# The Bulletin

## Winter 2026



## CRUDEN PARISH CHURCH

**Your Church**

Back in 2012 we celebrated 1000 years of Christianity in the parish with a series of joint ecumenical events with our local Christian friends which included an open day and a memorable open air service at St Olaf's well on the Golf course.

2026 is another important milestone in the life of Cruden Parish Church, 250 years since the original part of this building was constructed. In September we took part in Aberdeenshire Doors Open Day when a significant amount of Church memorabilia was on display in both the Church and Hall. Grateful thanks are due to all those who assisted in the event in whatever way. We were delighted in the significant number of people who visited.

At the beginning of November, we moved on to another important milestone in the life of Cruden Parish Church. It was almost 250 years to the day when the first service took place in the oldest part of the church building.

Quoting from Rev Adam Mackay's book "Cruden and it's Ministers"

The Kirk Session record of July 14th 1776 reads "This day the minister intimated to the congregation that there would be no more public worship in this church till it be repaired (it being pulled down this week) but that there would be one diet of public worship at the Manse next Sabbath, about the ordinary time, and every Sabbath thereafter (if the weather be good) till the church be repaired."
So in the summer of that year the church was pulled down and rebuilt in the open air. It was a simple but substantial building, built entirely out of one huge block of granite. The granite - known as The Grey Stone of Ardendraught" - rested in a field belonging to Aulton Farm and was a landmark to the fishermen at sea, being on the top of a small hill.
The workmen must have worked hard that summer for the church was opened at the beginning of November that same year. The Kirk Session record of November 3rd, 1776 reads "Being the first time that public worship was performed in the church since it was rebuilt.

The workmen must indeed have worked hard, can you see the central part of the Church being built in 3 or 4 months today. There would be so much red tape involved that it would take years rather than months.

We owe much to the dedication and commitment of our ancestors not just in 1776 but through the years since who worked tirelessly to provide us with this house of God for us to worship in.

They have left us a unique legacy and we continue to have the responsibility to look after it which we can only do with the continued support of you the members.

We find ourselves in an ever changing world when time seems to go faster than ever, let us try to find the time to slow down and reflect on things. May we find the time to reflect on what our faith means to us and the roll that Jesus plays in our lives, however small or significant that may be.

I wish you all a happy Christmas season and a prosperous 2027.

Robert Esson, Session clerk.

## ❄DATES FOR YOUR DIARY❄

❄As we prepare ourselves for Advent the next Saturday at the Kirk event will be held on Saturday 28th November from 10.00am till 11.30am come and enjoy the fellowship and activities

❄Our next celebration of Holy Communion will be held on the first Sunday of Advent, 29th November at 10.00am. The service will be conducted by Rev Stella McBurnie, Presbytery Clerk.

❄We are invited to St. James the Less on Saturday 12 December to join their Community Café with Carols which is held from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

❄Our Christmas Sunday service will be held in the Church on 20th December at 10.00am. Come and enjoy singing some Christmas Carols.

❄There will be a Christingle service in the Church on Sunday 20th December at 4.00pm. Come and enjoy the fellowship.

❄There will be a Christmas Eve service at St James The Less on 24th December at 9.30pm to which all are invited.

❄There will be a Christmas Day service at St James the Less at 9.30am.

❄We hope to see you at some of our celebrations over the Christmas period.❄




*With Performances from local choirs,*
*Inspirational Speakers and Cross Reach trading table.*

On Thursday 10th December at 7pm – 9pm
In Mannofield Church, Aberdeen AB10 6UZ
Tickets Cost:
Adult £9.95, Child £4.94, Family £25




## SAVE THE DATE - HARA COMMUNITY EVENT



**COME ALONG FOR A MAGICAL EVENING OF FESTIVE FUN !!**

**ON: FRIDAY 4TH DECEMBER 2026**

**6PM – 7.30PM**

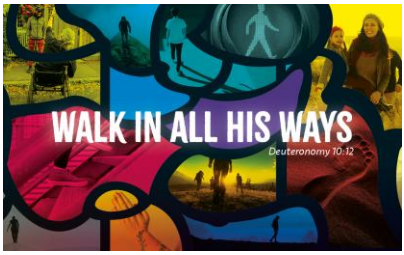
**HATTON VILLAGE HALL CAR PARK**

**(INDOOR IF BAD WEATHER)**

**EVERYONE WELCOME**

God is still working on me.

**Apparently, I am not a weekend project**




**Tearfund**

During his time as Moderator, Rt Rev Gordon Kennedy has asked Church members to consider supporting the Christian charity Tearfund, which helps tackle poverty in more than 50 countries.

Tearfund equips local churches to drive change, mobilise resources and empower communities to lift themselves out of poverty.

This year the Kirk Session agreed that we support the Moderator's appeal with special collections at our Christmas services in support of the work of Tearfund. More information about the appeal can be found at www.tearfund.org/moderatoronamission

**A Prayer for our Church**

*Bless our church and those who make it their spiritual home.*
*Bless our giving and receiving. Bless our words and conversation.*
*Bless our work and recreation. Bless our sowing and our growing.*
*Bless our coming and our going. Bless all who enter and depart.*
*Bless our church, your peace impart.*
*Written by Fred Coutts*

**Announcement of Moderator Designate for 2027 - 28**

We are pleased to inform you that the Revd Jill Clancy, Full-Time Facilitating Chaplain in HMP Barlinnie, Glasgow, has been announced as Moderator Designate for 2027-28.

Jill has worked as a prison chaplain at Barlinnie for nine years and previously served as a parish minister in Gourock, Glasgow and Ayrshire.

As well as her personal gifts and experience, we hope her year will serve to highlight the vital work of all of our chaplains in hospitals, prisons, with the Armed Forces, in workplaces, schools and beyond.

We commend Jill to your prayers as she prepares for this service.

***Where does the future lie for Cruden Parish Church***

There have been many changes in the Church of Scotland structure over the decades and centuries and changes are still being made. One of the most recent is the preparation and implementation of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act. For our area this was approved by Buchan Presbytery in 2022.

The effect that it has on Cruden Parish Church is significant, this is not unique as every parish in the country has been affected in one way or another. For Cruden we are due to go into a grouping with the Longside, Old Deer, Maud & Savoch and New Deer congregations and will have a allocation of 2 ministers or a combination of a minister and mission worker. The Plan does state that the churches at Cruden, Longside and Maud are to remain open. To date there have been no significant discussions because each of the congregations have had a minister in place and a minister cannot be forced to leave their charge.

We are now entering a different situation, as you will know Rev Sean Swindells left us at the end of September and the other three ministers in the proposed grouping are to be leaving their congregations during November. This will now allow discussions to begin between all the Kirk Sessions in the near future. It has to be acknowledged that these discussions will take some time and, in the meantime, Cruden Parish Church will continue as normal and I urge you all to support your local church in whatever way that you can at this challenging time.

Robert Esson
Session Clerk




We had a beautiful Birthday Cake to celebrate our 250th Birthday.

And a lovely surprise visit from Rodger and Alison Neilson, Alison cut the cake for us.



**A Mysterious Light**

It was a dark November night as I walked along the country road overlooking the sea. The wind was whipping up the waves which I could hear rather than see in the darkness. Something caught my attention in the gloom, far out to sea. It was something bright. No lighthouse there, I was certain. Was it a boat, something on fire, or was it something more mysterious, like the UFOs I had heard that people had claimed to see?

It seemed to get brighter as I stared out to sea. With plans to come back in the daylight, I tried to pinpoint the mystery light, lining up a fence post with a rock on the shore so I could find the right direction in the morning.

I stood and stared for a while longer with my mind racing, thinking of all the possible explanations. It was then that I watched the full moon rise out of the sea on the horizon. All the sinister, frightening, mysterious thoughts were driven away by the moonlight.

***"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*** **-** (John 1:5)



## Finance Update

Thank you for your ongoing support whether through your time, talents, prayers, practical help or financial support, every contribution is valued and appreciated. Together, these gifts enable our church to continue its ministry and mission.

At the recent Session meeting I reported a deficit of just over £7,000 to the end of September, due to a significant downturn in Givings, but thankfully no great increase in spending so far. As we are in the final quarter of the year, we do have the reclaim of tax to come and historically giving's do tend to increase in the last couple of months. However, we will once again end the year with a deficit.

Many of us set our offering level some years ago and may not have had the opportunity to reconsider it since. We fully recognise that we are all facing rising costs and financial pressures, and we understand that increasing giving will not be possible for everyone.

As costs continue to rise, and we look ahead to the coming year, we would like to invite everyone to review your regular giving. Even a small increase would be greatly appreciated and would help to support the church.

Thank you for all that you already contribute and most importantly that each of us responds thoughtfully and prayerfully according to our circumstances.

With Grateful Thanks
The Kirk Session and Treasurer

## Scotland's Church Trust

Our church and our Session Clerk Robert were mentioned in a post by Scotland's Churches Trust from when they had visited.

One of the volunteers had family from this area and it turns out, she is a relation of Mary Garden, whose name was given to our retiring room. Her family also had lived and farmed the same farm as Robert Esson but in 1835. A remarkable cross-generational link.

The were very interested to see the 16th century Dutch bell and the mid 17th century grave slab.

They thanked us for welcoming them in.

# Five facts about Mary Slessor, the Dundee mill girl who went to Calabar.




1. She was born in Gilcomston, Aberdeen, on 2 December 1848. Later, in 1859 her family moved to Dundee.

2. At 11 she started work as a half-timer at the Baxter Brothers' mill, splitting her days between the mill and the classroom.

3. On 5 August 1876 she sailed on the SS Ethiopia for Calabar, in what is now Nigeria, with the United Presbyterian Church mission.

4. In 1888 she moved inland to Okoyong, where she became known for her work to end the killing of newborn twins and took in abandoned children as her own. In 1892 she became vice-consul there, presiding over the local court.

5. She died near Use Ikot Oku on 13 January 1915, and in 1997 the Clydesdale Bank put her on its £10 note.

She never came home to stay, and Dundee has never forgotten her.

## PARISH REGISTER

**We remember the deaths of these church members:**

Mr G Hall, 16 John Buchan Drive, Cruden Bay
Mrs M Bruce, 17 Slater Court, Ellon
Mrs Dunnett, 1 Park View, Hatton
Mrs Burnett, 38 Longside Road, Mintlaw
Mrs D Chalmers, Auchtercragg Care Home, Ellon
Mr D Wyness, Grove Nursing Home, Kemnay
Mrs A Elrick, Grangepark Care Home, Peterhead
Mrs Mee, Crimond Care Home, Crimond

**We welcome our new members:**

Mr & Mrs I Munro, 8 Links View, Cruden Bay
Mrs S English, Samara, Aulton Road, Cruden Bay

## CRUDEN CHURCH PASTORAL CARE TEAM

The Pastoral Care team of Cruden Parish Church is set up to help and to listen in your time of need or maybe for just a friendly chat. If you would like a visit or know of anyone who would benefit from a visit or a listening ear, be it at home or by telephone please let a member of the team know. We also visit Care Homes and Hospitals. Please be assured that anything that is said between yourself and the pastoral care team is confidential.

| **Contact numbers for the Pastoral Care team:** | |
|---|---|
| Maureen Esson | (07949 792233) |
| Kathleen Craig | (01779 841221) |
| Jean Campbell | (07716 399011) |
| Robert Petticrew | (07990 904000) |

| **COMMUNION SERVING ELDERS<br>COMMUNION ROTA (October to December 2026)** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 November 2026 | Shonah Taylor | Joyce Willox | Rosemary Pittendrigh | Maureen Esson |

| WELCOME DUTY | | |
|---|---|---|
| 15th November 26 | Kathleen Craig | Joyce Willox |
| 22nd November 26 | Kate Clark | Maureen Esson |
| 29th November 26 | Bob and Norma Forman | |
| 6th December 26 | Robert Petticrew | Peter Slamaker |
| 13th December 26 | Margaret Adams | Rosemary Reid |
| 20th December 26 | Ken Bruce | Adelaide Duncan |
| 27th December 26 | Shonah Taylor | Irene Will |
| 3rd January 26 | Robert Petticrew | Peter Slamaker |
| 10th January 26 | Barrie and Helen Harper | |
| 17th January 26 | Ian and Sylvia Munro | |
| 24th January 26 | Bob and Norma Forman | |
| 31st January 26 | Ken Bruce | Adelaide Duncan |
| 7th February 26 | Kathleen Craig | Joyce Willox |

| TEA ROTA | | |
|---|---|---|
| 15th November 26 | Maureen Esson | Iris Durno |
| 22nd November 26 | Bob and Norma Forman | |
| 29th November 26 | Kevin and Janie Smith | |
| 6th December 26 | Margaret Adams | Rosemary Reid |
| 13th December 26 | Shonah Taylor | June Morrison |
| 20th December 26 | Maureen Esson | Iris Durno |
| 27th December 26 | Bob and Norma Forman | |
| 3rd January 26 | Kevin and Janie Smith | |
| 10th January 26 | Margaret Adams | Rosemary Reid |
| 17th January 26 | Shonah Taylor | June Morrison |
| 24th January 26 | Maureen Esson | Iris Durno |
| 31st January 26 | Bob and Norma Forman | |
| 7th February 26 | Kevin and Janie Smith | |