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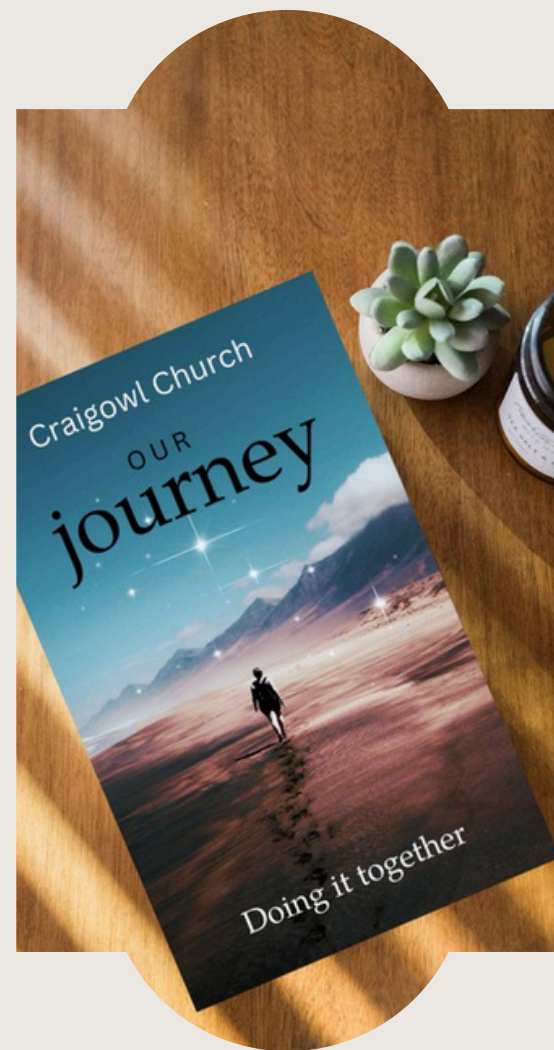
CRAIGOWL CHURCH

AUGUST
2026



TABLE OF CONTENTS

03	EDITORIAL - A JOURNEY OF FAITH AND UNITY
04/05	INSIDE THE 2026 GENERAL ASSEMBLY
06	OUR MISSION AND VISION
07	YOUNGLIVES
08	SHE IS CALLED
09	GIVING
10	VISION - LONG SLEEP AND AWAKENING!
11	BIBLE COURSE + LADIES BIBLE STUDY
12/13	FROM THE STUDY
14	CRAIGOWL YOUTH
15	BACK TO CHURCH SUNDAY
16/17	HELPING AT CHRISTMAS
18/19	ACTIVITY ROUNDUP
20	SOCIAL MEDIA - GOOD OR BAD?
21	FROM THE DOGHOUSE!
22	RECONNECTING SPACE TRAVEL WITH GOD
23	COMING UP & CONTACT DETAIL





Editorial

A journey of faith and unity

Back on 1 July 2024, Chalmers Ardler and Strathmartine churches took a bold step into the future, uniting as one single family in Christ. Wow! 2 years has passed at pace.

Looking back on this milestone, we can be immensely grateful for everything God has done in our midst. The Union was not built overnight. It's the result of the faithfulness, patience, and prayerful support of so many dedicated people across both original congregations together with others who have found Craigowl Church to be the church family which they wish to belong. Change requires courage, and the steadfast commitment to seeking God's will has been the bedrock of this transition.

A massive debt of thanks is due to those who during the early days of Union led us through the complex process of coming together. Whether leading worship, managing administration, organising practicalities, or simply offering a listening ear, the diverse leadership styles and tireless efforts kept us moving forward. Of course, there have been some hurdles to overcome, but for the most part we have journeyed in harmony.

The past two years have brought many reasons to give thanks. We are incredibly grateful for the arrival of our minister, Rev Chris Barlas, who has led us over the past 10 months with great vision, warmth, and grace. His leadership has helped us transition from merely being "united on paper" to truly thriving as a single, vibrant community of faith.

Thank you to every single person who has prayed, served, and given of themselves to make this Union a success. As we look ahead and work through our 5-year plan, we do so with deep joy, knowing that the same God who brought us together will continue to guide our steps as we journey into the days ahead with the firm identity – Craigowl Church.

A SHIFT FROM SURVIVAL TO REVIVAL

INSIDE THE 2026 CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

narrative officially flipped. The Kirk has stopped playing defence. In a pivotal four-day session, the Assembly launched an aggressive, forward-looking strategy. The message from leadership was clear: the Church cannot simply cut its way to sustainability. It is time to grow!

The mood inside the Mound in Edinburgh this May was noticeably different. For years, the annual gathering of the Church of Scotland General Assembly felt like an exercise in managing the inevitable — debating which buildings to close, how to stretch shrinking budgets, and how to navigate declining membership. But from 15 to 18 May 2026, the

New Leadership – Fresh Focus

The Assembly opened with the installation of the Rt Rev Gordon Kennedy (pictured right) as the new Moderator, succeeding the Very Rev Rosie Frew. Tasked with being the Kirk's global ambassador for the next year, Rt Rev Kennedy strikes a pragmatic yet deeply optimistic tone for his tenure.



Chris addresses delegates

The Five-Year Blueprint: 2026–2031

The centerpiece of the 2026 Assembly was the unveiling of a bold five-year strategy by the Assembly Trustees. Buoyed by a surprise, though volatile, £1.2 million operating surplus from the previous fiscal year, the Kirk is using this financial breathing room to restructure radically.

**"THE CHURCH CANNOT SIMPLY
CUT ITS WAY TO
SUSTAINABILITY.
IT IS TIME TO GROW."**

The new strategy discards what some in the church referred to as the defeatist "survival mindset" of the last decade, organising future operations around four distinct pillars:

- Mission First: Shifting the focus back to creating new disciples and making a tangible impact in local communities.
- Radical Simplification: Stripping away the suffocating red tape and administrative burdens that stifle local presbyteries and congregations.
- Financial Sustainability: Creating a realistic, modern ministry funding model that relies less on historical reserves.
- Duty of Care: Ensuring that structural changes and parish mergers are handled with genuine compassion for the clergy and staff affected.



Assembly Hall



Our Assembly delegates
Barbara and Chris

**“THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND EXISTS IN
LOCAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS SCOTLAND
TO SHARE THE LOVE OF JESUS THROUGH
ACTIVE MISSION, GROWTH AND
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.”**

.....OTHER TOPICS CONSIDERED BY THE ASSEMBLY WHICH HELP TO
SHAPE PRIORITIES FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY IN THE YEAR AHEAD.

Reshaping the Future: Education and Heritage

The drive for modernization also transformed how the Church trains its future leaders. The Assembly appointed Trinity College at the University of Glasgow as the lead academic partner for the Kirk. Starting in September 2027, Trinity College will spearhead a completely restructured Initial Ministerial Education programme, streamlined to better equip Ministers and Deacons for the unique challenges of modern ministry.

The Assembly also tackled the emotional issue of bricks and mortar. With the ongoing national sale of excess, costly historical church buildings making headlines, the Assembly called for a more streamlined approach to protecting Kirk heritage. The goal is to ensure that while the Church sheds financial liabilities, Scotland's cultural and religious history is not lost in the marketplace.

A Voice in the Wider World

Beyond its internal restructuring, the Kirk reasserted its role as a moral voice in public life. The Assembly dedicated significant time to highlighting the crucial role of military chaplains in supporting service members, addressing the ongoing global asylum crisis, and confronting the historical legacy of slavery.

As our representatives at this years assembly left Edinburgh, both Chris and Barbara agreed with the sentiment being expressed: the road ahead will be challenging, but the Kirk is no longer just holding the fort – it is looking to the future.





OUR MISSION AND VISION

"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."

Craigowl Church Vision 2026

In our March 2026 magazine we set out the Craigowl Church plan for the 5 years, 2026-2031 and alongside this outlined that all that we do, we do under the umbrella of our vision. Having shared the vision and set out some aims and goals, there is recognition of a need to ensure that there is good communication with the entire church family highlighting developments, success and yes, even disappointments. This article gives a brief glimpse into just some of what has already been taken forward. As we act and reflect on this 5-year plan in the months ahead, it's the intention to incorporate into future magazines updates which inform and encourage.



YOUTH & CHILDREN



Basketball ministry has started.

There is a strengthening of relations with Craigowl and Ardler Primary Schools through children visiting church and participation in activity days.

LOCAL MISSION/COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Positive relationships are being developed with those attending the Larder.

Our social media output is showing increasing engagement resulting in wider missional opportunities.

PASTORAL CARE



Pastoral care opportunities are increasing in number. Whilst this brings challenges, God's love is being shown through actions. The on-going challenge is the development of a strategy for expanding appropriate pastoral care and support across the whole congregation.

PROPERTY



Presbytery of Perth recently completed a survey of our property and found it to be in excellent condition.

CELEBRATE THE BREAKTHROUGHS, LEARN FROM THE SETBACKS, AND
KEEP MOVING FORWARD. OUR COMMUNITY IS WAITING FOR A
CHURCH THAT IS REAL, ALIVE, AND COMPLETELY UNSTOPPABLE.
LET'S DO THIS!

YOUNGLIVES TAYSIDE

Whilst not a group run under the auspices of Craigowl Church, for several years it has been supported by ourselves through the provision of premises and equipment. YoungLives, work specifically with mums under 21 and their children and has never wavered from the original vision to reach young mums by entering their world, modelling the unconditional love of Jesus and encouraging them to become the women and mothers God created them to be. In the words of the group meeting here at Craigowl, they "encourage young mums to experience fun and friendship, support and significance!".

The group meet and use our premises every Thursday morning during school term time. In addition, we are pleased to be able to enhance this partnership by opening up our halls on a Monday morning to facilitate additional contact with these young women. Annelie, who heads up YoungLives Tayside said, "We have prayed for years now for a partnership with professional counsellors or therapists to come alongside us at YoungLives, where we could refer girls who would benefit from some extra support.

Very recently, we met with Donna a fully qualified informed HCPC (Health and Care Professions Council) registered Creative Arts psychotherapist and a follower of Jesus! Donna has applied and received funding to run a creative arts group, for ten of our girls for twelve weeks, called BIG HEARTS, LITTLE ARTS. What a glorious provision!

Please pray that the girls that we have invited and who have committed to attend will be blessed, find healing, freedom and restoration and encounter Jesus through this opportunity. Let's also be praying for Donna and her team, for wisdom, direction and all their preparation. And of course, give thanks for the provision of space and facilities at Craigowl Church enabling this work to be taken forward."



Annelie will participate in our morning worship on 23 August and will share more about the work of YoungLives.



Written by Marion Barlas of Craigowl Church who back in the March edition of our magazine introduced us to this initiative. Marion serves as a leadership coach, supporting senior leaders and seeking to bring encouragement and leadership development into the community.

Recognising what God has already placed within you.

When 'She Is Called' was first launched, the vision was simple: to create a welcoming space where women could pause, reflect, and recognise the gifts, strengths and purpose that God has already placed within them. Since then, we've been encouraged to see that vision begin to take shape.

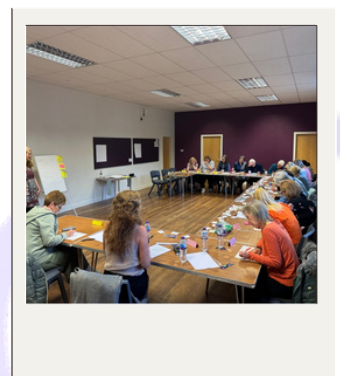
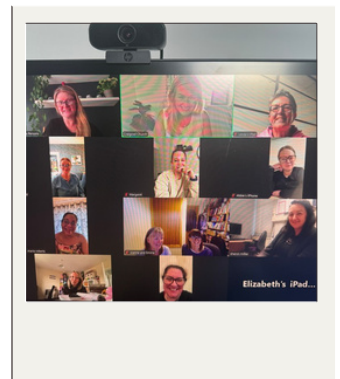
We have now delivered two 'She Is Called' workshops—one in person at Craigowl Church and one online—bringing together women from different backgrounds and life experiences. Both sessions were filled with honest conversations, encouragement, laughter, reflection and prayer. It was a privilege to watch women begin to recognise strengths they hadn't always seen in themselves and to encourage one another along the way.

One of the greatest joys has been seeing that the journey didn't end when the workshops finished. Since then, we have had the opportunity to continue supporting several women through coaching, mentoring and conversations about faith, helping them navigate life's challenges while growing in their relationship with God. Although we don't yet know exactly what the next chapter of 'She Is Called' will look like, we do know that God is continuing to open doors. Plans are already underway for future workshops, and we're excited to see how this ministry develops in the months ahead.

Please continue to pray:

- that God would lead each next step;
- that women would discover the gifts and purpose He has already placed within them;
- that 'She Is Called' would continue to be a place where people feel welcomed, encouraged and drawn closer to Christ.

Thank you to everyone who has prayed, attended, encouraged and supported this ministry so far. We believe this is only the beginning, and we're excited to see where God leads next.



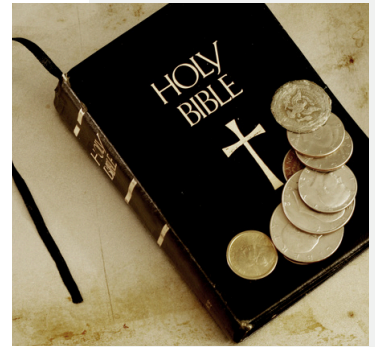
For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." — Ephesians 2:10

Giving

Generosity is a central part of our faith. We believe that God is endlessly generous to us and that we are called to be generous in turn. Here at Craigowl Church and in churches across Scotland and beyond, ministry, pastoral care and practical support to people in their communities is given. From offering hope and spiritual guidance to running food larders and supporting those in need, congregations such as ours play an important role in the life of the local community and beyond. We are grateful to all who give so generously.

As anticipated, whilst our income across the first 6 months of 2026 has risen slightly when compared with last year, expenditure is increasing at a greater rate. Whilst we are operating with a small deficit, our overall reserves are in good shape enabling our financial commitments to be met. Our 2025 year end Accounts have been approved by Presbytery and in accordance with Charity law have been submitted to the Charity Regulator, OSCR. These accounts can be viewed by [CLICKING HERE](#).

As a reminder, offerings or donations can be made in several ways including:-



OPEN PLATE

Before and after Sunday services there is an opportunity to make a financial gift. The offering plate sits at the entrance to the sanctuary.

WEEKLY FREEWILL OFFERING ENVELOPES (WFO)

These envelopes are used to assist regular giving and are generally placed in the offering plate whilst attending Sunday services. Money gifted via this means can be 'Gift Aided.' Further information regarding this method of giving can be had from our Session Clerk, Gail Alexander.

STANDING ORDER

This is the most popular way of giving. To sign up, just click on the link below, complete the Standing Order Form and submit this to your bank. If you use online banking, you may be able to set up a Standing Order via your banking app. Alternatively, speak directly with our treasurer, John Ralfe.

[CLICK HERE FOR STANDING ORDER FORM](#)

DIRECT DONATION

If you are considering a "one-off" donation, please speak with our treasurer, John Ralfe who can advise how best to arrange this.

*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
2 Corinthians 9:7*

Gift Aid

If you give by WFO or Standing Order and are a tax payer, we can claim 25p back on every pound that you give via the government Gift Aid scheme. Simply complete a Gift Aid Declaration which you can obtain from Gail Alexander. It can be cancelled at any time should your circumstances change.

? Vision

You fall asleep for three years. When you wake up, all you dreamt and hoped might happen in the Church of Scotland has happened. What do you see?

We asked three of our elders to answer this question.
No right or wrong answer. What would be your answer?

FIONA EWEN

Wow, I woke up and realised a miracle had occurred! As well as having no wrinkles and having the musical ability of Stuart Small, I noticed that churches were full with people of all ages – whole families! Folk looked happy and joined enthusiastically in worship. People were talking about what was happening in the community, describing God's love in action as skills, resources and time were shared. People were keen to help one another and to make sure everyone had what they needed and more. The church seemed to be a vibrant and relevant part of the community!



RICHARD CURRY

I woke. My daily prayer—"Thy Kingdom Come"—finally answered. An unprecedented revival has swept the world whilst I slept. The old church buildings, the formal worship and the Church of Scotland as an institution seem to have become somewhat irrelevant in the new order of things. On social media, on television, in pubs, and on street corners, the teachings of Jesus are the number one topic of conversation. People are gathered anywhere they can, just to hear God's word and worship together. The message is uncomplicated, piercing straight to the heart: love, forgiveness, and absolute trust in Christ. I look into the gatherings and weep with joy, I see the people I had prayed for, willingly on their knees. By God's grace, we have been given one final wake-up call. Christ is returning, and sooner than we may think!



STUART SMALL

2029, and the Church of Scotland are still stamping their feet to approve things 😊. However, they have realised that people have changed since the 1500s as has our culture and the way people see the Church. We no longer expect people to simply respect us because that's how it always was, instead we are out in the community, meeting people where they are. Sometimes they are interested and sometimes not so much. Thankfully, young people are still active and involved (thanks to a national level commitment to providing resources, discipleship and help to all ages of youth in the church). This means that we have new leaders coming through. It's great to see them respect the history of the Kirk, but also be supported by those who are taking a step back from some activities, letting this new generation try things in ways that they, the older generation, don't understand or maybe even like. It's great to see that we are a church that is encouraged to live prayerfully and Biblically.



The Bible Course

Explore the BIG story



You probably know lots of Bible stories, passages and verses, but have you ever wondered how the Bible fits together? The Bible Course is an eight week course that goes through the big story of the bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Every week involves watching videos, having a time of discussion in small groups, and a time of personal reflection. There is a great course booklet that helps you to get to grips with the teaching, and a digital hub which you can access any time, with lots of information including daily bible readings and the ability to watch the videos again.

Here at Craigowl Church, we will be starting the Bible Course on Thursday 17 September and it will take place from 7pm until approximately 8.30pm each Thursday evening for eight weeks. There will be a sign up sheet in the church in due course, but in the meantime, put the dates in your diary! This is an excellent course which you should not miss!

If you have any questions, please speak to Catherine Coull.

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

Catherine Coull who leads this group writes:

We meet via Zoom on a Tuesday from 2-3pm and would be delighted to welcome more women to our group. Please don't be put off by the thought of Zoom – a link for the meeting will be sent to you every week and you only have to click on it. It's really easy. Don't be put off either by any thought that you might be expected to speak. There is no pressure to say anything. Some of us speak a lot, and some of us are really quiet!

Every week there is an email sent out, usually on a Saturday, with the passage for the week and some questions to think about. There are also some women who don't find it convenient to join the Zoom meeting, but who get the email to study the passage for themselves. Maybe, even if you can't manage to come to the meeting, you might like to do this.

We will start again on Tuesday 8 September and this first meeting for the new session will be in the Living Rooms. It will be an open meeting so we would be delighted to welcome any woman who would like to come, with no commitment at all to join us.



If you would be interested to get the weekly email, either so that you can join the group or for your own personal study, or if you have any questions, please speak to Catherine Coull.

FROM THE STUDY



To all of my friends at Craigowl Church

As we move through these summer months, I have been reminded again and again by one simple truth: God's faithfulness never changes. It's constant and deeply personal. Over these past months, I have watched our church family worship, serve, pray, and grow, and as I look back over this season I see God's faithfulness everywhere.

Sunday morning worship has continued to take us on a meaningful journey through God's Word. We continued our Lent series into early April, spending time with some of the most powerful encounters in the Gospels. Nicodemus coming to Jesus at night, the Samaritan woman meeting Him at the well, Peter's confession of Christ, and the raising of Lazarus. These passages helped us see Jesus' compassion, His authority, and His call to new life.

Holy Week brought us into the heart of the story with Maundy Thursday Communion, Good Friday reflection, and Easter Sunday, where we rejoiced in the risen Christ through John 20:1–18. In the weeks that followed, we returned to preaching through Mark's Gospel. Mark's urgency and clarity really continued to shape our worship, reminding us of the power and compassion of Jesus.

Pentecost Sunday brought us to Acts 2:1–21, celebrating the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church whilst through June and July, we began our summer preaching series on single Bible verses about the faithfulness of God. This series has been deeply encouraging. It has been a joy to see how these verses have spoken into people's lives, offering reassurance and hope. I am so grateful for the way you have all been engaging with the preaching and thank you for the encouragement you have given me in this central part of my ministry.

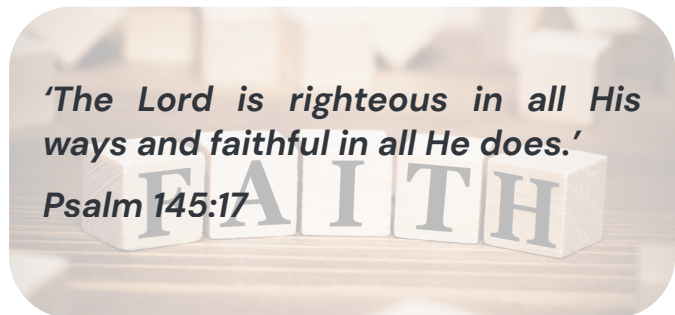
These past months have been full of meaningful interactions, where our connections with Craigowl and Ardler primary schools have continued to deepen. I have had the privilege of speaking at full school assemblies at both schools, and in May we had both Primary 7 classes at the church to speak about how we serve our communities. In May, we were delighted to welcome the then Moderator of the General Assembly, the Very Rev Rosie Frew and her husband Dave to hear about our school chaplaincy teams. It was an encouraging visit and a wonderful opportunity to share the positive work taking place in our schools and the partnerships that continue to grow. In June, we also welcomed a group of Primary 7 pupils from Craigowl Primary to help set up our Food Larder, a visit that was both practical and relational, strengthening trust and partnership.

Our youth ministry continues to grow steadily. As you will read in this magazine, the basketball ministry at the Ardler Complex has become an encouraging point of contact with young people, with good engagement each week. Alongside this, our monthly Youth Fellowship gatherings have been a real highlight. This space of discipleship and shared meals has brought such great joy.

Our monthly Zoom prayer meeting remains a really valuable time of gathering and praying together, and I am always encouraged by those who join faithfully each month.

We launched our 'Exploring Membership' course in June, welcoming a group of people who are considering taking the next step in their journey of faith. I am very much looking forward to our Membership Sunday on 9 August, when we hope to welcome new members and recognise all those people who have joined Craigowl Church in the past few months by Certificates of Transference and by Resolution of the Kirk Session. This promises to be a joyful and significant day in the life of our congregation.

Pastoral ministry continues to be a central part of this season with the continuing monthly services at Turriff House Residential Home – I am grateful for the relationships we continue to build there. Home visits, funerals, conversations, and opportunities to walk with people through both their joys and their sorrows are key components of pastoral ministry. These special moments remind me again of the privilege of serving as your minister.



'The Lord is righteous in all His ways and faithful in all He does.'

Psalm 145:17

My involvement with the Presbytery of Perth continues to grow. As part of my role on the Ministries Committee, the planning for a School Chaplaincy Conference in September is progressing well. I am grateful for the support of my colleagues as we prepare to gather chaplains from across the Presbytery for a day of encouragement and shared learning. I have also recently agreed to become a Formation Partner, accompanying a ministry student throughout their training. This is a role I am honoured to take on and I look forward to beginning this work in September.

In May, I had the privilege of serving as a Commissioner at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It was a full and very meaningful weekend and I was encouraged by the conversations that shaped our time together. Being part of the Assembly continued to deepen my appreciation for the wider work of our national church. I have also been able to support the national Church by helping to train new supervisors for ministry students. Having recently gone through the formation process myself, it has been a real privilege to use that experience to assist the national training team as they equip others to supervise those on the journey into ministry. It has been encouraging to play even a small part in strengthening the next generation of leaders across our Church.

As we move forward, my prayer is that we continue to be a church shaped by God's faithfulness, and a church that encourages and walks alongside people in every season of life. We have so much to look forward to: Membership Sunday, ongoing youth ministry, continued school engagement, and the steady building of relationships across our communities. You may also want to mark Sunday 4 October in your diary, as we are planning a special 'Back to Church Sunday' at Craigowl. This will be a gentle and welcoming opportunity for people across our parish to reconnect with church life, to return after time away, or simply to come along for the first time. I would love you to begin praying now for those who might join us, that it would be a day of encouragement and renewed hope.

Thank you for all your prayers, encouragement and kindness you continue to show. Marion and I are truly grateful for this amazing church family, and it is a joy and an honour to be your minister.

With love and gratitude,
Chris



CRAIGOWL YOUTH

Transforming the basketball court into a modern day pulpit!

When James Naismith (pictured right), first hung up what were peach baskets in 1891, he wasn't just inventing a game – basketball. As a young chaplain with YMCA, he was creating a tool to share the gospel with young men who wouldn't otherwise step foot in a church. At Craigowl Church, our new youth



basketball ministry is reclaiming that original vision right here in our community. We know that traditional church settings can sometimes feel intimidating or out-of-reach for local young people. Basketball changes the game. Led by our minister Chris and his wife Marion, an accredited basketball coach, and working in tandem with the established youth group at the local Ardler Community Centre, we are creating a high-energy, pressure-free space where any teenager—regardless of their background or church experience—can show up, lace up, and belong.

Beyond the Huddle: Life Away from the Court

While the action on the hardwood is fantastic for building fitness and teamwork, the real heart of Craigowl's ministry happens when the final whistle blows. For us, the basketball court is just the starting block. It provides the perfect, natural bridge to build genuine friendships that extend far beyond the gym floor.

Marion says, "Through this ministry and using our Living Rooms facility, we are intent on creating opportunities to meet up with the young folk in a casual setting away from the sport—whether that's over a pizza, a hot drink, or simply hanging out in a safe, relaxed space. It's in these quieter off-the-court times

that the walls come down. Away from the noise of the game, leaders have the privilege of listening to what's really going on in their lives, offering mentorship, and sharing the ultimate good news: the unconditional love that Jesus has for every single one of them."

Investing in the future

Both Chris and Marion come with a passion for this ministry and from their time in Greenock, have experience of seeing it being successful in a church setting. Chris embraces all that Marion has said and adds, "On the court, young people learn resilience, discipline, and how to lift each other up. Off the court, they find a community that values them for exactly who they are, not just how many points they score. We aren't just coaching players; we are investing in a generation of youngsters, showing them through our actions and our time that they are deeply cared for by God."

Using a missed shot to teach grace or a huddle to teach unity
.....that's mission and outreach!

Led by
**REV CHRIS
BARLAS**



BACK TO CHURCH *Sunday*

4 October | 11am
2026

Coming Home: An Invitation to Rediscover

Did you used to come to church? If your Sunday mornings look very different than they used to, and you find yourself among the many who have drifted away from church, you are not alone. As life changes, many find themselves quietly longing for something more. Whether you have been away for a few months, a few years, or perhaps even a lifetime, this is a heartfelt invitation to come back and see what you have been missing.

A Space for Grace, Not Perfection

If you have stayed away because you worry about being judged, being out of practice, or not knowing "the right things" to say or do, let's set those fears aside right now. Church is not a museum for perfect people; it is a hospital for the soul. It is a place to find rest, encouragement, and a moment of profound peace in a world that rarely stops moving.

The Power of Community

In an era of deep digital connection, we often find ourselves lonelier than ever. There is a distinct, irreplaceable warmth that comes from sharing life together in person.

- Shared Joy: Celebrating the good times alongside a supportive family.
- Comfort in Hardship: Having a network of people who will hold you up when life gets tough.
- Solid Ground: Taking a pause each week to reflect on what truly matters.

Your Seat is Waiting

God does not keep score, and neither do we. The doors are open, and there is a seat with your name on it. You don't need to "prepare" to come back—just come as you are. Whilst the doors are constantly open, we are setting aside Sunday 4 October 2026 as a day of invitation. If you are looking for a place to belong, to ask honest questions, or simply to sit in the quiet for an hour, Craigowl Church looks forward to welcoming you home.

You might be reading this thinking, "I'm here at Craigowl Church most weeks, this isn't for me." It is! Consider inviting friends or family along to our 'Back to Church' event. That simple invitation is mission and outreach.

HELPING AT CHRISTMAS (PART 1)

BLYTHSWOOD CARE SHOEBOX APPEAL 2026

We have already started to think about this appeal and many donations have already been handed in with many asking what is needed as people wish to take advantage of sales, bulk offers and promotional buys. There is an updated list on the Hall of Friendship Notice Board. We need large shoeboxes to cover. Filled boxes go to very needy communities in Eastern Europe through partnership with Blythswood Care, who deliver them, via local Christians, to those most in need. Our aim is again to fill 101 boxes for children, teenagers, men and women.

We are most grateful for cash donations to cover the cost of transportation of the boxes to Europe which remains at £3 per box even with current fuel costs.



Do you have un-needed gifts?

We can use "un-needed" gifts in a variety of ways

- In Christmas shoeboxes as a little gift
- To the ongoing Ukraine collection locally
- Donate to the "Secret Santa Shop" in Ardler Primary where the youngsters have the opportunity to bring their money and buy presents for their family and friends. A group of ladies from the church have the joy of wrapping these and affixing the labels – imagine our smiles when we wrap a "lovely red lorry" for a wee boy in P1 to give to his Granny!

HELPING AT CHRISTMAS (PART 2)

THE LEPROSY MISSION (TLM)

As in past years, there is an opportunity through the Welcome Group to order Christmas gifts & cards etc. in aid of the Leprosy Mission. Gift Catalogues are available from the beginning of September. Placing orders through Val means no postage costs. Early ordering ensures goods arrive well before Christmas.

Please consider supporting TLM including buying "Special Gifts" e.g. Shoes for Two (specially fitted protective sandals to prevent further injury); Bundle of Bandages (Fresh dressings reduce the risk of ulcers and injuries getting infected).

Return orders and catalogues to Val or Carol who will deliver your goods to you at church as soon as they arrive.



COPPER POT

From now through to Christmas, our "Copper Pot" donations are to be gifted to Dundee Therapy Garden. If you have any coins that you no longer wish to carry around, please consider dropping it into our copper pot which sits at the back of the sanctuary.



Located in Dudhope Park, Dundee Therapy Garden staff connect with current and former military service members, emergency responders, and their families to promote positivity and hope. The goal is to enhance emotional well-being and support people within a warm, friendly non-judgemental environment. They provide free, confidential, one-on-one counselling sessions and also offer an optional eight-week, small group programme on improving emotional well-being. Scan the QR code for further information.



Activity Roundup

British Sign Language (BSL) Group

The statistics about hearing loss in our society are stark : 1 person in 3 over the age of 60 and 1 in 7 across the population. Have you ever been in a small company where one member is slow to contribute? A big challenge faced by people with hearing difficulties is that many of the public don't realise that "the truth is that hearing aids are remarkable bits of technology but unlike glasses, which can often correct vision perfectly, hearing aids don't fully restore or recreate natural hearing".

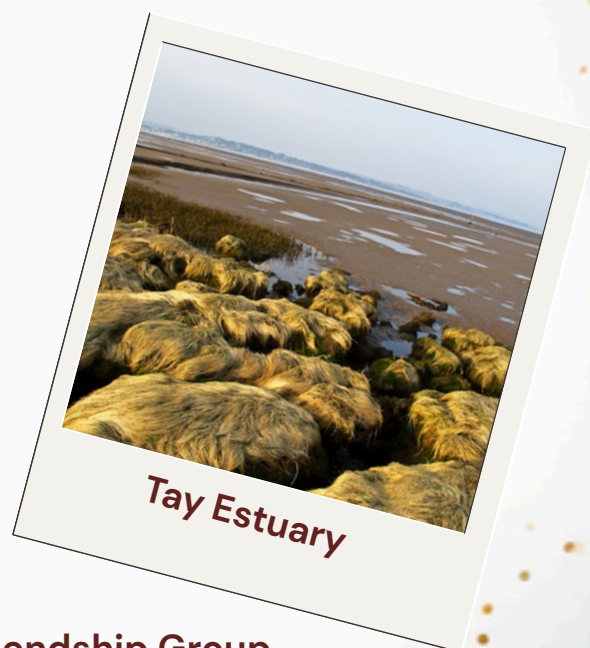
In the BSL Group, the BSL finger spelling alphabet is taught alongside a wide range of BSL signs. Conversational and communication skills are practised with a group of pupils from Ardler School who often join the regular meetings. Two new members started just before the holidays, with new members always welcome with NO prior knowledge required. The Group restarts on Friday 11 September meeting fortnightly in the Living Rooms 9.30-10.45am. 50p for tea/coffee and biscuits.

Contact: Roz Scott 07773 196074 (please take dates leaflet from the Hall of Friendship Notice Board).

Baby and Toddler Group

The Baby and Toddlers Group finished the most recent session with a party on Friday 3rd July.

The group restarts after the school holidays on Friday 21st August 2026. It runs from 9.30am to 11.30am and all are welcome - parents, grandparents, childminders, foster carers or aunties along with their children. We have had an increase in people attending this year but more are welcome!



Friendship Group

After our summer break, the Friendship Group members are looking forward to a new session beginning on Monday 7th September at 2.00pm. The opening talk is by Prof Rob Duck on "What is so special about the Tay Estuary ". This is a return visit from him as we so enjoyed his talk on Dundee last year.

There is a full programme to follow with a mixture of talks, music and presentations outlining the work of local charities.

Everyone is welcome to our fortnightly meetings to make new friends and enjoy refreshments. Further information is available from Alison Gibson.

If you are not yet on our mailing list, please consider having your detail added. You will then receive all communications by email.

SIGN UP



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

Meets weekly in the Living Rooms on Wednesdays 2–3.45pm (except school holidays). Those attending arrive to a cuppa and have another with snacks around 3.15pm (£2 per week). The group is open to men and women of all ages in our community.

Recently, the group had the joy of sharing two special birthdays, 93rd for Jess and 95th for Aileen. The Welcome Group covers a range of activities and this past session enjoyed a talk by Alan Ward from “The Grey Lodge Settlement” which started in the 1880s its work of caring concern in situations of need. The group restarts on Wednesday 2nd September at 2pm.

Contact person: Roz Scott 07773 196074

Scottish Country Dancing

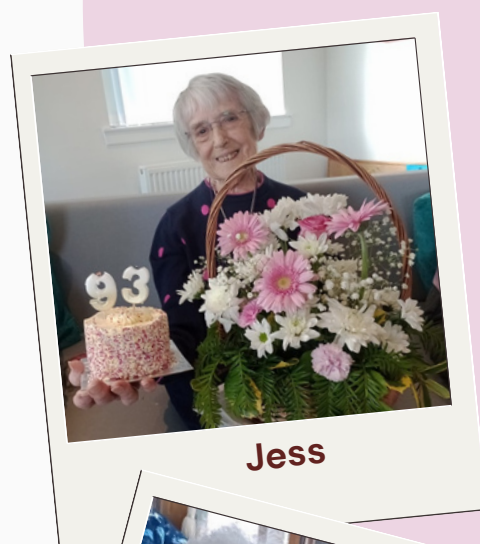
Are you interested in having some fun alongside fellowship and perhaps an opportunity to keep fit? If the answer is, “yes” then Scottish Country Dancing might be for you.

Some interest in starting up the opportunity to be involved with this activity has been expressed. At the moment, notification of interest is being sought. The regularity of this activity is not firmed up nor is time or dates. Much will depend on the level of interest and the expression of preferences by those expressing an interest.

If this is something that you think might interest you or friends, please take a look at the Hall of Friendship notice board at church and add your detail.

Carpet Bowling Club

The club resumes on Tuesday 6th October meeting every Tuesday from 10.00am till 12 noon and 7.00pm till 9.00pm. Bowlers can attend either or both sessions and should arrive promptly. New members will be made welcome with friendly tuition for those who have not played before. Please put this date in your diary and come along for the games and refreshments. Further information is available from Alison Gibson.



Jess



Aileen





Recently, social media has been a hot topic – is it good or is it bad?

From a church perspective, social media is a powerful tool for good. It helps us to fulfill the mission of spreading a message of hope and building community. Our digital footprint at Craigowl Church is enabling us to reach more people than ever.

Website engagement

A good number of visits to our website are made daily. We don't know what or how much is being read but the site is a consistent digital front door for both seekers and regular attendees to establish who we are, to find service times, connect with our ministries and events and obtain detail of all that is happening here at Craigowl Church.

Missed Sunday's service? Want to replay or share an encouraging word or powerful message with a friend?

One of the increasingly popular benefits of our website is the ability to access recordings of all our church sermons. Our complete digital library allows you to stream audio from your phone, tablet, or computer anytime, anywhere.

How to listen:

- Visit our homepage - www.craigowlchurch.org.uk
- Click the 'Menu' - select 'Sunday' then 'Sermons'
- Browse by date, speaker, or topic.

As an alternative to the above and with your phone, scan this QR code and go straight to our 'Sermons' page.



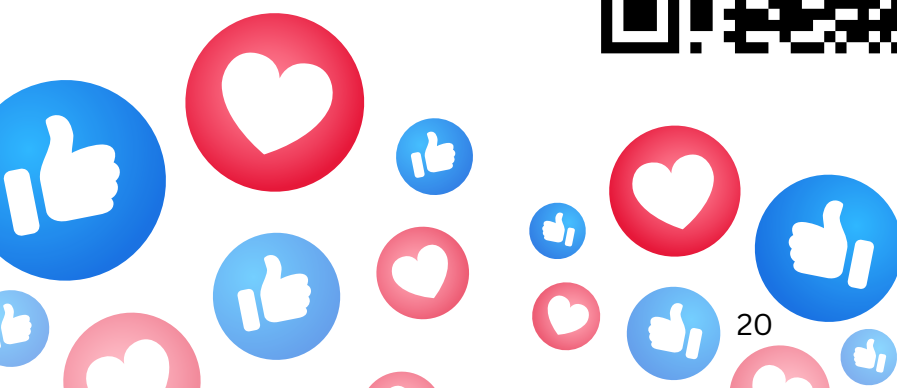
Facebook /Instagram

We are seeing growing followings on Facebook allowing us to meet people right where they are spending much of their time online. On average and across a monthly period, we are seeing around 35,000 contacts with our page.....yes, that is a correct number! Our Instagram page is still in its infancy as far as engagement is concerned.

Community Building

Social platforms act as a modern "coffee hour", allowing us to share daily encouragement, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and foster relationships that transcend physical building walls. Over recent weeks we have been able to share postings highlighting some of our church family engaging with community and everyday activity. These glimpses into our church family together with short video messages from Chris are enabling a positive outreach into the local community and beyond.

If you are on Facebook - please like and follow us. Engage with mission and outreach by taking every opportunity to share our posts.....👍





From the Study Manse Doghouse ✓

Hello, human flock! I am Preacher, the Rev Chris and Marion's new Golden Retriever puppy. Some of you I will have met, but others will not yet have had the opportunity to say, hello. I appreciate the magazine editor giving me the opportunity to share a few observations via this column....a sort of 'Paws for Thought.'

Living with the minister and his wife – my human dad and mum, means obeying strict laws. We had a fall out last week – Rev Chris brought down two stone tablets from the kitchen counter. He calls them the "Doggy Commandments." The top two are Thou shalt not covet thy master's Sunday roast and Thou shalt not turn the sermon notes into confetti. I am still in the wilderness trying to follow them.

Lost in the Library

I spend a lot of time in the study sniffing through the books of the Bible. So, even in the short time as part of the manse family I've become theologically astute. My arrival was definitely Genesis—a chaotic new beginning. When I accidentally left a poo on the kitchen floor it instantly turned into Exodus as I was chased out into the garden.

My human dad says my unruly puppy fluff makes me look like Samson. He might be right. The moment he cuts my hair, I completely lose the strength to resist stealing his socks. I try to practice the patience of Job while waiting for my food bowl to be filled, but it usually ends in Lamentations because I am starving. (It has been at least twenty minutes since my last treat).

The Miracle of the Crumbs

Getting back to food – I think Rev Chris is training me up for pulpit supply! We have just covered the miracles – my favourite is Jesus feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. Honestly, that sounds like a typical Tuesday for me. I am a master at cleaning up leftovers, and I consider vacuuming up fallen communion bread crumbs to be my personal spiritual calling.

FAITHFUL REMINDER

“A joyful heart is good medicine but chewing the minister's slipper is pure bliss.”
Proverbs PIV (Puppy International Version)

This brings me to the biblical concept of unconditional love. No matter that I rolled in the mud and trotted over the cream carpet, no matter that I stole the after-service pancakes (mmmm, so good), my human mum and dad still hug me. Love in this manse and church always overflows—just like those baskets of leftover bread.

If you see me around, please come over for a holy high-five. I promise not to lick your face – unless you smell like a sausage!

Preacher says, thanks to my friend GI who has helped me with the preparation of this article. You can follow my on-going adventures on Instagram:- [preachertheretriever](#) ✨



Artemis II Reconnecting Space Travel with God

In April, NASA's Artemis II crew journeyed around the Moon. An amazing feat of human endeavour. They did not just break scientific boundaries; they also carried a profound message of faith. Decades after the Apollo 8 crew read Genesis from lunar orbit, a new generation of astronauts has reminded us that the further we travel into the universe, the more clearly we see the hand of the Creator.

For pilot Victor Glover, a faithful Sunday school teacher, the historic mission was an opportunity to praise God. Before the spacecraft entered a 40-minute communication blackout at its furthest point from Earth, Glover broadcasted a powerful message to ground control, echoing Jesus' words to "love God with all you are" and "love your neighbour as yourself." Later, looking back at our blue planet against the dark void of space, he shared an Easter reflection, reminding everyone watching that "We need Jesus—whether here on Earth or orbiting the moon." Glover even carried his Bible and communion elements on the journey.

Yet, the spiritual impact of the mission reached beyond those who already believed. Mission Commander Reid Wiseman, who had not previously considered himself a deeply religious person, found himself completely overwhelmed by the vastness of creation.

After witnessing a breathtaking solar eclipse from behind the Moon, Wiseman was deeply moved. On safely splashing down and boarding the recovery ship, he sought out the ship's chaplain. Wiseman later recounted breaking down in tears the moment he saw the Christian cross on the chaplain's collar, stating there was simply "no other avenue" to process the sheer awe of what he had witnessed. For those of us watching from home, Artemis II serves as a beautiful reminder of Psalm 19: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." As humanity continues to reach for the stars, astronauts continue to find that no matter how far we travel into the heavens, the love of God is already there.

Set aside some time and use these questions to dive deeper into the themes of creation, awe and sharing our faith.

- ✓ **Wonderful Creation:** Read Psalm 8:3-4 and Psalm 19:1. Commander Wiseman was overwhelmed by awe just looking at the cosmos. When was the last time you looked at God's creation—whether the night sky, the ocean, or a mountain—and felt completely humbled? How did that moment affect your relationship with God?
- ✓ **Boldness in the Secular World:** Victor Glover used a highly public, government-funded scientific platform to openly share the Greatest Commandment. How can we find the courage to share our faith and love for Jesus in our own workplaces or secular environments, even when it might feel uncomfortable or face criticism?
- ✓ **The No Other Avenue" Moment:** Commander Wiseman found that science alone could not explain or process the beauty he witnessed; he needed a spiritual "avenue" (the chaplain). Why do you think human beings instinctively look for the divine when confronted with ultimate beauty or mystery?
- ✓ **An Oasis in the Dark:** Glover described Earth as an intentional oasis created for us, contrasting with the empty void around it. How does this "Overview Effect" reinforce the biblical idea that humanity and Earth are uniquely loved and designed by God, rather than being a cosmic accident?

"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."



MAKE YOURS A HAPPY
SUNDAY
COMING UP.....



Sunday 9 August at 11am
MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY

Sunday 23 August at 11am
YOUNGLIVES SHARE THEIR STORY

Sunday 30 August at 11am
SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

September Sundays at 11am
CONSIDERING STEWARDSHIP IN ALL ITS FORMS
Time - Talents - Gifts - Resources

Sunday 4 October at 11am
BACK TO CHURCH SUNDAY

Sunday 11 October at 11am
HARVEST THANKSGIVING



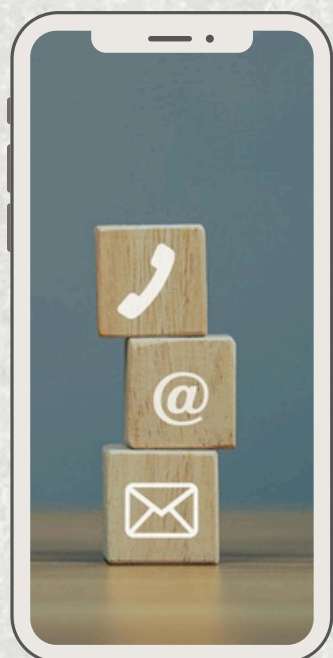
2pm SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER 2026

Following on from the success of last years quiz, we repeat this event here in Craigowl Church. Put this date in your diary now and watch out for further information.

IT'S FREE
JUST CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION
TO TEAR FUND ON THE DAY



CHRISTIAN ACTION WITH THE WORLD'S POOR

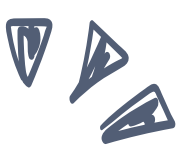


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CRAIGOWL CHURCH



WHERE LOVE
OVERFLOWS IN GOD'S
PRESENCE



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