselves so that we never waste gifts which you have given to us; a sense of responsibility to our friends so that we may not disappoint them; a sense of responsibility to the world so that we may put more into life than we take out; and a sense of responsibility to you so that we may always remember that you loved us and gave yourself for us. Amen.

Charles Robertson

Being a Christian is like being a Pumpkin



God picks you from the patch and brings you in. (John 15:16)

Then He washes all of the dirt off of you. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

He opens you up and scoops out all of the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, and greed. (Romans 6:6)

Then He carves you a new smiling face. (Psalm 71:23)

He puts His light inside you to shine for all the world to see. (Matthew 5:16)



©Andy Robb

Where's ours? What's yours?

The Five Marks of Mission in Blackford: Who's leading? Are we showing the marks? Where could you contribute?



1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom (Gordon)



2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers (Moira)



3. To respond to human need by loving service (Laura)



4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation (Bruce)



5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth (Sandy)

Mark of Mission 4

I would like to thank all of you in Ardoch and Blackford for contributing clothing for the Friends of Scottish Settlers (FOSS—fossfalkirk.org.uk) refugees and asylum seekers. Some of the items donated are obviously new so thank you for taking the time and using your money to purchase these items. They will be passed on to FOSS within the first week of December. If you need any more information on this or the [Causewayside Music Project](#), please speak to me.



Bruce Tarbet

Blythswood Showbox Appeal

This year we managed to fill 35 boxes from donations given by the congregation and also Auchterarder cubs. We had several knitted blankets and donations of coats and jackets - all making their way to Ukraine.



If you would like to help for the 2025 appeal by knitting squares for the blankets, please get in touch - plenty wool and needles. Many thanks to all those who help with this appeal.

Shona

Sunday 8th December

Our annual Gift Service is an opportunity to bring wrapped adult gifts (labelled man or woman) which are sent on to Churches Action for the Homeless and unwrapped children's gifts which we pass on through the Salvation Army.



Ardoch Guild

We have had a topsy turvey start to our session! Mairi and I both agreed that our opening meeting clashing with Seeds for Growth Presbytery/congregation meeting in Perth was an opportunity not to be missed. Nine of us travelled to St Mathew's for an interesting view of church in the future through worship and workshops. The Revs Neil Glover and Tommy MacNeil are inspirational speakers.



Then our second meeting, Prospects Across Scotland, had a change of speaker too. Helen Eckford, had to move to the church because of a funeral lunch in the hall. Helen spoke with experience and passion of Inclusivity and Worship for all. Our well-attended whist drive raising £364 with folks from as far as Perth and Dunblane.

Our in-house Christmas Party, to which Session is invited will be on 5th December. As a wee extra, to raise funds for our four Guild projects, we are going to have a produce/sales table at "Christmas in The Community" on Saturday 14th December in the village hall. Donations of anything you would like to buy, eg, Tablet, Sweets, Shortbread, Truffles, Preserves, Cakes, Biscuits, Knitting, Crochet would be much appreciated. Contact Heather on 07740 242714 for collection on the morning or whenever suits.

Our four projects for the next three years are: Bibles For Bairns, Scotland; Build My Church, Bulgaria; Operation Hope, Egypt; Playful Beginnings, Crossreach, Scotland. Your support for these projects is much appreciated, and any other charities you would like us to contribute to, please inform any of the committee.

Looking forward to the new year it will be lovely to welcome Gordon Roy into our midst for lunch to tell us all about his work with Scripture Union Scotland. This Wee Celebration is an SU Scotland fundraising initiative.

Can I just finish by saying thanks to Pat Duncan for organising us so efficiently as secretary. My English and computer skills are nothing in comparison, but I shall do my best to keep things rolling.
Heather, Guild President.



Donations given by Ardoch Guild during 2024

January	Mary's Meals	£50
February*	Guild Collection to Asylum Seekers, Falkirk	£115
April*	Guild Collection to Blue Door Food Bank	£101
May	Starchild, Uganda (Finding the light in every child)	£200
May	Ardoch Church Funds	£200
May	Pets as Therapy	£100
May	Blythswood Care	£200
May	Salvation Army	£200
May	Mercy Ships	£200
October*	Blythswood Care	£214
Total		£1,580

* Collections in February (Asylum Seekers) and April (Blue Door Foodbank) plus proceeds from raffle at Show Affs Concert to Blythswood Care £430

Donated from Guild Funds £1,150



Bethany
Christian
Trust



Thursday Guild Meetings for early 2025: all at 2pm

9th Jan	Gordon Roy	Scripture Union Scotland
6th Feb	Open Meeting/Produce sale	Bethany Christian Trust
6th Mar	Alan Laverock	The Banana Box Trust
3rd Apr	James Fraser	Operation Hope—Egypt (Release Int.) Annual General Meeting

Braco Warm Space and Social Club.

The Hub is fortunate to receive funding from Perth and Kinross Council for a further year. This has enabled the Warm Space and Social Club to continue to meet in Ardoch Church Hall from 11am to 3pm each Tuesday during the Winter (November – March inclusive). We are glad of the Session Clerks' enthusiasm for the project and all the help given by Charles Robertson to make this a success. We also thank the Kirk Session for their encouragement.

There are usually about 20 Hub attendees each week and they enjoy meeting up and chatting at 11am over a welcome cuppa and biscuits.

Lunch is served at 12 noon – a choice of two soups, a selection of sandwiches with refreshments and home baking to follow.

This session we have had visits at 1pm from Braco nursery (a 15 minute visit). We now have a small selection of suitable jigsaws on offer and it is wonderful to see the children enjoy the experience of being in a multi-generational environment. One Tuesday, the children created 10 digit cards for us to play Bingo. We also hosted the children for a 'story-time' where we showed a PowerPoint of pictures from 'Mog The Forgetful Cat' and we all had lots of fun shouting "Bother, bother that cat!" at the appropriate time as the story unfolded. The children are returning when Kirsty Duncan comes to entertain the group and she has promised to sing some Disney songs, etc. especially for the wee ones before she entertains The Hub group.

The format of the activities have fallen into a pattern and that continues: 1st Tuesday of the month – jigsaws and games; 2nd week - Bingo etc; 3rd week – Mega-quiz and 4th- some sort of entertainment – often live. Where a 5th Tuesday occurs in a month – it's a surprise!



We are also trying to provide information about various areas of support available to anyone who may be struggling financially, or in need of confidential advice and/or help.

Don't be shy - come along – you will be made most welcome!

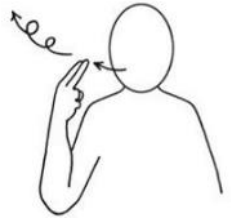
Anyone who would like to volunteer to serve at The Hub contact Pat Duncan on 01786 880 877 or berryduncan@hotmail.co.uk

Makaton in Blackford

You might have noticed that we have been gradually increasing the Makaton used in our Sunday services. I'm aiming to sign at least 2 hymns a week and we've added a prayer. It's usually a short prayer with simple language as lengthy prayers can be harder for people with communication difficulties to follow. You might also have noticed the symbol timeline across the top of each slide throughout the service. This is similar to a visual timetable – it is to help people know what is coming next in the service and how far through the service we are.

We are working on becoming "Makaton Aware" in the new year. We hope that all these things will help make our services more accessible. If there is something that would help you to be more comfortable in our services, or that would help you to understand or take part more easily, please let us know.

We've also started Sing and Sign sessions on the second Thursday of each month. So far we've learned the signs for "Any Dream Will Do", "What a Wonderful World", "Do-Re-Mi" and "Sky Full of Stars". We're looking forward to having fun with some Christmas songs when we meet on Thursday 12th December from 7:30-9:00pm in the Blackford Church Hall. We learn the signs at a slow pace, no previous knowledge or signing is necessary, and all singing abilities are welcome. If you've been thinking about joining us, please do come along and give it a go. Our early 2025 dates are:



9th January

13th February

13th March

10th April

Lyndsey Thomas

Blackford Sunshine Bags

Thanks to help from Lisa, the contents of all the Sunshine Bags will be counted by the bank machines on Monday 9th December. Please be sure to have your bag back with Jane or Jeannette by then. Thank you.



Blackford Community Lunches

By the time you read this, we'll have enjoyed four lunches together since the summer with one more to follow on Friday 27th December. 2025 lunch dates will be in the village calendar and bin rota!



Ardoch Pastoral Care (Outreach Team)

We are a practical caring team not only committed to helping church members but also the needs of the wider community. As always good communication is essential with our remit in the community, so we can deal with situations as they arise.

Flowers and a card have been delivered to people affected by bereavement, illness, loneliness or recovering from surgery. A Christmas gift will be delivered to deserving members of the community.

The team have welcomed new residents and some have already attended the Hub, Pins and Needles and the Art Class. Remember the help offered with transport to appointments and the wheelchair lending service is always available.

Community Lunches continue to be popular by bringing the community together for food, fun and fellowship. Future dates are, 20th December 2024, 31st January, 28th February, 28th March 2025,

The Team would like to thank everybody for their support throughout this year and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Peaceful 2025.

Team Contacts: Charles 880947: Barbara 880509: Lilian 880438: Heather 880556: Anne 880347.

Ardoch Church Foodbank

As always, the Congregation is very conscious of the need to support the Auchterarder Blue Door Foodbank and contributes regularly to the hamper in the Church. Recently there have been more referrals from Braco for support.



The harvest donations (above, right) from the church along with a collection from Braco Primary School amounted to 95 kilos. This fantastic amount was shared between Crieff Foodbank and Auchterarder Blue Door Foodbank.

The Foodbank coordinators are very grateful for the donations and thanks Ardoch Parish Church for their regular support and continued generosity.

“When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed.”

Blackford Children and Young People

The Hot Chocolate Club Youth Club has been running successfully with a meeting every month since the summer school holidays. As well as the usual table tennis, badminton and board games, Lyndsey has taken the opportunity to explore themes with the secondary school children like where to get help on dealing with stressful situations and Remembrance Sunday. We meet on the second Friday of the month at 7.30 pm in the church. All S1 – S6 welcome to attend.

Bruce Tarbet

We're aware that there's another **In-service Day** next term on Wednesday 12th February and would like to be able to put on a Holiday Club programme that day.

It's a seven week school holiday in the summer, so our **Blackford Holiday Club** is aiming for the week of Monday 11th August.

Shrove Tuesday is a little later this year so you've got to wait until the 4th of March before our **Stacks of Pancakes** event. Doors open at 2pm for those who enjoy making and eating before the primary school aged families arrive just after 3:15pm then secondary pupils just after 4pm.



Faith says...

You may recall that many turns of phrase in the English Language have biblical origins. And the book of Daniel is unusually highly represented. Can you work these out:

Into the _____ Dan 3v6

Thrown into the _____ of _____ Dan 6v7

The _____ is on the _____ Dan 5v5

This graphic is inspired by another phrase from chapter three, where three friends trust God with the future. Essentially they say, "God is able but even if he does not deliver us, we will not serve your gods. (Dan 3:16-18)

At the start of a new year, or a new phase, or an imminent or potential change in circumstances, do we approach the unknown with fear or faith?

Are we trusting God to be bigger than our fears?



Christmas Eve

Carols by Candlelight
6:30pm, Blackford

Watchnight Service
11:30pm, Ardoch

Christmas Day

Christmas Morning
10:00am, Ardoch



Some Advent reading?

In this short, engaging book a teenage girl, a respected priest, a group of angels and an old man share their songs from Luke's Gospel and bring us to the heart of Christmas, showing us the joy and peace that comes from meeting a baby who lay in the food trough and changed eternity.



You'll find free copies on the book table and some pews in Blackford and at the back of the sanctuary in Ardoch.

Why not ink it with your reading of Luke's Gospel on page 10 to stimulate your thinking over chapters one and two in the run up to Christmas?