

Church Magazine—December 2025

Dates for your diary

Sunday 7th December, 4pm—5.45pm — Messy Church

Thursday 11th December, 7pm — Annual Memorial Service

Sunday 14th December, 10am — Church Service

Sunday 21st December, 10am — Church Family Service

Wednesday 24th December, 7pm — Christmas Eve Family Svc

Sunday 28th December, 10am — Church Service

Sunday 4th January, 10am — Church Service

Please note — our Tuesday church services will continue throughout December, however, there will be no service on Tuesday 23rd December and Tuesday 30th December. The services will resume on Tuesday 6th January, 2026.

Friday 19th December, 7pm — PACT Annual Carol Service

St Matthews Church, Tay Street

All welcome



Dear Friends,

Christmas is approaching and the last days of 2025 will be close on its heels. What a year it has been and what a prospect there is for 2026. For many the new year is a goal line to cross to leave 2025 behind and for others is will be a year of rich memories. Regardless, it is good to remember and see 2025 through the lens of Christ's love and Christmas.

I do wonder how the angels in Heaven reacted when they found out God's plan for humanity? Did they cheer? Did they gasp? Did they question? The thought of God's Son leaving the courts of eternity to become a human being must have produced a sense of bewilderment amongst the heavenly host! The angels had a perspective on human history and humans that was quite unique. They are spiritual beings, created by God to be His servants and His messengers to humanity. Their role in the birth of Jesus was pivotal - from the announcement to the ascension they were with Jesus as He carried out God's rescue mission for humanity. In the end the angels are servants of God and even though they may have scratched their heads at what was going to happen they ultimately embraced it as God's loving plan to deal with sin and redeem humanity through Jesus life, death and resurrection.

As I write this, Scotland have just qualified for the football World Cup next year. The celebrations at the final whistle last night were epic. Truly amazing to see and be part of (from the manse living room). Let me take you to the hillside near Bethlehem where a few shepherds tended their sheep. Suddenly and without warning thousands of angels appeared, singing praises to God and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus' birth. It does make the Hampden Roar a little less fierce and also solidifies that absolute commitment of our loving Heavenly Father to put all of Heaven's resources into the redemption of humanity.

Happy Christmas and a good New Year.

Jim



Community Development Work December 2025

So here it is, December 2025, here already. The verse that comes to my mind as I write this is Jeremiah 8:20 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.' All the things we do in attempt to bring more love and care into our community are good but unless God blesses the work of our hands then there will be no fruit returned to God to give Him glory and praise. We will seek to continue, faithfully, prayerfully, that men, women and children would see God for who He is and Jesus Christ, God's Son as the Way into a relationship with Him.

As your Community Development Worker, I have had many enjoyable moments over these recent months since our last church magazine but until somebody makes that clear transaction with Jesus, their sin for His righteousness, I will not be satisfied. God's family is growing in numbers throughout the world every day. I would just love to see new members in His family here in Letham, Perth. So, this is my motivation, this is my driving force, in all that I do as your Community Development Worker.

With that in mind, we continue to build warm friendships with local people and community organisations. Working alongside Letham4All, we have recently started a Monday lunch club at Letham Primary School at the request of school staff. Each week we enjoy a bit of chat together, have some snacks, and do a bit of games or craft. The young people who come along really seem to enjoy it. I think they just enjoy having someone listen to them tell their stories about life and what they have been up to.

Babies & Toddlers continues every Tuesday from 12pm until 3pm. Numbers are pretty steady but maybe a little quieter recently although we do see new faces nearly every week. The families enjoy the great space and toys we have for them upstairs in the church every Tuesday. Fresh hot toast is always in demand and regular supplies of tea and coffee for the adults who bring their families along.

Thursday is Warm Space afternoon from 1pm until 6pm usually with a birthday to celebrate. We buy a giant chocolate & cream sponge from Morrisons and see a miracle each week as the cake is cut and provides a little taste for everyone.

Messy Church is running again on the first Sunday of the month. Sunday 7th December will be Christmas Messy Church. This year we are extending more invitations than ever before. With support from the Growing Young team, we are giving personal invitations to the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides who meet on Mondays and Wednesdays, the Singing Mamas group who meet on Wednesdays, the Thursday Baby Sensory group along with our usual invitations to the schools, Babies & Toddlers, Warm Spaces and the 700 leaflets we will put through local doors the week leading up to Messy Church.

As a church, it's great to see our doors open to the local community with these groups and many other things taking place in our building.

At this time of Christmas celebrations, may the people of Letham know the reality of John 3:16 for themselves and may we serve God well as we invite people to be reconciled to Him — 2 Corinthians 5:20.

Neil Slowman



Pastoral News

Hello from the Pastoral Team. It's been a busy autumn with the team out and about visiting people of our congregation.

As we hurtle toward Christmas, I personally want to thank Rita, Gail and Maureen for their hard work putting together a little Christmas gift for some of our church members, who, for whatever reason, cannot attend church in person. This ensures they are always remembered, not just at Christmas but throughout the year.

On behalf of the Pastoral Team, we hope you have a peaceful Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Blessings,

Lynn McKay



Between Christmas and New Year Lunch

December can be a busy or a quiet month depending on our circumstances so with this in mind we will be hosting a lunch on Monday 29th December at 12.30pm.

Come along and join us for some food, fellowship and fun.

£4 per person, places to be booked and paid for by Sunday 21st December.

Please speak to **Lynn McKay or Elizabeth Sime**.





Opening Times
10am—1pm
Tuesday,
Wednesday &
Thursday
All Welcome

Our staff have been fantastic over the year, as always. We welcomed on average 96 customers per week over the year, this is a slight drop on last years figures, however we are very grateful for each and every person who comes through our doors. Your support is very much appreciated by us all.

We were due to start our year on Tuesday 7th January, however the church heating packed in, so we didn't officially start until the 9th January, it was a much shorter week than anticipated!

Our working partnership with Fairview School and Letham Primary School has continued over the year, we've had Grace and Leah from Fairview working alongside us most of the year. We have also had Kelsey, Jax, Nolan and Aleah-Rose from Letham P.S. who worked with us on Wednesdays from January to June and Ella, Kayla, Nicole and Tara-Leigh who worked with us from August to October. As always, all of these pupils have worked very hard for us, they are all absolute credits to their schools.

We held a VE Day Café on the 1st May to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day, it went very well and around 50 customers joined us on the day.

Our loyalty cards are proving very popular, if you are a customer and you haven't picked one up, please do so on your next visit — after every 9th tea/coffee/special coffee, you are given a free one!!

Thank you so much to all of our volunteer cooks, baristas, kitchen helpers, servers and cleaners for your hard work over the year. There have been staff off after having operations, everyone has really stepped in to help myself cover the gaps. Your extra work is very appreciated. Without you all, we couldn't open our café!! Enjoy the Christmas break!!

We are holding a Christmas Café on Tuesday 16th, Wednesday 17th and Thursday 18th December. Details of this will be made available soon. Everyone is most welcome.

Our last day of LSM Connections Cafe before Christmas will be on Thursday 18th December. We will reopen after the holidays on Tuesday 6th January, 2026.

**** Have a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year ****

Tracey White

Church Family News



On the 26th September, 2025, **Hazel Storie** retired as our church cleaner after 19 years faithful service. Hazel worked extremely hard over that time and showed outstanding dedication in keeping our church building in tip top condition to enable our staff, church members, local community and outside agencies to use our building to its full potential. Hazel carried out her duties diligently, giving the same care and attention to our church as she would to her own home.



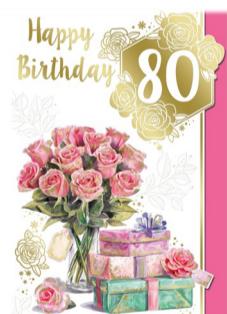
We know Hazel won't be a stranger, she will still be attending church and she'll pop into the café for her wee coffee and scone.

Hazel was presented with a gift from the church and with beautiful flowers. We also all had a piece of her retirement cake after church. From all at Letham St Mark's, thank you again for your hard work, Hazel. Enjoy getting to spend the extra time with your family especially your wee grandsons, enjoy the long lies and your retirement.



Happy 70th Birthday to **Lynda Pyper**.

Lynda celebrated her special day while on holiday in sunny Tenerife. Lynda volunteers as a server within our café, LSM Connections, she has been part of our café team for over 4 years. From all of us at Letham St Mark's, we hope you had a wonderful day.



A huge Happy 80th Birthday to our Elaine!! **Elaine Matchett** turned 80 during October, she celebrated her special day with her three daughters and wider family. Elaine has been volunteering as a

server in our café since it opened in 2020 and also volunteered in our original church café from the beginning. The photo shows Elaine on the left with Lynn McKay on the right on duty at a Tuesday café at LSM Connections. From everyone at Letham St Mark's, we hope you had a wonderful birthday, Elaine.

Church Family News



Lola Scott has been volunteering with our café for 9 weeks!! We celebrated her 16th Birthday during November with cake, flowers and singing. Lola is very much part of our café team, she has progressed so much in her time with us and volunteers as one of our servers in front of house. We hope you had a lovely birthday, Lola.



Hannah & Noah Hanson are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their son, James Paul Hanson, born in Canada on Saturday 30th August at 2.30am weighing 7lbs 6oz. He is named after his two grandfathers who Hannah & Noah truly admire as strong and loving examples of faithful men.



A first grandchild for **Jim & Anne Stewart**.

From everyone at Letham St Mark's, we send our love and congratulations to the whole family on the birth of this beautiful wee boy.



Happy Birthday to **Jim Leslie, Janeen Davidson and Jean Davidson** who all celebrated birthdays during November. We hope you all had a lovely day.



Happy 21st Birthday to **Holly Webster**!!, Holly will be turning 21 on the 13th December. She is celebrating her special day with a party and then going to the pantomime during December. Holly works full-time at Fairview School and also teaches dance to the under 5s at Inspire Dance School. From all of us at LSM, have an amazing 21st Birthday when it comes, Holly.



Happy 16th Birthday to **Robyn Webster**, Robyn turns sweet 16 on the 29th November. From everyone at Letham St Mark's, have a fantastic birthday Robyn!!



It's a busy time in the Webster house, especially for Mum, Fiona!! Congratulations on becoming a teenager and a huge Happy 13th Birthday to **Ethan Webster**!!

Funerals -

Mrs Betty Caldow — 12th August, 2025
Mrs Evelyn Watt — 27th August, 2025
Mrs Irene Pearson — 28th September, 2025
Mr Sandy Logan — 13th October, 2025
Mr Robert “Bobby” Murphy — 3rd November, 2025



A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to our **Harvest Foodbank Appeal**.
Neil Slowman and I took all the items down to the Perth Foodbank in October, we were very surprised to hear that we had delivered a huge **94kg** of items!!!

Thank you all so much

These items are vitally needed in our community of Perth. The Foodbank was fairly well stocked while we were there, however, the staff told us that items would deplete very quickly. In the run up to Christmas, please remember the Perth Foodbank and if you can donate anything to them, it will be gladly received by staff and clients alike, please note — they cannot accept any items which contain alcohol e.g. Christmas cake, mince pies etc. If you would like to donate, they are based at 10 — 16 York Place, Perth, tel no. 01738 626799.

Thank you.
Tracey White



For further information,
contact Perth Christian
Aid Group
c/o Peggy Lamond
Tel. 07803 015509

2025

CAROL SINGING
*Dobbies Garden Centre
Crieff Road, Perth*

*Saturday 13th December
11 – 11.45 and 12 – 12.45
Come and join us*

Prisoners Week National Launch Service

On Sunday 16th November, and for the third year in a row, Letham St Mark's hosted the national launch service for Prisoners Week. Attendees included the Chief Executive of the SPS, two former His Majesty's Chief Inspectors of Prisons, serving and former prisoners and Prison Fellowship volunteers, as well as a very good turnout of church folk. Singer Barbara Dickson, who is patron of the Prisoners Week Trust, performed for us, and governor Natalie Beal spoke inspiringily about this year's theme of "Crossroads: What next?" There was an audio recording of some prayers written and spoken by people currently in custody. It was lovely to have our former worship leader Chris White leading the singing.

The Prisoners Week Planning Group are *extremely* grateful to "Team LSM" for the lovely hospitality and all the work behind the scenes to make this happen. In the Bible, when Peter is sent to prison, Acts 12:5 tells us that " the church was earnestly praying to God for him". Please do continue to remember people in prison (and their families and victims and prison staff too). It is to encourage such remembering that we have Prisoners Week. **Anne Stewart (Chaplain — HMP Castle Huntly and HMP Bella)**





Blythswood Shoebox Appeal 2025

On behalf of the Perth Blythswood team I just wanted to say a massive thank you to you all for your contributions to this year's Shoebox Appeal.

At Letham St. Marks, we supplied 167 boxes.

Over the week 6830 shoeboxes, were checked and repacked. Supplemented by boxes from another part of Scotland, 7500 boxes were loaded onto a lorry destined for Odessa in Ukraine. Each hat or scarf that has been knitted, each pencil, notebook, toy or bar of soap donated will be gratefully received and will bring hope and joy to many people living in difficult circumstances.

Iain Shaw



**Blessings in a
Shoebox**

Letham Primary School — Day Away to Lendrick Muir

The annual day this year happened on 12 September. It seems a while ago now but that is because we just missed the last magazine!

Thanks once again due to -

- i. those of you who so generously gave
- ii. Lendrick Muir who reduce the cost of instructed activity and
- iii. once again the Souter Trust who paid for the bus

The children were very well behaved and were a real credit to the school and their teachers who accompanied them.

Roy Osborne, SU staff worker for Perth + Kinross and Fife gave two appropriate short talks, one at the beginning, the other at lunchtime.

The weather was good to us, and the staff and pupils seemed to enjoy their day away. The school really appreciates this provision especially for those who do not normally get away. The school realises that we as a congregation are supporting them practically and in prayer.

Ruth Gunn



Supa Club ...

continues in the school on Tuesday lunchtimes. While I am out of commission it is being carried on by Sheena and Anne on this year's theme "People Jesus Met". Numbers attending vary, but on average there are 15 regulars - a mix of boys and girls from P6 and P7.

Ruth Gunn

An update from Karlien Becker

Hennie and I can't believe how time has flown. We are already 18 months in Scotland, a year and a half! Fifteen of these were in Perth, and we are already three months in Maybole. I was inducted as the minister of North Carrick Parish on the 9th of September. Hennie also started to work as an Electrical Engineer at Omexom at the beginning of November.

We are very grateful how things are working out for us. We do miss Perth and all our friends we made at Letham St Mark's, but we are also settling well into Maybole and we love our home with beautiful views over the Carrick hills.

North Carrick Parish was formed by the union of Maybole, Kirkoswald and Crosshill. Each still have their own building and we have 3 services on a Sunday, with the help of an OLM and Worship leaders.

I'm starting to get to know the people in the town and the villages. The Carrick Centre in Maybole is a very busy place with a Café open 6 days of the week and a lot of groups using the halls; it is a good place to meet people.

It has been a busy time. I have already led a Kirk Session meeting. We have had Communion services, Harvest services, a baptism, a combined Remembrance service with other churches in Maybole and there have been funerals, a memorial service and I also have a small group of young people doing the Alpha course.

We have made a new website, Facebook & YouTube Pages. I visited the schools for assemblies, there are four primary schools, and one Secondary school in our Parish. I attend our Guild, community lunches, choir practice and do house visits to meet the people and to give pastoral support. We are now planning for our Christmas Fayre, Carol service and Christmas services.

In between work Hennie and I are still exploring this beautiful part of Scotland, we've seen Dumfries House, Loch Doon, Glasgow Cathedral, Culzean Castle and went to Ireland for two days. We love living in the countryside with green hills, farms, sheep & cattle but we are just 15 minutes away from Ayr and Prestwick with many shops and we are also near the beach. Maidens & Turnberry next to the coast is also part of the parish.

We feel blessed. We want to thank everyone for your support and prayers and thank you to those who came all the way from Perth to Maybole for my Induction. It was a very special evening and I'm glad we could share it with you. I also want to thank you for the generous gift I received from Letham friends.

Lots of love and Merry Christmas!

Karlien & Hennie Becker

Karlien with her gift of flowers from LSM after her last service with us



Our home in Maybole with Christmas stars



My Induction



Growing Young

Our small group has continued to meet regularly since the summer to consider how we can implement this nationwide initiative in the context of Letham St Mark's church.

We attended summits in Wester Hailes, Edinburgh, on 13th September and Bridge of Allan on 25th October along with groups from other churches in our area. We will be joining a second webinar on 25th November.

The Growing Young initiative is about developing a shared vision for our church, looking to the future. We would like to encourage especially the younger people in our church by involving them more, supporting them and growing together with them in faith. We would also like to welcome more young people into our church family!

We plan to make small changes by listening to members of the congregation and to younger people, seeking views and feedback on the best way to go forward. In sharing the love of Jesus, we hope that people of all ages will feel valued and included, warm relationships across the generations will be promoted and deepened and younger people and families will feel supported and encouraged.

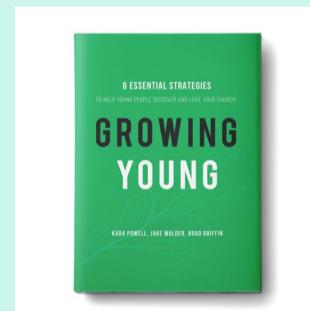
More tables are now available after worship in the hope that people of all ages will stay behind for refreshments and fellowship. The hall has been opened up to allow children to play, thus making it easier for families to feel included.

We are in the process of making personal contact with church groups and youth organisations who use the church premises and have extended invitations (with flyers) to Messy Church and to the Christmas Eve service.

We are considering how we might build relationships further by including all generations in a programme of activities over the coming months.

Fiona Anderson

21.11.25



CHRISTIAN AID CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2025

No Crib for a Bed

After the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, his family had to flee to Egypt to escape Caesar's reign of terror in their home country. This Christmas, Christian Aid is highlighting communities affected by conflict, especially displaced women with children. We are invited to consider families like Chance's — facing unimaginable hardship after fleeing violence

Meet Chance

Chance lived in Minova, a small farming community on the shores of Lake Kivu, East Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She is married, with eight children, the youngest being a small baby. Her older children went to school; she worked as a shopkeeper alongside her husband

"I thought my life would be happy – to work with my husband, feed and educate our children. I never expected to leave my village."

When violence reached her village, Chance knew she had to escape with her children to survive. Her husband remained, and is feared killed in the conflict.

For days, Chance and her children fled on foot, terrified and exhausted, searching for safety, carrying her 2-month-old. Each step was a fight for survival. They eventually reached Katashola Camp, where they are safe from the conflict, but have only what they were wearing and carrying to make a new life.

Chance isn't alone. She's one of millions forced from their homes in the DRC – one of the largest, and now most urgent, humanitarian crises of our time.

"I wish you could help me and my companions who are suffering like me. Please help us."

Though Chance is a resourceful mother, she now has very few options – because her situation is beyond her control. Her dream is to protect her children so they can grow up in peace — and one day see her baby become a journalist who gives a voice to others like her.

Conflict in the DRC: an ongoing humanitarian emergency

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been repeatedly devastated by centuries of violence, leaving homes destroyed, livelihoods lost and families displaced. Today, the DRC faces one of the largest global hunger crises, with over 27 million people in urgent need of food.

Christian Aid is working with trusted local partners to deliver families like Chance's a vital lifeline – a financial assistance programme, bringing immediate emergency aid to families who've fled their homes. Christian Aid funds cash grants for mothers to buy nutritious food, medicine, and hygiene supplies that could save children's lives and protect them from hunger, malnutrition, disease and pain.

£15 could buy the 20kg bag of beans, adding vital minerals to a family's diet—helping fight malnutrition.

£36 could provide personal hygiene kits for more than one family, keeping children safe and healthy.

£70 could fund pots, cups, bowls, plates and spoons for a family who've lost everything.

Further information, and to donate, see the Christian Aid website:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christmas-appeal>

Gill Kaye

CHRISTIAN AID CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2025



Chance and her children



2025

ANNUAL CAROL SERVICE

Perth Action of
Churches Together

Friday 19th December,
7pm

St Matthews Church, All Welcome
Tay Street, Perth



Please note:-

Warm Spaces will continue throughout December, but, will **not** meet on Thursday 25th December or Thursday 1st January, 2026.

Warm Spaces will restart on **Thursday 8th January, 2026**.





Jesus is the reason for the season



The Church of Scotland

Letham St Mark's

The church in the community

Contact Details—

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