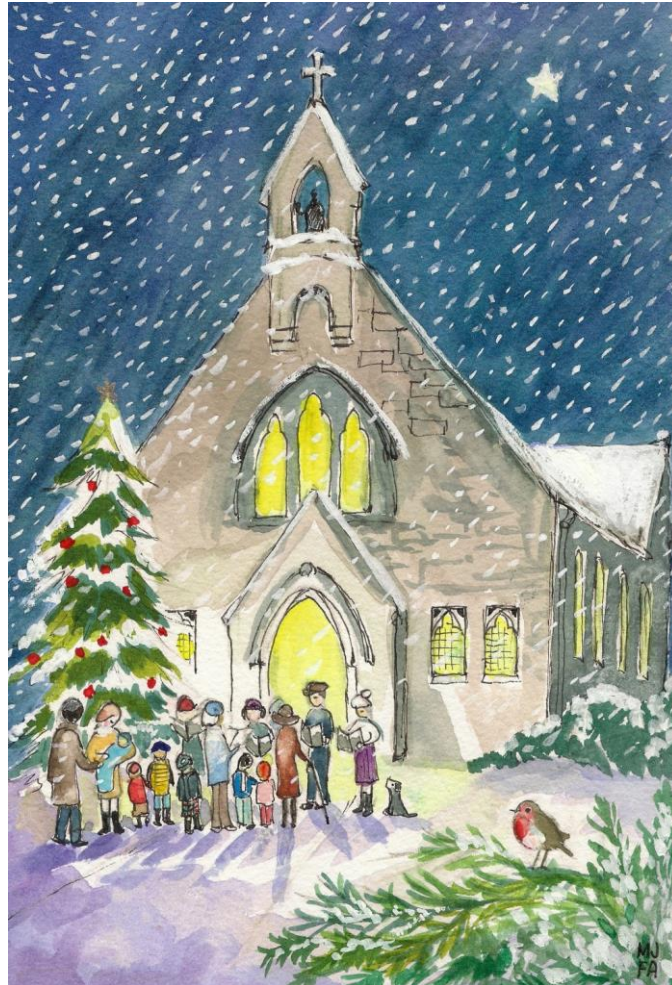


Ferintosh

Parish Church



Ferintosh Focus

Church Newsletter

December 2015

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



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Contents

As Christians around the world have gathered to pray in response to events in Paris and across the world, I've been able to reflect, again, on the verse below. I first came to fully understand the importance of it during communicant classes at Ferintosh and it's remained one I return to often because of its seeming simplicity but also complexity and relevance when read in light of whatever's going on in life.

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11:1

It's clear from the many missional and charitable causes brought to light in this edition of the Focus that we live in a world which is not what we would hope for. People are struggling with ill health, hunger, violence and death. This is the world we *do* see. Hebrews reminds us that there is a Kingdom that we *do not* see and that by having faith we can have confidence and assurance of its glory. As we mourn with those around us our eyes are turned to God in faithful and hopeful expectation of His Kingdom to come.

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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

A full-colour copy of this newsletter is also available online at ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk



Minister's Message

Dear Friends,

Peace, Joy and Love - where would we be without them - and is it possible to have one without the other two? Somehow, I don't think so and in His Son, Jesus Christ, God has given us the ultimate gift through whom we can experience the peace, joy and love that only He can give.

A few weeks ago we welcomed a new baby into our family. He came just days after the loss of my Mother - he would have been her first Great Grandchild. In that short week we had as a family experienced the Peace of God in our mourning, the Joy of God in our new baby and, through it all, the overwhelming Love of God. My Niece's baby will always be special, as all babies are, but due to the time of his arrival I think he may be extra special.



Unfortunately over recent weeks we have seen much sadness with people losing their lives through various terrorist activities and sadly there is so much evil in the world today, leading people to ask whether we will ever have any true peace, joy or love in the world. However, thanks to God, evil never has and never will have the last word. The prophet Isaiah tells us, ***'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy...For to us a child is born...And He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace...(Isa. 9:2,3,6)'***

In His love for us God gave us the greatest gift of all, His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. When Jesus came into this world He was special but no-one knew just how special he was. His time on earth brought so much to us all and still today continues to do so. So as we look towards Christmas once again, I hope and pray that like me you thank God every day for the gift of his Son and that his Peace, Joy and Love be with you and your family this Christmas and always.

With every blessing,
Andy

Andy's Blog

Readers of the website will have enjoyed keeping up with Andy on a weekly basis and finding out about some of the important ministry work that takes place outside a Sunday.

Visit the website (www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk) and visit the News to see more. You can even sign up to have these blog posts, along with the weekly Church intimations, delivered straight to your email inbox. Look for the "follow" box which appears in the bottom-right.



Christmas Services

- Sunday 20th** Family Nativity Service at 11.00am, followed by tea and coffee in the church hall.
- Sunday 20th** Family Carol Service at 6.30pm, followed by tea, coffee and mince pies in the church hall.
- Thursday 24th** Watchnight Service at 11.30pm.
- Friday 25th** Christmas Day Family Service at 11.00am.
- Sunday 27th** Morning Worship at 11.00am (No Evening Service)
- Sunday 3rd January** Morning Worship (Communion Service) (No Evening Service)



Hello,

I've been in and about the Church for about two months now, but thought I should write a wee bit about myself for the magazine to introduce myself to those I haven't gotten to know yet.

My name is Andrew Morrison (many just call me by my surname) and I'm a second year candidate for full time ministry in the Church of Scotland. I'm a full time Theology student at Highland Theological College in Dingwall. I'm in my 2nd of three years there before going onto a probation period in a congregation for about 15 months. My home is East Kilbride and I'm still a member and Elder of my home congregation of Claremont Parish Church.

At the same time at university I'm on placement from October to May during my first two years of study and this year I'm placed in Ferintosh. While on placement at Ferintosh I'm supposed to carry out about 10 hours of work a week. These 10 hours are a mixture of both the more practical aspects of ministry (visiting people, helping lead worship, attending meetings) or can be preparation & reflection work (planning worship, organising events, having a weekly meeting with Andy). The intention is I gain a wide experience of what goes on in the parish and the life of a minister so I'm hoping to be involved in as many things as possible that Andy and the Church carry out in their service to God and the building of His kingdom in this place and beyond. If you have something you think it would be helpful or interesting for me to be a part of just let me know.

I look forward to getting to know you more and journey with you as a congregation and community wherever God leads you in the next few months. Please keep introducing yourselves to me and please do forgive me when I haven't remembered your name! If there's anything I can do for you to help (even if not overtly "ministerial"), or a way I can encourage you in your faith in God, please let me know. Only too happy to do what I can.

*In Christ,
Andrew Morrison*



Guild

The **Guild** has had two more meetings since our last report. In October, we enjoyed a film afternoon with “Albert’s Memorial” starring David Jason and David Warner. This proved to be very amusing but quite poignant.

In November, the Community Safety Officers from Police Scotland came to help us keep safe at home and online. They were extremely helpful and very approachable. At this meeting we held a Bring and Buy Stall for our project for this year, Breaking the Cycle of FGM (Feed the Minds).

During Guild week the National Guild held another “Big Sing” this year in Dunfermline, which incidently raised £1900 in the collection for a hostel at Loudon Teacher Training College, Embangweni, Malawi. None managed to attend from Ferintosh but many from the Highlands did. We did attend a Gathering of our own in Guild Week in Castle Street Church Hall. We heard about another of the Guild Projects for this next three year cycle, the one from Christian Aid called “Caring for Mother Earth in Bolivia”. Through Christian Aid Partners, this project will work with over 700 families to educate them about climate change and support them to build and use solar powered ovens enabling families to eat year round. Always great to meet up with the other guilds in our local area.

At the time of printing, we hope to enjoy a meal together at the Conon Hotel for our final meeting of 2015. We return on January 4th 2016 at 2pm. We’d love to have you join us. The Guild is for all - young, old, male and female. Do come along for the lovely fellowship.



"It is important to protect our forest in the Amazon. Otherwise, I do not know what will become of us. We live next to the Beni river, the forest is right there. We would love to protect our forests, because they are the lung, not only of Bolivia, but for other countries as well."

Bolivia is one of the poorest and most unequal countries in South America. Millions of people live in difficult conditions, struggling to survive. The Bolivian Amazon is one of the most bio-diverse regions in the world, yet it is increasingly under threat from deforestation. Deforestation coupled with climate change has left communities who rely of the forest for survival vulnerable, as crops flood and livelihoods are lost. Women very often have to spend hours every day collecting firewood for cooking. Not only does this prevent them from engaging in other activities, but when the forest is under water it becomes difficult to get wood for cooking and families are unable to even boil water. Through Christian Aid partners, this project will work with over 700 families to educate them about climate change and support them to build and use solar powered ovens enabling families to eat year round. Partnering with the Church of Scotland on Bolivia, Christian Aid Scotland will use this story to link Guilds to our current work on climate change and give practical ways to get involved.



CrossReach

Have you heard of the charity “Playlist for Life”? This was founded by Sally Magnusson who found out, through caring for her mother, just how powerful music can be. It can evoke many emotions and stimulate many cherished memories and connections to the past. This can have a hugely positive impact on the lives and relationships of people with dementia across Scotland.



Last November, CrossReach Services to Older People announced plans to work with the charity and pilot the “Playlist for Life” initiative in 10 services in 2015 and then to roll it out to all services in 2016.

In developing the partnership further, Sally’s book (Where Memories Go: Why Dementia Changes Everything) is now used as part of the induction for all new staff within CrossReach’s Services to Older People.

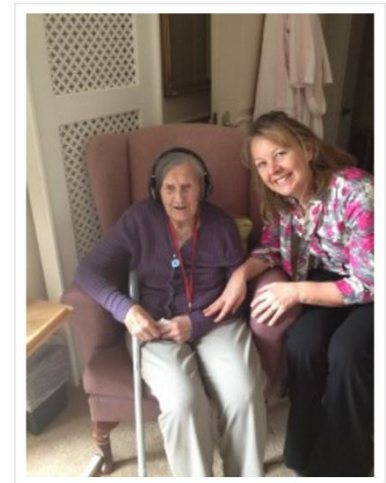
Certainly, Ferintosh Guild know at first-hand how powerful music can be when we visit Cameron House in Inverness, a CrossReach Care Home for those who have dementia.

Mary is a 90-year-old lady living with dementia. She moved into a care home about two years ago as it was becoming unsafe for her to live alone in her own home. Mary liked to keep busy so she helped in the dining rooms at meal times, and because she always loved to sing she joined the local dementia choir.

Over the last six months, Mary’s physical health and mobility has deteriorated and she has started to become agitated. She has been so tired and lethargic, she couldn’t attend choir and became very low.

I thought she was an ideal candidate for Playlist so I started gathering music she enjoyed singing. There was quite a collection, from The Sound Of Music to Donald, Where’s Yer Troosers?

When I went to the care home last week I found Mary slumped in a chair in the reception area. Although she recognised me, it was clear she wasn’t great that day. With the help of a carer, we walked back to her room where I set up the iPod with a small speaker. As The Sound Of Music boomed out, Mary’s head lifted, her eyes engaged and she began to smile. It was so lovely. As she put on the headphones she seemed to become younger and kept saying, “This is marvelous! This is wonderful!” As I left, Mary was walking along the corridor with a nurse, singing away. The lady in charge of her wing said it was like having the old Mary back. The manager of the home says Mary is transformed – singing at the top of her voice and loving it. Thank you, Playlist.



The **Pastoral Care Team** is a small but dedicated group of people who love to serve the Lord by helping others in our community. Much of our activity is centred on providing transport to appointments both locally and to Raigmore Hospital. However, we are maintaining contact with people in Care Homes throughout the county and, of course, people in their own home.

This is a very welcome service and much appreciated. We would ask that you remember this Team in your prayers and if you’d like to volunteer, please speak to the coordinator, Janette Steele or Rev A Graham.



A bit more about Highland Theological College



University of the
Highlands and Islands
Highland Theological
College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Colaiste Dhiadhachd
na Gàidhealtachd

Part of the University of the Highlands and Islands, HTC is a community of faith and scholarship based in Dingwall. Many of you will be familiar with the training of ministerial candidates, such as Andrew, but may not know of other learning opportunities.

Easy to follow Leisure Classes take place in most terms and provide an opportunity for those in local faith communities to delve into the depths of God's Word. These courses are for enjoyment and intrigue – there are no essays or exams! From September to November, Rev Dr Alistair Wilson, New Testament Lecturer has been leading a course titled "Paul's Letter to the Church in Colosse."

The College also runs an Access to Theology course. Used by some as a stepping stone into the BA in Theology it's also a great chance to study theology for interest and to better equip you to understand the Word and the Church. Funding is available for most students to cover fees and it's a great opportunity to have top level theological teaching available to close to home.

If you're interested in finding out more about the College they can be contacted by telephone on 01349 780000, email htc@uhi.ac.uk or by visiting the college building on the High Street opposite Dingwall Free Church.

From the Organ Bench

It is with pleasure that I wish you all a most Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year 2016. Further, I have been more than pleased to play some of your hymn choices throughout the year. As I am currently nearing the end of the list, should anyone have further "favourites" etc. then I shall be more than pleased to play them for you.

Ferintosh Choir

We consider ourselves to be a happy bunch and would yet again invite you to join with us if you would like to – no audition and no subscriptions! Music provided! Most certainly no "press-ganging"!

Thank you for your kind comments regarding our "renditions" during the past year and for those we are most grateful.

So now we are yet again approaching the end of another year and we all send you the best of wishes for a lovely Christmas and Happy New Year.

May God Bless you all! Doreen



Bible Study

Read Luke 2:1-7

Luke is the only Gospel writer who related the events he recorded to world history. Why is that significant in these verses, recording the birth of Jesus?

- *The Roman rulers, believed to be like gods, stood in stark contrast to God Incarnate in the child in the manger.*
- *Augustus' decree went out in God's perfect timing and according to God's ordained plan to bring His Son into the world.*
- *All of this helps demonstrate that the birth of Jesus was a defining moment in our history and God controls the whole of history.*

What can we learn from Joseph and Mary's journey when considering our own journey with God?

- *When we do God's will we are not always guaranteed a comfortable life.*
- *But what we are assured of is that even in our discomfort, God has a plan and purpose for us.*

Read Luke 2:8-20

The greatest event in history had just taken place and the shepherds were given the news in dramatic and glorious fashion, but consider their reaction to your own when you first received the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- *Were you fearful – and if so, of what? How your life might change – or how you would have to change?*
- *Did you at once want to share the Good News with others – and do you still earnestly seek to do so today?*
- *Have you discovered a Lord so wonderful that you can't help but share your joy with all whom you know?*

The birth of Jesus Christ is still a significant moment in history today and still today He breaks into the lives of people for the first time. Whoever we are, whatever we do, we can all have Jesus Christ in our lives – all we need do is receive this wonderful gift from God. But let's not forget that Christmas is only the beginning – Jesus doesn't offer us only a moment in history or in time – **He offers us life everlasting.**

The **Ladies Bible Study** group meets every Wednesday in the Church Hall from 1.30 until 2.30pm approximately.

This term we have been looking at Evangelism in its many forms and aspects. Some of the titles are - A life that Speaks; Getting People Interested; Friendship Evangelism; Talking with Strangers; Crosscultural Evangelism. These have stimulated much discussion and interest.

For Advent we return to the Christmas Story for the three Wednesdays at the beginning of December - Mary; Joseph and the Shepherds. Hopefully we will continue in 2016 with the arrival of The Wise Men.

We'd love to have you come along even if you can't make it every week. A friendly, warm welcome awaits you. We'll begin again on 6th January.



Sunday Club & FYF

Over the past few weeks FYF and the Sunday Club have been working hard making calendars, gift tags and coasters to raise funds for Natalia, the young girl they sponsor from South America. On Sunday 29th November after morning worship on the first Sunday of Advent, we invited the congregation through to the hall for tea, coffee and cakes, as well an invitation to buy our handmade gifts. The response was fantastic and we would like to thank everyone who came through and supported us, helping to raise the amazing sum of £300.



Can you find the following from the Christmas Story?

Jesus Mary Bethlehem Joseph Inn Shepherds Angels Star Herod

Bible Quiz:

1. What was the name of Jesus Mother?
2. Who was the angel who came to visit her?
3. Where was Jesus born?
4. What was the name of the King the Wise Men went to see first?
5. What gifts did the Wise Men bring to Jesus?
6. How did they know where to find Jesus?
7. Who told the shepherds where to find Jesus?

B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M
R	J	O	S	E	P	H	W	A
I	E	V	S	A	J	E	R	N
N	S	N	T	C	H	R	T	G
N	U	M	A	R	Y	O	A	E
P	S	O	R	B	U	D	S	L
S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S



Although the media emphasis is rather different these days, the plight of the people of Syria cannot have escaped notice or been forgotten. Over the years since 2011, millions of civilians have been killed or injured, have seen family and friends suffer or die. They have lost their homes and businesses and have been forced to flee to wherever they believed they would find safety, whether in another part of Syria or in a neighbouring country or, increasingly, in the farthest corners of Europe.

The television pictures of thousands of people from tiny babies to disabled and elderly crossing the sea in unseaworthy craft, then wending their weary way in all weathers from country to country in the hope of finding refuge, touched the hearts of many. In response, the Church of Scotland sent money to congregations and partner Churches in those places where they could provide direct help.

The Church had also a project already underway to help those who were displaced within their own country, or who had fled to nearby countries such as Lebanon and Jordan, and were living in refugee camps or otherwise in precarious circumstances. This was A Place at the Table, aimed at raising money to support the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon in its efforts to provide accommodation, food and hygiene products for those in need. Mary Mikhael, addressing the 2013 General Assembly as a representative of this partner Church said:

"The refugees are living in a miserable situation. Lacking food, drinking water, heating, so many old diseases (those that had been eradicated) like TB have come back. It is beyond a tragedy. We appeal to the whole earth to help bring this tragedy to an end....We cry for prayers, for solidarity with people, we cry for the world powers to stop the violence, we cry for financial help especially from Churches."

In response the Church of Scotland challenged its members to remember the refugees when enjoying a meal with family or friends, setting an extra place, and donating the cost of the extra meal to the project. As of today £82,211.16 out of a goal of £100,000 has been donated. Recent escalation in this humanitarian crisis led the Congregational Board to commend A Place at the Table to the congregation at Ferintosh, and donations are still being accepted (until Sunday 13/12/2015, after which the total collected within the congregation will be sent off to the World Mission Council, for onward transmission).

Information packs are available in the Church or from Janet Winchester (see contact details below). Further information and a donation page can be found at churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/world_mission/get_involved/place_at_the_table. The Mission and Outreach Committee is aware that many of the congregation will have supported the Syrian refugees through the many other organisations which are involved, but we do commend this project for your prayerful consideration.

Janet Winchester, Convener (01349 865398 / cjw49@hotmail.co.uk)



Encounter the King

Christmas is full of good things. There's an abundance of food, families getting together, presents to be shared, time off work & school, and endless specials on the TV. Even in our increasingly secular society, the expectation, happiness and joy of Christmas is obvious.

But, the real Christmas, the whole point of all the good stuff, was also full of joy. The first few chapters of Matthew and Luke in the Bible record how much the news and arrival of Jesus brought the people around them. Babies leapt for joy in the womb, outcasts in society were invited and welcomed, people from far-flung nations were willing to travel vast distances just to see this child, a mother sang for joy, and the elderly realised that seeing this baby was the most important thing that had happened in their long life.

As Jesus grew up, encounters with him brought joy to people. He calmed the storms to the relief of the scared, fed thousands of hungry people with a boys packed lunch, healed the deaf and mute, caused the lame to dance, and raised the dead to life.

But, more than that, he willingly paid the penalty of our sin when he died on the cross. Jesus, the baby born at Christmas, came so that he could die in our place for all that we've ever done wrong. And, for millions around the world, this 'Good News' of Jesus that the Angels sang about still brings joy, peace, hope and transformation today.

Just like the people who saw him face to face, an encounter with Jesus should transform our lives. Everyone is invited to encounter the King of all the world, born this day in Bethlehem. I know when I first encountered Jesus, my life changed forever. It was the greatest news I'd ever heard (and will ever hear) - God is here on earth, he's come to save us, and he's going to transform the world in the process. That first encounter changed my life forever – because without Jesus being born, I wouldn't have had a chance to encounter the Almighty God of love and grace.

My prayer is that this Christmas you, and all whom you love, have a life-changing encounter with the King lying in the manger.

Andrew Morrison, Student Minister

The congregation received a letter from Laura Ferguson, Foodbank Development Officer in Inverness.

Thank you to all at Ferintosh Parish Church for generously supporting Highland Foodbank this harvest with a 143.7kg food donation. Your support is greatly appreciated by all at Blythswood and particularly those who use our emergency food service.



When Mary's husband was paid off in June, they depended on their savings to get by. However, after three months without a job – and a baby to look after – all that they had put aside was exhausted. Mary's family were referred to the foodbank because her Child Benefit had still not been processed and she was down to her last feed of formula milk for the baby. Thankfully we were able to provide her with not just a food parcel but also the correct type of baby formula! Mary was absolutely delighted and said that for her family, it was a real life saver.





Social Calendar

River Café

This takes place in the Church hall on the second Wednesday of the month from 2pm-3.30pm and gives the opportunity to meet up with friends, or even make new ones, while enjoying some tea/coffee and home baking. Even if you can only manage to drop in for a few minutes, you will be most welcome. Thanks to everyone who already supports this venture, in any way. If you feel you can contribute some home baking for this, on an occasional basis, please contact Janet Murray.

Future Dates: 9th December, 13th January, 10th February, 9th March

Soup Lunches

In October, we welcomed back Adrienne Dempster from Blythwood Care who gave us an update on the work of the Shoe Boxes Appeal. It was interesting to see the extent of the distribution which now takes place and it was rewarding to see the delight on the faces of the people receiving their boxes. A worthwhile cause indeed! In November, Mick Hilton gave us a most interesting and informative talk on the work of the Scottish War Blind. As well as outlining the help available to ex-servicemen and women, he brought along some equipment from when he worked as a soldier, serving in Afghanistan. In December we plan to look at how Christmas is celebrated in different parts of the world.

Future Dates: Friday 5th February & Friday 4th March

Meeting at 12noon in the church hall. Speakers for those dates are to be confirmed. We look forward to seeing you there.

Musical Evening with the Miriam Singers

Those who braved the elements on Friday 20th November were suitably rewarded, when the Church seating was rearranged to enable everyone to have a clear view of our entertainers. The theme for the evening was "Bringing Scotland Home" and the Miriam Singers and Iain's Boys certainly did that. As well as an evening of fun, laughter and some beautiful singing, we were treated to the lovely tunes of hand bells being played. As well as being invited to join in with the singing, the audience also shared in the spiritual message which the choir presented. Following the concert, everyone moved to the hall to enjoy a light supper, which included some "fine pieces" and the chance to chat together.

Many thanks to everyone who supported this venture in any way, whether by setting up and clearing up the Church and hall, providing some delicious "goodies" to eat, or by coming along to join in the fellowship.

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. Crèche (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 MacKenzie**

6 th	Mrs P Gillanders
13 th	Christmas
20 th	Christmas
27 th	Christmas

January **Organiser – Mrs M Wilson**

3 rd	Mrs M Wilson
10 th	Mrs J McCulloch
17 th	Mrs S Chalmers
24 th	Mrs M Wilson
31 st	Mrs C Allison

February **Organiser – Mrs J Steele**

7 th	Mrs K Campbell
14 th	Mrs J Steele
21 st	Mrs MacKinnon
28 th	Mrs E Munro

Church Welcome

	Door	Count
December	J. Steele J. Murray	I. MacDonald
January	S. Telfer M. MacKenzie	C. Parry
February	I. MacKenzie I. Millar	J. Murray

Church Register

Funerals

30 September	Mrs. Barbara Morrison
14 October	Mr. John Rattray
16 October	Mrs. Margaret Imrie
20 November	Mr. Robert Geddes
23 November	Mrs. Winifred Stewart