

# ***NESS BANK CHURCH***

## ***Congregational Newsletter***

***Winter 2025/26 - No 1028***



***Congregation Formed 1787  
Present Church Opened 1901***

# Life and Death

## *Dear Friends*

Paul writes to Corinth, *“Death is at work in us, but life is at work in you”*. (2 Cor 4.12)

By *“death”* he meant the danger of death, at risk from persecution by enemies of Jesus trying to stop his preaching and teaching. *“Life”* describes the response of faith in those who believed his dangerous message, and became committed Christians.



We have faced death in Ness Bank faithfully over the years, because hosting funeral services is one of the things we do. In the last few months there have been a number of such gatherings, both large and small: some for faithful servants of the church; others for friends in the wider community. I am grateful to hard working staff and volunteers who provide this service with great dignity, respect and compassion. As Christians, death leaves us with nothing to fear, and sharing that hope in times of distress is one of our greatest privileges.

We also believe in life before death. Some have recently experienced that with renewed vigour, as our regular pattern of Christian worship and Bible teaching makes a lasting impression. That happens in the building, and also on-line. It's been great to receive some very positive feedback from people – sometimes previously unknown to us – who have logged on to a livestream and made a personal connection with Jesus.

That life is physical as well as spiritual. In recent Sunday morning services on the theme *“Healing Matters”*, we have read in Mark's Gospel of Jesus pursuing his passion for the Kingdom of God by healing bodies and saving souls in equal measure. We try to reflect that by collecting money for Tearfund at Harvest, supplying the foodbank and filling shoeboxes for Blythswood, and holding Communion retiring collections for Inverness Foodstuff (IF). It was gratifying to have that recognised recently by the National Churches Trust awarding Ness Bank Church first place in Scotland in its Community Awards category for the volunteer partnership between IF and the congregation. Much of what matters most often goes unseen by many, but it should encourage us all when good things are appreciated.

Thoughts begin to turn now towards the end of the year, and our celebration of the birth of Christ. At Ness Bank we will share that with my Ugandan friend Bishop Gabriel Kijjambu, who will join us for church and Messy Church on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December. There will also be a Carols and Lessons service on the 21<sup>st</sup>; our now traditional – and this year

extended – Christmas Carol Crawl on Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> (starting in Ness Bank at 5pm); and extra services on Christmas Eve from 11pm, and Christmas Day in the morning. All of these are great opportunities for believers to share the gift of new life with neighbours, families and friends – many of whom have battled tough times and bad news throughout the year.

After his talk of life and death, Paul concludes, (v15) *“All this is for your sake; and as God’s grace reaches more and more people, they will offer to the glory of God more prayers of thanksgiving”*. May God grant us more gratitude than ever before!

***Blessings,  
Stuart***

## **Congregational Register**

**Weddings:** 8th October 2025: Pauline Kobialka and Philip MacPherson

**Deaths** 16<sup>th</sup> August 2025: Eric Milne; funeral 27<sup>th</sup> August 2025

### ***Next Issue***

Contributions for the Spring 2026 Newsletter can be sent to me at any time, but no later than Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026. The Newsletter will be available for collection by Elders and Visitors on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026.

***Elspeth Smith***  
***Email: nessbmagazine@gmail.com***

Copies of the Newsletter are available in the vestibule  
Ness Bank Church is online at [www.nessbankchurch.org.uk](http://www.nessbankchurch.org.uk)

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### ***Baby and Toddler Group***

The Baby and Toddler group continues as usual on a Wednesday morning 0930 - 1130 and are always ready to welcome more children. We have welcomed three new families since August, but there is plenty room for more!

**Contact Anne Sutherland**  
(details on back page of newsletter)

## ***Ness Bank Church – Open days, August 2025***

Our church was open from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> until Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August, and over that time we welcomed 1209 visitors. Over 200 signed the Visitor's book, and many also put a sticker on our maps to indicate their home country.

In addition to generous donations totalling £336, there were over 100 messages and prayers left on the Prayer Tree – mainly in English, but also in German, French and Italian. Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August saw the highest concentration of visitors – 117 – and on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>, access was restricted due to a funeral, so only 10 people came in.

From the entries in the Visitor's Book, and the maps, it appears that folk came from over 34 different countries, including Norway, Ireland, Ukraine; Dubai, Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, USA, Canada, Taipei, Vietnam, China, Australia and New Zealand

The dates for Ness Bank Open Church 2026, are currently proposed as Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August, however this may change depending on progress with the Sanctuary redevelopment project.

I'd like to thank all those members of the congregation who gave their time and talents for this event. We were especially thankful to those who volunteered more than once, as only 21 members actually signed up to take part over the 4-week period. As it requires 2 volunteers to cover each morning and afternoon session, we could have used 80 different people over the period!

I would therefore encourage those who haven't yet volunteered for this event, to 'have a go' next year. It is very easy and you will enjoy introducing your Ness Bank Church, to many people visiting Scotland, and in particular, Inverness. **Barry Gilbert**

### ***The Guild***



Our Guild group has got off to a good start for the new session. Our theme this year is "Living Stones", which is the second part of our national 3 year strategy entitled, 'Let's Build a House'. Stones in the Bible represent strength, stability and enduring faith and we are called to be the living stones building God's kingdom on earth.

Over the next few meetings, we'll have talks from a lawyer on wills and power of attorney and two meetings involving talks from our project speakers, one on Release International in Crown church on the 4th November and one here in Ness Bank on 18th November, both at 7:30pm.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December, we have a Christmas craft evening, and Inverness Handbells will entertain us on 16th December. As always, we would love to see new faces at our meetings - even just coming for a taster! There is no pressure and it's free for the first year! We really are a welcoming group who enjoy fun and fellowship.

**Contact Anne Sutherland**



## *Girls' Brigade*

The first term has flown by at Riverside GB! Explorers have been busy diving into oceans, complete with stories of Jonah and Noah and whale and ark crafts. Juniors have had fun playing team games and learning about the Fruit of the Spirit. Brigaders have chosen Company Service as one of their topics and have already redesigned the GB notice boards. They are also looking forward to sampling foods from other countries. As usual, we are collecting items for the Blythswood Shoebox Appeal.



shows the girls and leaders with delighted pastors Robbie and Karen Halkett and Mike.

The defibrillator has been installed outside the hall of Trinity Life Church and the Brigaders carry out a weekly check to ensure all is well. We had a training session with Mike MacDonald, a representative from The Order of St John. The attached photo

Following 4A's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year, this time it's the turn of 3<sup>rd</sup> Inverness Company with its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary which will be celebrated on Sunday 23 November. There will be the annual Enrolment Service in Trinity Life Church followed by a party in the hall. Our term will finish with our Christmas Singalong on Monday 8 December.

At 4B Company, the chosen theme for all sections is Space and the girls have had a walk to view the recent supermoon. The company has gained some new members from the recently closed Inshes East Company. It is hoped that two new leaders will begin training soon.

We'd be delighted to hear from anyone interested in helping at either company. If you would like information on this or about Girls' Brigade in general, please get in touch as follows:

Riverside: [riversidegbinv@gmail.com](mailto:riversidegbinv@gmail.com)

4B Inverness: [maria.girlsbrigade@gmail.com](mailto:maria.girlsbrigade@gmail.com)

***Hazel MacDonald***



## Big Quiz 2025

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November, Ness Bank will open for folk to take part in the 2025 Big Quiz, an annual event created by Tear Fund, which brings

people together all over the UK to enjoy some fun questions, raise money and learn more about the wonderful work which Tear Fund does around the world.

The Ness Bank hall will be open for you to come at 6pm, with refreshments, and the opportunity to spend time with friends and contribute to a very worthwhile cause. See you there!

## Moderator's visit

On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September, the current Moderator of the General Assembly – the Right Reverend Rosie Frew – visited Inverness, and spent time at the Highland Hospice as well as Ness Bank, Old High St Stephen's, the Crossreach centres at Beechwood House, and Nevis House, and finished off with a Civic Reception hosted by the Provost at the Town House! The schedule of a Moderator on tour is a challenging one, but the role does give them the opportunity to see the big picture of the Church of Scotland at work across the country, and to share good news of what God is doing in different places.



Members of Ness Bank provided a light lunch for Rosie and her travelling companions, and we shared some of our hopes for the development of the building, and our vision for the future. The work of Inverness Foodstuff was also

shared, and the Moderator had a chance to meet the staff of IF at the evening reception.

A new Moderator for 2026/27 was announced on 16<sup>th</sup> October, and Rev Gordon Kennedy, currently serving in Craiglockhart parish church in Edinburgh, will take over from Rosie at the 2026 General Assembly in May. Mr Kennedy hopes to use his position as Moderator to 'support and encourage local church members in their mission to follow and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ'. (Church of Scotland press release; 16/10/25)

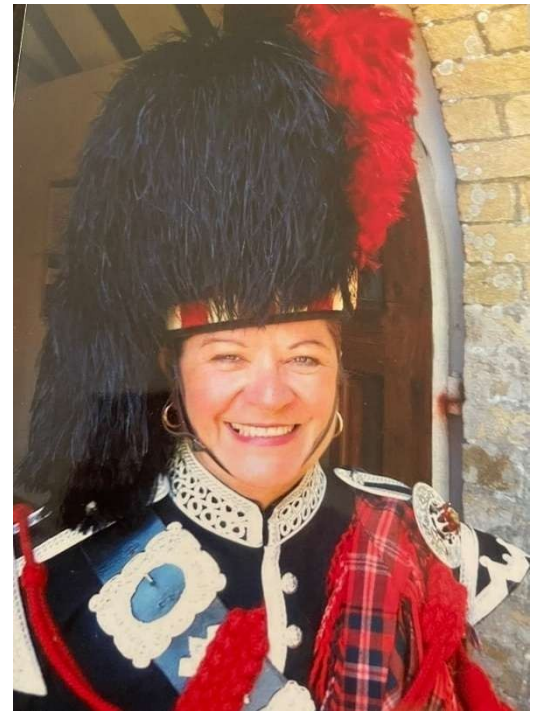


## ***Familiar faces in Ness Bank –***

### ***this month we hear from Anne Fraser Reed***

I was born and brought up in Inverness, by Mum (from Caithness) and Dad (from Bunloit near Drumnadrochit). When I was only 15 years old, Bobby & Ann Black (theatrical agents) from Kirkcaldy came to Inverness, searching for pipers and drummers who would be willing to travel and play with the European circuses! I jumped at the chance to go, although my Mum had grave reservations about my going away so young. Our minister George Eddington, wisely advised Mum saying, "There's two ways of looking at it; either you don't let her go, and regret a chance of a life time: or you do and then pray it all works out to her advantage." And much to my delight, she chose to do the latter!

I travelled to Germany, meeting with the rest of the Edinburgh Girl Pipers – a show band - who were already there. And then we started the hard work of practice and preparation. Not long after joining the Circus, the director informed us that he had other work for us than 'just' playing in the band! I learnt to ride on and perform with elephants which was no mean feat!! But I loved it, and in later years - having a great admiration for the trapeze artistes and arial flyers - I was trained by Irma, one of the trapeze artists. I mastered performing at heights of over 10.5 metres high, and also on the free-hanging single rope, known as the Aerial.



As circus contracts were usually only 9 months out of each year – in most countries in Europe, the weather conditions make it impossible to use a big tent all year round – I also joined a small floor show and touring band which entertained GI's at different American bases around Germany. This group included an accordionist (Bobby), two singers, (Ann and John), and a ventriloquist (Ken), and we played, sang and danced for the troops.



In addition to playing for the circus, the Edinburgh Girl Pipers travelled to perform at fiestas and festivals all around the world, it was a tremendous life! The band took me to many parts of the world which included all of Europe, S. America, S. Africa, USA., Canada and Singapore. My last tour late 70's was the Coliseum Do Recreos, in Lisbon Portugal where they have purpose-built circus building.

I returned to Scotland for a short time, then moved to London where I worked for several years, and married. I

have 3 children and 6 grandchildren. In 2012 it was clear that my Mum, now elderly and frail, needed my presence, so I came back home. I nursed her until her passing in 2014, and then stayed on in the family home up to the present day.

I still play in the NORCON pipe band (Inverness Constabulary pipe band), and a few years ago, when we were due to be playing at Cavel gardens on Remembrance Day, I 'got the times wrong', as did quite a few others! As I stood there wondering what to do next, Helen Macpherson walked past on her way to church, and invited me along to join her at the service in Ness Bank. I was already nearly there, so I joined her, and the rest is history.



## **Harvest Offerings – Blythswood and Tear Fund**

Following our Harvest Thanksgiving Service, we were glad to be able to forward 30 bags of supplies to the Highland Foodbank, and would encourage members to continue to support this sadly necessary ministry throughout the year. The items most needed are listed each week in the intimations.

In addition to the food, a retiring offering raised over £425 which has been sent to Tear Fund. In face of the suffering of thousands in and around Gaza at this time, it is a blessing to be able to express our concern in such a practical way. This extract from their website shows where the funds from the current appeal are being directed...

“We’re currently working with local churches and partners across the Middle East.

- In Gaza, Tearfund’s partner, Anera, is already providing life-saving medicine and aid to the most vulnerable and is ready to scale up quickly once supplies are allowed in. Our partner, International Health Partners, has vital medical supplies close to the border which must be allowed immediate access.
- In the West Bank, we are providing emergency funding to local hospitals and schools, and distributing food and essential supplies to those affected by the violence.
- In Lebanon, we’re working through local churches to provide shelter and assistance to people forced from their homes by the fighting.

This is only possible with your support. Please, join us in prayer and give if you can to help us respond to the growing need.”

**Pray and donate today at [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org)**





## MUSIC NOTES

Everyone knows the Choir! You see us every Sunday (or hear us if you are on line). We sing anthems every other Sunday – it used to be every Sunday but you may have noticed that numbers are dropping. We are one of the few churches in Inverness who still have a regular choir and we must keep it.

We urgently need new members! I am sure there are some folk in the congregation who would enjoy an evening out on Thursdays – 7.30 – 9pm – with a break in the middle for tea and cake! You could always come along to see how you get on. Even if you can't read music (or think you can't) you will quickly pick it up, sitting next to those who can.

IT IS YOUR CHOIR SO DON'T WAIT TO BE INVITED! Please speak to me after church any Sunday, or just come along one evening.

***Bridget Black***

### ***National Churches Trust Awards 2025***

On Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October, Barry Gilbert and I (representing Inverness Foodstuff and Ness Bank Church), attended a one-day conference, organised by the National Churches Trust, at Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The event – entitled, “Great Expectations for Churches : See them, Save them, Support them” – was organised by the National Churches Trust in collaboration with Ecclesiastical Insurance, The V & A, Churches Conservation Trust and The Kings Foundation.

Churches are active, living places powered by volunteers and sustained by communities who depend on them. The focus of the day was discussion about how to maintain churches as living spaces. The national Award Ceremony and reception took place that evening, in the museum itself.

Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A Museum opened the event, with a short speech, followed by Mark Hews of the Benefact Group, Sir Philip Putnam, Chair of the National Churches Trust, and Nick Carter of Marsh Charitable Trust.

Finally, Revd Canon Ann Easter, described each of the National winners of the Church and Community Volunteer Awards(Scotland, Wales, England, Northern Ireland), before presenting each of us with an Award. This was a plaque, to be displayed in the Church and a cheque. Finally an overall winner was announced which was the English Church in Lincolnshire.

I spoke with Victoria Collison, Director of Historic Churches Scotland and one of the judges, after the presentation. She said that it was a very difficult task choosing the overall winner!

Barry and I were privileged to represent the many volunteers who contribute to the running of both Inverness Foodstuff and of the church, it was very special to receive the national recognition for all that we do.

*Gilly Thomson*

The following is an extract from the NCT press release following the event:

The judges praised Ness Bank Church in Inverness for its extraordinary community outreach and the sheer scale of its impact. At the heart of the city, the [Inverness Foodstuff](#) project, based in the building, has become a vital centre of care, compassion, and inclusion – tackling food poverty, social isolation, and vulnerability with energy and heart.

Through the input of a small staff team and more than 80 dedicated volunteers, thousands of people are reached every year. The judges were deeply impressed by how the church offers dignity and welcome to everyone who comes through its doors, as well as hosting groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and other community



Ness Bank was recognised for the life and love within its walls – a living example of how a church can serve its city in practical, transformative ways. Its work brings people together, gives hope where it's most needed, and shows what can be achieved when faith and community go hand in hand.

(Pictured: Sir Philip Rutnam (National Churches Trust), Nick Carter (Marsh Charitable Trust), Barry Gilbert, Gilly Thomson. Photo Credit: Maddmann Photography)



# ***Ness Bank Church Bible Readings and Prayer Prompts for Winter 2025/26***



***This mini-booklet is designed for you to pull out of the church newsletter and keep, so that you can use it in the coming weeks to assist you in bible reading and in prayer.***

*There's nothing like the written word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another – showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.*

*(2 Timothy 3.15-17, the Message)*

*'Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.*

*The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programmes and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need.*

*With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:*

*Our Father in heaven, reveal who you are, set the world right; do what's best – as above, so below. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You're in charge: You can do anything  
You want! You're ablaze in beauty!*

*(Matthew 6.6-13, the Message)*



## ***December 2025***

1<sup>st</sup> Habakkuk 1:1-11  
2<sup>nd</sup> Habakkuk 1:12-2:1  
3<sup>rd</sup> Habakkuk 2:2-20  
4<sup>th</sup> Habakkuk 3:1-19  
5<sup>th</sup> Obadiah 1-14  
6<sup>th</sup> Obadiah 15-21

7<sup>th</sup> Psalm 67  
8<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 52:1-12  
9<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 52:13-53:12  
10<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 54:1-17  
11<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 55:1-13  
12<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 56:1-8  
13<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 59:1-4; 9-21

14<sup>th</sup> Psalm 68  
15<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 60:1-14  
16<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 61:1-11  
17<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 63:1-14  
18<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 64:1-12  
19<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 65:1-7; 17-25  
20<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 66:1-16

21<sup>st</sup> Psalm 69  
22<sup>nd</sup> Matthew 1:1-17  
23<sup>rd</sup> Matthew 1:18-25  
24<sup>th</sup> Matthew 2:1-12  
25<sup>th</sup> Matthew 2:13-23  
26<sup>th</sup> Matthew 3:1-12  
27<sup>th</sup> Matthew 3:13-17

28<sup>th</sup> Isaiah 40:1-5  
29<sup>th</sup> Matthew 4:1-11  
30<sup>th</sup> Matthew 4:12-17  
31<sup>st</sup> Matthew 4:18-25

*Make the book live to me, O Lord, show me yourself within your word,  
Show me myself, and show me my Saviour, and make the book live to me.  
(H.Pope, 1879-1967)*

## *January 2026*

1<sup>st</sup> Genesis 37:1-11  
2<sup>nd</sup> Genesis 37:12-24  
3<sup>rd</sup> Genesis 37:25-36

4<sup>th</sup> Psalm 70  
5<sup>th</sup> Genesis 39:1-23  
6<sup>th</sup> Genesis 40:1-23  
7<sup>th</sup> Genesis 41:1-16  
8<sup>th</sup> Genesis 41:17-32  
9<sup>th</sup> Genesis 41:33-43  
10<sup>th</sup> Genesis 41:44-57

11<sup>th</sup> Psalm 71  
12<sup>th</sup> Matthew 5:1-12  
13<sup>th</sup> Matthew 5:13-16  
14<sup>th</sup> Matthew 5:17-26  
15<sup>th</sup> Matthew 5:27-37  
16<sup>th</sup> Matthew 5:38-48  
17<sup>th</sup> Matthew 6:1-4

18<sup>th</sup> Psalm 72  
19<sup>th</sup> Matthew 6:5-15  
20<sup>th</sup> Matthew 6:16-24  
21<sup>st</sup> Matthew 6:25-34  
22<sup>nd</sup> Matthew 7:1-12  
23<sup>rd</sup> Matthew 7:13-23  
24<sup>th</sup> Matthew 7:24-29

25<sup>th</sup> Psalm 73  
26<sup>th</sup> Jeremiah 1:1-19  
27<sup>th</sup> Jeremiah 2:1-22  
28<sup>th</sup> Jeremiah 3:6-4:4  
29<sup>th</sup> Jeremiah 4:19-31  
30<sup>th</sup> Jeremiah 5:1-13  
31<sup>st</sup> Jeremiah 5:14-31

These daily readings are a programme designed by Scripture Union. SU publishes explanatory notes to accompany the readings – called Daily Bread – or you can sign up to the Word Live service to receive the notes and readings online each day at :-

[www.scriptureunion.org.uk](http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk)

## ***February 2026***

1<sup>st</sup> Psalm 74

2<sup>nd</sup> Jeremiah 6:1-15

3<sup>rd</sup> Jeremiah 6:16-20

4<sup>th</sup> Jeremiah 7:1-20

5<sup>th</sup> Jeremiah 7:21-29

6<sup>th</sup> Jeremiah 8:18-9:9

7<sup>th</sup> Jeremiah 10:1-25

8<sup>th</sup> Psalm 75

9<sup>th</sup> Hebrews 11:1-19

10<sup>th</sup> Hebrews 11:20-31

11<sup>th</sup> Hebrews 11:32-40

12<sup>th</sup> Hebrews 12:1-13

13<sup>th</sup> Hebrews 12:14-29

14<sup>th</sup> Hebrews 13:1-25

15<sup>th</sup> Psalm 76

16<sup>th</sup> Genesis 42:1-24

17<sup>th</sup> Genesis 42:25-38

18<sup>th</sup> Genesis 43:1-34

19<sup>th</sup> Genesis 44:1-34

20<sup>th</sup> Genesis 45:1-15

21<sup>st</sup> Genesis 46:1-7;28-34

22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm 77

23<sup>rd</sup> Genesis 47:1-12

24<sup>th</sup> Genesis 47:13-31

25<sup>th</sup> Genesis 48:1-22

26<sup>th</sup> Genesis 49:1-28

27<sup>th</sup> Genesis 49:29-50:14

28<sup>th</sup> Genesis 50:15-26

There are other sources for bible reading programmes, such as the Lectio 365 app, which takes users through readings, prayers and prompts for meditation each day.

***Praying for ourselves, our community, our world  
– and for God’s kingdom to come!***

*O Thou the reflection of whose transcendent glory did once appear unbroken in the face of Jesus Christ, give me today a heart like His – a brave heart, a true heart, a tender heart, a heart with great room in it, a heart fixed on Thyself; for His name’s sake.*

*Amen.*

(John Baillie: A diary of private prayer, OUP London, 1972)

These headings and suggestions are to help you pray for our church, our family, our world, and above all, to pray that God will build his kingdom. Please use them in any way that suits. There are significant spaces between each section in case you want to note particular items for prayer.

**“Our Father, who is in heaven”**

It is always good to start here, getting our perspective right and remembering that we come to the Almighty, the Maker and Sustainer of the universe, before whom we are as dust. We acknowledge that God is ruler of all things, and that he is worthy of all praise and honour. All the issues which trouble us, are His business, and we are invited to bring everything to him in prayer. All that we have and are comes from Him, and we give thanks, offering it back to Him for His use.

**“Hallowed be your name! Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”**

The whole purpose of all creation, and of all history, is that God will be glorified, and so we pray for that to happen. We acknowledge that even when we cannot see it, God is working; we pray that heart-by-heart people will come to living faith in Jesus Christ, and join the kingdom. We pray that people will be set free from all that keeps them in fear and darkness – pride, sadness, addiction – so that they can live fully as God’s beloved children. There are many, many ways that God opens minds and hearts, and we can pray for these – for the work of Scripture Union among young people in schools and at youth camps; for the witness of Street Pastors here in Inverness and other city centres; for the impact of media such as the Chosen TV series, and The Greatest Story Ever Told, a book re-telling the story of Jesus written by the adventurer and broadcaster, Bear Grylls.

We can pray for ourselves, that we might share the good news of Jesus with our friends and family – wisely, gently and faithfully, not being ashamed of our Saviour.

[www.suscotland.org.uk](http://www.suscotland.org.uk)

[www.streetpastors.org/our-network/united-kingdom/scotland/](http://www.streetpastors.org/our-network/united-kingdom/scotland/)



### **“Give us today our daily bread”**

It is not only bread, but breath that we need each day. We pray for ourselves but also for others that they might receive the portion they need today – of courage for hard situations; of wisdom for difficult decisions; of patience for prolonged challenges; of love and support in a time of grief and loss. God has called us to live for Him, and He promises that all we need to do that will be supplied. So even as we pray, we give thanks for that faithful provision and let go of our worries.

Organisations like Tear Fund, Christian Aid, Embrace the Middle East others give us much information to help us pray for people in need of physical help and support – food, medicine, education, clean water – and for those who are trying to provide that aid.

[www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org)

[www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)

[www.embraceme.org](http://www.embraceme.org)

### **“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One”**

We pray for ourselves and for one another as fellow believers, and for Christians around the world, that we might all grow more like Jesus. We may be able to do little in one sense for those far away, but prayer is practical, and we can always use it to bless the church around the world. Christians are called to live in ways that show people what Jesus is like – and that is not always easy! So let us pray for self-control, wisdom, courage, love, a humble and forgiving spirit that forgets the wrongs done to it, and for God to keep all his children trusting in Him and close to Him always.

Organisations like Release International, and Christian Solidarity Worldwide give us so much information to inform our prayers for those who are particularly suffering for their faith; and our daily news gives us much material for prayer for people around the world as they experience war, drought, floods, famine, persecution, displacement. When we pray for these situations, we are acknowledging that only our Heavenly Father is big enough and powerful enough to bear this world's troubles. When we pray, we are only doing what He asks us to do, which is to ask Him to build His kingdom, reveal His glory and make all things new.

[www.releaseinternational.org](http://www.releaseinternational.org)

[www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk)

**“For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen!”**

All the power is in the hands of God – and when we pray, we are simply asking that power to be used to reveal this glorious kingdom of which we are part.

So we pray for our churches – Inverness has many different kinds of churches, but all proclaim the truth that Jesus is Lord, and invite people to come and find out for themselves. We can pray for the wisdom and strength of church leaders – teachers and others – as they have to make decisions about using their resources well. We can pray that God will work through the churches to reach people here in Inverness, and that each of us will be so full of God’s goodness to us, that we want to tell others about it.

We can pray particularly for Ness Bank, for its leadership – the Kirk Session and Minister – that together they will lead our congregation in what God would have us do. We can pray that all we have – our building, our energies, our money – would be used by God to create a worshipping, loving community where people meet Jesus, and learn to worship Him.

## ***Prayer***

### ***prompts Media***

As you read your newspaper – online or on paper – let your responses to the news be formed into prayer, into sharing the burdens of the world with the God who longs that it should be restored and whose power is at work. Praying for those in positions of influence to bring peace into conflict situations; for those with capacity to bring aid to the needy, that they might have wisdom in using their resources; for those suffering, that they might find comfort and help; and for God’s love and power to be revealed as his people serve his world in his name.

Praise God for the good news, and for the non-news which is also good – the marriages which celebrate 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of faithfulness; the children being raised in loving homes; the practice of integrity in the workplace by employers and employees; the outrageous beauty of creation, and the gifts of art, music, poetry and movement which enrich our lives.

### ***Out and about..***

As you walk or drive around the town, let what you see inform your prayers. As you pass a school, pray for the teachers in all the challenges they face. Pray for the pupils who come, and for their growth in understanding, maturity and responsibility. Pray that these young people will encounter God’s word, and God’s love, so that they might find hope, identity and purpose.

When you pass a surgery or hospital, pray for the medical staff in all the pressures which they face; for wisdom to use each appointment well, and discernment in diagnosing and prescribing, in treatment and care. When you pass someone whose face speaks of despair, desperation, a life lived in chaos and at the mercy of addiction, pray for all those – many

unseen – who suffer from such bondage to hopelessness. Our God is powerful to defeat evil, and we pray for deliverance, for ourselves and others, from all that keeps us from knowing Christ's love and living in freedom as God's children.

Keep your eyes open, and keep your conversation with God going as you see the community to which he has called you as his hands and voice, to serve. Ask him to whom he is calling you to speak today.

### ***Managing your money***

As we go about our daily business, we are continually making choices about how we use our money – that is the financial resources with which God has entrusted us, to use for his glory and the good of others. Pray as you make decisions, for wisdom to discern what is wise and what is not; for opportunities to use your resources to bless others – whether you give through the church, or through Tear Fund, Christian Aid, Embrace the Middle East, the Leprosy Mission, the Scottish Bible Society, and any number of other agencies. Give thanks for the work of these organisations which channels our small resources to places where they can be of greatest benefit. They enable us to bless our brothers and sisters around the world, and to spread the good news of Jesus, and we are all the richer for their work.

### ***Coming to church***

Our congregation is one of many which meet across the city, and no two are alike! We thank God for the diversity of his church, and we pray for his power to be at work in each and every one. We can pray for churches facing change in leadership – the retirement of David Scott from Inshes East, and Douglas Robertson from the Crown Church – which is not easy. Pray for these vacancies that they will prove to be times of blessing, of strengthened faith and of the exercise of gifts within each congregation. We can pray for St Columba's church as they meet in a school and look to the day when they can start building – for perseverance and that God will bring among them people who will share their vision to reach out the community at Holm.

As we come to Ness Bank week by week, pray for the preaching of God's word to bear fruit in our hearts and minds, so that we become more like Jesus, and our congregation grows in mutual love and fellowship.

*Delight yourselves in the Lord, yes, find your joy in him at all times. Have a reputation for gentleness, and never forget the nearness of your Lord.*

*Don't worry over anything whatever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God, which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus.*

*(Philippians 4.4-7; JB Phillips translation)*



## Leprosy Mission Fundraising Event

The annual Afternoon Tea which raises funds for the Leprosy Mission, run by the local support group, took place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October at Crown Church, Inverness.

The event was well attended, and over £2,000 was raised and will be sent to the project to restore the Danja hospital building in Niger. The hospital is in need of beds, vital equipment, and even basic supplies such as soap. More information about the work of the mission, loving and caring for some of the 200,000 new cases of leprosy diagnosed every year, can be found at their website: [www.leprosymission.org.uk](http://www.leprosymission.org.uk)



## SHOE BOXES 2025

Many thanks to everyone who helped with this year's appeal. From wrapping boxes,

filling boxes, bags of donations, money in the tub and transporting them to the depot, your support is very much appreciated.

Everything has now been dropped off at the Blythswood depot in Longman Road, where each box will be checked and sent off on the journey to reach recipients before Christmas. It is wonderful the support we are able to give to this appeal, which brings so much joy to those who receive the boxes.

If anyone would like to be involved in the checking of the boxes this will be done at Culduthel Christian Centre on Monday 17 November 12:00-21:00, Tuesday 18 November 09:00-21:00 & Wednesday 19 November 09:00-late afternoon. Drop Danny Muschate a message and let him know when you plan to go - [danny@churchatccc.org](mailto:danny@churchatccc.org)

**Janet Russell**

## 2026 Flower Calendar

The 2026 Flower Calendar will be on the noticeboard in the vestibule from Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December. If you wish to donate flowers to the Church, please add your name to the date of your choice. Our sincere thanks to all who donated flowers to the 2025 calendar, and brought such pleasure to those who subsequently received them.

Anyone interested in joining our Flower Group will be most welcome. If you would like to help, please contact me via the Church Office (details on back page of newsletter).

**Finella Thomson**





## Inverness Street Pastors update

There is exciting news from the Street Pastors this month, as they are now in a position to recruit a paid coordinator, and hope thereafter to move to the recruitment of new prayer supporters

and street pastors. The post is being advertised throughout November, with interviews in December, and any enquiries should be directed to Mark Hadfield, email: [inverness@streetpastors.org.uk](mailto:inverness@streetpastors.org.uk).

The pastors are currently operating every other weekend, and also on selected midweek dates, and value our prayers for all those with whom they spend time – the newly homeless, the suicidal, the confused and tired, the joyously intoxicated and those less cheerfully afflicted by addiction. The good relationship with the local police force is a reason for thanksgiving, as are the various services like Foodstuff, and the work of the Salvation Army, in supporting those whose lives are in upheaval.

## ***SANCTUARY***

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our plans to improve our building.

We continue to work on the five parts of the project which are:

- improved stair from the main riverside entrance;
- lift access from Room 2 to the Sanctuary;
- removal of pews from the front of the Sanctuary;
- installation of new kitchen and café servery area;
- redecoration of the entrance hall Sanctuary.

As well as helping us all to move around the building more easily, the big hope is to extend our Open Church programmes at Summer and Easter to have people visit our building all year round in Christian welcome, witness and hospitality, giving our Ness Bank church building a part to play in the mission of the church for a new generation.

Permission: Having secured the support of the Kirk Session and Congregation, and completed the initial design, we now need the approval of others. The local Presbytery of the Highlands and Islands has already given this. We are now awaiting formal consent from the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland, and have also applied for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent from the Highland Council.

Funding: Thanks to the generous legacy of which we have allocated a large part to this Project, and the giving and pledging by the Congregation of around £75,000 through our Giving and Sharing appeal, we have made a good start on the funding. We hope the General Trustees will also contribute. And we have begun to identify other external funders – around 25 so far! – to whom we can apply once our Permissions are in place.

If you know of any source of funding that might contribute, please get in touch!

Next Stage: We can't begin the work until we have the money to pay for it! But once we have our Permissions in place, we will move forward with our Design Team (architect, engineer, quantity surveyor, and others) towards a Building Control application, that will also allow us to put the work out to tender. Only then will we really know what it will cost.

In the meantime, these changes raise questions about storage and equipment. The new lift and kitchen will both take up existing cupboard space. So we are looking at the shelves we have, and the rest of the rooms we use to see what can be removed or rearranged. Please be patient with our staff and volunteers while they work through this task, and be ready to provide whatever constructive advice and help you can.



Our Giving and Sharing programme commenced at the end of June, ending with the 'Giving and Pledge Day' on 16<sup>th</sup> July. This campaign was in recognition of the deficit in running costs and the proposed Sanctuary Project costs.

Elders and District Visitors distributed the Giving and Sharing booklet to all members and adherents in June, which provided information on the current running costs in Ness Bank together with the Project costs. This booklet included a response form giving various options for increasing monthly offerings and donating to the project costs. On Sundays 29<sup>th</sup> June, 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> July, our minister explained and demonstrated the gap between expenditure and income using towers of Duplo, providing a readily grasped explanation for the deficit in running costs.

The results of the campaign can be summarised as follows:

- 92 members completed response forms and a further 14 members increased their donations
- Contributions to running costs were increased by **£1,707** per month resulting in an annual increase of **£20,484** with Gift Aid to be added each month
- The total sum donated to the Project costs was **£64,287** including Gift Aid
- Members have also pledged a further **£9,150** toward Project costs.

This is a wonderful result from the campaign, and the congregation is to be commended for such a generous response.

In another part of the campaign, Team Leaders and their members undertook a review of budgets which has also led to the identification of savings. The Team Leaders are commended for their diligence in achieving this outcome.

The financial situation of the congregation has greatly improved due to the positive outcome of the campaign, but the review of expenditure and budgets will continue to be the focus of the Finance Team and Kirk Session in the foreseeable future.

***Finance Team***

## What kind of pilgrim?

**As for God, his way is perfect. The Lord's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he causes me to stand on the heights.**

(Ps 18.30-33)

**Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you."..**

**Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs... And a**

**highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that way;... But only the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them.**

(Isa 35.3&4,6-8,10)

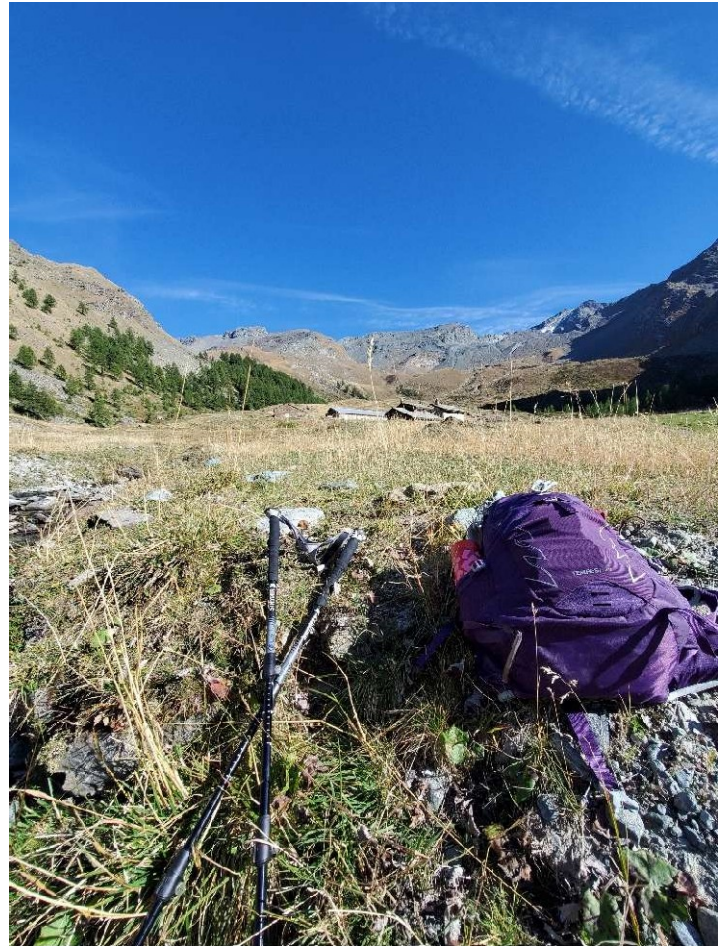
**Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.**

(Matt 7.13&14)

**"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No-one comes to the Father except through me."**

(Jn 14.6)

I was privileged on a recent holiday to spend 3 days walking in the Italian Alps, to be immersed in the glory of creation and slowed right down to that moment-by-moment focus which deeply refreshes the spirit. Sometimes the path wound through trees, by fast flowing icy streams, gently climbing or descending so that I could relax and enjoy the view, take in the scents and sounds. At other times, the conditions were so



demanding that every step was a matter of careful deliberation, of balance and of courage - 'Don't look down, just move slowly, don't think about how loose all these stones are..' ' This was a regular internal conversation!

I had brought a book to read at night - choosing 'Pilgrim's Progress' by John Bunyan, and found that although the language feels alien, yet the truth it portrays is as powerful as ever, and was reinforced by my daily experience. And as I thought about all the different characters whom Bunyan introduces, I wondered what kind of pilgrim I am? As a child, reading 'Little Pilgrim's Progress' (by Helen L Taylor, 1947), I found myself identifying strongly with Much-Afraid, a young woman much oppressed by her many fears. And I have to confess that she remains the pilgrim with whom I feel most connected - how our fears and doubts can hold us back from the joyous, confident and steady progress which is our Lord's calling, and for which He has made such ample provision!

The testimony of scripture is that our pilgrimage as God's beloved, redeemed people is indeed abundantly provided for - we as followers of Jesus, are called followers of the Way, and he has defeated every foe that we may encounter on that road. His victory is ours, and his strength, wisdom and joy are also ours to appreciate and live by on our journey. He is both our journey's end, and also the means by which we travel; and since he knows the path which we take, nothing surprises or takes him unawares. He has called us and brought us safely through the narrow gate onto the path which is the Way of holiness - his holiness, not ours - and no matter whether we pass through green valleys and by clear refreshing streams, or toil over high and exposed mountain passes, yet we go in his company, by his strength, and with our eternal home awaiting us.

If, at some of the most exposed and dangerous parts of our walk, I had allowed fear to take hold of my mind, then I would have been in even greater danger! Fear doesn't solve the problem, or make it go away, it only paralyses and postpones the ordeal... When I chose to trust my guide, to trust that there was a path where none seemed visible, and to step out - quite literally at one point over the edge - in faith, then I found the way open before me. What a marvellous picture of our journey in faith this is; to recognise the fear, to name it, and then to put my trust in my guide, the Way himself, and to step forward and - trembling at times, tearful at times - tread the path a little nearer home.

May our great guide, our Master and the Victor over all that might frighten us into immobility on the Way, continue to inspire us to follow his leading, depending on his strength, and giving him the glory as we travel homewards!

**[aforgetfulsoul.com](http://aforgetfulsoul.com)**





## Wednesday Lunch Club Fund

Many members and friends will remember the successful Wednesday Lunch Club which was established a few years ago. Unfortunately, when Covid came along the club had to cease providing lunches which was disappointing for everyone concerned.

When the club was set up the Kirk Session agreed that a restricted fund entitled 'Wednesday Lunch Club' should be set up and used only for this purpose. As the fund is 'restricted' it cannot be used for any other activity either in Ness Bank or within the community.

During the life of the club some members donated small amounts each week and these donations, together with annual grants from the Hector Grant Russell Trust, enabled volunteers in Ness Bank to run the club.

The Kirk Session has agreed that the fund should now be renamed the 'Social and Community Fund' and this would allow the funds to be used for activities such as the Bught Stop, and any other events under this banner.

One of the rules set down by the Charities Commission (OSCR) regarding changing the use and name of a fund is that those who donated should give permission for the fund to be used for other purposes. Therefore, I am asking if those members and friends who attended and donated can please support the change of use. If anyone has objections to this plan can you please contact me as soon as possible.

**Joyce Muir**

*(contact details on back page of newsletter)*

## CHRISTMAS FAYRE



We hope you've got Saturday 22 November (10am-12noon) in your diary. There will be tea & coffee with mince pies and shortbread, raffle, bottle stall, filled jar stall, toys, knitted goods, crafts (perhaps some floral items too), books along with a new 'mystery book stall', cake and candy, unwanted gifts. We are also

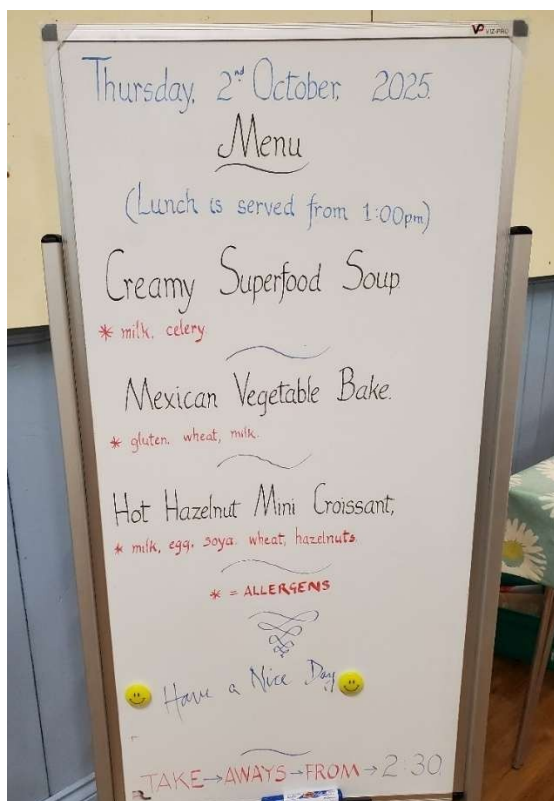
pleased to have L'Arche along with a stall with their handmade goods.

Please hand donations in on the Sundays before the fayre and come along on the day to enjoy the event. It is planned to have the 'card reader' available for payment by card. The hall will be available to set up from 2-4pm & 6-8pm the day before when items can also be handed in.

We still need volunteers before/during & after the fayre. Please get in touch with the Church office if you can help in any way.

**Janet Russell**





## A day in the life... of a kitchen volunteer in Inverness Foodstuff

Elsewhere in the newsletter, you will have read of the National Churches Trust 'Church and Community Volunteers' Award, for which Ness Bank and Inverness Foodstuff have been nominated. It seemed appropriate to share my own experience as a volunteer at IF, for those who don't know much about how this amazing project works...

I arrive most Thursdays at the side door of Ness Bank, being admitted by another member of the volunteer team, perhaps X who deals with donated clothing, or Y, one of the front-of-house volunteers who has fought his own addiction demons in the

past, and thus still to an extent in the present. At 9.45am the lower levels of the building are already a hive of activity, with tables and chairs being laid out, clothes sorted and donated food being assessed – to freeze, use, store or distribute later in the day to the clients. Fresh produce is donated through various charities, from the gardens of Inverness prison, and from all the big supermarkets, including M&S, but as IF is entirely vegetarian, any meat products are offered only to volunteers, or else diverted to the sister project in Hilton - a different project, aimed at building community and addressing isolation - which has always used meat and fish. A great deal of volunteer time is devoted to this food collection, with trips to the back doors of retailers in the evenings or first thing in the morning. Sometimes, suppliers are naughty, and donate badly spoiled food – I have seen some punnets of pretty disgusting strawberries, and bags of decomposing salad leaves – but this is not common, and we can usually use most of what is given.

One side of the hall has tables where fresh food, bread fruit etc, groceries like pasta and cereals are laid out for clients to choose from when they are admitted at 12. But in the meantime, the kitchen team has to prepare a 3-course meal. Our chef, Al, is unflappable, imaginative, and a great team leader. He looms over us all, cheerfully directing the preparation of mountains of fresh vegetables for soup, and concocting nourishing food which looks as good as it tastes. We are often prepping food for the next shift, as this takes a bit of the 'ready-steady-cook' pressure off! The Ness Bank kitchen is very well equipped, and that makes a huge difference, as the team – usually 3 volunteer cooks, plus Al and a dishwasher – get to work. Alongside the 3 paid staff – chef, manager and administrator - there are around 90 volunteers who support IF, drawn from all over Inverness and beyond.

By 12.30, we are serving soup to any volunteers (cooks or front of house) who want it, before the proper service begins at 1pm. By this point many of the clients (anything from 35 to over 60 people may turn up on any given day) have arrived, helped themselves to items from the tables, and are chatting, or on their phones. The nurses are making their rounds, and the visiting hairdresser may be at work at one end of the room. Citizen's Advice Bureau, the Housing department, and a GP may also be in the building offering assistance. Many clients are homeless; some are isolated as a result of physical disabilities, mental health or other traumas, and many struggle with addictions and chaotic lives. It is sore to see the physical deterioration over the months as they appear week after week, clearly failing to break free from all that binds them in fragile and unhealthy situations. IF does not preach; it accepts. IF offers a safe space (although people will be barred for a time if they fail to respect the space, the volunteers and the help offered), and the opportunity to reach out for help. Beside the coffee machine and kettle, IF has a list of first names, and beside them, each person's preferences in tea and coffee – eg white, two sugars – because this is where they belong, are known and seen. We know that some people are alive today only because of the support of IF.

The location and facilities available in the Ness Bank building make it ideal for this project, but there are inevitable tensions – as when IF clients choose to drink alcohol and smoke weed just outside the building and sometimes give vent to anger and frustration leading to loud altercations and even fights. Sadly the toilets are sometimes abused, and there are frequent calls for a plumber to fix a broken cistern. Sometimes, church folk can't find what they want in the cupboards, and blame IF for the loss; and equally, IF volunteers may find things moved or missing and blame the church! Those of us who straddle both organisations do our best to smooth the waters, and to help each see the other's point of view when tensions arise. A number of Ness Bank folk are volunteers, either in the kitchen team, or out in front, and there is an excellent working relationship between the IF management, our wonderful church officer, Billy Irvine, and the Kirk Session.

After serving three courses, from 2.30pm we offer takeaways – folk can take portions of food home, and by 3pm, all food service is over, and clients are gone. On average in August, IF served about 70 meals three days a week – including takeaways – helping to keep people safe, as healthy as they can be given their life choices, and also connected to a community. The hall is cleaned, the dishes done, all leftover food either binned or – if it can be transformed into something else – stored in the fridges. The kitchen floor is swept, and mopped, and then we all stagger home.

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve through IF, and commend the staff, volunteers and especially the clients to your prayers, that God might reach and rescue the needy, and reveal His love in Jesus to us all.

***Elsbeth Smith***

## ***“Just Giving” Online Donations***

“Just Giving” is an online donation scheme which allows people to donate to charities. In Ness Bank we have now joined Just Giving and have a charity page which will accept donations using a debit/credit card, Apple Pay, Google Pay, PayPal and bank transfer.

It is a very easy system to access, especially if the QR code below is used: All that is needed is to follow these straightforward instructions:



- point your mobile phone camera on the QR code and click on the Just Giving box which will transfer you to the Ness Bank Church charity page.
- click on Give Now and you will be asked to enter the amount of your donation, agree and confirm to continue
- the system also supports Gift Aid and if your postcode is entered then Just Giving will automatically collect this.
- you can donate anonymously so that your name will not be included.
- when you are ready just click on donate and enter your card details, or follow the instructions for other payment methods.

### **Why don't you try it in the comfort of your home?**

The Ness Bank website now has a ‘Donate’ facility and again this is very easy to use – just access **[nessbankchurch.org.uk](https://nessbankchurch.org.uk)** and click on Donate, you will then be transferred to our charity page.

The Order of Service and the Magazine will include the QR code which will also appear on other leaflets and publicity.

This is a great way of donating to Ness Bank not just for members but for friends, including those who access our services on the livestream and recordings. Also people attending events in the church can donate if they wish to do so. Please advertise this new facility as widely as possible. Many thanks.

***Finance Team***