

Kilsyth Anderson Church

Newsletter

February / March 2026



It is not long till the start of Lent, the forty-day period leading up to Easter, running from 18th Feb to Good Friday on 2nd April this year which has long been understood as a time of preparation, repentance, and spiritual discipline within the wider Christian tradition. While our Presbyterian practice in Scotland historically placed less emphasis on ritual observance compared to Roman Catholic or Anglican traditions, the season still offers profound opportunities for reflection and renewal.

The roots of Lent lie in the early church's preparation for Easter baptism, marked by fasting and prayer. Today, its purpose remains the same: to draw believers closer to Christ through intentional spiritual practices. This is not about earning God's grace - but about responding to that grace with gratitude and obedience.

Traditionally, Lent invites three disciplines: **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving**. In Scotland, fasting has often been interpreted less as strict abstinence and more as simplicity—choosing restraint in food, spending, or digital habits to create space for God.

Prayer, too, takes on a reflective tone during Lent. Many congregations incorporate special midweek services or devotional guides, focusing on Christ's journey to the cross. These practices encourage believers to examine their hearts, confess sin, and renew their commitment to discipleship.

Almsgiving—acts of generosity—connects Lent to the social conscience of the Scottish Kirk. Historically, offerings during Lent supported local poor relief, echoing the biblical call to justice and mercy. Today, this might mean supporting food banks, refugee ministries, or global mission projects, embodying Christ's compassion in tangible ways. One distinctive Presbyterian emphasis is on **the Word**. Lent is an ideal time for deeper engagement with Scripture. Many churches follow lectionary readings that trace Jesus' ministry and passion, inviting us to walk

with Him toward Calvary. Personal Bible study, coupled with prayer, helps believers discern how the cross shapes our lives and communities.

Finally, Lent carries a communal dimension. While private devotion is vital, the season reminds us that we journey together as Christ's body. Whether through shared worship, small groups, or acts of service, Lent calls us to live out our faith in fellowship and mission.

Written with the help of Copilot AI

Although it's still too early to expect their them quite yet, early spring flowers stir a quiet hope, hinting at the promise of life returning. Their first brave signs of colour feel like gentle gifts of God's grace, reminding us that renewal is already on its way.



Photos courtesy of Scottish Wildlife Trust, BBC, Garden Supply Direct.

Vote regarding Basis of Union

On Sunday 25th January both Burns & Old and ourselves voted for or against the basis of union. A document had been issued stating the main points:

- New name – Kilsyth and District Parish Church of Scotland
- Anderson Church building to be retained as place of worship
- Burns & Old Manse to be retained
- Finances of both congregations to be amalgamated
- Permission will be given to call a minister to the united charge
- Power to readjust, if necessary, be requested from Presbytery.

Anderson vote 86 for 0 against
Burns & Old 22 for 71 against.

At the time of printing, I am not aware of what might happen now. I will keep you informed when I have information to share.

Finances

The end of the year is the time when Church accounts are prepared. The General account and the Fabric account are both looking healthy. Last year we were able to invest £10,000 from the General account thanks to all who continue to give regularly and also thanks to the income we receive from the Manse rent.

Can I remind those who are tax payers and have standing orders or who use the offering envelopes that we are able to claim 25% of your offering back from the tax man. I can claim some of the open plate, but need to show the evidence of what is received from tax payers. All tax payers need to do is complete a simple form. If you haven't already done so, please see me on a Sunday. Last year we received over £12,000 in tax returns.

The Fabric Fund is healthy too because we were not allowed to do work other than keeping the building wind and water tight until a decision had been made as to which Church was being retained. We are hoping that we will soon be able to spend some money upgrading our buildings.

Christine Johnston

Thanks

Apologies to everyone who sent thank you notes in time for the last magazine. I seem to have had an editorial malfunction and didn't print them, so here they all are now. Ed.

I would like to than you for the beautiful flowers I received from the church on Sunday 30th November. A lovely surprise delivered by Barbara Smith.
Thanks again,
May Ralston.

Thank you very much for the lovely arrangement of flowers I received recently. They fairly brightened up my day. Thank you to the flower ladies.
Marion Cowie.

Thank you for the beautiful flower arrangements we received it was a lovely surprise. A big thank you to the Anderson Church Members for thinking of us both.
Lynda and Douglas

Thank you so much for the lovely flowers we received from the Kilsyth Anderson Church it was a lovely surprise.
Christina and George Bateman

Thank you so much for the lovely flower arrangement we received it was a lovely surprise. A big thank you to the Anderson Church Members for thinking of us.
Margaret and Ian Stewart

Many thanks for the flowers when I came out of hospital. They were beautiful.
Allison Russell

Many thanks for the church flowers which I received recently. It was a lovely surprise and very much appreciated.
Thank You,
Helen Provan



Robbie & Margaret Toop in Nigeria

For anyone who doesn't know, Robbie and Margaret are a couple who attended one of the Songs of Praise evenings in Anderson Church last year. They were going to Nigeria to work for Mission Africa and the church was pleased to give a donation to support their work.

Thank you for your prayers, the Lord has truly answered. After safe flights we arrived early Wednesday morning in Abuja, collected all our luggage, where our faithful Nigerian driver, Zongo, was there to meet us. Several checkpoints along the way assured us the police and military were keeping a watchful presence over our security.

On Friday we spent time with Mark Nixon, adopted as a 'Scottish' missionary having been commissioned by a church in Aberdeen. Mark is a lecturer in a theological college not far from the hospital.

Saturday saw our visit to the ADVANCE Centre in Ogugu where the Child Sponsorship Programme, Circle of Hope, is run by Innocent. We hoped to meet our sponsor child, Mercy, as well as Michael whom our church Sunday School sponsors. What a privilege it was to not only meet them but to visit their homes and meet their guardians and siblings. Michael proudly showed us the mattress that he'd received from the Child Sponsorship programme as a Christmas gift which meant he no longer had to sleep on the hard mud floor.

Another highlight was a visit to the Leprosy wing where Janet has been holding short services over recent Sunday afternoons. After the children sang, Janet told the story of Joseph whom his brothers sold into slavery, two young lads interpreting into Igala and Hausa.

Two Fulani patients, their hands and feet disfigured by leprosy, listened intently to the message that although the brothers intended it for evil God worked it for good.

It was soon time to pack for our journey to Abuja. Many children came to say goodbye and pray God's blessings on 'mummy' Janet, on her friend Mercy and on us as trusted friends. Janet had formed a close bond with Mercy whom she'd met at the hospital and this trip to Abuja included a first visit for her to a supermarket on two floors. While the escalator proved a worrying challenge the lift was a much more sedate form of transportation to the upper floor where a huge variety of home furnishings, kitchen appliances and utensils, stationery, food and hair

An early bed gave us sufficient sleep for the 4am rise to accompany Janet to the airport. While several of us had concerns about her visa issue she now proudly possessed an official Amnesty document which she hoped would provide an uneventful passage through the airport for her departure. Many had been praying and the Lord answered in a miraculous way.

On our arrival at the airport we all piled out and gathered her 2 cases ready to say our goodbyes because only those bearing flight tickets are allowed beyond the entrance. Just then a lady, looking very smart in a uniform, appeared then greeted us. This was Nugwa's twin sister Blessing - who is an Airport Security guard. As we approached the "Entry Only for those with Tickets" sign she spoke with the guard then waved us through. The same thing happened as we approached the following half dozen security checkpoints until we were all inside the terminal building where I was able to help Janet weigh her cases and check them in!! This is unheard of... and literally a miracle.

God had provided His angel to open doors which we couldn't! Blessing was indeed God's blessing to us and Janet in particular. At passport Control we waited while Blessing and Janet passed through then Blessing accompanied Janet all the way to the Departure Lounge. No one expected such a smooth passage for our departing missionary!

Thank you for praying and being part of what God did that day.

On Friday we visited the radio station at Abeokuta, Rock City Radio where we were interviewed for half an hour about Mission Africa's work in Nigeria. Saturday saw us visiting two orphanages where we were able to give some lovely knitted items of baby clothing as well as some cuddly knitted bears.

On Sunday after church we enjoyed a relaxing afternoon of fellowship in Patrick & Christiana's home where she cooked for us.

Time in Abeokuta has passed quickly. Tomorrow morning, Tuesday, we fly to Abuja then go by car to Jos. Please pray flights are on time and that the journey is uneventful

We thank God for safety in travel, good health and worthwhile time with those involved in various aspects of God's work here. Thank you for partnering with us in prayer and please continue as we journey on through our time in Nigeria.

Yours,
Robbie & Margaret

2nd Kilsyth Girls' Brigade.

The girls enjoyed their Christmas trip to the ten pin bowling. We have started back into a busy session. The girls are continuing their badgework and working towards items for their parents' night.



As part of their badgework the Brigaders are learning about the Trussell Trust and the work of the Cumberland Foodbank and the Juniors are learning about bumble bees.

We are having a fundraising soup and sandwich lunch on Sunday 1st March after the service and we would love if you can come. The girls in the Juniors and the Brigaders are fundraising for their chosen charities they have been learning about. We would love if you can come.

We will also be raffling a pamper hamper. We will have a diary where you can enter a date for a chance to win the hamper. Each date is a £1 and the diary will be available at the lunch. We will also be drawing the raffle at the lunch too.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the church for their continued support and prayers for our Girls' Brigade company.

Jacqueline Gore

Boys' Brigade

We are very much back into the swing of things post our Christmas break. We have a number of our seniors pushing on with their Kings Badge, and the rest of our Boys working towards their badge work with our end of year in May.



Plans are in place for a night at the bowling, and planning for an all night games evening to raise funds before the end of the session. Hopefully pictures to follow!

Scott Anderson, Captain

Cheesecake filled Easter Eggs from BBC Good Food website (<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com>)

On the basis that if a thing is worth doing, then it's certainly worth over-doing...

1 hollow chocolate Easter egg
75g digestive biscuits
25g butter melted
75g mascarpone
100g soft cheese
2 tbsp icing sugar
2 tbsp cocoa powder
100g double cream

Easter treats such as mini chocolate eggs or crumbled chocolates
Caramel sauce or cooled melted chocolate



Step 1 Carefully separate the Easter egg in half along the seam. (Use a knife dipped into a bowl of hot water to cut through the seam rather than slicing, as it may break the chocolate.)

Step 2 Tip the digestive biscuits into a bowl or food bag and bash to crumbs with the end of a rolling pin. Stir in the melted butter until the mixture resembles damp sand. Spoon this into the Easter egg halves and pack down gently using the back of the spoon. Chill until needed.

Step 3 Mix the mascarpone, soft cheese, icing sugar and cocoa together in a medium bowl with a wooden spoon until smooth. In a separate bowl, beat the double cream to soft peaks using an electric whisk. Gently fold the whipped cream into the mascarpone mixture, then carefully spoon the cheesecake filling over the chilled biscuit bases in the Easter eggs.

Gently level the surfaces with a palette knife or spatula, then chill for at least 2 hrs until firm and set.

You may be left with extra cheesecake filling, depending on the size of your Easter eggs – this can be spooned into glasses over extra digestive crumbs for another treat.

Step 4 Scatter with mini chocolate eggs or other Easter treats, then drizzle with caramel or melted chocolate to serve.

Of course you could put raspberries or other fruit on top and kid yourself on it's a healthier option! (Even we didn't believe that!)

The reality of life in Ukraine without power

Serhii and Nataliia live on the upper floor of a Kyiv apartment block that depends entirely on electricity. When the power goes out, heating stops, lifts don't work, and water barely reaches their floor.

For Serhii, blackouts carry an additional risk. He lives with a serious medical condition and relies on a breathing device at night. Without electricity, it simply does not work. Every outage becomes a calculation: how much power remains, how long it must last, and what cannot be switched on.



Their home is organised around survival during outages. Batteries are charged the moment electricity returns. Water is stored in advance. One room is kept just warm enough to prevent the temperature from dropping dangerously low. Nights are planned in advance because there is no margin for error.

Russia's systematic attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure are designed to put this pressure on civilians. Turning cold and darkness into tools of war is Russia's deliberate strategy. Ukraine needs stronger international pressure to stop Russia's energy terror.

President Trump praised Putin for “keeping his word” and not attacking Ukrainian energy infrastructure for a week. Maybe he forgot that deliberately targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure is a war crime. The attacks never actually stopped during that “promised” week. They continued—just not against power facilities. Civilians were still the targets.



The photos show how people in Kyiv spend their nights in the subway during the coldest, darkest nights.

Pray for Ukraine.

From Ukraine.ua—the official facebook page of Ukranian government

Funerals

I am the resurrection and the life

January Robbie Dockrell Twechar

February Agnes Paterson Twechar

Family deaths

We send our condolences to the Erskine Family, Karen, Fiona David and Ysanne, on the passing of William. William regularly attended Anderson but recently his health had deteriorated. His funeral was in Bishopbriggs Crematorium.

Condolences also go to the Haggart family. Isobel has recently joined our congregation from Banton and we were saddened to hear of the passing of one of her daughters.

Many people will know of Margaret Bankier, a wonderful pianist, who supported many organisations with her playing. Margaret has passed away and her funeral will be held in Stirling Crematorium on Wednesday 11th February at 12 noon. We send our sympathy and prayers to Douglas and his sister Frances.

Natural Environment Bill

This week, MSPs voted to pass the Natural Environment Bill into law. Scotland will now have **legally binding targets to protect and restore nature**, marking a major step forward for nature recovery and a victory for people and nature. Read more on the Scottish Rewilding Alliance website at <https://www.rewild.scot/>



image IAIN SARJEANT/GETTY IMAGES

The Guild

January sees us into the second part of our Guild programme. We have been blessed with reasonable weather which has allowed us to gather together on a Monday evening.



We had great fun at our Beetle Drive and enjoyed the film 'Julia and Julie' as well as the ice cream at our cinema evening. I think all of us felt the benefit of our Relaxation Time with Claire.

Our Scottish Evening was a great success. William Shaw as usual produced a lovely supper of haggis, neeps and tatties before we were thoroughly entertained with music, song and verse. We are indebted to Jim McQueeney for piping in the haggis as well as giving us a lively selection of piping tunes.

Margaret Wren and Ann Butler sang 2 beautiful duets while George Ewen sang 2 less well known songs but also produced two lovely videos to accompany them.

Christine Johnston regaled us with 2 humorous poems. There was community singing of 4 hymns sung to Scottish tunes. The evening ended fittingly with the Celtic Grace given to us by Olivia Brittan.

There is still time to join us if you would like to come along to see what we are all about.

You would be made most welcome.

Margaret Brown, Convener.



St Thomas of Canterbury, Basingstoke

Where to worship when you're away from home?

Always a tricky question.



Having missed the morning service on our first Sunday in the deep south, I did a quick internet search and alighted on St Thomas of Canterbury Church, a very traditional looking Church of England building, simply because it offered an evening service.

Of course it was dark when I arrived and I had some doubts, as parking seemed to be up a narrow, unlit, bumpy track however a very warm welcome awaited inside from a small but perfectly formed congregation.

According to the website, there has been a church in the Worting area since Saxon times and is mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086 although the current building is 19th Century. The congregation also meet in the Church of the Good Shepherd in Winklebury for more informal services.

It was great to recognise most of the hymns and/or tunes – Speak o Lord by Stuart Townend, and How Great Thou Art being two, and to join in with the enthusiastic singing. CofE services involve much more congregational participation than we are used to and the service sheet was very helpful in providing the words to join in responses, prayers of confession and the declaration of faith through the Creed. I did stick to “debts” not “sins” though in the Lord’s prayer!

Rector John Wigmore has started on a series of sermons working through John’s Gospel and his preaching was rich in insight and learning - an inspiring message, clear and Christ-centred.

Thanks to everyone for their prayers and care for those in need, showing true Christian warmth and inclusivity.



50 Word Fiction competition: write a story featuring a fox

Closing date: Tuesday 24 February 2026 at 11.55pm

The [50 Word Fiction competition](#) includes four categories: adult writers, all-age Gaelic writers, young writers aged 5–11 and young writers aged 12–18. The entries will be judged by a panel and the four winning stories will be published on our website roughly two weeks after the closing date.

Scottish
Book Trust



Comhairle nan
Leabhraichean
The Gaelic Books Council

A prize will be awarded to a writer in each category, and we're very happy to offer a certificate (printed or digital, depending on your preference) as well as the below:

- **Adult writers:** A 'go away I'm writing' mug from the **Literary Gift Company**
- **All age Gaelic writers:** A fab book from **The Gaelic Books Council**



We extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to everyone at Kilsyth Anderson Church for their most kind and generous donations of Christmas gifts for the children and families of the Preshal Trust.

The Preshal continues to support and care for the socially excluded in our communities and be a place of safety for many and our centre in Paisley is also proving to be a much needed project offering the same love and compassion to everyone.

Thank you all once again for your support as this ensures we can continue to serve the disadvantaged of the community.

Wishing you all a happy and joyous Christmas and New Year.

Kindest regards, **Alan Nicholson**

Manse

Our tenants continue to be happy in the manse. Some work has been done on it during the year – ventilation to prevent mould in a shower room, some windows have been replaced, a roof repair etc. The annual inspection done by Kelvin Valley on our behalf showed that the tenants were keeping it to a high standard – higher than they might have expected. We are so lucky to have them. The gardens are being well kept too and they even tend to some of our grounds – cutting the grass and hedges!



Donations

During the year we made our usual monetary donations to Lodging House Mission, Erskine Hospital, Poppy Scotland, various disaster funds and at the end of the year to a representative of Mission Africa, Robbie Toop.

As usual, everyone was very generous in giving to the Harvest Appeal which went to the Food Bank and to the Christmas Gift Service which again went to the Preshal Trust in Govan. Once again, Alan was overwhelmed by the generosity. He said that they have opened up another group in Paisley as there was a great need for their support. Schools were helping him identify those most in need. Our gifts would ensure that children had toys at Christmas.

Christmas seems a long time ago, but we're happy to share some pictures from the gift service and the Jam Club Nativity play which, as usual was very entertaining. Well done for all the hard work by the leaders to bring the Christmas story to us in new ways each year!



The deadline for the April/May edition of the magazine is Sunday 29th of March for publishing on 5th April.

Please send emails to andersonchurchmagazine@outlook.com or give your articles to Rona McFadyen on a Sunday.

Rotas

Week ending	Door Duty	Reading	Cleaning	Tea & Coffee	Flower donations
Sun 8 Feb	B & B Smith	John Gordon	Team 5 (Thur 5)	E Gordon, A Sneddon, A Mitchell, J Ewen	Elsa Gordon
Sun 15 Feb	A Mitchell, A Sneddon	Kathleen Ross	Team 1 (Sat 14)	K&I Ross, H Provan, G Whyte	Margaret Brown
Sun 22 Feb	J Gordon, J Miller	Rona McFadyen	Team 2 (Thur 19)	M Brown, M Whitelaw, C Ramsay	Dorothy Barrowman
Sun 1 Mar	H Provan C Clark	Jim Miller	Team 3 (Thu 26)	GB Lunch	Allison Russell
Sun 8 Mar	W Shaw, M Whitelaw	John Weir	Team 4 (Sat 7)	J&G Ewen, M Laird, O Brittian	Helen Provan
Sun 15 Mar	K & I Ross	Olivia Brittian	Team 5 (Thur 12)	E Gordon, A Sneddon, A Mitchell, J Ewen	- (communion)
Sun 22 Mar	T & A Anderson	Jean Ewen	Team 1 (Sat 21)	K&I Ross, H Provan, G Whyte	Elizabeth Strang
Sun 29 Mar	O Brittian J Ewen	George Ewen	Team 2 (Thur 26)	M Brown, M Whitelaw, C Ramsay	Margaret Martin