



DORNOCH FIRTH PARISH MAGAZINE

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Easter Week is Sunday 13th to Sunday 20th April
See more details in the Worship Section (back page)

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Together, we honour the past and celebrate a future built on unity, hope, and peace.

And much, much more!

Minister's Thoughts

Dear friends

RECENTLY, I've been listening again to a podcast called The Confessional. Host Nadia Bolz-Weber asks her guests to tell a story from their life. Mistakes made, dreams denied, conversations never finished... it being The Confessional, the stories are often stories of disappointment and dashed hope... and sometimes even danger. But there is grace too and gentle listening and a desire for those who've messed up in whatever way to know God's blessing.

It being near Easter now I've been thinking about the stories Jesus' friends and followers might tell were they in The Confessional. I think, in those last days of Jesus' life, they knew a thing or three about disappointment and dashed hope and, yes, even danger.

Imagine Peter is first in. Maybe he'd tell the story of how, after Jesus was arrested, Peter was standing beside a fire, trying to look inconspicuous, pretending never to have met the man who'd saved him from himself.

Maybe he'd also tell the story of another fire, a few days later, the stranger beside it, waiting, wanting to feed the disillusioned fishermen who thought with Jesus dead, they'd come to the end of the story. But... guess who was cooking them breakfast...

Something Bolz-Weber said in telling a little of her own story in one episode really rang true. She said something like, Sometimes we assume there's a full stop where really, quite often, there is actually a comma.

Peter would say a great big Yes! to that for sure. Peter had thought everything was over, maybe that he'd really messed up this time. But it turned out the full stop he felt was actually a comma. The story wasn't done - Jesus wasn't done with him or with any of those who'd followed him with varying degrees of faith and patience. And the part of the story that came after the comma was way more wonderful than they could ever have imagined.

Who might go in after Peter. Judas maybe? Poor poor Judas. Would he tell a story of feeling frustrated with Jesus perhaps? How the revolution he and the others thought was coming was not at all as they'd imagined. All that talk of a new kingdom and here they were still, an occupied people. He turned Jesus over to the authorities. And he believed the full stop he felt. Decided he didn't deserve another day. And this side of eternity at least, never got to see the full stop was really a comma.

Here's a question, what would we each tell were we in The Confessional. Because, the thing is, whatever it is, however regret-full it leaves us, the chances are there is a comma even there, another bit of the story waiting to unfold, even for us. Grave clothes discarded. A dead man walking. If the story of Easter shows anything, it is surely that the next part of the story might just surprise us. There is grace for us too. And gentle listening. And such desire in the heart of God for us to know God's blessing.

I pray for your eyes to see the comma in your own story. And I pray you know peace and freedom and love beyond your wildest imagining.

With you,

Carol Anne



The Chosen

A COUPLE of weeks before Lent forty or so folk gathered over two sessions to watch an episode of *The Chosen*, the first multi-season television show about the life of Jesus. We decided to make it a Lenten practise, to gather weekly to watch successive episodes so that by the time we get to Holy Week we'll have watched the entire first season (there are 8 episodes).

If you haven't watched yet but would like to you can download the Chosen app wherever you get your apps. You can also put "thechosentv" into your preferred search engine and find it that way.

There are four seasons so far so you'll need to find Season 1 Episode 1 to get started. It's certainly been a powerful and moving watch for many of us so far. Some describe it like the gospels switching from black and white to full colour. Someone even said watching it was the nudge they needed to get back to church and engaging with faith's stories. Why not check it out yourself? And let me know how you go!

Carol Anne



Sing a New Song

'SING A NEW SONG TO THE LORD', so the psalmist bids. Here is a new song to an old tune for you to sing and take to heart.

Just as I am, not what I will be
you have accepted and so made me free
to find your love is truly for me
so loving God, I come

Just as I am, though often gone wrong
you don't reject me and rob me of song
Instead your love is constant and long
so loving God, I come

Just as I am, with you I will stay
you alone give me the wonderful way
to live my life with gladness each day
so loving God, I come

© *Thursday's Child*

Carol Anne

Social Committee

ONCE AGAIN many thanks for supporting our coffee mornings.

Please mark your calendar for the following Fridays, 25th April, 16th May, 20th June.

We will continue through July and August and after that we will fix dates through to Christmas time.

Una Reid, Convenor

In Hospital or ill at home

IF YOU KNOW of someone that has been admitted to hospital or was in for a brief time and is recovering at home and would like a visit, please let Carol Anne or an Elder know. Please do not assume that someone else will have told us.

There have been a few illnesses lately when it was not known.

Thank you.

Session Clerk Team

Life Events

Funerals

12th February	Helen (Nell) MacDonald	Died 27th January
13th February	Mary Littlejohn	Died 3rd February
14th February	Albert (Bert) Knight	Died 31st January
19th February	Moira Connell	Died 8th February
3rd March	Mary Mackay	Died 18th February
4th March	James (Hamish) Sutherland	Died 23rd February
5th March	Alison M. Young	Died 16th February

Wedding

15th March **Beatrice Anna Birgitta Oberg and Matthew Lewis Arne Logie**

I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid

– Jesus of Nazareth

Tent for Lent

ON TUESDAYS through Lent, we've been hosting soup lunches at home and inviting anyone who wants to come for lunch to make a donation to ShelterBox and their Tent for Lent campaign.

ShelterBox provides shelters, tools and all sorts of equipment to those made homeless by war or disaster. At the time of writing we're only a little way in but with your generous support we have already gathered enough cash to buy at least one ShelterBox - the average cost of a box is £590 - which is just amazing.

Thank you to those who have been bringing soup or jumping into the kitchen to help or making donations and of course thank you to everyone for coming along, it's lovely having your company.

Carol Anne & Will



ShelterBoxes are issued to millions of those whose homes have been lost.

Parish News now £1.50

JUST TO EXPLAIN that I had not realised there had been a big increase in the cost of ink. In addition to this the newsletter has grown from 14 or 16 pages to last issue of 22 pages plus so many good pictures to include. While it was suggested that we reduce the content there was more support for retaining the quality and content supported by good images.

The overall costs are still subsidised but we are grateful to the Welcome & Sales Table who have offered to contribute to the costs. This will allow Elders to issue 60 copies to those that can no longer attend Services but we wish to continue to include in our congregation family letting them read our news and enjoy the selection of photos.

Nearly everyone that receives a digital copy has paid their £5 using BACS below or cash in an envelope. If you have still to pay please use:

Bank transfer - details are Sort **Code 80-06-36 Account 06002380** and include as a reference - Parish News.

If you have stopped getting a digital copy please let me know and I shall take you off the list.

Willie MacKay

Finance Facts

HERE ARE A FEW figures so you can see the financial challenges we face.

Our basic income is from congregational giving, plus gift aid reclaim we can make on that. Anything else is extra and we have no guarantees of what additional income streams will bring in. We know we'll take in money from visitors in the safe, occasional donations, the sales tables, fundraising and various other income producing ventures but we have very little idea how much and nothing is guaranteed.

The commitments we have are to pay Giving to Grow, which includes the cost of the minister, Presbytery Dues, buildings insurance, lift insurance, lift inspections, and Chubb fire safety inspections and equipment. All these are things we have to pay before we even open the doors of the buildings.

Added to those we have regular costs of utilities payments, photocopying for the order of service, the Parish News costs, cleaning, building maintenance, boiler servicing in both buildings, grounds maintenance, organist payments, piano tuning, organ servicing, internet connection, pulpit supply, minister travel costs and probably some that I've forgotten to add here.

On top of the regular costs we have building repairs and maintenance as and when needed.

Congregational giving is, on average, £9,000 per month, including gift aid.

Giving to Grow payments are £6,000 per month.

Buildings Insurance is £1,882 per month.

Presbytery Dues are likely to be £300 per month this year.

Other insurances and inspections as above work out at £250 per month.

You can see the challenge –

Income we can count on is £9,000 per month.

Costs that we absolutely have to pay are £8432 per month.

That's before we even turn a light on, so firstly a huge thank you to the amazing fundraising team, the sales tables team, the tower team, and anyone who helps in any way at all to keep our heads above water. You are all doing an invaluable job and it is greatly appreciated.

The Finance Team

“One more time”

IT IS OFTEN pop groups or music stars that have several Final Live Shows, but here in the Dornoch Firth area it was Creich Church that drew a big crowd for another church service.

Minister Elect Carol Anne Porter writes, “We all thought Sunday 26th January would see the last act of worship in Creich Parish Church. However, with the help of the weather, the ACTUAL last service turned out to be for local primary school pupils, their families and staff, as severe winds caused by Storm Eowyn made it unsafe for the children to walk down the hill the week before as originally planned.



Go Exploring



Mural painted by Creich Sunday School

In the past we have run Sunday School in church, Scripture Union in the school and held holiday clubs in the summer. We will look again at engaging with our young people and using a variety of fun gatherings.”

Principal Teacher of Dornoch Camus, Bonar Bridge Primary School, Lisa Mackenzie, commented,

“We were grateful to be offered the chance to have one last service in the local church. It holds many special memories for us as a school, in particular the Christmas services we have attended each year. It was always lovely to gather families and the community at that special time of year.

“On our visit this time, Carol Anne allowed the pupils to wander around the church and have a closer look at the beautiful features. They were very excited and enjoyed the juice and cake on offer afterwards.”

Here are some of the pupils’ thoughts.

Kirstin Leonard, P7 – “It’s very sad that the church is closing. It was nice to visit one last time.”

Flora Murray, P3 – “I really liked looking at the windows. They’re so pretty.”

Jasmine Green, P4 – “I’m sad that the church is closing but glad I got to go there one more time.”

Willie MacKay, Property Convenor for Dornoch Firth Parish, met the new owner, Duncan McArthur, earlier this week. He is very keen to have an Open Day once he gets his art and sculptors equipment moved north from the South of England. Maybe some of the pupils’ older brothers and sisters worked on the mural shown. The mural will be retained in the portacabin beside the church. Mr MacArthur loves this special piece of work.

It has been a painful time for church members, saying goodbye to the building they so love. But, in the end, we came away thinking perhaps there is something rich and wonderful about the fact that the final farewell in terms of worship included what looked like a game of How-many-kids-can-you-fit-in-a-pulpit and lots and lots of cake!

There is much work for the church to do going forward, supporting the school community - and the community at large. But the church is willing and has its sleeves rolled up ready.”

Jeani Hunter, herself a former Headteacher and Session Clerk for several years was determined that Bonar Primary would have their visit. She says, “We have enjoyed welcoming the school into the church building at Christmas and for an end of year service each June.



Rev. Carol Anne greeting the pupils and families

Guild Report – March/April 2025

TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY at 2.30pm

Anne Chambers and Liz Broadhead bid everyone a warm welcome and led the worship, before introducing the speaker, Donald Goskirk. Donald is an Optometrist in Golspie and was well known to most of the ladies present. Donald spoke passionately about eye care and the importance of regular eye examinations especially for over 40's. No smoking, wearing of sun glasses, and good diet will all help in protecting your eyes.

Donald told us about Cataracts, Glaucoma and Macular Degeneration. He told us of the advances made in Cataract Surgery and how the National Treatment Centre in Inverness is treating more patients, thus reducing the waiting list.

If using a screen for work or leisure it is recommended to take a break every 20 minutes for 20 seconds. It was a very interesting meeting with many questions answered. Anne Barclay gave the vote of thanks and tea was then served.

TUESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY at 7pm

Trish Geddes welcomed everyone to the meeting and led the worship before welcoming back Sue Prince who had come along to “get us moving” with some armchair Pilates. Sue was very patient and showed us a few exercises to improve our posture and balance etc. It was a fun evening with many laughs and we all felt the better of the exercises. Sue was warmly thanked, especially as she stepped in at short notice.

We were all ready for our cuppa!

TUESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY at 2.30pm

Margaret Macrae welcomed everyone and she and Kathleen Greer led us in worship. Margaret then welcomed David Mahoney, who had recently retired from working at The Meadows Nursing Home as general handyman. David began by saying that he always says “yes” if asked to do something. He never knows if he has the ability but relies on God's lead, quoting from Proverbs 3, ‘we don't go in our own strength but with God's help’

David began work as an apprentice joiner in a funeral parlour. Got paid off when coffins became cheaper to ship from China. He then got a job in D.C. Thomson, Dundee, in the Art department. Thomsons is a family run business and he enjoyed working in such a fun environment. He became a Christian after accepting an invitation to a church service with 6 workmates. He always starts each day with God's word and attests to His goodness.

David demonstrated his skills by drawing characters such as Denis the Menace and Gnasher, Oor Wullie and Fat Bob and Paw Broom. Myra Campbell gave a hearty vote of thanks on behalf of us all for a most enjoyable afternoon.

TUESDAY 4TH MARCH AT 2.30PM

Gladys McCulloch welcomed a good turnout of members to the small hall in Bonar Bridge, and led us in worship. Gladys offered us all soothers sweeties, she really thought that Tunes would be appropriate but unfortunately they stopped producing them in 2017.

Roddy was warmly welcomed and we got off to a good start to our musical afternoon by singing Blessed Assurance. We continued with Scottish songs and songs from the Sound of Music. Then another hymn, Amazing Grace.

The second group of songs were great fun, from Mamma Mia and ...



Guild meeting in Bonar Bridge Village Hall



Guild Report – March/April 2025 – continued

... Chitty Chitty Bang Bang We finished our singing with a final flourish - To God be the Glory.

Gladys thanked Roddy for a wonderful afternoon of singing and musical memories and then we all enjoyed a refreshing cuppa with some delicious home baking.

TUESDAY 18TH MARCH

Gwen welcomed a good turnout of members on a beautiful sunny afternoon and she and Lizzie led us in worship. Gwen then welcomed Carol Anne, Minister Elect, our speaker.

Carol Anne told us of the day she received a royal invitation from Catherine, The Duchess of Wales, to join the audience in Westminster Abbey for a Celebration of Carols at Christmas. Carol Anne and her husband, Will, flew down to London last December and took their places with many other chosen people from celebrity to local volunteers, all were welcomed, in the Abbey .

The theme of the concert was one of sharing kindness and love in the community. They watched in fascination at the production unfolding in front of them and were struck by the atmosphere created of kindness spilling over around them.

Everyone was given a candle with their order of service which included a personal letter from the Princess of Wales, thanking them for attending the concert. All in all a moving experience and we were delighted to share her memories, which also included a visit to St Pauls Cathedral and a climb up to the famous Whispering Gallery. Gwen thanked Carol Anne for a lovely afternoon which ended with tea and chat.



Carol Anne enjoying the view from St Paul's Cathedral

Meeting dates for your diary

IN THE WEST CHURCH HALL

Tuesday April 1st – 2.30pm - our last meeting finishing with the AGM, followed by a Daffodil Tea.

Thursday 8th May - 12.30pm for 1pm. Dornoch Guild is hosting a gathering of Highland Guilds

Together. We will have speakers from the projects that the Guild is supporting over the next three years. All are welcome .

Trish Geddes

Women's Group

THE WOMEN'S GROUP has had a quiet few months but we were back together recently creating an Easter gift for each member of the Congregation.

Our next meeting is planned for late April when we will combine our AGM with a meal out together, and plan our activities for the next few months.

Our group usually meet on the first Monday of the month and our activities vary from walking, to fundraising to learning a new skill.....however our main objective is to provide support, friendship, empathy and a shoulder to cry on (when required) as well as sharing a lot of laughter and a fair quantity of cake!

Anyone and everyone is welcome to join us, just ask any member of the group for more information..

Caroline Gilchrist



What is your Easter gift going to be?

Property Team update

THE KIRK SESSION have agreed to fit hand railings on the Chancel steps. We are grateful for the drawings produced by local architect, Jimmy MacDonald, who is not charging a fee. We are in the process of getting quotes and permission from the General Trustees.

An engineer has viewed the four clock faces which are not secure and will cost the work required to make and fit new brackets to replace the rusty ones.

Seagull deterrents have been fitted on roof areas where birds nested last year in the hope that we can reduce the mess the nesting season causes around the Cathedral. Some are on the ground already and a plastic hedgehog was pulled off the boiler room roof.

Croick Church is at the final stages of being transferred to Historic Churches Scotland (HCS). It is very important that this historic building in our parish is preserved. HCS will renovate the Church and we are pleased that while they will own Croick Church we shall be able to have access for Services.

Duncan McArthur, the new owner of Creich Church has started to move his sculptor studio equipment from Lowestoft to Bonar Bridge. He is going to be a great fit for the community. Most of the church pews are not wanted and Mr McArthur has offered them to locals to buy with proceeds split between Bonar Bridge Primary School and the Bradbury Centre.

The Kirk Session agreed to support Ardgay Community Council who wish to retain the Church Bell at Kincardine Church in the Kincardine area. It was gifted to Kincardine in 1778 by Admiral Sir John Ross of Balnagowan. The Community Council are finalising a plan and how to finance it.

We are in the process of getting quotes to erect an easy access ramp at the West Church Hall entrance from the car park. Planning permission is required as the hall is within the conservation area.

We will soon have roof repairs to the east side of the Cathedral roof underway. We hope this will stop rain entering the building in the pulpit area and also beside the organ console. As you may know tracking water leaks is not easy.

West Church Hall Sunday Services – a big thank you to Stephen MacKintosh for his time and skill installing our new Live Streaming system and to Liz, Morag and Will for their expertise in broadcasting our Sunday Service each weekend to most often 600+ viewers. We have a fixed and a moveable PTZ camera. Cathedral - The “Camera Team” met with Stephen and discussed where the fixed cameras and the PTZs would be best placed. Also to see the desk unit and where it will be located.

Cathedral Services & Heating – those who attended on Sunday 16th March saw that we are only using the North (High Street) and the West (Coop) doors to help conserve heat.

Cathedral heating – the boiler was tested for output and found to be satisfactory – in fact slightly above the level expected. The temperature on a cold morning was at 16C. The engineers are looking into ways of circulating the warm air that rises to the high ceiling area. Considering the approach to heat the people and not the building we are getting quotes for electric under pew heaters.

LED lights have been trialled in the Cathedral and we wait for those with an amber shade filter to be tested. This will be a cost saving project. Exiting wiring will be used.

An anonymous donor has kindly offered to gift a defibrillator to be used outside the West Church Hall. David Sullivan will arrive on 31st March to 1st April and install it and also deliver a few training sessions on how to use a defibrillator.



Willie Mackay, Property Convenor

Parish Prayer Group

WE MEET every Sunday morning at 9.45am upstairs in Mary's Room in the West Church Hall and also every third Thursday of the month in either the Bonar Hub or in the West Church Hall at 10for 10.30am.

We pray for our minister Rev Carol Anne Porter in her ministry amongst us, for the parish, the community, the wider world, for any individual requests we receive and for each other as personal situations arise.

Whilst we are currently few in number we are constantly reminded and encouraged by the words of Jesus himself in Matthew 18 verses 19 and 20, "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Over the last two months we have been encouraged and amazed that with no foreknowledge of the Bible passage or the selected hymns nor having a sneak preview of the sermon, our prayers for situations that we have been prompted by the Spirit to pray into, have once again resonated strongly in the Sunday services that followed. Be encouraged, His Spirit is at work.

With this confirmation of the need to underpin everything with prayer we go forward in confidence and strength, praying for our minister, for the process leading up to her induction, as she seeks to lead and serve the fledgling new parish as it evolves and takes on its identity in Him.

We invite and encourage you to join us in these prayers.

You would be very welcome to come a long and join us. The next dates are Thursdays 17th April in West Church all and 15th May in Bonar Village Hall - 10am for 10.30am start.

Debbie Miller

Debbie.miller205@gmail.com



Fundraising

A REMINDER of some of the activities that our fund raising group have planned for 2025 to reach our target of £40,000 which will see the Parish continue to flourish and buildings maintained. It really is a team effort in many ways. Those that support the events and those that volunteer to help.

Looking back on 2024 we had a target of £60,000 to raise. Although we fell short of achieving this,

2025 already got going with the Annual New Year Concert organised by Graham McCarthy raising £940 for Parish Funds.

While we are raising funds for our Parish, it was lovely to see the donations raised by the Junior Band and Youth Theatre concert on Saturday 15th March go towards the ShelterBox Fund that Carol Anne & Will were raising money for with their Tuesday soup lunch.

Keep your eyes open for an opportunity to use your talents to raise funds. More about this later!

When the Pipe Band starts at the end of May we plan to open the Tower on Saturday evenings. You might have been up last year but a surprise display about St Gilbert's Story will be on show at the first level. There may be some opening on Community Market Day. Helpers are needed as we must have 4 stewards on duty each time.

During the summer Graham McCarthy and Willie MacKay will be opening the tower again on Saturday evenings when the Dornoch Pipe Band play. If we can get more volunteers to help we can consider opening on Community Markey days.

We have had a great response for tours of the Cathedral and Historylinks from Cruise ships docking at Invergordon. See Roger Boyce's request for more volunteers.

We have another Golf Event this year on Saturday 13th September. We are delighted to have sponsorship by Morrisons Construction confirmed and support by Glen Morangie Distillery. Contact johnmcmurray1400@gmail.com This can be a great day as in the evening the Military Wives Choir is singing at 7.00pm in the Cathedral to raise funds for SSAFA the Armed Forces Charity.

We are planning a major concert in the Cathedral for later in the year and we also plan to have another concert involving Gizzen Briggs once a date and time has been agreed. Likely in September.

Will the Singing Waiters who were so successful in 2024 get their white shirts ironed and bow ties ready – this could be a date for later in the year. Most were more nervous about serving the meal than singing.

Watch for details of a major speaker to the West Church Hall in the autumn with more details when confirmed.

Fund Raising Team

Prayer Tree

THE PRAYER TREE is very popular with visitors and locals alike and in 2024 there were 2090 tabs hung up on it. Yes, over 2,000 prayers on the branches.

With the cold weather, and less footfall of visitors to the cathedral, the Prayer Tree has, like other trees, been fairly dormant over the winter!

But... spring is here, Easter is coming and there are plenty of tabs along with some Church of Scotland prayers for Lent to welcome all comers as the visitor season starts.

"God of the story, God of the conversation, we are here".

Gillian



Cathedral Tour Guides

DO YOU LOVE our Cathedral? Would you be interested in informing visitors about its history? If the answer to these questions is “Yes!”, why not become a Cathedral Tour Guide?

This year we are offering guided tours to groups from the cruise ships docking at Invergordon. Interest from the companies has been very encouraging. Whilst we have a small band of volunteers already training, it would be good to increase the size of our team.

Training and guidance will be provided. If you are interested, please contact Roger Boyce on 07867 618459.

Many thanks.

Roger Boyce



L to R: Norman Tulloch; Kim Tulloch, Depute Lord Lieutenant; Henrietta Marriott; Patrick Marriott, Lord Lieutenant.

Welcome and Sales Table

SPRING is in the air and in May the Welcome & Sales Team will be back in action. We are all looking forward to welcoming visitors to the Cathedral, hoping that while they are admiring the beautiful building and stained glass windows, they will also make a few purchases from us, which will help in raising funds towards both parish work and the maintenance of the Cathedral.

We do still urgently need to recruit a few more volunteers to help us, so please, please, please, will you give this thought some serious consideration? Just 3 hours once a fortnight is all that is required and training will be given. It genuinely is a very enjoyable way to spend a few hours with a partner or a friend – old or new, and you will be helping the Cathedral in a very positive way. Just please give one of us a call. Thank you

Sue Boyce (01862 810415; 07833 698040; sueboyce4@btinternet.com)

Anne Chambers (01862 811520) and **Lisa Dickenson** (01862 810973)



Natter and Nosh

WE CONTINUE to welcome a regular group of about 35 who come to enjoy a lunch and get together with friends in the West Church Hall every fortnight.

The dates for April are 7th and 28th and May 12th and 26th.

We look forward to welcoming everyone on these dates.

Trish Geddes



L to R Innes Matheson; Henrietta Marriott; Patrick Marriott, Lord Lieutenant of Sutherland; Shiela Anderson; Jimmy Melville enjoying the Natter.

Theatre Group and Junior Band

The Youth Theatre Group recently performed in the West Church Hall - but something a little different! Wanting to produce something between the Christmas and summer plays, they hit upon the idea of singing and dancing to songs from the Musicals - and sing and dance they did!

With boundless enthusiasm and energy to match, their enjoyment was infectious, delighting a supportive audience which thoroughly enjoyed the singalong and clap-along numbers.

The Dornoch Firth Junior Band started off the afternoon with a tuneful rendition of Red Ian's Lament in Gaelic. The Skye Boat Song followed and the band finished by accompanying the theatre group as they sang Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and other songs from musicals.

The show brought in £287 which will go to Carol Anne for her shelter boxes.

Graham McCarthy



Youth Theatre Group beginning their "Musicals Journey"



Dornoch Firth Youth Band singing Red Ian's Lament – their first Gaelic song.

Oversteps Care Home

WORK ON OUR sensory garden is now in full swing, with the Dornoch Firth Men's Shed very kindly building us a pergola. We are all excited to see the end result.

We held a service for the World Day of Prayer on the 7th March. It was lovely to see so many of our residents joining in with the singing, and enjoying a cup of tea & cake afterwards.

Jen MacDonald



Mahairi & Gladys ready for a cuppa



The Mens Shed at work on the Sensory Garden

Friends of Oversteps

THANKS TO ALL who supported the "Friends of Oversteps" Coffee Morning in February. With the generosity of those attending plus a couple of very kind donations, £655.80 was raised - a very pleasing result !

This money went directly to Oversteps to help with completion of the Sensory Garden.

Shiona Stuart

1st Dornoch Girls Brigade

WHAT A YEAR we have had! Now that the days are getting longer, we are fast approaching the end of 24/25 Session.

Our first year of being 1st Dornoch Girls Brigade has been wonderful. The girls have been amazing - joining in the activities and learning everything is possible with God.

We would like to thank Dornoch Firth congregation for their support this year. From making us so welcome at our dedication service to our recent coffee morning raising funds for the Bear Necessities Charity.

The coffee morning together with donations finally came in at £498. Thank you: what a wonderful way to finish our Badgework.

We will be starting up next session on Monday 1st September 2025

Marianne MacLeod (Leader in Charge)



All ready to serve at the Coffee Morning

The Meadows Care Home

THE MEN visited their 2nd distillery on their north coast 500 distillery tour this time visiting Glen Ord distillery in Muir of Ord. We have an exciting new partnership between the Meadows and the University of the Highlands Golf Campus. Residents and students enjoy the banter and the golf. We also hosted a 90th birthday party for Elvis in the Duthac Centre, Tain, which was a lovely outing for all

Jackie Macrae



They weren't Lonesome Tonight or in the Heartbreak Hotel



The Golf Students with Barbara & Barry – which one is 90 and used to play from Ladies tees?



Barry Watson, a skilled golfer in his day playing golf on a simulator

Garden Opening

WATCH FOR POSTERS and information in the Order of Service for when Rosie Baxter/Reid will have her garden opened for viewing. The plan is to start at the end of May.

"Daylesford" Garden - is on the bank of the Kyle of Sutherland - with a peaceful garden room for rest and a cuppa.

Entry will be by donations split between the Parish and Save the Children fund.

Rosie's home and garden are 2 miles out of Bonar on the way to Lairg. Turn left onto the old gravel quarry at the west end of the Balblair straight. Look out for the sign "Garden Open"

Rosie Baxter /Reid



1st Dornoch Brownies

THE GIRLS are working on their painting badge and are currently finding out about abstract and figurative painters. They have decorated masks and made potato characters for World Book Day.



Georgie, Lois & Millie with their potatoes

We have been in the kitchen making pancakes which was great fun and earned the girls their baking badge.

Mrs Muir very kindly took Rosie her therapy dog in to meet us and explain what Rosie does. The girls had plenty of questions and enjoyed their interaction with Rosie, especially blowing bubbles for her.

Julie Herbertson



Robin blowing bubble for Rosie

Royal British Legion Scotland (RBLs)

THE CREICH AND KINCARDINE with Lairg and Rogart Branch of RBLs covers a large part of the Dornoch Firth parish. As the name suggests, the original Creich and Kincardine Branch merged with Lairg and Rogart branches over the years, and members now come from a wide geographical area. Neighbouring RBLs Branches are located in Golspie, Helmsdale, Lochinver and Tain.

As with all RBLs Branches, one of the main activities is Remembrance of those who have given their lives in the service of their country. With five war memorials within the Branch area, Remembrance weekend, the nearest Sunday to 11th November is always a busy time, with members parading standards for the schools coming down to their local war memorial on the Friday, as well as the main Sunday services.

The Branch usually participates in ceremonies to mark other important anniversaries, such as the D-Day 80th anniversary in 2024, and the centenaries of the dedication of the war memorials, all five of which have been marked in recent years.

Another important aspect of RBLs work is welfare support for veterans or their families who are in need, both through giving practical support for those living locally, or by raising funds to be used more widely across Scotland. Some of our members are also volunteer drivers for Fares4Free, a veterans' transport service.

This Branch currently has 37 members, comprising Armed Forces veterans and their families. Although founded in 1921 by Field Marshal Earl Haig as a veterans' organisation, membership of RBLs is now open to anyone wishing to support our veterans' community, whether or not they have served in the Armed Forces or emergency services.

New members are always welcome. More details about RBLs activities can be found on their website, www.legionscotland.org.uk or from the Branch Secretary, at CreichRBLs@legionscotland.org.uk Tel. 01863 766061.

The Dornoch Branch of the RBLs wish to recruit more members. Please contact Archie MacDonald – 07826 714024



Patricia Hannah

Victory in Europe – VE Day – 80th Anniversary

VE DAY will be centred in Golspie on Thursday 8th May with a remembrance event followed by social events on Saturday 10th May. The official events to mark Victory over Japan, VJ Day will be held in Dornoch on Friday 15th August.

On Thursday 8th May there will be the raising of the VE Day flag at 09:00 and the laying of a wreath at Golspie War Memorial with the lighting of a beacon at 21:30

On Saturday 10th May there will be afternoon events for children and young people in the YMCA building (time TBC) and an Evening party for adults in Fountain Road Hall (time TBC)

VE Day 80 is not only a tribute to those who fought for freedom but also a powerful reminder of the resilience and unity that have defined our country ever since. We reaffirm our commitment to peace, ensuring future generations understand and cherish its value.

Bruno Peek, Pageantmaster writes, "Our nation will unite to celebrate 80 years of peace since the end of World War II in Europe. VE Day 80 is not only a tribute to those who fought for freedom but also a powerful reminder of the resilience and unity that have defined our country ever since. We will stand together in gratitude, honouring the sacrifices that secured our freedom.

Together, we honour the past and celebrate a future built on unity, hope, and peace.



Dornoch Firth Group

Little Otters

The group has now been running for a whole year! We have enjoyed very kind weather recently. Our mud kitchen, donated by the Dornoch Men's Shed, is very popular for cooking up bird seed porridge and mud cakes. Join us for outdoor adventures for parents, babies and toddlers every Wednesday at Davochfin Farm from 10am. Keep an eye out for extra activities in the Easter holidays including the Farm Spring Open Day on Saturday 5th April and a Family Fishing day on Wednesday 16th April.

Golspie Teddy Bear Club

The latest project for the DFG Families Team is a yearlong pilot project working with the Golspie Teddy Bear Club baby and toddler group on a Friday morning. Our newest team member Larissa provides support and a range of wonderful activities and crafts for the families to enjoy. So far, the Golspie families have enjoyed a Wheelie Disco, Farm Play Day and many fantastic crafts and activities aimed at supporting early child development and family learning. Join Larissa and Eilidh at the Golspie Teddy Bear Club every Friday during term time 9am-12noon.

Tuesday Tots

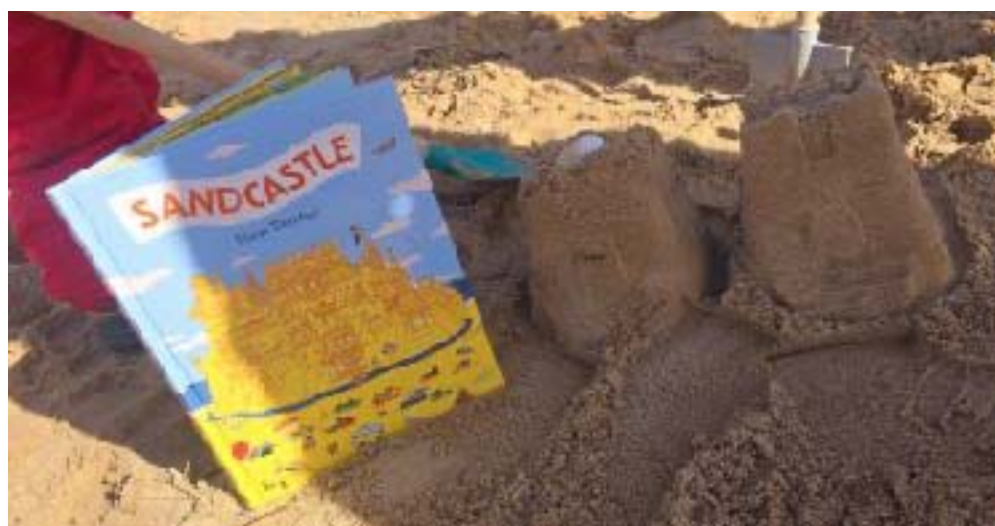
Tuesday Tots Baby and Toddler Group continues to thrive, with regulars attending weekly and visitors popping in on their holidays too. We've celebrated pancake day with freshly made crepes and a pop-up pancake role play cafe, donned our trainers for a sports play day with parachute games, made Valentine's crafts and even had some stories outside on the grass in the sunshine!

Mamas' Club

Our crafty club for mums and mums-to-be held in Embo Old School has produced some wonderful creations in the last few sessions. Classes have included printed tote bags and a lovely thankfulness watercolours workshop run by one of our mums, alongside some mindfulness exercises, which everyone really enjoyed. We're looking forward to some spring crafts in the upcoming weeks.



Making pancakes



Sand castles at Dornoch beach

Seaside Storywalks

This term we've covered lots of topics at our walks for under 5s on Dornoch Beach including a dino dig, hunting for bones in the sand and making volcanoes, a Katie Morag wander and a very blustery sandcastle competition (where stomping on them was even more fun than making them, according to the tots!). We're enjoying getting out in the fresh air and blowing away the cobwebs.

Knit & Natter

The knitting and crochet projects produced at our weekly group continue to amaze us - beautiful creations made with love, all while having a good blether and not losing a stitch! The group support each other so well and are so inviting to newcomers.

More on www.dfgcommunity.com or www.facebook.com/DornochAreaFamilyEvents

Jen Smith jen@dfgcommunity.com & **Eilidh McInnes** eilidh@dfgcommunity.com

Organ Recitals – Rosehall Church

THERE WILL BE organ recitals in Rosehall Church on the first Sunday each month from 3-4 pm starting on Sunday 6th April. John Brozovsky, who sometimes plays in the Cathedral and was Bonar's organist will be playing their lovely organ.

Enjoy the flowers and inside is just as beautiful.

£5 entry and free for children.



World Day of Prayer

IRENE CHISHOLM and Jeani Hunter held a World Day of Prayer at the Bradbury Centre in Bonar Bridge.

*God who knows us,
God who is with us,
God who made us,
To you we pray.*

This was one of the prayers used in this year's World Day of Prayer service prepared by the WDP Committee of Cook Islands.

It reminded me how fortunate we were that 20 years ago our minister from New Zealand, Rev. Bob Te Whaiti, began holding services at the Bradbury Day Centre. Since then many have given of their time to share in worship and fellowship at the Bradbury.

Services are usually once a month and as I look back to some of those who helped, Dorothy and Victor Bruce, Greer Johnston, Rev. Nick Archer, Rev. Kathleen Greer, the late Peter Macleod and more recently Rev. Hilary Gardner, Rev. Lizzie Campbell, Christine Mackay and Rev. Carol Ann Porter and so many more, all making our time there so special.



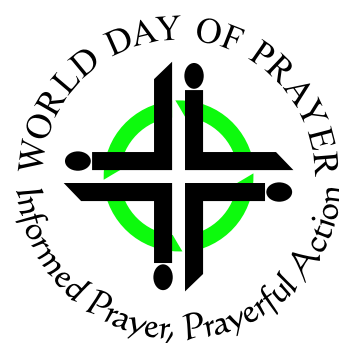
World Day of Prayer at Bradbury Centre, Bonar Bridge

It has been and is a wonderful journey to be surrounded by such loving support and encouragement we receive at the Bradbury.

Sometimes organisations have come to share their work with us during the services, such as Alba Aid with Jan and the late Bob Baxter, the Kyle of Sutherland Trust with David Watson and Beverley Hill, Blythswood and Mary's Meals.

We are always appreciative to any organisation or group who give of their time to share their work with us and we are always open to suggestions for future services.

Irene Chisholm irenechisholm70@gmail.com



Dates for your diary

WORSHIP TEAM - SUNDAY THROUGHOUT THE PARISH FOR APRIL AND MAY:

APRIL

6th 11.00 am - Dornoch Cathedral
Morning Worship
3.00 pm - 4.30 pm "A Spring Sing" Join us for
musical fellowship, followed by tea and
cakes at Ardgay Church Hall

13th **Palm Sunday** 11.00 am - Dornoch Cathedral

EXPERIENCING HOLY WEEK: 6.00PM IN WEST CHURCH HALL

Monday 14th, Tuesday 15th, Wednesday
16th, Thursday 17th

18th **Easter Friday** 10.45 am - "Walk of Witness"-
Meet Outside Creich Church
7.30 pm - Good Friday Service -
Dornoch Cathedral

20th **Easter Sunday** 5.40 am - Easter Sunrise
Service - Dornoch Beach Car Park
8.30 am - Service at the "Stones" beside the
bridge at Bonar, followed by Hot
Chocolate & Sweet Treats
11.00 am - Easter Sunday Service - Dornoch
Cathedral
6.00 pm. - Easter Sundown Service - Dornoch
Cathedral

APRIL

27th 11.00 am - Dornoch Cathedral - Morning
Worship
1.30 pm - Ardgay Church Hall - Afternoon
Worship

MAY

4th 11.00 am - Dornoch Cathedral - Morning
Worship

11th 11.00 am - Dornoch Cathedral - Morning
Worship
1.30 pm - Ardgay Church Hall - Afternoon
Worship

18th 11.00 am - Dornoch Cathedral - Morning
Worship
1.30 pm - Ardgay & District Golden Jubilee
Church Service, at Drovers Square,
Ardgay, followed by Refreshments in
Ardgay Community Hall

25th 11.00 am - Dornoch Cathedral - Morning
Worship



MORE DATES TO NOTE

APRIL

Sunday 20th Services at Oversteps 2.30pm and The
Meadows 3.15pm

Tuesday 1st Guild AGM – 2.30pm West Church
Hall

Sunday 6th Organ Recital in Rosehall Church 3 –
4pm + every first Sunday of the
month

MAY

Thursday 8th Highland Guilds Together
12.30 West Church Hall

Thursday 8th VE Day at Golspie 9.00am

Sunday 18th Services at Oversteps 2.30pm and
The Meadows 3.15pm

Contacts

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Email: sessionclerks@dornochfirthcofs.org

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