

Mission Statement

"Our purpose is to honour and enjoy God, proclaim Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, serve our community in Jesus' name, strengthen one another in our spiritual life, and influence our world through prayer, witness, truth and grace."

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Charity registered in
Scotland No SC001285

From the Minister

The first Sunday in Advent marks the beginning of the Christian calendar. Many also consider it to be the beginning of winter. An article about how to make the most of the time of year appears in this edition of the church newsletter. As Christmas looms, it is important that Christians do not get caught off guard by the commercial and secular onslaught. One way of doing this is to observe the seasons of Advent, Christmas itself and Epiphany.



Advent is a time of fasting and preparation. Why not make a point of re-booting your daily devotions, either using familiar notes like 'Every Day with Jesus' or try something fresh? The World Mission Council of the Church of Scotland has produced a handsome booklet, enabling us to share the season with Palestinian citizens of Israel. You can order a copy from the Church Offices in Edinburgh or via www.churchofscotland.org.uk.

Observing the full 12 Days of Christmas, as a whole season of celebration, can be refreshing. You do not have to be officially on holiday to savour the deeper joys which enrich life. Even if your outward circumstances are harsh, dwelling on the humanity of Jesus reminds us that we never walk alone because God loves us so much that he came alongside his people long ago in the person of his son and he still comes in the person of his Spirit today.

If the emphasis of the Christmas season is on the humanity of Jesus then Epiphany, which begins the day after Twelfth Night, is all about how he is also God. It is also when people make New Year resolutions.
(continued overleaf)

Need prayer or someone to pray with you?

Email Mary Fennell 1995gideon@gmail.com

Need to talk? Questions about the Christian faith

Contact the minister, who will find the right person to speak to you.

Rev. Dr Rory MacLeod Phone: 07841 654281 rorymofg@gmail.com

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Notices lesleyinskye@yahoo.co.uk

From the Minister (continued)

These are often wildly unrealistic and normally come to grief by February. In contrast, why not adopt more worthwhile intentions which have a better chance of success, such as inviting a neighbour or work colleague to church, or becoming more regular in Bible reading and prayer?

At this point, let me come good on my intention to acknowledge those who are already setting an example. I think of Mairead MacDonald and her Gaelic Singing Classes, Cameron Tallach who got us into 'The God Question' and 'Grasping the Nettle', Mary Strachan and her 'Café Chat'. These are splendid examples of believers acting on a need or an opportunity to put their faith into action and bless the church and the community. Perhaps you are thinking that I have missed out an equally deserving example to those I have mentioned? Well, can I invite you to give expression to your outrage in a letter or article for this newsletter, which promotes the initiative you feel so strongly about?

For myself, I would like to express appreciation for the Kirk Session. Being a "ruling elder" is not an easy task and it is a significant responsibility. Strath & Sleat's current team must be the most representative (in age and sex) that we have ever had. What impresses me is their passion for faithfulness and their concern for each individual in the congregation – and indeed for those not yet there. In this regard I should also include the Congregational Board.

But before anyone accuses me of painting an idealised picture, let me acknowledge that not everyone is happy. And, as we stand on the threshold of a new year, I would like to invite anyone with a grievance to get in touch with me, so we can address it and move into God's future together and not encumbered with baggage from the past.

Le na h-uile beannachd airson Nollaig Chrìdheil agus Bliadhna Mhàth ùr!

Rory

Church Life (November 2017)

Wedding

James Finlay & Gemma Livingstone, 25 November, An Talla Duisdale

Funerals

Mrs Janet MacSween, 3rd November, Broadford

Mr Peter Bailey, 7th November, Broadford

What's on???

December

Sunday 3rd	Advent- 10 & 11am Christmas Gift Services	
Mon 4th & Tue 5th	12.30pm Mairead’s Gaelic Hymn Class, Kilmore	
Tue 5th	10am Presbytery, Kyle Church Hall	
Wed 6th	7.30pm Broadford Midweek Meeting, Church Foyer: God Question 2	
Thu 7th	7.30pm Kirk Session, Manse: ‘Learn’	
Sun 10th	3pm Elgol Christmas Gift Service	
Tue 12th	11am CoS Gaelic Group, Highland Theological College	
Steve Aisthorpe returns to deliver a series of evening workshops to help identify and develop our "gifts":		
Tue 12 Dec	7-9pm	Kyleakin Church Hall
Wed 13 Dec	7-9pm	Kilmore Church Meeting Room
Thu 14 Dec	7-9pm	Broadford Church Foyer
Fri 15th	Dave Mockett completes his service as COOL Worker	
Sun 17th	6pm Gaelic Service, Kilmore	
Mon 18th	Sleat Primary Carol Service, Kilmore Church	
Tue 19th	11.10am Primary School Assembly, Kyleakin	
Wed 20	7.30pm Broadford Midweek Meeting, Church Foyer: God Question 3	
Thu 21	11am Broadford Primary Carol Service, Broadford Church	
Christmas Eve	7pm Family Carols, Kilmore 11.30pm Watchnight Service, Broadford (Carols from 11.15pm)	
Christmas Day	11am Celebrations in Kyleakin & Broadford Churches	
Hogmanay	11am Parish Service, Kilmore: Change Management Part 2	

News from COOL: An Interview with Dave



To many you are an institution! For how long have you been in post? *I've been COOL Youth & School's Worker for 16 years – to the day! I started on 19 November 2001.*

What is the most significant change you have noticed over those years? *As regards society in general, it is the concern over sexuality. At the local church level, it is the rise in interaction between churches, facilitated by the fact that COOL works independently of denominations.*

So now you are away to join the police; how did God call you into that? *It is what I always wanted to do but, for the last 25 years, God had other ideas! But since opening the door, everything has fallen into place and I have sensed his leading and providing every step of the way.*

As you prepare to move on, what are your lingering hopes for COOL? *First, that it continues and, just as important, that my replacement is allowed to flourish according to their own strengths and not expected to be a clone of me. In that regard, I hope that he/she will increase the evangelistic impact of the role, to complement my more pastoral style.*

What is your parting advice? *Let Dave go but stay committed to COOL!*

We are pleased to gather that you will remain in the area, at least for the time-being. How will your relationship to the church change? *I expect to be just as committed – but in a different way. I am not reducing my service to Christ and his church, so much as changing the means by which I express that service.*

Devotional Extract

Excerpt from a letter written by Pierre Poiret (1646-1719), dubbed "the only mystic of the French Reformed Church" to an unknown friend, explaining how to fulfil the command to "pray at all times" (Ephesians 6.18):

"God never asks the impossible from man. If one had always to be at church, man would die for lack of the necessities of life; and were one obliged to be always on one's knees, the body could not bear this constant fatigue. And if one had always to meditate with one's head one would break down for one could neither eat, drink, nor sleep. But God only asks for this conversation to continue always between Himself and the soul, and it can continue when you are working, eating, drinking, writing, even sleeping. So you see it is possible to pray without ceasing, as Jesus Christ taught us."

Parish Christmas cards



We now have 500 Christmas cards ready to be delivered! There are 10 wonderful designs from our Sunday school children.

The idea is to reach as many homes as possible in south Skye. If everyone in church was able to deliver just 5 each, we would be able to deliver them all! However we realise that there will be some people unable or unwilling to deliver them, so if those who are willing were prepared to deliver 10 cards each, we should be able to deliver them all. To avoid the same house getting more than one card, there will be lists of house areas in each church, and you are invited to sign-up to a few houses near you.

The cards are in packs of 10, but please just take what you need and return any undelivered ones to church. Please deliver the cards at the beginning of December. This will give us time to print some more if we need to.

This is what is on the inside of the cards. Christmas is a time when people who don't usually come to church might like to, even if it is just to sing some carols. So let's give everyone we meet at any of the Christmas services a really warm welcome.

Nollaig Chridheil! Happy Christmas!

We would love to see you at any of our Christmas services.

SUNDAY 17TH DECEMBER

FAMILY SERVICE - 10am Kilmore Church

FAMILY SERVICE - 11am Kyleakin Church (*Sunday school Nativity*)

CHRISTMAS EVE

FAMILY CAROL SERVICE - 11am Kyleakin Church (*followed by mince pies in the hall*)

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION - 3pm Elgol Church

FAMILY CAROL SERVICE - 7pm Kilmore Church

WATCHNIGHT SERVICE - 11.15pm Broadford Church

CHRISTMAS DAY

FAMILY SERVICE (about half an hour) - **11am** in **Kyleakin** Church
(Kids... bring something you received for Christmas to show us!)

Parish of Strath and Sleat – Church of Scotland
www.sschurch.co.uk

And a huge 'Thank You!' to everyone who is able to find time to do this.

CROSSREACH

providing a caring future

Does the name 'Crossreach' mean anything to you? If not, it is either because you still know it by its old name 'The Church of Scotland Board of Social Responsibility' or because you are about to discover our denomination's best kept secret for the first time! The fact is that, for the tiny amount which the Church of Scotland contributes, this in-house operation delivers the largest voluntary social care service in Scotland, employing more than 2,000 staff, with an annual budget of more than £50 million and addresses issues as diverse as substance misuse, children and families, learning disabilities, old people and dementia, the list goes on. Here in Skye, Budhmoir Care Home in Portree belongs to the Crossreach portfolio, as does the Lewis Street Project (supported housing) on the Isle of Lewis. Earlier this year, the following press release announced Crossreach's commitment to Gaelic:

"Gaels Blow Away Dementia Perceptions To Win Award

Youngsters at a Gaelic speaking primary school and residents at a care home run by the Church of Scotland's Social Care provider, CrossReach, for elderly people living with dementia are breaking down language and generation barriers in an innovative scheme in Inverness.

"The residents at Cameron House are visited weekly by children from the Gaelic Medium Primary School. The idea behind the initiative is to allow the native Gaelic speaking residents the chance to talk in Gaelic with the children and to increase their wellbeing and enable them to take part in their community and share memories and skills.

Patricia Birse, Service Manager at Cameron House said: "This is an excellent platform to breakdown prejudices and misunderstandings about dementia. Seven primary school pupils have met regularly with our Gaelic speaking residents and the visits have been a great success."

"One of the residents, whose native tongue is Gaelic had not communicated verbally for some time, but has actively participated in the Gaelic speaking group after a word triggered memories of the past. On 25 September, the partnership between Cameron House and the school received significant recognition by winning the "Best Innovation in Continuing Care" category at Scotland's Dementia Awards. The award scheme showcases the creativity, innovation and dedication impacting the daily lives of people with dementia and their families and aims to demonstrate clearly how, across Scotland, policy is being sustainably put into best shared practice.

"Built in 1987, Cameron House is a purpose-built residential home for 30-people with dementia. At present Cameron House is home to 28-residents."

Even more recently my eye was caught by an article which appeared in the West Highland Free Press and which I am sharing with the kind permission of the editor, Ian McCormack. I believe many will recognize the gentleman toting the pen as my predecessor, Ben Johnstone!

Island churches agree to become “friends” of CrossReach charity

Churches in the Western Isles have signed a new accord to support one of Scotland's biggest social care charities.

The Church of Scotland Presbytery of Lewis has become a 'Presbytery Friend' to CrossReach, which runs cradle-to-the-grave services across the country.

The agreement means that church members will engage in fundraising activities for the charity, the social care arm of the Church of Scotland.

Rev Dr Ben Johnstone, moderator of the Presbytery of Lewis, and Calum Murray, director of adult care services at CrossReach — which employs more than 2,000 people and relies on volunteers — formalised the agreement in Stornoway recently.

Dr Johnstone said: “We are delighted to pledge to become a Presbytery Friend of CrossReach. The pledge encourages all of our congregations to support — prayerfully and through fundraising — the wonderful work done, in the name of Jesus, by CrossReach nationally.

“This includes the exceptional services provided by the Lewis Street and Dochas projects on the Isle of Lewis.”

Lewis Street in Stornoway provides flats for homeless people, as well as other service user groups,

for up to two years. Operating from the Lewis Street project, Dochas is a community-based service supporting

homeless people who have issues with substance misuse and who have been referred for support by the

Homeless Service Development Department of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.



Rev Dr Ben Johnstone, moderator of the Presbytery of Lewis, and Calum Murray, director of adult care services at CrossReach

... which brings me to my own decision to participate in the Edinburgh 10k Charity Run on Sunday 3 December. My uncle, John MacLeod, suffers from dementia and was recently admitted to The Elms, a Crossreach facility which specializes in the condition. So impressed have we been with his treatment that my sister, Katrina Macpherson, decided that she would celebrate her 50th birthday by assembling family and friends to run under the banner 'Special K' in support of Crossreach and the individuals, families and communities throughout Scotland, who are blessed by its expression of Christ's love on behalf of our church.

I hope the personal and general sweep of this article has convinced you that Crossreach is a cause worth supporting. If you would like to turn that into a financial contribution, you can visit my 'justgiving' page (Roderick MacLeod) and, if you already have, thank you!

Preparing for Winter

Some find this time of year difficult, on account of the bleak weather and lack of light. Our Danish neighbours counter these ills with a concept called *hygge* (pronounced “hooga”). Roughly translated it means “cosiness” but that doesn’t do justice to what amounts to a whole seasonal attitude, covering everything from how you do your laundry to what you eat. Check out the VisitDenmark website for a fuller explanation!



Christian tradition also offers an antidote. This has developed over centuries, often in surprising ways. Candles were first used as decorations by Pope Gregory in 601AD and later, much later, in 1521 Martin Luther placed them on a fir tree to represent the stars over Bethlehem. Nativity plays appeared in Europe during the Middle Ages, while the very British institution of pantomimes started during the 1740s. Turkeys began coming over from America in 1555 but Prince Albert can probably be credited with the greatest impact on contemporary festive fashions, with his introduction of the Christmas Tree in 1847.



Another popular continental import is Christingle, which involves the decoration of oranges with candle, cocktail-sticks, sweetmeats and ribbon, to be displayed or given away as visual illustrations of everything that the original Christmas represents. Similarly metaphorical, the classic carol ‘Twelve Days of Christmas’ is laced with hidden meanings. If the way to your heart is through your stomach, you may enjoy a slice of Dreikonigskuchen, an elaborate German confection meaning

“Three kings cake”, which celebrates the arrival of the Magi after the birth of Jesus.

Advent, Christmas and Epiphany provide structure and a source of spiritual rigour and are not to be confused! Advent is a season of fasting and preparation, encompassing the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. The first proclaims God’s promise to redeem the world; the second acknowledges how the prophets of old announced God’s intentions; the third recognises John as the ultimate prophet, sent to prepare the way of the Lord; and the fourth hails his mother, Mary.

Christmas itself is a twelve day celebration which begins on 25 December, the first day of Christmas. Growing up in Romania during the Communist era, I recall watching commuters rushing home on what was officially a normal working day, with overcoats bulging surreptitiously. That sight convinced me that you don’t have to be on holiday to enjoy the party! A while later, when I was minister in Portnalong, an unusually prolonged cold snap

brought traffic to a snowy stand-still from Christmas Eve till after New Year. It was a magical time, during which I went from home to home sharing the joys with those who were house-bound.

Twelfth Night brings Christmas to its conclusion, which is a crescendo not a damp squib because it is immediately followed by the feast of Epiphany. The word itself means something like “revelation” and is associated with the visit of the Magi. Epiphany has a dark aftermath which rarely features in our sanitised Nativity plays. Matthew, chapter 2, verses 13-18, tells the grim tale known as ‘The Slaughter of the Innocents’. It reminds us that Christmas is no fairy-tale but is born of the harshest of reality. But its message of hope transcends despair because it announces the arrival of God’s Messiah, Jesus, in whom God himself is present, which is why the seasonal name for Jesus is Emmanuel: God with us!

Devotional Extract

Excerpt from a letter written on 28 October 1882 by James Chalmers, Scottish missionary in New Guinea, to his friend John Thompson, who became foreign secretary of the London Missionary Society, describing the transformation of a cannibalistic tribe:



“The change came about in the same way, by the same means, and on the same lines as in the many islands of the Pacific. In the sameness of the Gospel there is always a freshness of true life, by which the means used becomes fresh and living, and those among whom the work is carried on feel the power of the life and are drawn to it. The first missionaries landed not only to preach that Gospel of divine life but also to live it, and to show (to the savage) a more excellent way than his own. They learned the dialect, mixed freely with them, gave kindnesses, received the same, travelled with them, quarrelled with them, made friends, assisted them in their trading, and in every way made them to feel that only their good was desired...

“That God is Love, seen in Christ, this was the life word we brought them. Day after day in duty’s routine – not in hymn-singing, praying, preaching in public, as some imagine missionaries spend their days – the work was ever going on. The Gospel was working its way in bush-clearing, fencing, planting, house-building, and many other forms of work, through fun, play, feasting, traveling, joking, laughing and along the ordinary experiences of every-day life.

“The Gospel shows itself still the power of God unto salvation, the life and light-giver to those in darkness... But it is evident that mission work can be done only in direct contact with the people.”

Greetings from Uganda

Dear Friends in Skye,

THIRD
HOPE
AFRICA



It was so good to spend time among you this summer. Whilst we were home, David worked on a piece of music that communicates the heart of the work we are involved in, entitled: *Requiem for the Lost Children of Northern Uganda*. It is music that reflects the suffering of God's heart for children who are used as soldiers in war.

In performing this piece, it was extraordinary to experience how we can sing about this kind of suffering and to experience the way that prayer, in this form, enables us to press into the hope and redemption of God's love. We hope to perform it on Skye sometime, come sing and lament with us if you are able!

Meantime, we are back in Uganda, embarking upon a training course with a small group of ex-child soldiers, exploring innovative ways of farming in a sub-Saharan landscape threatened by climate change. We are learning how to plant and care for trees that will stabilise the soil whilst producing a diverse range of fruit, helping to overcome the malnutrition so common in post-conflict zones.

David and I are about to move to the rural setting of the farm that we have been developing as a team. This move to the site is going to be a challenge in terms of the isolation of its location and its lack of connection to power or internet. We have been waiting on the Lord, however, and believe he is shepherding us to make the move, so we trust in his leading and covering of our lives. Pray with us that we will fully trust him and be able to express his heart of love more fully through this move.

It looks like we will be on the farm for the start of Advent. Advent is not a season we grew up following in the church calendar - only on the family Advent calendar! - but we are rediscovering its significant meaning, particularly considering the way Christmas has been hijacked in the UK. We will not miss the glitz and glamour that can tend to subsume the true meaning of Christmas in our culture!

The church fathers observed this Advent season as a time of fasting and waiting, expressing their longing for the coming Christ. They did not decorate their dwellings or churches until Christmas Eve, then Christmas day was a joyful celebration of singing and feasting. This season of Advent will indeed be a time of fasting for us; we will be on a diet of rice and beans with the occasional vegetables: a 'Daniel Diet' - he did well on it though! We look forward to



reaching Christmas day in this rural setting and reflecting on the Lord's humble birth and beginnings, whilst also looking forward to his return with anticipation and excitement. Do I hear a 'Hallelujah'? Let us join with our African brothers and sisters and express our enthusiasm for the coming of Christ in an audible way!! We long for his reign of righteousness when the broken children of our world will be loved and cared for...

Bless you all and we wish you a joyful Christmas.

In friendship, Rose-Mary and David



Feasgair nan Sailm.

An Afternoon with Gaelic Psalms

Aig toiseach a' mhios, chruinnich grunn dhaoine - a Ealaghoil is Slèite, An t-Ath Leathann, Breacais, is Caol Acainn - agus a Chaoil is Loch Carran - anns a "Vestibule" 's an Ath Leathann.

Fo stiùir Amy Cruikshank, a bha teagaisg ann am Bun-sgoil Stafainn airson iomadh bliadhna, Sìne Ghileasbuig a Stafainn agus Dinah NicFhraing a Cillemoluaig, bha sinne ag obair air Sailm 16, bho rann a còig - "Coibhreann mu chup is m'oighreachd Dia"

Bha Amy a' sealltainn dhuinn an doigh a chleachd i 'nuair a bha i ag ionnsachadh clann-sgoile ciamar a chuireas tu a mach a loidhne, agus tha mi a' smaoineachadh gun d'fhuair sinn tòrr misneachd as.

Sheinn sinn dhà neo trì laoidhean Gàidhlig, agus mar bu dual, bha srupag ann cuideachd!

Mìle taing do Amy, Dinah agus Sìne, agus gu h-àraidh do Mhairead NicDhomhnaill airson am feasgair sònraichte a chuir air doigh.

Chi sinn sibh an ath thuras!



At the beginning of the month, a good crowd - from Elgol, Sleat, Broadford, Breakish, Kyle and Loch Carron - met in the Broadford Church Vestibule.

Under the guidance of Amy Cruikshank, Dinah Rankin and Sìne Gillespie from Staffin and Kilmuir, we worked together on some verses of Psalm 16.

Amy demonstrated the methods she had used to teach the Staffin schoolchildren how to present the psalms. We were very encouraged with the response, and would welcome anyone interested in learning more about the Gaelic psalms to the next workshop.

We also sang some Gaelic hymns - and enjoyed tea and pancakes.

Many thanks to the Tròndairnis ladies for coming to Broadford, and especially to Mairead MacDonald for organising everything so well.



STRATH & SLEAT CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Times & Contacts

Our Churches

Broadford
High Street
Broadford
Isle of Skye
IV49 9AB



Elgol

Elgol
Isle of Skye
IV49 9BL



Kilmore
Kilmore
Sleat
Isle of Skye
IV44 8RG



Kyleakin

Kyleakin
Isle of Skye
IV41 8PH



Regular Sunday service times

10am Kilmore **11am** Kyleakin **11am** Broadford

3pm Elgol (2nd & 4th Sundays of the month) **6pm** Kyleakin Fellowship

Seirbheisean Gàidhlig

6f An t-Ath Leathann (a' chiad Sàbaid), A' Chill Mhòr (an treas Sàbaid)

Midweek Meetings

Mondays 10am - Prayer for revival in Broadford Church

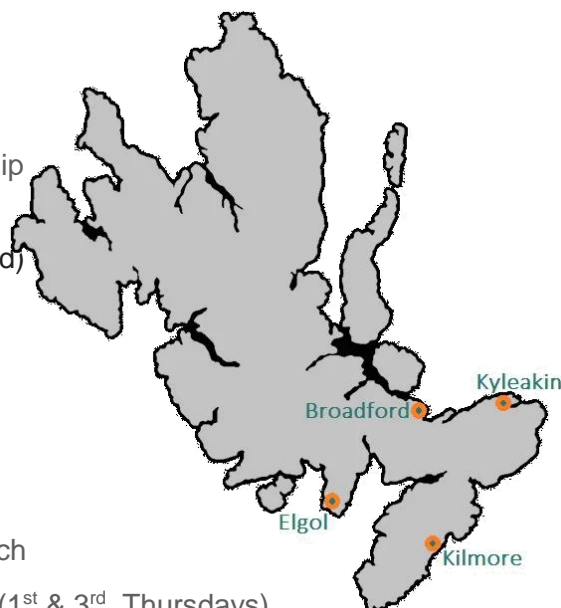
Tuesdays 7.30pm - Kyleakin Prayer Meeting, Church Hall

Wednesdays 7.15pm Sleat Midweek Group

7.30pm Broadford Bible study, Broadford Church

Thursdays 1.30pm Ladies Group, Broadford church foyer (1st & 3rd Thursdays)

7.30pm Housegroup, Grianach, Harrapool (2nd & 4th Thursdays)



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Mary Strachan

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