

*THE MAGAZINE OF*

# Craigowl Church

*March 2026*

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## *INSIDE*

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- Easter@Craigowl Church
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- .....plus lots more

# Editorial



Welcome to this issue of our refreshed church magazine. We are striving to make it a bit more visual, and, we hope, more engaging. But while the cover, fonts, and layout have changed in parts, the heart of this publication remains the same: to keep our congregation connected, informed, and inspired.

## **Why the Change?**

Two reasons - firstly the publishing programme which we have used in the past will very soon cease to be available. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, as our church grows and evolves, it was time for our communication to do the same. We want to move beyond just summarising activity and events (although that's still important and included), and create a space that reflects the vibrancy of our faith and church family.

Our goal with this new design—incorporating brighter images and sharper and clearer layouts, is to make this a magazine you want to read and share. In forthcoming editions, it's hoped that the content will continue to evolve with shared stories, thought provoking articles and inputs which share joys, challenges and life together.

We are always keen to hear from those reading this magazine. Going forward, we encourage submission of comments around the content of the magazine - maybe you have some photos and stories you would like to share, perhaps there is something around church life that you want to commend or maybe see changed. Please get in touch - drop an email to [info@craigowlchurch.org.uk](mailto:info@craigowlchurch.org.uk)

## It's great to have 'new' faces in our congregation. We asked some, "Why Craigowl?"

### JAMES KELLY

*"Back in 1969 with my parents, I moved to Rosemount Road. I had been in church in 1969 and even at that time as a young boy I was amazed by the architecture and modern nature of the building. I have fond memories of a full church at Christmas. I moved away from Ardler, and for whatever reason, recently experienced a pulling back to Ardler and to the church. Since returning, I've been blown away by the welcoming and openness. I have seen the best side of human nature and have had my faith in many areas reinvigorated."*



### EDITH OGHUVWU

*"The first time I came in contact with the church was in May 2023. I was a domiciliary care worker then and that day it was raining heavily. I walked into the church to seek refuge from the rain. I was welcomed and made very comfortable and served a cup of tea and some biscuits. Fortunately, the Larder was on at that moment and I was introduced to it and given all items for free that day. Everyone was so nice and friendly. I experienced the true meaning of Christ's love for the first time. I became regular at the Larder and eventually came along to the Church."*



### AILEEN KENNEDY & ALISON MARSHALL

*"Mum and I had visited Craigowl Church on various occasions, mostly as members of Stuart Small's choir and had always expressed to one another the lovely "feeling" we experienced about the church in both the building itself and the people present there. Our own church, the High Kirk, closed down during Covid and we thought, here is our opportunity to become involved with Craigowl Church.*

*Right from the beginning everyone has been so very welcoming and supportive of us as they are of one another. Chris, the minister, is inspirational and so good at getting the Lord's message across to people. We are looking forward to our future within the Craigowl Church family and thank all for welcoming us so warmly."*



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## A FUTURE WITH HOPE

# OUR 5-YEAR JOURNEY (2026-2031)

Throughout the scriptures, we see a God who makes plans, and a people who trust those plans into His hands. From Nehemiah rebuilding the city walls to the early church expanding to new regions, planning is an act of faith and stewardship.

Since the beginning of the year and as required by Presbytery, our elders have been prayerfully reflecting on where God is leading us next. We have looked at where we are, considered the needs of our community, and identified the strengths God has blessed us with.

In this edition of our magazine we are excited to share with you a summary of our 5-year plan designed to shape our church family into all that God wants us to be. On the page opposite you will find what we hope is a simple summary of the plan prepared.



### OUR VISION: WHERE WE ARE GOING

Our vision is simple:

*"We want to see transformation of our communities by making the reality of Jesus Christ known, so that others can come to know the love of God for themselves."*

We believe this plan will enable us to move from just being present in our community to actively proclaiming the Gospel and serving our neighbours over the next five years.



The plan is a living framework and we will strive to be positively reactive to all that God may reveal. Each year the Kirk Session will review it in order to ensure it remains faithful to God's leading and adaptable to new circumstances. Some of our plans will need review and amendment and that's okay.

Of course, we also recognise that, "Rome was not built in a day," and with this in mind three overarching priorities over the period have been identified.

1. Developing sustainable youth and family ministry.
2. Strengthening community presence and outreach.
3. Nurturing discipleship and intergenerational connections.

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This is not a plan just for elders and the Kirk Session, it is a plan that involves everyone. We want you to journey with us!

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# Craigowl Church

## A 5-year Plan

*Taking us from today into tomorrow*

Join us on our journey

### WORSHIP & TEACHING



Develop culturally relevant worship that honours tradition, while reaching new generations and the unchurched



Strengthen Biblical teaching and discipleship across all age groups

Enhance digital presence and reach

### YOUTH & CHILDREN

Develop basketball ministry as a youth outreach tool



Maintain and develop school relationships

Rebuild and develop family ministry

Supporting our younger Church family within the context of regular worship services

### PASTORAL CARE & FELLOWSHIP



Revitalise and adapt pastoral care structures for an ageing congregation. Strengthen fellowship and community life

### LOCAL MISSION/COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Deepen engagement through Food Larder ministry

Build identity across the parish

Engage with social issues in parish

Continue and expand Alpha course ministry

### WIDER MISSION



Re-engage with ecumenical partners

### FINANCE



Maintain financial sustainability and plan for growth

### COMMUNICATIONS



Enhance internal and external communications

### PROPERTY



Maintain and develop property for mission

### HUMAN RESOURCES/STAFFING



Support and develop ministry team

### PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN



Align with and contribute to Presbytery Mission Plan.



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# A Healing Ministry

Over many years, what is referred to as a 'healing ministry' has been an integral part of church life. It operates on the belief that God desires wholeness and uses prayer, compassion, and community support to bring comfort, restoration, and healing to those suffering. In many ways, it is an extension of Jesus' own ministry, where disciples are commissioned to share God's love, compassion, and healing power. In this article, the opportunity is taken to highlight two aspects of this specific ministry, each being aligned with prayer.

Firstly, a small group of people from within our congregation commit themselves to offering prayer in emergency situations. If you face a situation whereby immediate prayer would be a support, please contact our Healing Prayer Coordinator, Kathleen Cunningham by email – [kathleencunningham@live.co.uk](mailto:kathleencunningham@live.co.uk) or by phone – 07543 904111. Provide some detail of the situation requiring prayer and be assured that those who commit to pray in these situations will receive the request. The prayer team will ensure confidentiality where that is requested and pray with a spirit of sensitivity.

If you feel led to becoming part of the group willing to commit to prayer in emergency situations or perhaps at this stage just want further information, please speak with Kathleen Cunningham.

Secondly and away from 'emergency situations' there is an opportunity for prayer to be offered up for others facing illness.

In such circumstances and generally on the third Sunday of each month, a list will be available in the Hall of Friendship. Individuals can add names and brief detail of the nature of healing requested. However, before adding any name and detail, it is essential that the person being prayed for give permission to do so. The following week, the 'Healing List' will be available for any to take and use for supportive prayer. If you would wish to receive a copy by email, please speak directly with Kathleen Cunningham.

This prayer Healing List will renew each month. Names will not automatically be added.

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## WHY PRAY

*Prayer is important because it helps us to stay close to God. When we pray, we are opening up our hearts to Him and He is able to work in us and through us.*

*Prayer also helps us to grow in our relationship with God. The more we talk and spend time with someone, the more we get to know them. The same thing happens when we spend time in prayer connecting with God. The more time we spend talking to Him, the closer we will become!*

*Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.  
James 4: 8*

# CHURCH TREASURER

## Could you volunteer to be our treasurer?

After many years of faithful service, our treasurer, John Ralfe, is looking to step down from this role. Consequently, we are looking to appoint a new treasurer as soon as possible.

The key responsibilities include managing and recording the income and expenditure of the church, undertaking banking of cash receipts, creating a monthly summary of transactions for consideration by the Kirk Session, preparing annual accounts for audit and drafting an annual budget.

You do not require an accounting or financial background, however an understanding of electronic banking, a familiarisation of simple accounting processes and a basic knowledge of Excel would be beneficial.

If you think that you might be interested in undertaking this role, as a first step, please speak directly with our treasurer who will provide a more detailed resume of what the role involves. For a period, John would work alongside the new treasurer in order to help with the familiarisation process.

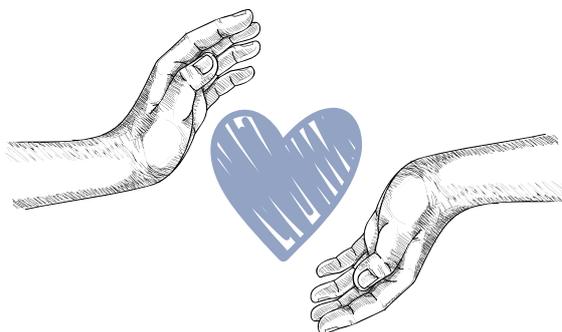


## FINANCIAL UPDATE

Over the year 2025, we had a situation whereby our expenditure exceeded our income. However, the amalgamation of congregations and the combining of funds, together with the availability of funds held in various nominated accounts leaves us in a healthy financial position. We cannot become complacent, but that is good news! The Annual Accounts for 2025 are in the course of being prepared and these will be shared with the congregation shortly.

During the year 2025, the congregation through general appeals and via several of our organisations, have been extremely generous in their giving. Among those who have benefited include, Tear Fund, Christian Aid, Crossreach, Leprosy Mission, Blythswood, Scotland Yard Adventure Centre, Dundee Dragons, Starter Packs, Scripture Union, Food Larder and misc. others via our "copper pot" donations. There will have been donations to others - apologies if they have been missed.

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL.



## FROM THE STUDY



### *To all of my friends at Craigowl Church*

As I sit down to write this update for our Easter magazine, I find myself full of gratitude. Gratitude for our church family here at Craigowl and gratitude for the tremendous journey these past months have taken us on. Above all, gratitude for the One who is at the very centre of it all. Jesus Christ, who died and rose again so that we might truly live. Easter Sunday, more than any other day in the Christian calendar, reminds us of the most important truth we will ever know. The tomb is empty and He is risen.

Throughout this season of Lent, we have been walking together through some of the deepest encounters in the Gospels. We have sat with Nicodemus as he met Jesus under cover of darkness and heard those life-changing words: "You must be born again." We have stood by the well in Samaria and witnessed Jesus seek out a woman who society had written off, offering her living water that will never run dry. We have heard Peter's great confession "You are the Messiah" and felt the weight of what it truly means to take up our cross and follow him. And possibly most powerful of all, we have wept with Mary and Martha at the tomb of Lazarus and then watched in amazement as Jesus called him out of that tomb.

These past months have been full to overflowing with all that God has been doing here at Craigowl and beyond. I want to share some of that with you, because I believe that when we see what God is doing, our faith is stirred and our hearts are encouraged.

In January, we came to the end of our 'When God Calls' preaching series and then went straight into Mark's Gospel, a series I have loved preaching, and which I will look forward to returning to throughout this year. Mark's Gospel has a real urgency and energy to it that I find exciting, and I have felt that same energy in our worship together on Sunday mornings. I also had the joy of speaking at the Catalyst Youth Event at Dundee Elim Church in January, and it was wonderful to see so many young people hungry for God. January also brought such a personal moment for our family, with the interment of my brother Ally's ashes. It was an emotional and yet very peaceful day. Marion and I are so grateful for your continued love and prayers as we have navigated that grief.

At the start of February, I had two weeks off and I was so blessed to be able to attend a retreat at Crieff Hydro for ministers in their first five years of ministry. This was genuinely a time of reflection and rest, and I came back re-energised and grateful for the colleagues God has placed around me in this season. February also saw the beginning of something we have been looking forward to for a while, our Alpha Course. It has been a real delight to be able to create space for people to explore the Christian faith and please continue to pray for all those who are attending.

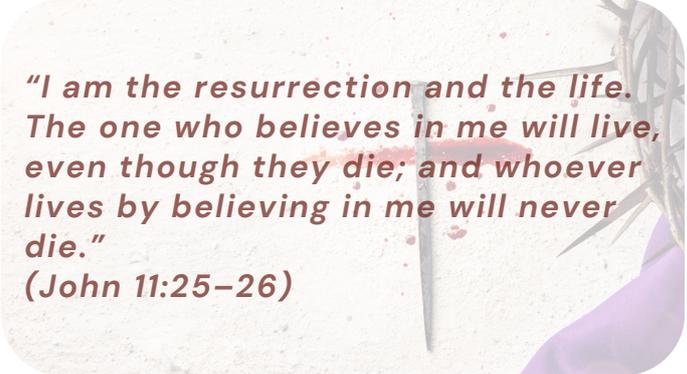
At the end of February we were able to submit our 5-Year Action Plan to the Presbytery of Perth, and I am so grateful for the hard work of everyone who was involved in bringing this together. Thank you to all who invested their time and thought into this process. A summary of the plan is incorporated into this magazine.

March has been another busy and very blessed month. As well as continuing to journey through Lent and our regular social media updates, we have started something new and exciting. Our weekly discipleship sessions with our high school-aged young people in the Living Rooms. Seeing teenagers come together to grow in their faith is always one of the most encouraging things I ever get the chance to be involved with in ministry. We also have a wonderful partnership with Scripture Union and will be hosting an Easter Journey event in the church on Friday 27th March, welcoming children from both Craigowl Primary School and Ardler Primary School.

I also continue to lead our monthly services at Turriff House Residential Home, which is another of the many great privileges of my ministry.

Alongside all of this, there has been the ongoing work of school chaplaincy, pastoral visits, committee meetings, community engagement and all the behind-the-scenes work of building this ministry for the long term. Marion and I are loving every minute of it, and we continue to feel such a deep sense of calling and joy in being here with you all.

So, as we look ahead, we know that Easter is not the end, it is only the beginning. The resurrection of Jesus is the basis on which everything we do here at Craigowl is built. As we move from Easter into the weeks and months ahead, I have real excitement about what God has in store for us. We are pressing ahead with plans to develop our ministry here in ways that we hope will bear lasting fruit for years to come



***"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die."***  
***(John 11:25-26)***

Whatever this Easter brings for you personally, whether it is a season of joy, of questions, of grief, or of hope, I want you to know that the risen Christ meets us in all of it. He is always with us. So may we all know His presence in a deep and very personal way this Easter.

Thank you so much for your love and your prayers. It is the greatest privilege to be your minister and I wish you a truly blessed and joyful Easter.

With much love and gratitude,  
Chris

# Activity Roundup

## British Sign Language (BSL) Group

The group look forward to welcoming P6/7 pupils from Ardler Primary to join them on March 27th. Our focus is on practising conversational signing using topics involving – food, health, time, giving directions where theoretically one could give basic help in an accident, answer a timetable query in a station, ordering in a café, indoor directions in a shopping mall etc. BSL members continue to try to become more aware of the needs of those with hearing impairment and whenever possible make contact using BSL. In a future service some of the BSL Group will teach and lead the congregation in “My Jesus, My Saviour” using BSL signs which many find deepens their understanding of the words as they sing. The BSL Group meets fortnightly on Fridays 9.30am to 10.45 am until June 5th.



## Friendship Group

There are still two meetings before the session ends. On 6 April, the Rev Chris Barlas will give a talk and on 20 April a craft afternoon will be held. Meetings start at 2pm.

The group has enjoyed a variety of talks and looks forward to a summer outing.

An interesting programme is already being planned for next session when we hope to welcome new members in September. For further information, contact Alison Gibson.

## Baby and Toddler Group

The Baby and Toddler Group meet every Friday morning from 9.30 to 11.30am during term times. The group are planning to stay open on Good Friday – 3 April but will be closed on Friday 10 and Friday 17 April. There is a warm welcome to all parents, grandparents, childminders, and carers with their children. Contact Barbara Chalmers on 07977543203 for more information.

## Ladies Bible Study

This group continues to meet on ‘Zoom’ on Tuesdays at 2pm. If you would like an inspiring hour looking at what the Bible is saying to us today, speak with Catherine Coull. The group will not meet on 31 March nor 7 April but will restart on 14 April through to 26 May.

*If you are not yet on our mailing list, please consider having your detail added. You will then receive all communications by email. All you have to do is drop us an email, provide your name and just ask to be added to our mailings.*



# Activity Roundup

## Welcome Group

The group recently enjoyed a talk by Ken Simpson who heads up TASH (Tayside & Strathearn Help for Ukraine), a charity which has sent lorry loads of aid including good quality clothing to Ukraine since February 2022. They have gained the support of many businesses in Dundee and further afield with our nearest collection point being John Clark Motor Group (Volvo) at Rutherford Road, Dundee. Many thanks for the donations received and the carloads delivered already. Anyone is welcome to take good quality clothing etc to the Reception Area at John Clark Volvo.

The group meets on Wednesdays 2-3.45pm (except in school holidays) until June 17th.

Last Easter a number of chicks were knitted by members of the Welcome Group to be sold in aid of a Children's Hospice. Last year, the sum raised nationally from the sale of the chicks was over £95,000. This year we have sent off 212 filled chicks - thanks to the knitters in the Welcome Group and Gina Cochrane and family who have coordinated this effort.

On past Easter Sundays the young people of the church family have received a Cadbury Crème Egg inside a knitted chick thanks to the quiet kindness of Elma Campbell.



## Carpet Bowling Club

The bowling season finishes at the end of March after a very enjoyable session with well-attended meetings. The group finishes with a meal at Kingsway Farm.

Let's hope the weather allows outdoor bowlers to have plenty of games before the club resumes in October.

# International Women's Day

## #GiveToGain

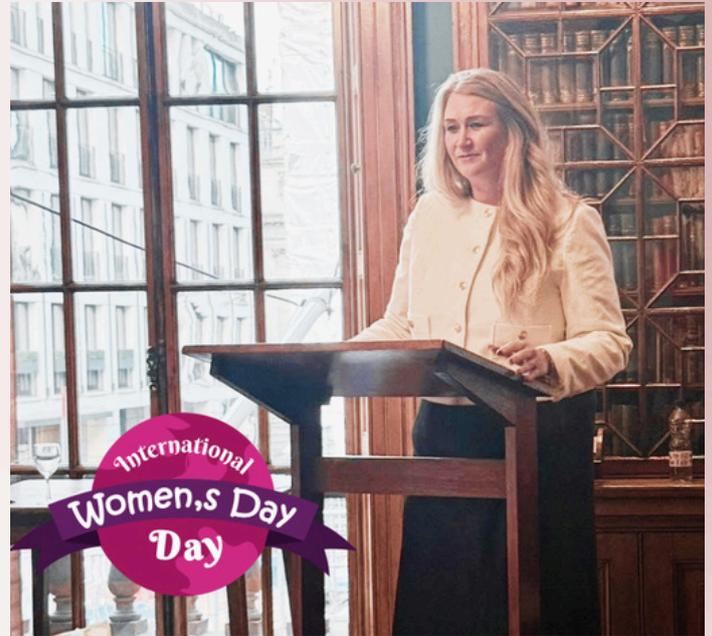
*"Encourage one another and build each other up." – 1 Thessalonians 5:11*

Each year on 8 March, people around the world mark International Women's Day, recognising the contributions, strength, and influence of women in our communities. This year's theme, #GiveToGain, reminds us that when we share our gifts, encourage others, and invest in people around us, the whole community grows stronger. For us in the Church of Scotland at Craigowl Church, this idea connects deeply with our faith. Scripture reminds us that each person is created in God's image and given gifts that can bless others. Throughout the Bible we see women showing courage, faith, wisdom, and leadership within their families and communities. Their stories continue to inspire the church today.

Here at Craigowl Church, we are grateful for the many women who faithfully serve, encourage, and strengthen our congregation and wider community. International Women's Day gives us an opportunity not only to celebrate that contribution but also to create space for women to grow in confidence and discover the gifts they have to share.

In my daily work I serve as a leadership coach, supporting senior leaders as they navigate responsibility, decision-making, and the challenges of guiding others. With the encouragement of the Kirk Session, I'm delighted to bring some of these same encouragement and leadership tools into our community through a small workshop series called "She Is Called."

These relaxed and welcoming workshops will create space for women to reflect on their strengths, grow in confidence, and explore how they can encourage and influence others in everyday life.

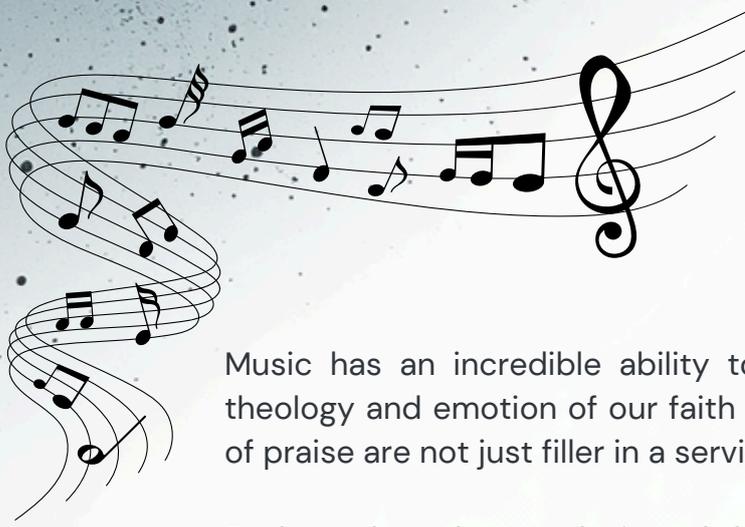


### She Is Called - Workshop Series

- **Discovering Your Strengths** – recognising the gifts you already have and growing in confidence to use them.
- **Finding Your Voice** – learning how encouragement, listening, and communication can strengthen others.
- **Leading Where You Are** – exploring how everyday leadership and small acts of encouragement can make a difference in our community.

The hope behind these sessions is simple: that as we recognise and share our gifts, we help build a stronger, more supportive community across our parish and beyond. Further details about the workshops will be shared in the coming months, and everyone will be warmly welcome to take part.

*Written by Marion Barlas of Craigowl Church who serves as a leadership coach, supporting senior leaders and seeking to bring encouragement and leadership development into the community.*



## From the Music Group

Music has an incredible ability to deepen our worship and can capture the theology and emotion of our faith in ways that spoken words cannot. Our songs of praise are not just filler in a service; they are a vital, prayerful response to God.

Each week at the conclusion of the service, what we as a group have come to term a 'going out song' is played/sung. Whilst it provides a backdrop to the minister leaving church, we are also aware that many in the congregation appreciate this short time of being still – an opportunity to reflect on all that has been shared across the time of worship together.

Back at the beginning of February, a member of the congregation asked that a hymn, special to him, be played. We were able to do this and it has caused us to be aware that there may be others who would appreciate an opportunity at this time in our worship to be able to reflect on a specific hymn (old or new) which might have relevance to them.

If you have a hymn/song which you might like to hear at this point in our worship, please pass the detail to any member of the Music Group on a Sunday morning. No guarantees, but going forward we will do our best to use it at some point over the weeks ahead.



## Congratulations

We congratulate Nicola and Ryan on the birth of their son, Rory Alexander McConnell. Rory arrived into the world at 04:44hrs on 22 February weighing in at 8lb 5oz. Both mum and Rory (and of course dad), are doing well.

Nicola says, "Rory is like most babies, he sleeps, eats and cries (occasionally!). Ryan and I are so grateful for this little bundle of joy and are looking forward to experiencing all the joys and challenges of being mum and dad. The good wishes received from the church family are very much appreciated – Rory is looking forward to meeting with you all very soon!"



# Stewardship

# Time and Talents

Stewardship is a word which we often hear spoken in a church context, and for many this conjures up a consideration of finance. However, 'stewardship' has many facets including the need to recognise that our time and talents belong to God with both needing to be considered when thinking about 'stewardship' as part of our faith journey. In so many ways, we can use our time and talents to enhance not just our personal relationship with God, but as tools linked with the mission of the church.



Within church, there are many opportunities to allow time and talents to be used. Examples of where you might consider being practically involved in church life includes, assisting with the preparation of our weekly audio-visual presentations; helping out with simple general maintenance and garden work; being willing to do a Bible reading or prayer for others on a Sunday morning; maybe thinking about how you might be able to help out with our Sunday kids group. Other simple but important ways of being involved includes helping with the serving of refreshments at the end of morning worship, or being available on an occasion to welcome people as they arrive for church.



If you think that you might be able to help out in any way, in the first instance speak with our Session Clerk, Gail Alexander who will point you in the right direction.



Whether you have joined in 'Thy Kingdom Come' before or not, we invite you to get ready to take part and join in the 2026 initiative. You might want to take a look at the short video clip from an earlier year which gives further information. Just click on the image opposite or go to [www.thykingdomcome.global/about-us](http://www.thykingdomcome.global/about-us)



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# Coming Soon

This year's Thy Kingdom Come is all about the presence of God through His spirit. The God who is with us in the everyday – in the joys and sorrows of life (and everything in between) and the One who, through His spirit, longs to reveal Himself to those who do not yet know Him.

From the story of Ruth to the story of Gideon, from the story of Elijah to the story of the early church who waited for the promised Holy Spirit to come– over the 11 days we will explore a different Bible story each day, which demonstrates God's transformative presence, power and love at work in the lives of people and places.

Our hope is that as we pray for our five people, they will also experience the life-changing love of God and choose to follow Him..

Further information will be issued towards the end of April.

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## Looking for Kids Stuff on YouTube

Check this out!

The award-winning Cheeky Pandas is one of a kind: a British-made Christian TV series for kids on YouTube. It is Bible-based, fun, free, friendly and full of music, for children and parents looking for faith-based content. There are also stacks of extra resources to serve parents, schools and churches. This is what you've been looking for!



Search 'Cheeky Pandas' on YouTube or click on the image above.

# CRAIGOWL CHURCH

# @ Easter

Saturday 28 March at 7pm  
**FAMILY CEILIDH - A FREE EVENT FOR ALL**

Sunday 29 March at 11am  
**PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP**

Thursday 2 April at 7pm  
**MAUNDY THURSDAY - WITH COMMUNION**

Friday 3 April at 7pm  
**GOOD FRIDAY - A TIME FOR REFLECTION**

Sunday 5 April at 11am  
**EASTER SUNDAY - CELEBRATING THE RISEN CHRIST**

## Come and join us



We would love to have you join us at some of our special events.

The Ceilidh provides an opportunity to have fun. Even if you don't see yourself as a dancer, come along and enjoy the fellowship.

Our special services will allow us to reflect on some of the emotions of Easter such as anticipation, fear, bewilderment, shock, love and of course, ecstatic joy.

## Contact Us

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