

Ferintosh

Parish Church



Cover Picture by FYF member Saffron Jezewski

Ferintosh Focus

Church Newsletter

December 2014

Serving the communities of Conon Bridge & Maryburgh
www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk



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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@gmail.com



Contents

There were a whole number of people who, at the time around Jesus' birth, made their "Journey to Bethlehem". It was long, difficult and full of worry. It was bursting with expectation and excitement at what was to come.

Can you imagine Mary – travelling with this mysterious infant? Joseph – wondering what to make of this virgin birth. The Shepherds – delight and awe at these exceptional events. And later the Wise Men, determined to find the Child no matter what. But have you ever considered how God felt as Bethlehem approached, sending His one and only Son to Earth? Knowing the joy He would bring, the ministry He would complete and ultimately what was in store for His loved one at the cross.

Today we make that same journey of fear, doubt, joy and rest ending at the foot of Jesus and offering our lives before Him.

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Minister's Message

Dear Friends,

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas once again, I wonder if there are any Christmases that immediately come to mind when you look back over the years. Perhaps there is more than one – your earliest Christmas memory as a child, the first Christmas after the birth of your first child or the first Christmas after you were married.



The first Christmas for Margaret and I came only weeks after our wedding. I had been posted to RAF St. Mawgan and we found ourselves living in quarters at St. Eval, a bleak place on the Cornish landscape. I recall a small Christmas tree which even after it had been decorated with the usual baubles etc., still looked somewhat sparse. Our Christmas gifts to each other were not that elaborate or grand either – although perhaps slightly better than the tree!!

However, there was something special about that first Christmas together; about giving something personal to the one I loved and cherished more than any other in the world and about receiving something special from someone who loved me just as dearly. It is in this simple loving, giving and receiving that we surely find the real joy of Christmas.

On that first Christmas morning, God gave us the most precious gift we could ever receive, **'Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord...'** (Luke 2:11), and in so doing, revealed just how great his love for us is. Jesus Christ came to us as a babe, was laid in a manger in a lowly stable and would one day give His life for us, that we might find salvation through Him and be reconciled to our loving Father in Heaven.

What gift could we give to God this Christmas? God doesn't expect anything from us – but He perhaps hopes for something. Nothing that money could buy, not even the praise from our lips as we journey through the Advent season to Christmas itself. What God would love from us – *is our heart and our love.*

So as we look forward to celebrating the birth of our Lord and Saviour once again, remembering God's great love for us, let's try to give Him what He really wants from us – our heart and our love – for if we can do that, it will truly be a joyous and blessed Christmas indeed.

With every blessing,
Andy

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God"
Ephesians 2:8



Church Community Update

Guild Week (16-23rd November) was a very busy week. All members were encouraged to "wear the badge", some displaying the old style and some the new. The national team organised a "Big Sing" in Perth North Church on Friday 21st. There was a walk around Dingwall on Tuesday 18th starting from St Clements Hall and, of course, finishing at the Coffee Morning at Castle Street! Castle Street Church Guild hosted another Coffee Morning on Saturday 22nd November and all Ross Prebyterial Council Guilds were invited by Ross Tain Presbyterial Council to a "Songs of Praise" service at Kilmuir Easter Church on Sunday afternoon at 3pm, with the theme "The Guild Remembers".



The Ross Presbyterial Guilds gathered at Muir of Ord on Monday 24th November to hear presentations about the Vine Trust given by David and Ruth Shepherd with Donald MacDonald.

Our own members took part in the morning devotions on 23rd to mark the end of Guild Week. It is intended to visit Cameron House and some of our former members too. We are now looking forward to having a Christmas Lunch at the Priory Hotel! The project we are supporting this year is the Julius Project organised by Scottish Churches Housing Action. It aims to help and support people to get their own tenancies and also to keep them. A worthwhile cause. We are in our final year of the three year cycle of projects and we look forward to 2015 when we will hear which six projects have been chosen by the Guild to give its support. These are very hard fought since the Guild and its supporters are very generous to the projects chosen.

Already half a million pounds has been raised for the current six.

The members of the **Pastoral Care Team** would like to express their gratitude to all who support their efforts by providing information about needs and also by praying for their work on a regular basis.

We continue to get alongside people who need a little extra help to do everyday things. We take folk to appointments both locally and to Inverness. We visit Care Homes to ensure former church goers know we are still thinking and praying for them. We visit the elderly in their own homes.

I know that these small efforts from us are really appreciated by those who call upon us. It is a great pleasure and honour to serve our Lord and Master in this way. Keep praying that God will be given the glory in all we do.

Janette Steele



Bible Study - Matthew

Background Information:

Matthew was a Jewish tax collector who became one of Jesus' disciples and is widely believed to be the author of the Gospel which bears his name. The fact that it is the first of the Gospel narratives and at the beginning of the New Testament is no accident as it seems to form a natural link between the Old and New Testaments because of its emphasis on the fulfilment of prophecy. The Gospel is filled with Messianic language throughout and its purpose is unashamedly clear – to present clear evidence that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah, the Redeemer and Saviour of the people.

Read Matthew 1:1-17

Why do you think Matthew began his Gospel narrative with this long genealogical account of Jesus' ancestors?

A person's lineage was very important in Old Testament times. In presenting Jesus' lineage in this way, Matthew shows that Jesus was a clear descendant of Abraham. It also connects Jesus directly to Jesse and King David, so right from the outset Matthew is keen to prove Jesus' 'credentials'.

Read Matthew 1:18-25

Questions to consider and reflect upon:-

Why is the virgin birth so important to the Christian faith?

What was the significance of the angel appearing to Joseph in a dream?

What can we learn from Joseph in these verses – what qualities did he reveal to us?

Jesus – Immanuel – what do these names mean to us as we live out our Christian faith today?

Read Matthew 2:1-12

Questions to consider and reflect upon:-

The wise men followed a star for thousands of miles to come to see Jesus. What can we learn from their faith?

The scribes and priest obviously knew of Micah's prophecy concerning the birth of the Messiah, so why didn't they then continue on with the wise men?

What can we learn from the actions of Herod here?

The amount of information of the actual birth of Jesus recorded in Matthew is less than that which we find in Luke, however, Matthew does go on to speak of the actions of Herod once the wise men didn't return and of the journey of Jesus and His family to Egypt – and again to show how prophecy is fulfilled.



An update from the Organ Stool

I would thank you for your encouraging words to me throughout the year regarding special hymns played and also Choir pieces sung. Gratefully received and appreciated. The request list is ongoing - just tell me or give me a note.

Your favourite hymns or those with a special memory attached

Should you have a 'spare' evening on December 8th (Monday), I would well recommend that you trot over to Rosskeen Parish Church, Perrins Road Alness, where there is to be a Presentation of "Carols by Candlelight" given by The Miriam Singers and Iain's Boys, directed and led by Wemyss Billows, followed by refreshments. It will be an evening full of fun, laughter and a time for reflection. Do come along - you'll love it!

Ferintosh Church Choir

Just to remind you that the final rehearsals for our Christmas Carols will be on the last Sunday morning in November and first Sunday morning in December plus a short run through of Carols on the Sunday morning before the actual event. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Choir members for their loyal service - it is certainly not taken for granted I can assure you. Bless you all.

Doreen Suckling



It was with quite a heavy heart that the final payment to **Child Survival In Malawi (Scotland)** was made last month. (£30) It is being wound up in 2015.

If you are one of those who collect small change and donated to this charity, might I prayerfully suggest continuing to collect and perhaps donating to Fellowship of the Least Coin which fulfils a similar role but worldwide rather than just Malawi. If you want to continue to support Malawi, the Feeding programme which Bob and Jan Baxter (Alness) visit regularly is also very grateful for any amount of funding no matter how insignificant you might think it is.



We would like to express our sincere thanks for the welcome and friendship we were given on our recent return visit to Ferintosh. It seems amazing that it is 10 years since we moved South and on each of our return visits it still feels like coming home. Special thanks to Andrew for his warm welcome, also Fred and Arlene. Congratulations on the new look Church interior, we thought it looked great.

Unfortunately we chose the wrong time for our visit, it being school break time so some of the people we hoped to see were away so we send them our regards and want them to know they were in our thoughts. The same problem also prevented us seeing Dan and Joanne in Lenzie, so will have to plan better next time, God willing.

Good to see the Website is being updated, congratulations on that.

Yours in God's Love.
Adrian & Eileen



Our Church Prayer Life

'I didn't want to leave', 'there were a lot of resources for food for thought and prayer', 'I didn't know about until I read.....' and 'it was so peaceful' were some of the comments made after the **Day of Prayer** for cessation of conflict which was held in Ferintosh Church sanctuary on Remembrance Saturday on November 8th.

The success of other church events may be measured in terms of numbers, but the success of a day of prayer cannot be readily quantified. What was important was that our doors were opened to both church and public for six hours for private or group prayer and reflection at a time when people everywhere are becoming more and more distressed by the rampant brutal conflict escalating in our world. The best thing we can do is pray, and not the last thing even if it is the only thing; to petition our Lord to intervene in His great mercy as He hears our prayers added to the many others praying all round the world.

Having chairs allowed the event to be arranged in more imaginative and accessible ways than would have been possible with fixed seating, so it enabled us to have six 'stations' with topics of prayer for : countries in conflict, corruption, women's rights, persecuted church, personal conflict and a display of some WW1 and WW2 memorabilia. Two short excellent Tearfund films were shown at intervals and reflective music was played.

Overall sixteen attended (three from other churches in the area) and prayer was offered in the sanctuary for the whole time apart from five minutes. Several people stayed for lengthy periods of time in the quiet and some came for just a few minutes. Two people asked for group prayer and again the church is ideally laid out with the side of the church being used for that in privacy, not disturbing anyone else.

Were our prayers answered? Prayer of course changes the person who prays, so yes. Did conflict stop? No, it seems to have increased. However we worship a God of the impossible, who brought down the Iron curtain and an end of apartheid in South Africa, in His time. We are only asked to be obedient and expectant and to 'pray without ceasing'.

Very many thanks to all who helped with the day in any way.

Irene Munro

Just Prayer is a quarterly meeting at which folk from different congregations can pray together for God's gracious intervention at this difficult time in the history of the Church of Scotland.

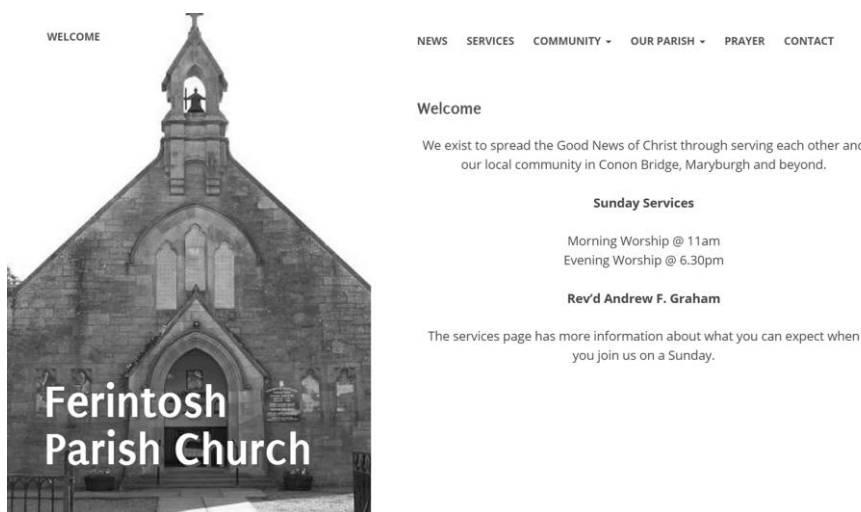
When? Check the Church News for details of the next meeting

Where? Inshes Church, Sir Walter Scott Drive, Inshes Retail Park, Inverness, IV2 3TW



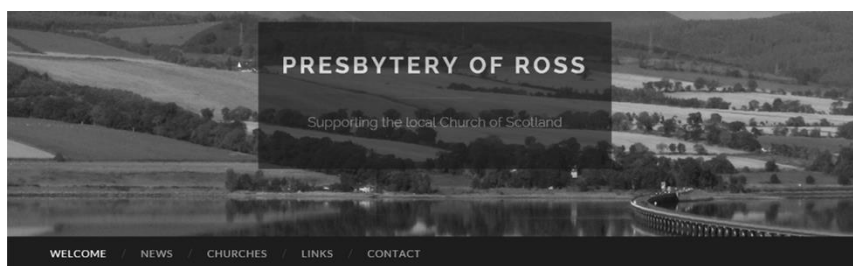
Website Updates

October and November were busy times for Emma, who spent time refreshing the Church website and introducing a new website for the Presbytery of Ross.



www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

Our own Church website now has regularly updated news from different groups, which you can sign up to receive by email. The services page has been introduced to tell others about what a Church service at Ferintosh involves, which will hopefully make it more familiar and easier to join us. The Prayer page is updated weekly and the Church news (Intimations) posted each Saturday.



Welcome to the Presbytery of Ross

The Presbytery of Ross is a group of Churches belonging to the Church of Scotland. We exist to support the local Church in their mission to serve the community and tell others about the love of God.

Presbytery, made up of ministers and elders of the member churches, meets at 7.00pm in Castle Street Church Hall on the First Tuesday of February, March, May, September, October, November and December and on the Third Tuesday of June.

Moderator For The Year 2014-2015:
Mr. Kenny MacKay

presbyteryofross.wordpress.com

The Presbytery have launched a website to create a unified space for Presbytery News and encourage fellowship between Churches. You can also sign up, via the site, to receive relevant news from congregations across the Presbytery.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God"
Ephesians 2:8



CrossReach Focus

On Saturday 22nd November 2014, the Church & Society Council/CrossReach (Church of Scotland Social Care Council) held a joint Conference entitled "Inside Out: Faith Driven Action". This was held in Dalziel St Andrews Church in Motherwell.

Worship for the day was led by the Moderator of the General Assembly, Rt Rev John Chalmers who took as his text the parables in Matthew concerning the Kingdom of God and what it is like.

Peter Bailey, Chief Executive of Crossreach, was one of a number of speakers for the day. He was joined by Paul Morrison, a member of the Joint Public Issues team of the Methodist and URC churches, who talked about poverty and inequality. He is the main author of "The Lies We Tell Ourselves", a report produced in partnership with the Church of Scotland about people experiencing poverty. There were two Panel Discussions throughout the day - "Social Care: A Government responsibility? Leave it to the professionals?" ; "Money, money, money: the way we use our wealth" .

There were opportunities to attend different workshops. The two I chose were:

1. The Digital Divide - as the Government moves towards the strategy of "digital by default", more and more people in poorer communities and those in rural areas risk being left behind. The Church has been seeking to work with Scottish Government and Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) in making congregations and local communities aware of some of the issues e.g. only being able to claim benefit online!
2. Two are Better than One: Practical ways of "Getting Alongside" - this was led by CrossReach employee, Linda Kelly, the Dementia Development Officer.

From the day the messages I took were

- CrossReach is the expert in Social Care even although it is in the Voluntary Sector. No government agency does it as well as they do. Instead of asking for funds to carry out the care they do on our behalf, we should be highlighting how good we are at doing it and letting Local Authorities etc. know the services we provide and say this is what it costs for you to provide this to our citizens. As Chris Wigglesworth said, "Speak the truth to power".
- Tax evasion and tax avoidance by large multi-national companies impact the lives of the poorest in society throughout the world and the poor keep getting poorer while the rich keep getting richer.



Janette Steele

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God"
Ephesians 2:8



It was decided at the beginning of this winter's session to hold the **Ladies Bible Study** each week. This was for a couple of reasons - to help continuity of thoughts and discussions and also to achieve more. We felt we were taking too long to cover each individual study. So if you'd like to come along and join us, we meet on a Wednesday in the small Hall of the Church at 1.30pm. The meeting usually lasts for an hour and the ladies are very friendly and open. We have some very good debates but it is quite alright if you'd like to listen too. That is equally important.

It has been decided to study Christian Aid Bible Studies for Advent published in 2013. We will begin these as soon as we can. There are four studies from different authors. Guides are available. If you can't come along at this time on a Wednesday, do ask Janette Steele for a copy of the Guide which you might want to look at in your own time.



BIBLE STUDIES FOR ADVENT 2013

Introduction

Advent is given to us as a time of waiting, but not of inactivity. It is a time to reflect on the journey that Mary and Joseph made towards Bethlehem, and on the forthcoming birth of Christ.

We hope that this series of four Bible studies, based on the Lectionary readings for the four Sundays in Advent, will inspire you through this period of expectant waiting.

Have your Christmas Cards delivered by the 1st Conon Bridge & Maryburgh Scout Group for the very reasonable price of 15p per card.

They will be delivering them within the 30mph signs in the villages of Conon Bridge and Maryburgh.

**Christmas cards can be dropped off at
Conon Bridge Church Hall
or
Maryburgh Amenities Hall
(Combined with Maryburgh Brownies Christmas Fair)
Between 10am to 12pm on Saturday 13th December.
No post accepted after this date**

Same day delivery not guaranteed.
For more information contact Corinna 867880 or Lauren 863794

**Tea/Coffee with Mince
Pie and Shortbread on
Sale throughout the
morning**





University of the
Highlands and Islands
Highland Theological
College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Colaiste Dhiadhachd
na Gàidhealtachd

Dear Readers,

The time seems to be flying by as I am thoroughly enjoying my placement with you all. If you haven't met me yet, I sure hope to meet all of the parish in my time here, in the meantime just a few words about me.

Well my name is Heidi, I am wife to Tony and mum to Jack who is 3½ and has been loving his time in the crèche at Ferintosh. We have just moved into a lovely wee cottage in Kiltarlity and are settling in to life in the village. I am a full time 2nd year student at HTC and a first year candidate for full time Ministry of Word and Sacrament. As part of my candidacy, I am to do four placements. You, Ferintosh are my first placement, and I will be with you all until May.

It is my hope during my time with you I will be as involved in the life of the church and parish as time allows. I have been attending the weekly prayer meetings and Ladies Bible Study, the River Cafe and the fellowship lunch and have received a lovely welcome. Andy and I meet weekly and I am delighted he is so willing to get me involved in the worship services. As this goes to press I will have taken an evening service on Nov 23rd and will be leading the morning service on December 14th.

I have been encouraged by the activity I see going on in Ferintosh and look forward to joining in on the outreach to the community. I would love to put together a Messy Church for the spring, and would hope to gather some volunteers to help run this great outreach opportunity.

As I continue on this journey of ministry I am constantly reminded of the Lord's words to Jeremiah, "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans for good, and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11. It is a wonderful exciting journey I am on with ministry, there are challenges but there is much more blessing. I know God has incredible plans for me, he will uphold me and sustain me and my family through it all. I am glad part of God's plan was bringing me to Andy and Margaret and all of you, I very much look forward to the next six months.

As we head into this advent season - for many a busy, stressful time - may Christ bring you His peace, His joy, His light.

His Blessings,

Heidi

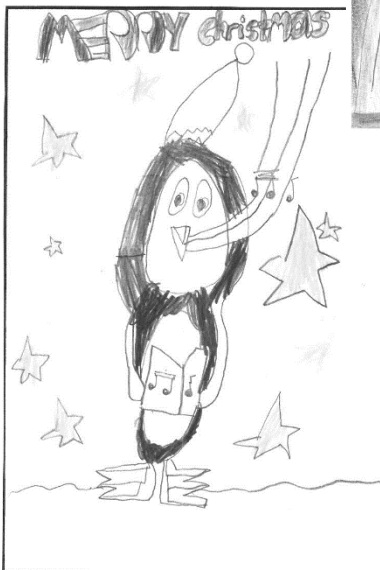


Sunday Club

In Sunday club we have been talking about The Paralyse Man (Matthew 9) and the Good Samaritan (Luke 10). The children have been finding out how to do bandaging on each other and resuscitation on the dummy that Isobel brought in. We learnt the steps to follow by saying Dr ABC. Now we are practising for the nativity that will happen on the 21st December. This year instead of the Christmas party we are going to see the pantomime 'The Three Musketeers' on Saturday 6th December. Fraser from FYF will be in it, so we will be cheering him on.



Christmas Card Designs by members of the Sunday Club and FYF



"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God"
Ephesians 2:8



News from FYF

There is a lot going on at FYF just now, as well as the usual Bible Studies and prayer time. Some of the other things that we've been up to recently include;

- A couple of our members, Saffron Jezewski and Andrew Vance entered the Christmas Card Competition and we would like to congratulate Saffy on winning the competition. You can see her winning design on display in the Church Hall and on the front page. If you can't manage then you'll be able to see it when you receive this year's Christmas card from the Church.
- Several members of FYF and the Sunday Club also took part in the recent Church Concert that was held on Friday 14th November. Saffy played the violin and Isla and her sister gave a demonstration of Highland dancing.

Dates for the Future....

We are going to provide the congregation with tea/coffee and cakes in the Church Hall after the Morning Service on the 7th December. This is to help raise funds for the Child we sponsor. Her name is Natalia Abigail Moreira Castellanos and she is from Guatemala. You can find more information on her from the Notice Board in the main Church Hall. Although we will not be charging for teas, coffees or the baking we provide, donations towards our sponsorship funds will be most welcome. The tasty treats for this event will be provided by members of FYF and the Sunday Club.

We are delighted to hear that one of our senior FYF members, Victoria MacRae, has decided to confirm her commitment to Christ by joining the Church as a Communicant member. Victoria has been a long standing committed member of both the Sunday Club and FYF. She will join the Church at a special service on the 30th November. (Advent Sunday) and we look forward to being in Church that day to support her.

This year we have decided not to have a Christmas Party, instead we are going to join with the Sunday Club and go to Dingwall Academy to see the Dingwall Players' Pantomime, "The Three Musketeers" instead. One of our members, Fraser Holmes will be participating in it, as Athos.

We will be joining the Sunday Club to start our preparations for the Christmas Nativity on the 30th November.

Have you noticed??

You may have noticed that along with the Sunday Club we are trialling coming into the Service at the end rather than the beginning. This is to give us a bit more time to do activities in our groups.

Thank You!

We would like to thank the Congregational Board for considering and agreeing to take forward our request for internet access in the Church Hall. This will be very useful for both the FYF and Sunday Club as a lot of our resources are now only accessible online. We hope that it will also prove useful to other users of the Church Hall as well.



Social Committee Report

Around 60 people gathered in the church for our recent social evening with the theme of **"Down Memory Lane."** With a variety of ages represented, memories came in various forms and we were entertained by a host of talented "artists".

The evening was "compered" by none other than our own Janette Steele, who not only introduced the various performers, but also sang for us and even her jokes went down well! Well done Janette! The evening started with a medley of tunes from Leslie Currie on his violin and Alan Shepherd on the keyboard. James Munro sang a variety of familiar songs and his powerful voice filled the Kirk. Saffron Jezewski delighted us with a few musical pieces, played on her violin. The Cruickshank Family was well represented, as Dad Ian, played his bagpipes, while daughters Ellen and Isla expertly performed some Highland Dances for us. Mrs Pat Gillanders entertained us with some recitations and recollections from bygone days at Dingwall Academy. This was particularly appreciated by several fellow pupils from that era! The audience was then invited to exercise their vocal chords and join in some community singing, before retiring to the hall for a most enjoyable spread.



The hall was decked out with bunting and the colours of red, white and blue brightened up the hall.

Many thanks go to everyone who supported this enjoyable evening. Special thanks go to our performers: those who baked, made sandwiches, set up the hall and church, served our food, cleared up and a host of other tasks too. Too many to mention individually! Thank you one and all.

The Social Calendar

River Café: The River Café takes place in the church hall on the 2nd Wednesday of the month during school term time. Forthcoming dates are:

10th December 14th January 2015 11th February 11th March

Soup Lunches: These are held in the church hall on the 1st Friday of the month throughout the Autumn/Winter. We meet at 12noon for a short time of devotions. This is followed by a choice of home-made soups, tea and biscuits and a chance to chat, after which we usually have a guest speaker. Forthcoming dates are:

5th December 6th February 2015 6th March

On 5th December we are to be entertained by the Ben Wyvis Primary School Choir. Speakers for February/March are to be confirmed.

Beetle Drive: Once again we plan to hold a Beetle Drive in the church hall. The date is to be Saturday 31st January 2015 at 6.30pm. Cost is £1 for adults and 50p for children. Juice, tea and biscuits will be provided. We hope you will manage to join us at some, or all, our social events.

Janet Murray,
Social Convener



Ferintosh Parish Church meets at 11am and 6.30pm each Sunday.

Our friendly and welcoming congregation is made up of those from Conon Bridge, Maryburgh and the surrounding area. Creche (for those of pre-school age), Sunday Club and FYF meet during the morning service. Tea and coffee are served in the Church Hall at the close of worship.

You are invited to join us and we pray that you will experience a real sense of God's blessing during your time with us.

Church Flowers

December Organiser – Mrs J Cameron

7 th	Mrs P Gillanders
14 th	N/A
21 st	N/A
28 th	N/A

Church Welcome

Door

Count

December

J. Bremner
J. Fraser

J. Murray

Church Register Funerals

26 September	Mrs. Catherine Rae
19 November	Mrs. Ann Sutherland
2 December	Mrs. Morag Shearer

Christmas Services

Sunday 21st

Family Nativity Service at 11.00am, followed by tea and coffee in the church hall.

Sunday 21st

Family Carol Service at 6.30pm, followed by tea, coffee and mince pies in the church hall.

Wednesday 24th

Watchnight Service at 11.30pm.

Thursday 25th

Christmas Day Family Service at 11.00am.

Sunday 28th

Morning Worship at 11.00am (No Evening Service)

Sunday 4th January

Morning Worship (Communion Service)
(No Evening Service)