

Forth St Paul's Parish Church Newsletter



October to December 2025 / Issue 12



Our
beautiful
Church
garden

Mary and
Joseph await
the arrival of
Jesus

Welcome to New Year

A new year dawns, a clean white page.
With grace from God to turn the stage.
May Jesus lead with a gentle hand,
Across this fresh and promised land.

Each day a gift, a chance to grow.
To love His way, to let Him know.
We love His plan, His perfect light,
To guide our steps both day and night.

Inside this issue:

- What's been happening?
- Laura-Jane's art work
- Rena Jardine
- Mainly Music
- Guild
- Bosch family
- Elspeth MacLean
- Café news
- Dates for your diary
- Intimations

Forth St Paul's – What's been happening?



Monday 13th to Friday 17th October – Church Shop

Thank you to all who made our Church shop a success once again. The team, contributors, purchasers and all who supported in any way. The amazing sum of £1,845.50 was raised for Church funds.

Sunday 26th October – Shoebox Sunday

Thank you to everyone who handed in shoeboxes or envelopes with money for the Blythswood Shoebox Appeal 2025. We counted an amazing 87 boxes. Last year Blythswood sent over 85,000 shoeboxes to eight different countries – Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.



The poppy cross in our Church garden.



Thank you to Miriam Finlayson for these beautiful diamond artworks on display in the church. This is one of four.



The children of Jigsaw decorated these poppy themed cakes

Sunday 9th November – Remembrance Sunday

There was a short act of remembrance at the war memorial followed by morning worship in Church. There was a retiring collection for Poppy Scotland.

On this day of remembrance, we pray for those who have lost loved-ones in conflict, and through the collateral damage of war. We think of those close to home in our Army, Navy and Air Force. We remember those on the other side to us in conflict, and we think of the deep scars of conflict that mark our world whenever there is war.

Prayer from Church of Scotland.

Bible for Bairns – A special gift for every baby born in Scotland!

Did you know that every baby born in Scotland can receive a **FREE Share a Story Bible** on their first birthday? 📖

Through the **Bible for Bairns** project by the Scottish Bible Society:

- ✓ On their first birthday, your child gets a Share a Story Bible.
- ✓ Every year after that, they'll receive a Bible-related gift.
- ✓ On their fifth birthday, they'll receive an early reader Bible!

Reading together helps children feel loved, builds confidence, and grows their vocabulary. Sharing the Bible can help families discover God's love and grow in faith.

Register a baby today at: bible.scot/bfb

Or scan the QR code below to sign up easily!

📖 *It's completely free and a wonderful way to share the Bible with the next generation.*



CHRISTMAS



begins with *Christ*

It was on a starry night, when the hills were bright
Earth lay sleeping, sleeping calm and still.
When in a cattle shed, on a manger bed,
A boy was born, king of all the world.



We extend our thanks to Linda and Campbell Fisher for this wonderful Nativity scene in our church garden. It has been a lovely and meaningful addition, offering a visible reminder of the Christmas story to all who pass by.



Christmas Crib

By May Gibson



A long time ago, past members of Braehead Lunch and Leisure Club knitted this Nativity scene, which was displayed in our village hall each year. It was the main attraction to our Christmas decorations. When our hall was in threat of closure, I was very happy to pass it onto Forth St Paul's Parish Church.

We're so grateful you donated it to us as it is beautiful and has been very admired. The children from Forth Primary School enjoyed using it as a prop while learning the Christmas story. Thank you!



Inside our beautiful Church

Our thanks go to everyone who gave their time, creativity, and care to decorate our church for Christmas. This year's theme, *"The Reason for the Season – The Nativity,"* beautifully reminded us of the true meaning of Christmas: the birth of Jesus Christ. Through thoughtful displays and traditional symbols, the decorations helped create a prayerful and welcoming space for worship, reflection, and celebration. We are truly grateful to all who contributed to making our church such a meaningful and inspiring place during this special season.



Sunday 16th November –

- Santa's Grotto



Santa's Grotto was once again a wonderful highlight of the season, with plenty of excited children eagerly waiting to meet Santa. While they enjoyed their magical moment, the adults were able to relax with a warm drink and an array of delicious homemade cakes. Photos from our always-popular photobooth are now available on our Facebook page for everyone to enjoy. There was also a bouncy castle, face painting, bracelet making and crafts. A heartfelt thank you to all who helped make the event possible. Your support made it yet another fantastic success! We raised just over £2,000 to support the work of the Parish Coordinator.



• Christmas lights switch on

Christine treated us to a joyful and uplifting service that blended festive Christmas-tree fun with a heartfelt reminder of the true meaning of Christmas. The children were happily engaged in crafts while the adults enjoyed singing and even picked up some fascinating Christmas-tree facts along the way.

St Andrew's Hospice joined us once again for anyone wishing to purchase a 'Light up a Life' in memory of a loved one. In keeping with tradition, we rounded off the service with our own unique version of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. As everyone left the church, they were gifted a candy cane and a poem to take home.

Let Forth Shine!

We were delighted when Christine Fraser accepted the invitation to switch on this year's Christmas lights, and the turnout certainly reflected how special the event was. As someone put it, *Christine is a tremendous advocate for Forth*.

Christine went on to say:

I'd like to thank the Initiative Group for inviting me along to do this. The Initiative Group are a wonderful group of people who have worked so hard to give us our lights and also to maintain them. I also want to thank the Council for putting our lights on to make Forth shine. I love living in Forth and I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. I love the fact that I can walk down the street

and I can talk to people and they talk to me. I love the street I live in because I know that people will help me. I love that in this village when every organisation has a fundraising event they are supported generously. Forth is a truly shining place and it's wonderful that when the lights go on, the whole world can see our shining village. So let's get Forth shining.



Saturday 29th November – Guild Christmas Fayre

This year's Christmas Fayre was filled with warmth, laughter, and a real sense of community. We were delighted to see such a strong turnout, with visitors enjoying unlimited cups of tea and coffee, sampling delicious home baking, and picking up some beautiful festive gifts and goodies.

Thank you to the Guild members, church members, and Jigsaw leaders for helping and to everyone who contributed and to all who came along, helping us raise the fantastic total of £1,893.20. The Guild kindly donated £2000 for Church funds – Thank you!



Sunday 30th November – First Sunday in Advent

A time of Hope

The children discussed all the things a modern baby needs—milk, clothes, nappies, a pram, a bath and a cot. In contrast, Jesus was born in a stable with none of these comforts. He had no proper home because Mary and Joseph were travelling to Bethlehem, and the only place for him to lie was a manger filled with hay. Although he lacked material things, Jesus did have loving parents.

When a new baby arrives today, excited family members usually visit first. But the first visitors to Jesus were shepherds—ordinary, humble people who lived outdoors with their sheep. They were the ones God chose to see Jesus first.

When people visit a baby, they usually bring useful gifts. The three wise men brought presents that didn't seem practical for a newborn—gold, frankincense and myrrh. Yet each gift had a special meaning: gold showed Jesus would be a king, frankincense that he would be worshipped, and myrrh that he would one day die. These gifts were part of God's plan.

Overall, Jesus' humble birth in a stable shows that God wanted him to come into the world as an ordinary, humble person, not as a grand and powerful king.



The children filled the stable with the nativity figures.



Week beginning 1st December – Forth Primary and Nursery Christmas visit

Karen welcomed the nursery and school children from Forth Primary for a Christmas presentation which was a mixture of storytelling and songs. Some songs were action ones where they all enjoyed dancing around. There was also a film of all the families who got their picture taken at the photo booth at Santa's grotto which was played on the big screen – the children just love seeing themselves and asked for it to be shown again. The nursery also came and enjoyed a Christmas presentation with different songs and the children got to set up the nativity which Mrs. Gibson kindly gave us which was knitted by the lunch club members years ago. It was admired by all the teachers. All the children and staff enjoyed a hot chocolate with cream and marshmallows as a treat. As they left, everyone walked round to the church garden to let everyone see the nativity Linda and Campbell built and donated to our church.



Sunday 7th December – Sacrament of Baptism and Second Sunday in Advent

A time of Peace

On this Second Sunday of Advent, we gathered in a spirit of peace and joyful expectation as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. The Advent season reminds us to slow down, reflect, and open ourselves to God's presence in our lives.

During the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism, we warmly welcomed into our Church family Eilidh Jane Savage and Faye Jennifer Frame. Surrounded by their families, friends, and the prayers of the congregation, these two children were baptised in faith, love, and hope. We pray that they may always know God's peace and be guided by His light throughout their lives.



Sunday 14th December – Gift Service and the Third Sunday in Advent

A time of Joy

The Third Sunday of Advent reminds us that this season of waiting is also a time of joy. As June Allan from the Salvation Army lit the candle on the Advent wreath, we were encouraged to pause and rejoice, knowing that the celebration of Jesus' birth is drawing ever closer.

Even in the busyness of Advent, we are invited to smile, give thanks, and share a little joy with those around us.



This Sunday also marked our Gift Service. We were delighted to welcome June and Jim from the Salvation Army, who kindly received the gifts that will be distributed by the Salvation Army to those in need. During the service, we learned a new chorus called "Joy", reminding us that true joy comes from putting Jesus first, yourself last, and others in between, sung to the tune of *Jingle Bells*.

June brought the Children's address to a close by sharing her prayer that God would bless us all and that everyone might enjoy a peaceful and happy Christmas this year.

Sunday 14th December – A Service of Prayer and Reflection

This service was led by the Revd Sumit Harrison and offered a time of quiet reflection. Members of the congregation were invited to light a candle, join together in prayer, and remember their loved ones in our Book of Remembrance. We hope this service brought comfort to all who are bereaved, and to those who find this time of year particularly difficult.

Monday 15th to Monday 22nd December – Christmas Glow Experience

Karen invited everyone to come and experience Christmas to some meaningful music and some tasty festive treats. Thank you to Corey Greenshields who helped to set up the Glow decorations and also helped make a new star as the old one got broken. Corey also asked a few teenagers to come along to enjoy the Glow. We were delighted that they came along to join us!

We also had the Braehead Lunch Club attend and after the music presentation they had tea and cakes made by Carl from Braehead who is a lovely baker. We had various other days with some new people who hadn't been before and commented on how moved they were. It gives people a flavour of the true meaning of Christmas.

One lady who comes to the Glow each year commented – *Once again the Glow event was a time to relax and listen to the Christmas story. The candle lit hall and beautiful music added to the true meaning of Christmas. Thank you Karen.*



Sunday 21st December – Nativity Play and Fourth Sunday in Advent

A time of Love.

Although the Nativity service was led by the JIGSAW children, leaders and friends, everyone in the congregation had a part to play. The JIGSAW children performed the main parts in the nativity story with the congregation being travellers, or innkeepers, or angels, or shepherds.

The theme of the service was gifts. Looking at giving the right gift. Then, the gift God gave to everyone, baby Jesus. The gifts Jesus gave to us and gifts that do not have a monetary value, gifts of kindness and friendship.



The JIGSAW children gave everyone a Christmas card and chocolate as they joyfully left the Church.



Wednesday 24th December – Watchnight Service

The Watchnight service started at 11.15pm and was led by Steven and Karen. The first 15 minutes was a time when people could greet each other and enjoy some refreshments. The four advent candles were lit at the beginning of the service by Corey, Ruth, Krystal and Neil, with the middle white light being lit at 12.00 to signify Jesus was born.

Karen's reflection was about 150 years our church had been open and about God's tent the tabernacle. The theme was God being among us and this led to birth of Jesus and our need to have a closer relationship with God.

Everyone wished each other Merry Christmas at midnight, followed by Krystal singing a beautiful Christmas song. Everyone sang O Come All Ye Faithful at the end.



As Karen said at the watch night service, the church is not a building it is the people and we are very blessed with the folk who make up our church. There are wonderful folk who work for our church, enthusiastic volunteers and faithful worshippers. Each has a part and all are needed and valued. They all have our grateful thanks and we pray for them as at this time that they may continue to — — Believe like Mary. Trust like Joseph. Hope like the shepherds. Seek like the wisemen. Praise like the angels. Love like Jesus.



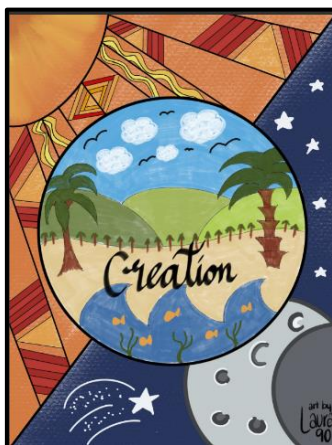
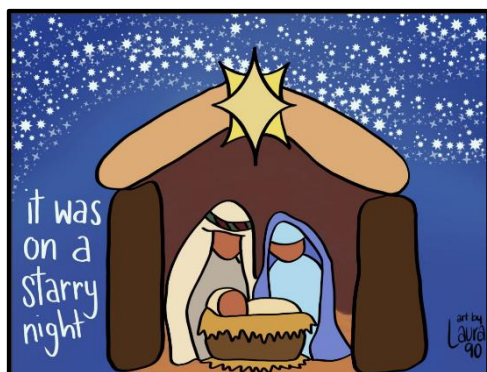
Art Work by Laura-Jane Sinclair

Hi there, it's your friendly church artist Laura, or many of you may know me as Laura-Jane, or even the one who hides away at the sound desk most Sundays.

In 1 Peter 4:10-11 it says "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in it's various forms" and James 1:17 "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights". That is how I see my talents with art; they are my gift from God. I don't like to boast about my art because pride is a sin, so I share it for free with others through the church.

But not all my art is inspired by scripture or church life, I also take inspiration from pop music because music is a big part of my life. I just draw what I hear through the music, or the sermon, or the scripture reading. So, if you ever see me with my head in my iPad during a service, now you know what I'm up to.

If you're interested in seeing more of my work, I have an art account on Instagram [art_by_laura90](#).



Laura-Jane generously donated these calendars to members of the congregation.

See Page 15 for more pictures.

Catching up with Rena Jardine

How long have you been worshipping at Forth St. Paul's?

All my life, from Sunday School right up to now so about 75 years!! Plus!

How long have you been arranging our Church flowers?

For about 30 years. Its not just me, there are ten other ladies. We each have a different month. It starts with me in January and it passes round the others and back to me in December when we decorate the Church for Advent.

How do you manage to store all your props?

Most are up in my loft or in the garden shed. I recycle most things.

You make a wonderful job of covering all the shoeboxes for the Shoebox appeal. How long does it take you to cover one? When do you start covering boxes?

It takes about 10 minutes. Boxes are left for me in Church or given to me (I've got some already for next year). I don't need to buy wrapping paper, there is someone in Church who buys it in January! And passes it onto me.



You have held different posts in the Church, which did you find the most challenging?

Being Session Clerk. There was a new minister and new Session Clerk but we got there. Until Presbytery wanted to send me e-mails! It was then time to go and let someone with a computer take over.

What other activities/clubs are you involved in?

I go to Lanark Floral Art Club, play whist at the Bank Hall and enjoy evenings at the Guild.

Is there anything else you would like to be doing in the Church? In your life?

Nope. I'm happy to help in any way I can, but I'm trying to step back a bit. I am very lucky to have all my family near me – Aileen, Fiona, Geore and my grandson Blair. I have great times galavanting with “the boy” and watching him grow up. He's 6'4” now and I think he's now stopped growing.





The children and adults from Mainly Music have enjoyed a busy and fun-filled time, with lots of dressing up for both Halloween and Christmas. The group will return from Christmas break on 13th January 2026.

We were delighted to welcome baby Emily, who joined in the Christmas party alongside her big sister — especially impressive as Emily was only one week old at the time!

The leaders would like to thank everyone for their kind comments and support, and hope that everyone had a very good Christmas.



Guild

In January and February, the Guild is trialling afternoon meetings, in small hall from 1.30 - 3.00 on Mondays. The programme for the four meetings will be-

12th January — Circle dance afternoon

26th January — Scottish afternoon (Hopefully we will have haggis pies)

9th February — Afternoon tea with entertainment from Marion Dick. Invitations have been sent to Guilds at Carnwath, Carstairs, Carmichael, Douglas and Lanark

23rd February — Border Biscuits.

Some folk have indicated that they would like to come to the Guild, but they find the idea of going out in the cold, dark winter nights intimidating, so this would be your chance to try out the Guild in the afternoon.

Everyone will be most welcome.



A catch up with the Bosch family

We caught up with Eckhardt at the beginning of December to see how he and his family — Rozelle, Lorelei and Lucien — were getting on. He shared that all is going well. Lorelei is now three and Lucien will celebrate his first birthday in January. Lorelei is now attending nursery, which she is thoroughly enjoying, and her English continues to improve. Lucien is recovering well from a recent chest infection and is doing very well. In terms of ministry, Eckhardt reported that things are going well and that he has settled into a good rhythm. There have been positive developments within the church, and he is making every effort to be present and involved in the wider community. Eckhardt regularly shares updates and stories on Instagram at [Prestongrange_Church](#). Eckhardt sends his

best wishes to everyone at Forth St Paul's. He mentioned that he has now been away for over a year and that the time has passed incredibly quickly.



A catch up with the Elspeth

We contacted Elspeth to find out how she been since moving to Aberdeenshire. Elspeth was delighted to hear from us and sent the following: -

It's hard to believe that it's over 4 years since I retired from Forth. As so many retired people said, I don't know how I found time to work!

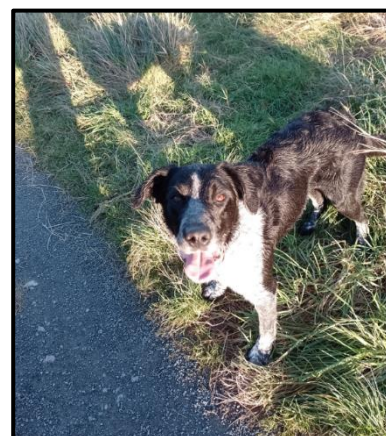
Taking a puppy, Monty, into my life takes up a lot of time and energy. He's now 4, a Collie cross Spaniel and full of exuberance. We do dog agility training which is great fun and helps to tire him out.

I'm also loving being back dancing, Scottish country dancing, each week, back to a book club, and this year I decided to try and learn to play the fiddle!

Roughly twice a month I go to a sauna at Aberdeen beach and dip or swim in the sea. The highlight of the year was my 70th birthday! I had a ceilidh in the scout hut here in the village with a live band. Around 50 friends came to help me celebrate and the dancing group had written a new dance, Elspeth 's Jig, for me!!!

Photos show me at the ceilidh, Monty dog, and me having just completed 100miles in October for the Scottish Charity Air Ambulance.

Please also pass on my greetings to everyone, I don't send cards but send prayers for peace and joy to all.



Monty

Café News

The Rainforest Café is open on a Sunday from 12noon (last orders 1.15pm) and every Wednesday from 10am till 3pm (last orders are taken at 2.15pm).

The café is open to everyone to sit in or takeaway lunches/snacks.



Happy Birthday to Isa

Warmest congratulations to Isa on her 95th birthday.

A cherished member of our Church, café and wider village, she celebrated the occasion with cake and shared laughter amongst friends.



Thank You

As we come to the end of 2025, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers for their continued support, friendship and many shared laughs throughout the year — including those who travel from further afield than the village.

Thank you also to everyone who so kindly gave us Christmas gifts & cards and joined in the fun by donning props for our festive photos. Your generosity and good humour are very much appreciated.

Introducing Gini

We were delighted to welcome Gini to our café team in November. She has joined us as our new Café Worker and is already proving to be a wonderful addition. Many of you may recognise her from around the village or from her volunteering work in the Breast Cancer Charity Shop. Do take a moment to say hello when you're in — Gini is keen to get to know everyone.

Gini lives locally with her husband, Keith, and is mum to two daughters, Megan and Gabby. She is also a proud grandmother to Malcolm (11) and Clary (age 7). Having often visited the café with her family, Gini is now enjoying being part of the team behind the counter.



Spreading some Christmas cheer in the café on 17th December



Dates for Diaries

Please keep an eye on our Facebook page and website for more information on upcoming events.

Church services

We would love you to join us in person on a Sunday morning at 11am but if this isn't possible our services are streamed live via our website www.forthstpauls.com or via YouTube (a link for this can be found on the website).

Church Groups (open to everyone)

- ❖ **KNACC (Knit, Natter, Craft & Chatter)** meet on a Monday from 10am-12noon. **Are now on holiday until February.**
- ❖ **Guild** meet every second Monday from 1.30-3pm. **Start back 12th January**
- ❖ **Mainly Music (pre-school parent & toddlers)** meet on a Tuesday from 9.30 -11am. **Start back 13th January.**
- ❖ **Planet Earth Afternoon Club** for P3-P7 meet on a Tuesday from 3-4.30pm. **Start date to be confirmed**
- ❖ **Youth Rainforest Café** for high school pupils meet on a Friday from 1pm onwards. **Start date to be confirmed**
- ❖ **Jigsaw** meet on a Sunday at 10.50am. **Start back 11th January.**

Please note that all our Groups are off over the festive period.

Crèche – A creche will be provided, in the small hall, during the service for parents to attend Church.

Co-op Community Grant – Planet Earth Club has received a total of £2369.85 from the Co-op Community Fund. A massive thank you to all who selected them this year. It costs nothing to sign up and it is well worth it! The new grant this year is for Forth St Paul's Parish Church – it is to help with the new electricity meter and electric work in the Church). You need to re-register your support if you are a Co-op member. Thank you for your continuing support.

Gift Aid – If you give regularly to the Church and are a Tax payer, please consider signing up for Gift Aid. This will not cost you anything and will allow the Church to claim back 25% of any amount you give. Also, if you have previously signed up for Gift Aid and are no longer a Tax payer then please let us know so that we do not make a false claim. If you are unsure or would like any further information then please speak to either Catherine McGurk or Jane Savage and they will be able to help you.

Old Spectacles - If anyone has any old spectacles they no longer use and are happy to donate them to a charity in Ukraine, please bring them along to Church or the Cafe and Audrey will coordinate.

Used stamps – Please leave in the box at the back of the Church to support the work of the Al Ahli Hospital in Northern Gaza.

Volunteers:

All the following wee jobs need covered if you'd be interested please get in touch. Remember you'd be on a rota not covering all the time.

- Church Door Duty
- Readers in church
- Sound desk/ Powerpoint preparation
- Flowers in church and flower delivery
- Anyone willing to write and read the 'Prayer for Others' during weekly worship
- People willing to help with our Property Group to maintain our buildings
- **Cleaner - As we no longer have a church cleaner, we are trying to form a rota of folk who can give up 30 minutes once a month to clean the church. Thanks to those who have volunteered to clean the church already. If you can help, please give your name to Margaret.**

Prayer Box

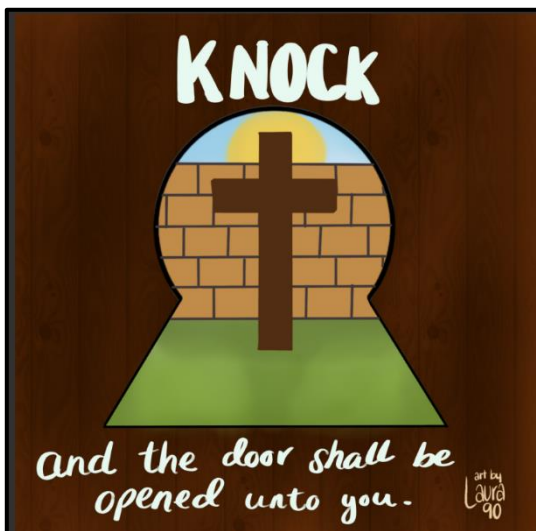
A prayer box is at the back of the Church for anyone who would appreciate prayer for themselves, a friend, a family member or a situation.

Please pop a note in the box and the prayer group will offer a prayer.

We would like to encourage more people to use this box

When your heart starts to worry,
and your mind just can't rest,
put your prayers down on paper
and let God do the rest

All requests are confidential.



Thank you to
Laura-Jane
for this
beautiful art
work

