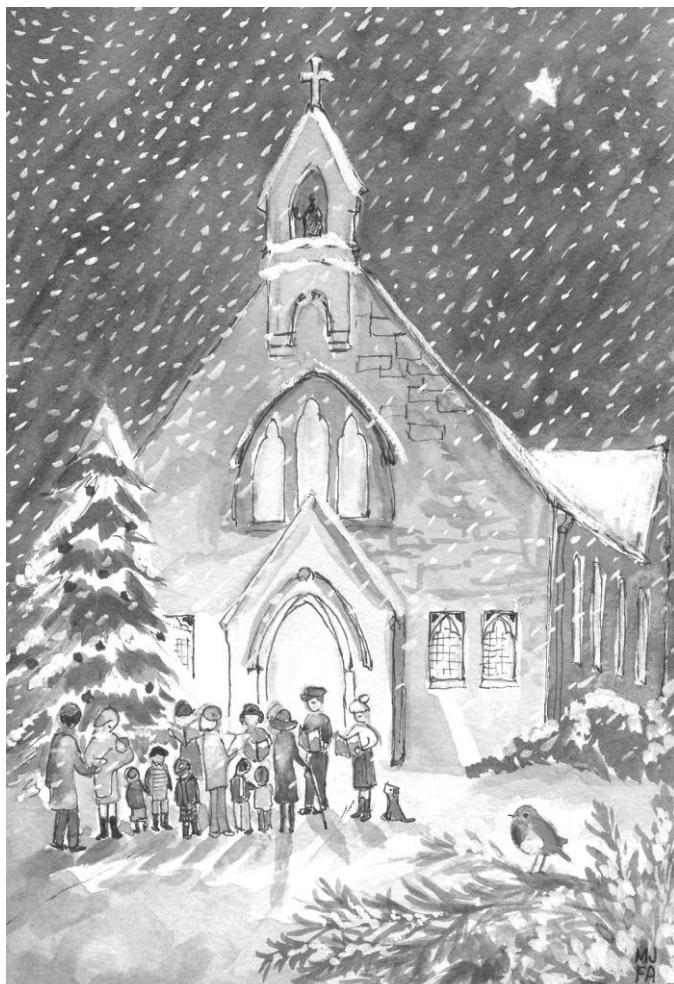


Ferintosh Parish Church



Ferintosh Focus

Church Newsletter

December 2012

Serving the communities of Conon Bridge & Maryburgh

www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk



Church Contact Information

Minister: Rev'd Andrew F. Graham

Ferintosh Manse, Leanaig Road, Conon Bridge IV7 8BE

Tel. 01349 861275

Session Clerk: Mr Fred McCreadie

Inchbroom, Highfield Park, Conon Bridge IV7 8AP

Tel. 01349 862171

Clerk to Congregational Board: Mrs Janet Murray

The Cottages, Easter Kinkell, Conon Bridge IV7 8HY

Tel. 01349 864024

Treasurer: Mr Jim Bremner

Strathmore, Gairloch Crescent, Conon Bridge IV7 8BQ

Tel. 01349 861412

Freewill Offering / Gift Aid: Mrs Isabel MacKenzie

31 Bayne Drive, Dingwall IV15 9UB

Tel. 01349 864387

Roll Keeper / Order of Service / Website: Mr John Smith

The Finches, Strathdrynie, Dingwall IV15 9UJ

Tel. 01349 865915

Newsletter Committee: Miss Emma Smith, Mrs Janette Steele, Mr Hugh Steele

Pastoral Care Team: Mrs Janette Steele

17 Muirden Road, Maryburgh IV7 8EJ

Tel. 01349 861591

Guild Contact: Mrs Elizabeth Blackburn

12 Riverford Crescent, Conon Bridge IV7 8HL

Tel. 01349 861593

Sunday Club: Mr John Fraser

Quarry Croft, Conon Bridge IV7 8AQ

Tel 01349 861140

Ferintosh Youth Fellowship: Mr Tommy McGregor

102 Birch Drive, Maryburgh IV7 8ES

Tel 01349 866181

Child Protection: Mr Hugh Fraser

Achnasoul, Muir Of Ord, IV6 7XA

Tel. 01997 433384

Church Website:
www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. 2 Timothy 2:7



Contents

Many take this heralding of the end of another year to reflect on what they've done, how they've grown and what they've learned. Reflecting on how the Lord has moulded us gives a wonderful testimony; one that you can share this season.

Reflection is not just looking back; each of us is called to reflect the love of Christ in our lives, showing grace to those around us. Reflect on how you've done this, and how you could better do this over Christmas.

Congregation Contribution

Look out for the "Congregation Contributions" in this edition, and have a think about submitting some for the next issue.

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As always, we welcome any comments, questions or suggestions about the newsletter.

Submissions are now invited for the next edition of the Focus - these can be made to members of the editorial team, or sent by email to strathdrynie@fiscali.co.uk.



Minister's Message

How many of you remember what part you played in your first church or school Nativity play? I remember as a young boy, standing as smartly as I could, waiting to be told what part I would be given. As names and parts were being given out, all I could hear myself thinking was, **not the donkey, not the donkey....pleaseeee not the donkey!** What part did I get – no, it wasn't the donkey. I was to play a shepherd with the usual tea towel and tie for headwear and an old striped dressing gown for my cloak. How things don't change over the years. (Look out for the shepherds this year!)

I have often wondered how those shepherds felt on that special night. **Fearful** as the angelic host first appeared to them. **Special** as they had been the first to be told the news of Christ's birth. **Excitement** as they went to worship this Saviour for themselves

Fearful, special, excited – is this perhaps how we feel at this time of the year. Fearful when we look at what's happening in our world today, especially in the Middle East where our Lord and Saviour was born. Special because we know our Lord loves us and will not forsake us. Excited that we are again free to celebrate His birth and that one day we will meet Him face to face.

'When they had seen Him they spread the word...' (Luke 2:17) Our challenge this Christmas is to do as the shepherds did and share the good news.

I wish you all a joyful and peaceful Christmas.

God Bless,
Andy

Christmas at Ferintosh Parish Church

Sunday 23 rd	Family Nativity Service at 11.00am, followed by tea and coffee in the church hall.
Sunday 23 rd	Family Carol Service at 6.30pm, followed by tea, coffee and mince pies in the church hall.
Monday 24 th	Watchnight Service at 11.30pm.
Tuesday 25 th	Christmas Day Family Service at 10.30am.
Sunday 6 th January	Holy Communion at 11.00am service. (No Evening Service)



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Reflecting on Fellowship...



The Programme for 2012-2013 is well underway and has been very interesting so far. The **Guild** Theme is "A Faith to Proclaim" with the discussion topic this year "Being a Christian in today's world."

We have enjoyed and learned from a speaker from "Child Survival in Malawi (Scotland)"; from Rev Graham on the theme; and an afternoon of discussion around the discussion topic.

Guild Week has just taken place and our members had a very busy time. There was a very enjoyable time of singing and fellowship on Wednesday 21st November in St Clements Church when there was a Songs of Praise Evening to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Guild. Members have also been visiting former members who are no longer able to attend meetings

and Guild members took part in the morning service on Sunday 25th November.

Some of our members also joined with the Guild folk of Ross Tain Presbyterial Council at a Songs of Praise afternoon in Logie Easter Church on Saturday 24th November. It was lovely to meet up with Laura Flett who with her husband, David, used to stay in the East Lodge, Maryburgh. David was an elder at Ferintosh and Laura was a president of the Guild here.

On Tuesday 27th November we made a visit to Cameron House in Inverness where we held a short service for the staff and residents. It is always lovely to go there and see the residents enjoy the hymns and readings. Many are unable to do very much but it is wonderful to hear them join in the singing of the familiar hymns.

We have completed three years of the projects and are now supporting six new ones over the next three years. Ferintosh Guild have chosen three to support and this year's is "Heart for Art", a CrossReach project looking at the use of art therapy in the care of those with dementia.

On Monday 3rd December we had a Christmas Afternoon Tea in the Church Hall with Leslie Currie and Hamish Menzies supplying the music.

Guild always welcomes new members, young, older, male, female. Do come along to the next meeting on 7th January at 2pm. The topic that day is "People of Faith".





The **Pastoral Care Team** continue to give of their time and talents, and once again I'd like to thank all who are involved. Their dedication and helpfulness and willingness are appreciated by me, the coordinator, and I am certain by those who make use of our services.

Pastoral Care Team are volunteers who are willing to do odd jobs for you about the house, take you to appointments, take you to visit a friend or relative in a Care Home or hospital and various other tasks. If you have a problem that you think we could help with, just let us know.

Some of our members visit on a regular basis those who just like a chat and a bit of company and a catch up with Church news. Again if you'd like that contact, just let us know.

We are a small team and would welcome new members if you feel you could help out even on an irregular basis. Contact Janette Steele or the Minister if you'd like to join us. As always you need your prayers to help us carry out the work of Jesus in this way.

You can contact the Team in one of two ways. You can speak to your elder who will try to arrange it or you can contact the coordinator, Janette Steele (01349 861591).

Janette Steele, Coordinator

Fellowship Lunches are held in the Church Hall on the 1st Friday of the winter months at 12 noon, when we share in a short time of Worship together. This is followed by some delicious home-made soups, which are prepared by some ladies from the congregation. We then have a cup of tea or coffee and enjoy a chat together. We usually have a guest speaker and aim to finish around 1.45pm.

The dates of the next lunches are:

- Friday 1st February 2013 –Our speaker is to be Mr John Noble, who will speak on the Life of Jesus, told through stamps.
- Friday 1st March 2013 – Our speaker is to be Mrs Shona Vance, who will speak on her work as an author.

The **River Café** takes place in our Church Hall on the 2nd Wednesday of the month (during school term time) from 2pm-3.30pm. This gives the opportunity to meet together for a chat, while enjoying a cup of tea or coffee and home baking. Why not drop in, even for a few minutes and give it a try? We look forward to welcoming you there.

Dates of the next Cafes are:

- Wednesday 13th February 2013
- Wednesday 13th March 2013

There is to be a **“Beetle Drive”** in the Church Hall on Saturday 9th March 2013 at 6.30pm. We hope you will come along and join in the fun of the evening.

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. 2 Timothy 2:7



Reflecting on God's Word...

Do take time out from the busy festive period to spend time in quiet reflection alongside Our Lord. He provides worship, prayer, other people and His Word to encourage us. Take the opportunity to glorify Him in studying with others in the congregation and reflecting together on what He has been teaching us from the passage.

Read Luke 1:5-25

Zechariah and Elizabeth had been praying for some time, not only for their own child, but also for the coming of their Saviour. They must have had great faith to continue to believe that God would answer their prayers and now when the Angel of the Lord comes to deliver the good news it seems that both prayers are to be answered.

Why is it then that Zechariah reacts in the way that he does – **How can I be sure of this?**

- Could it be that his faith is not as strong as we first thought?
- He kept praying, yes, but the reality of the situation i.e. the age of himself and Elizabeth made him think that they were long past the age of ever having a child.
- Could it be that the news he is given is too good?
 - He and Elizabeth simply wanted a child. But not only were they to be blessed with a son, but a son who would be the Lord's messenger.
- Was he simply stunned and shocked at the way the news was delivered?

All too often we too are guilty of praying to the Lord for something and yet when He answers, we too respond in disbelief – for a whole host of reasons. The question we perhaps need to ask ourselves is why this is so. If we have the faith to pray to God in the first place, why do we so show little faith when He answers?

Read Luke 1:26-38

It is difficult for any of us to truly imagine how Mary must have felt when Gabriel appeared before her – fearful, full of trepidation, wondering just what on earth was happening. When Gabriel tells her what will happen, her reaction is - **How will this be?**

What makes Mary's reaction different to Zechariah's? Why does Gabriel 'deal' with her differently from Zechariah?

- First of all we need to note that Gabriel wasn't appearing to Mary in response to prayer.
 - Mary hadn't been praying for a child in the way Elizabeth and Zechariah had so there wasn't that same sense of disbelief at her prayer being answered.
- Zechariah asked – **How can I be sure of this?** Mary asked – **How will this be?**
 - Asking **how can** something happen suggests that you don't believe it to be possible. Whereas asking **how will** something happen suggests that you believe it to be possible, but you don't understand how.

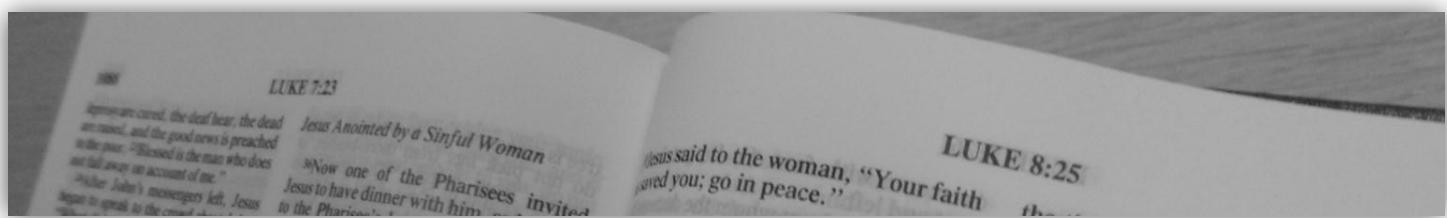
Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. 2 Timothy 2:7



One of the great mysteries of our faith is that there will always be things that we won't understand. However, a lack of understanding doesn't necessarily mean that we don't believe things are possible. In many ways that is what faith is all about.

All through our faith lives we all face situations where we ask questions. These may be in relation to our prayer life, they may be in relation to our personal circumstances. But perhaps we need to consider how these questions manifest themselves and ultimately reflect upon this question.

When we do have questions, which of these two are we most like – Zechariah or Mary?



Ladies Bible Study meets fortnightly in the Church hall on a **Wednesday** afternoon beginning at **2pm**.

The ladies have been studying the material from World Day of Prayer from the ladies of Malaya, dealing with "Let Justice Prevail" looking at the prophet Habakkuk. These have generated some good discussion but, don't worry, if you prefer to listen and absorb, that's OK too.

Our last study of 2012 will take place on Wednesday 5th December at the usual time of 2 o'clock. We will then take a break for the holiday period and resume on Wednesday 9th January at 2pm.

We have decided to take a look at the book 2 Corinthians from the Cover to Cover study booklets. This is to deal with "Restoring Harmony" which seems to be a pertinent subject for the group, the congregation and the wider Church of Scotland.

The Ladies Bible study is a welcoming group who'd love to have more folk join us each fortnight. If you'd like to come along to this informal gathering of women who read God's word and try to see its significance for our lives today, come and taste to see if it is what you are looking for. Look forward to seeing you there.

Janette Steele



Reflecting on mission & outreach...

I thought readers might like to know what is going on in Ferintosh parish in terms of reaching out to our own community and the wider world in the name of Jesus Christ and of making known the good news of God's love and his promise of salvation. My intention would be to provide an up-date in each Newsletter.

As far as our local community is concerned Ferintosh Focus, the Church website and the delivery of a Christmas card to each household in the parish are ways in which we aim to have contact with as many people as possible. The activities of the congregation and its organisations are open to everyone who is interested, and special events are advertised, publicly or by word of mouth – eg the Ceilidh Dance planned for 8th December, or the Sunday Club's "welcome back" party after the summer holidays. Our minister visits Ben Wyvis and Ferintosh Primary Schools throughout the terms and our youth club outreach extends to all P6/7 in the community, and again this year the minister has been invited to take part in Christmas Assemblies at Dingwall Academy. We also welcome a number of non-church organisations and one-off community events in the Church Hall.

Further afield but still within Scotland, we participate in the rota of local Churches which holds services in the Ross Memorial Hospital. We have links to Cameron House, the Church's care home for confused elderly people in Inverness, which the Guild recently visited as part of Guild Week celebrations. We also support the food bank run by Blythswood Care, which has outlets in Dingwall and Easter Ross, as well as Inverness, providing emergency food supplies for people in crisis. 20 boxes were handed over after out Harvest Thanksgiving service this year, and there is a basket in the Church for any contributions people would like to make throughout the year.

Looking beyond our own land, Malawi is a main focus of interest, and the Presbytery of Ross is in the process of signing a formal twinning agreement with Ekwendeni Hospital. The Presbytery World Mission Committee is planning an event to publicise and explore this in the spring of next year. Members and organisations of the congregation also support the work of Child Survival in Malawi and the Viyele Elderly Feeding Programme, both of which aim to support people affected by HIV/Aids, and the Raven Trust, which helps supply material and equipment required for work in Malawi. Ferintosh congregation had a retiring offering for Child Survival during this year, and a representative gave a talk at the opening meeting of Guilds in Ross Presbyterial Council. Over the summer the congregation collected a large amount of stationery for schools which has been sent via the Raven Trust.

The congregation supports the work of Christian Aid in promoting sustainable development through partner organisations throughout the world, and this year again over £2,000 was donated, mainly through door-to-door collections in our parish. In addition, Souper Sunday back in January raised money and awareness for the Church of Scotland HIV/Aids Programme, which supports the efforts partners in many countries to combat the virus and its devastating effects. A large number of used stamps were delivered to the World Mission Council stamp appeal, this year supporting an agricultural training project in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. This appeal is on-going, and used stamps, UK or foreign, can be placed in the box in the Church vestibule at any time, or given to any Church member. The dealer requests that a margin of half to one inch of envelope is left round the stamp(s), and it is helpful if the stamps are cut neatly off the envelope rather than torn, and UK stamps separated from foreign ones.

Organisations within the congregation, and individuals, are also involved in many different forms of voluntary work and fund-raising, all of which is part of our response to Jesus' exhortation to love our neighbour.

All this depends on the good will, enthusiasm and hard work of many people, and I would like to record the thanks of the Mission and Outreach Committee to everyone who has played a part. The more people who are involved, the more we can do, and the easier it is for each individual, so next time there is an appeal for help in cash, kind or time, please consider what you can do.

Janet Winchester
Convener, Mission and Outreach Committee

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Reflecting on growing youth...

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

Thank you to all who give of their time in helping with Creche, Sunday Club, FYF and Xtra Time. Your commitment and dedication play such a valuable part in the Christian nurture of our young people here in Ferintosh Parish Church. We are still looking for one or two more volunteers to come forward, particularly in regard to FYF, so if you can help please see the Minister.

This term **Sunday Club** have been continuing to look at God in the world and are now focussing on the Nativity which will take place on Sunday the 23rd of December during morning worship. We hope to see lots of grandparents, aunties and uncle along for that and we're looking forward to it very much.

Ferintosh Youth Fellowship (FYF) continues to meet each Sunday during the morning service. We have been looking at the moral guidance the Bible can give to young people today. We have also been helping the Sunday Club with their Nativity play and we're looking forward to participating in it.

After Christmas we will be starting a small series of discussion topics entitled pictures of God.

The FYF is open to any young person of Academy School age and new people are always welcome.

Xtra Time finished this session on the 7th of December with lots of fun and games at our Christmas party. The last few months have gone well although numbers have been up and down a bit. However, the ones who have come along every week have enjoyed the different formats that we have been using and look forward to it every week. Our thanks go to all the adults who have helped over the past twelve weeks. Without your help none of this would have been possible. We now enjoy a well-earned rest until the middle of January.

Congregation Contributions

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Thanks to Ondrej Paska (See Matthew 14:24-33)

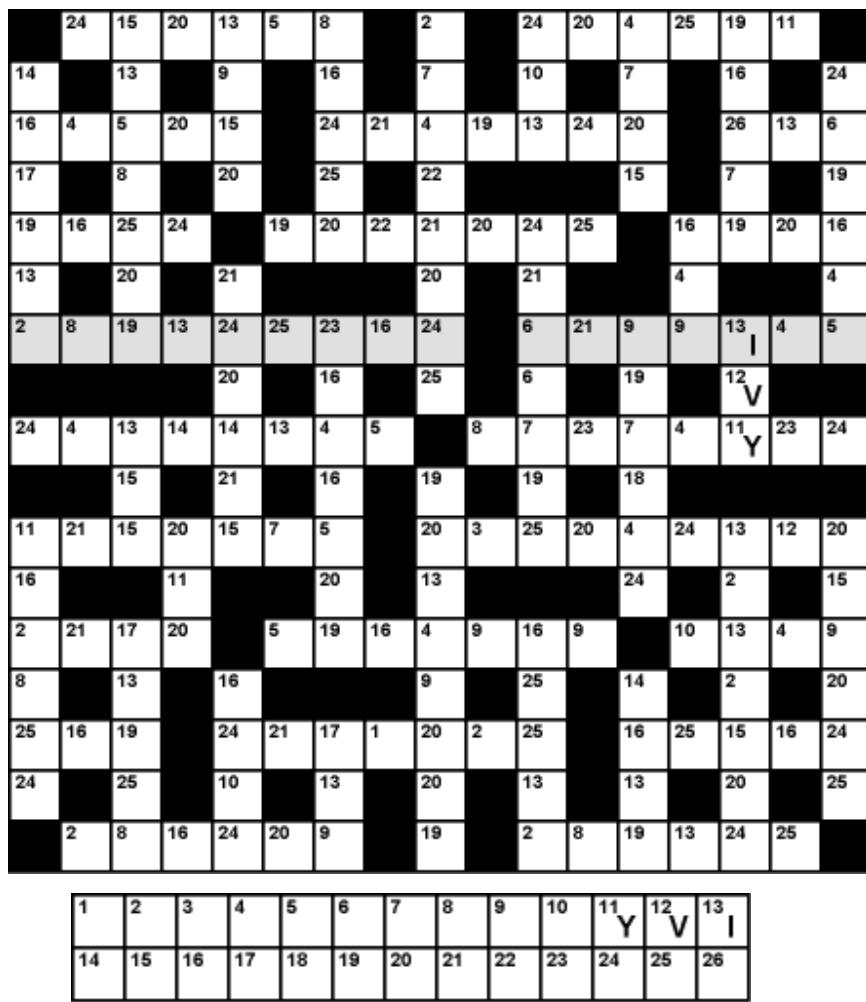
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**PETER FINDS HIS FAITH TO BE MUCH
STRONGER IN THE WINTER**

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Reflective fun...



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Unscramble the tiles to reveal a bible verse.

O	W	N	L	L	Y	T	H	I	F	U	W	W	I	N	S	H	A	T	H
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Church Flower Rota 2013

January	Organiser – Mrs M Wilson
6 th	Mrs M Wilson
13 th	Mrs J McCulloch
20 th	Mrs S Chalmers
27 th	
February	Organiser – Mrs M MacLeod
3 rd	Mrs M MacLeod
10 th	Mrs J Steele
17 th	Mrs K Campbell
24 th	Mrs MacKinnon
March	Organiser – Mrs P Chata
3 rd	Mrs E Munro
10 th	Mrs S MacKenzie
17 th	Mrs P Chata
24 th	Mrs C Parry
31 st	Mrs I Thomson
April	Organiser – Miss J Winchester
7 th	Miss J Winchester
14 th	Mrs M Wilson
21 st	Mrs J Cameron
28 th	Sheena Telfer
May	Organiser – Mrs J MacKenzie
5 th	Mrs J Steele
12 th	Mrs J McCulloch
19 th	Mrs J MacKenzie
26 th	Miss M MacKenzie
June	Organiser – Mrs J Murray
2 nd	Shona Menzies
9 th	Mrs J Murray
16 th	Doreen Suckling
23 rd	Sheena Telfer
30 th	Miss J Winchester

July	Organiser – Mrs E Blackburn
7 th	Mrs H Drummond
14 th	Mr T Thomas
21 st	Mrs C Aitken
28 th	Mrs E Blackburn
August	Organiser – Mrs C Parry
4 th	Mrs C Parry
11 th	Mrs D Ritchie
18 th	Muriel MacKay
25 th	Mrs J Cameron
September	Organiser –
1 st	Mrs A McKee
8 th	Mrs Wallace
15 th	Mrs D Fraser
22 nd	Mrs W Leggett
29 th	Harvest Thanksgiving
October	Organiser – Mrs J Cameron
6 th	Mrs A MacKay
13 th	Sadie MacKenzie
20 th	Anne McInnes
27 th	Gael McCallum
November	Organiser – Mrs E Glashan
3 rd	Mrs E Glashan
10 th	Mrs P Gillanders
17 th	Mrs M Graham
24 th	Miss M MacKenzie
December	Organiser – Mrs J Cameron
1 st	Mrs I MacDonald
8 th	Mrs P Gillanders
15 th	Flower Team
22 nd	Flower Team
29 th	Flower Team

Church Register Funerals

4 October 2012	Mr Alec McLeod	18 October 2012	Rev Gordon Holroyd
6 October 2012	Mrs Rena Ross	19 October 2012	Lucie May MacKenzie
9 October 2012	Mrs Jean Thomas		

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