



‘Our Kirk Matters’

Holytown Parish Church

January 2025



**Let the joy of the Lord be your strength
as you face this beautiful new year.**

Invitation to Communion:

Sunday 26th January 2025 at 10 am

Our vision is to be a living, caring Church at the heart of our communities – celebrating worship, offering support, giving a welcome and sharing the good news of Jesus.

Letter from the Manse - Rev Terence C Moran BD; Cert Min

Dear brothers and sisters,

A New Year and what a big one in the life of Holytown Parish Church.

A few years ago, about this time, I was away at a conference with other ministers to discuss the future of The Church of Scotland as a whole, which it was felt was not as bleak as it may appear if our congregations could get our collective act together and face the challenges of these times.



One thing that particularly struck me was a contribution from one of the main speakers, who said *"we get to pick the internal furnishings of our homes but not our moment in time."* Applying this to our Church buildings, he said *"we may prefer to live in the romantic setting of the 18th century when we are indoors, but we cannot escape the reality that we live in the 21st when we set foot outside."* The speaker went on to assert that there was no point in longing for a time gone by because *"this is the day God has chosen for us in which we are to serve him."* What that looks like, he contended, is down to individual congregations to decide – *"but decide they must, otherwise we will inevitably cease to exist as a denomination."*

Since that time, I have worked very hard to try to get my own congregation in Wishaw to a point where we are clearer about the work we face and what our response might be. This has resulted in us developing a number of projects such as our free drop-in cafe and Foodbank as well as our Recovery Hub and we are presently revisiting plans to replace the old hut in our grounds with a new facility that will be at the forefront of the work we hope to do among the youth in our community.

Of course, what projects we are able to launch depend on the ideas of all of those committed to them and the availability of finances. In pursuit of such finances, I attended another conference that same week to discover that much of the money available depended on carrying out community audits to ask those living in our area what support they felt they needed. This all seemed sensible until I looked around and saw that what was (and is) truly missing in the lives of many people in our communities is hope and faith, which few people would express in an audit, and as a Christian I know that hope can be found through faith in the living Lord Jesus.

I realised then that if the church doesn't focus on that aspect of the community's needs, then who would? There are many people, agencies, and organisations already focussing on the social care of our communities, and I am very thankful that they are. But I believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ is every bit as important, indeed I believe it is more so. After all, our *raison d'être* is not to be an extension of the social services but to bring this hope by leading people to faith in Christ: *18 Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'* Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

I fervently believe that for too long our denomination has retreated behind the veneer of demonstrating God's love by our works of charity which, important as these are (and don't be mistaken I believe they have an important place), have failed to disciple people. At one conference someone said that *"what we do is seek to build friendships with no hidden agenda."* And that's my point, we do have an agenda! It's God's agenda: to make disciples, but we hide it. In fact, it is so well hidden at times that no one even knows what we truly stand for and I'm not sure that we do either.

The proof is in front of our eyes when we take a look around our churches on Sunday mornings and see how few people are converts to our faith who have come to us as a result of years, indeed decades, of such works. Instead, we should be proclaiming loudly and proudly the name of Jesus, who we declare to be the head of our Church, and should not be ashamed of his gospel, which can transform lives better than any project we can think of or dream up.

With that as our clear and unhidden agenda, I am encouraging my own congregation at the start of 2025 to look afresh at our ministry to determine whether we have been successful over the last four years of making disciples, not just friends or a good name for ourselves but real disciples, and to adjust our practices if we are not. I encourage you all at Holytown to do the same even as you await news of your request for a review of the Presbytery Plan. The success of your request will only be the beginning of the work you will have to do to address the future life and witness of your congregation within your community.

I believe that a focus on making disciples is the only way to ensure that our congregations have a future never mind our denomination as a whole. But more than that, I believe that the furtherance of the kingdom of God in our land is at stake, and we must play our part. I am reminded of the scripture from the Old Testament Book of [Esther 4:14](#), which says: *"For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"*

Friends, let us not remain silent in speaking out the hope of the gospel.

Your brother in Christ,

Terry

Rev Terry Moran

Interim Moderator

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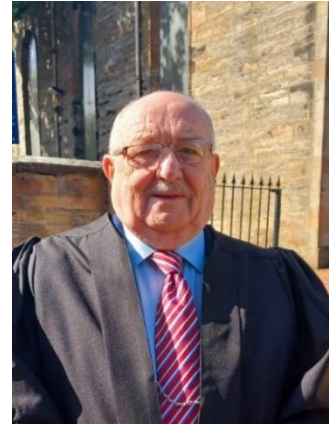
Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

From Mr Bill Hastings, Locum

Hi Folks'

Hope you hae a guid new year with many blessings. I have a question to ask you. In [Matthew Chapter \(v13-20\)](#), Jesus asked his disciples "Who am I" after a few discussions, Peter said "you are the Messiah, the Son of God". My question includes me, who do you think Jesus is? Over the past few months I have spoken to Jesus many times and I know he is my best friend. In Matthew 16 Jesus disciples were standing right in front of him and they could see him. We through faith believe our Lord is the Son of God. Peter got it spot on and we as fellow Christians got it right when we accepted Jesus as our own personal Saviour. We sung it a few weeks ago 'What a friend we have in Jesus'. Please think of the words and take it to Him in prayer. We do not know what our future holds but we know who holds the future so keep praying and leave everything in his hands.



May the road rise up to meet you, May the wind always be at your back, May the sun shine warm upon your face, the rain fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

As I said before, You are Gods people.

*Bill Hastings
Locum*

From Stewart McNeil (Session Clerk)

Firstly, I hope each and every one of you had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year and I pray that 2025 will prove to be a good year for us all.

It's great to see Bill back among us after the problems with his health during December and we all hope he retains good health for the oncoming year.

Thanks must go to our elders for stepping up to cover one of the Sundays Bill was absent and for our Interim Moderator, the Rev. Terry Moran for covering the others. It really is much appreciated. We also had a good turnout at our Watchnight Service on Christmas Eve and thanks to all who came along.

There's not been a great deal happening concerning how the Presbytery Mission Planning process is affecting ourselves, but we expect to be hearing something fairly soon and as soon as I do, I will update you at morning worship.

The 'Thoughts for the Day' are continuing with us and Wrangholm taking it week about to share some biblical observations via Email and Facebook every Monday, Wednesday and Friday with the purpose being to share the Good News. If you are on the circulation and you enjoy reading these articles, please like them and share them with your friends and acquaintances. If you wish to contribute an article for any of the days that are our turn, please pass it to me and I'll make sure it is included.

Attendances at morning worship have been encouraging and are fairly consistent but there is always room for more. So, if you have any friends or neighbours that you think might enjoy the fellowship on a Sunday morning, please reach out to them and invite them along.

Stewart

Moderator's Challenge

Lighting up learning in Malawi

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson has challenged people to support an initiative that has the potential to transform students' lives in Malawi.



The idea was sparked during Dr Paterson's visit to Malawi in the autumn. He was struck by the determination of the people there, and particularly within the Church, to ensure education at all levels becomes available and accessible to all.

But he also noticed that there were barriers for students who were keen to learn.

For children, without lights in their homes they could not study after it became dark.

And for PhD students at Zomba Theological University they were frequently dealing with power outages, something the Moderator witnessed first-hand.

His challenge aims to help students at both ends of the academic spectrum – primary school learners and PhD students.

Let your little light shine - creating light libraries for primary schools



Moderator Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson in Malawi.

The Moderator saw an initiative at Thondwe CCAP Primary School which he believes the Church could help replicate. He believes 'light libraries' could hold the answer.

It is lighting up homes to allow children to do homework by funding a simple 'light library' at their school, allowing them to borrow small solar lights to take home, potentially making a difference to their whole future.

The headteacher at Thondwe told him how the simple solar lights are allowing extra time for children to learn in villages where there is no electricity and so it is dark at 6.30pm. She has seen academic improvement in her pupils since this initiative has been in place. The light also becomes a resource for others in the household too as even one small light radiates a beam which allows others to see also. Before

children were studying by using candles or kerosene lamps which are both expensive or indeed not studying at all.

Solar lights are changing children's lives.

24-hour Learning opportunities for PhD Students at Zomba Theological University.

It will also provide solar panels to allow PhD students to study during the hours of darkness. Nestled in the foothills of the majestic Zomba Mountain, Zomba Theological University (ZTU) has high ambitions.

As part of its strategic plan to advance and extend quality theological education, ZTU is embarking upon an ambitious renovation project to provide accommodation for new and expanding postgraduate programmes. The vision is that the new centre will become a hub of collegiality, creativity and collaboration that can generate transforming ideas and transformative leaders. The proposed development includes solar power provision and improved IT infrastructure throughout the renovated buildings to provide a variety of flexible working locations.

To ensure the students can make the most of their time of study, there needs to be a consistent electricity supply for lighting and internet access, something which a state-of-the-art solar energy system will ensure once installed – and it will also be more economical than buying from the grid.

Building the People of God in Malawi

Solar panel will allow students to study. (Image sunnymoney.org)

The Moderator's visit to Malawi allowed him to see the steps from Early Childhood Development Programmes to the accredited University programmes of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) with whom the Church of Scotland have a long-standing partnership.

Talking after the trip he said: "I evidenced a real desire and enthusiasm for education and was so taken by the steps learners (of all ages) took in their thirst for knowledge. This challenge seemed to me to fit in well with my theme for my Moderatorial year of 'Building Together'. As much as I love a good DIY project, this theme is more about 'Building the People of God', allowing everyone at whatever level they are at, to be encouraged and supported to take the next step on their journey through life."



This appeal will help to keep lights shining and give students opportunity to shine too as they seek to enhance their learning. How can you help?

- Solar lights for light libraries, cost around £10 per light and can be bought locally in Malawi.
- The new PhD Centre needs support to install solar power and a modern IT system which would allow students to study at any time.
- No matter how little you can raise you will be helping to Build God's people in Malawi
- Be creative in your fundraising – let us know what you are doing

The Project will remain live until May 2025.

The Red Donate Button will take you direct to the Church of Scotland website.

[Donate](#)

Click plus Click to follow link

Alternatively, our own Treasurer, Mrs Susan Reid will be happy to accept donations. Please make clear that your donation is for this particular project.

Remembrance Sunday – 10th November 2024

A service of remembrance was conducted by Mr Bill Hastings at Holytown Parish Church at 10:45. Thereafter, a service followed at the War Memorial and was conducted by Mr David Paterson. It was lovely to see so many people on such a wet day and to have the Boys' Brigade present. Thanks must go to both Bill and David for reminding us of the great sacrifice made in the name of Peace.

Below is a picture of Gary Paterson age 11, the medals were Victoria Foster's late husband, Kevin Foster who sadly was taken from the family on Easter Sunday the 9th of April 2023 aged 61 years.



Victoria Foster said “May I take the time to thank the church for asking my grandson to lay the wreath on behalf of the church, it was an honour and privilege for Gary to be asked. I’m sure his Grandad would have been very proud of him as we all were.”

Victoria informed that Kevin was a retired Royal Military policeman and also served with police Scotland for a total of 33 years. His medals were from two tours of Northern Ireland, Gulf war, United Nations, Golden Jubilee and Diamond Jubilee.

Gary's picture with his Grandad's medals brings home that the War Memorial in Holytown stands not only as a reminder, of those who gave their lives during the 1st and 2nd World Wars but also those who serve in more recent and present-day conflicts.



Jean Henderson: On behalf of the Church our Treasurer, Susan Reid visited Jean Henderson (17th Jan) on the occasion of her 96th birthday. Jean wished to thank everyone for their kindness and to pass on her good wishes to them in return.

Flower List 2025:- Thank you to all who have added their name to the flower list for 2025. If for any reason you are unable to fulfil your commitment, do please let Christine Bell know by calling 01698 – 732337. The Flower List for 2025 is now available. Thanks must go to Christine for all the work she does. Those who receive the flowers are always very grateful and appreciate that our Church family is thinking of them.

Gift Service: Thank you for the wonderful gifts of toys received for our annual Gift Service. Once again your generosity was greatly appreciated. This year the parcels were taken to Holytown Primary School where the Head Teacher was very grateful.

Service of worship in Bill's absence: As our locum Bill Hastings was unwell recently, we must thank those Elders who conducted and contributed to morning worship and also to our Session Clerk for conducting the Watchnight service.

Christmas Trees- Lights: The Guild once again gave a substantial donation for the purchase of the two Christmas Trees. This year, the tree within our Church was especially stunning and it was wonderful to see the Church decorated. Grateful thanks to all who gave of their time and efforts.

CD's: Alan Donald, our Church organist has given of his time and talent to produce a wonderful CD of Organ Music. To-date he has raised over £200 for our Church Fabric Fund. A new CD is available for purchase from Alan at a cost of £5.00 each. A great effort Alan – Many thanks.

To All: A Big Thank you to all who have done something for their Church over the past quarter no matter how large or small. You know who you are!

Snow Clearers: Winter is here and with it the possibility of snow, more frost and ice. Once again this means we need to ensure the paths around the Church are cleared of snow before the Sunday service. We are looking for volunteers to be ready, in the event of a snow fall, to be at the Church Hall before 9 am on a Sunday morning and help make the approaches to the Church safer. Over the last few years, we have not had many Sundays when the snow needed to be cleared, so it is not an overly onerous commitment. If you would be prepared to help out, please let David Paterson our property convenor know *or just turn up on the day. (Contact details on back page)*



Margaret Paterson Milne

22nd June 1931 – 20th November 2024

On 5th December, the funeral service of Margaret was conducted by The Right Reverend Dr Shaw Paterson, Moderator of the Church of Scotland within the Church here in Holytown.

In regard to this Church, Margaret was always involved and it played a huge part of her life. She was Sunday school superintendent, Magazine editor for many years, Organist, Treasurer, Clerk to the Board, Clerk to several vacancy committees, Officer in the Girls' Guildry which became the Girls' Brigade and was an active elder, wrote several books on the history of the Church and the formation of Holytown Parish Church from a meeting place to Quad Socra.

Not only was the Right Reverend Dr Shaw Paterson a former pupil of her Sunday School classes but five of the six pall bearers at Holytown Crematorium were also.



Maragret Paterson Milne – born 22/6/31, daughter of James George Milne a police constable stationed in Holytown at 36 Main Street, which was positioned in the car park adjacent to the former post office her mother was Jean McNaught was a chargehand in a pawn brokers. They were married in 1930 at Larkhall. Jimmy was the son of a small farm in Aberdeenshire-and worked as a ploughman working various farms. He came south and joined the former Lanarkshire Constabulary in 1924, went to Motherwell and then posted to Larkhall where he met his wife. He then was posted to Holytown and lodged with Mrs Gibson in the main street (Jess Gibsons's mother). Margaret was born in the Police station in Holytown and attended Holytown Primary but due to her father being the local 'Bobby' was not encouraged to have friends or allowed to bring any that she had back to her home.

Margaret did very well at Primary school and was Dux. She left Primary and attended Dalziel High in Motherwell and obtained a number of Highers. She did however fail her German exam due to having contracted measles but this decision was appealed and subsequently awarded. Her friend at school was a Louise Hart but she sadly died in her teens. Margaret was a loner but that was not through choice. She would often go to Aberdeenshire on holiday where she had three aunties and spent a lot of time with them. During the war years Margaret was often left to look after the house as her father was busy with his police duties and her Mum was an avid collector for the Red Cross.

At the end of the war Margaret started going to Bible Class and Youth Fellowship and was active in these groups.

She went to West of Scotland Commercial College and took a diploma in Business Studies and obtained great speeds in Pitman & Greg (shorthand) and could literally set a typewriter on fire! After gaining her diploma she went to Jordanhill College to obtain her teaching qualification which was at a degree standard. She qualified as a teacher but as there were no vacancies at the time in the local area, taught in Allanton Primary School, St Patrick's in New Stevenston, St Johns in Hamilton and a school in Rutherglen. She then taught Business Studies in several schools in Coatbridge, Coatbridge Tech becoming Principal teacher at Coatbridge High where she retired.

On the death of her mother, she moved from the family home at 27 Holytown Road to Balfron Crescent in Hamilton until her illness. After retirement from teaching, Margaret took up the position of secretary to the Evangelical Council for a number of years which incorporated the Colportage Society and was there for a number of years.

Later in life she took up German lessons and travelled extensively. Margaret was fluent in German and attended a number of operas in Germany and she was a Buchan speaker Doric. She visited Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Israel, The Holy Land, Turkey, Germany and other European countries. She often went on short coach tours of the UK. On two occasions she crossed the arctic circle in Lapland whilst cruising.

She wrote two books on the History of the Church and a book on entitled 'Sowing the Seed in Scotland: The story of the Scottish Evangelistic Council 1930-1996 and all three are in the National Library of Scotland.

We thank God for the blessing of Margaret Milne and gratitude for the impact she had on so many of our lives here in Holytown.

Dear Lord,

We give thanks for all who have walked before You in faith and hope and love and especially for those whose path has been part of ours. Above all, we thank You for Jesus Christ who walked before You in trust and in truth, whose walk has inspired us and given us light, whose walk has taken Him to death and beyond for all our sakes.

Amen.

THE GUILD 2025

The Guild still going strong. We started back in October and have had upwards of 20 members which is fantastic. Thank you, members, for all your support. Our new Secretary Irene Gilchrist has done well in providing great speakers both this year and last year. We also enjoyed a lovely afternoon of music and song from our Church organist Alan Donald.



The picture above is Sabah Moran (our Interim Moderator's wife) with Billy McIlroy and Peter Gardner (Elders).

Sabah works with Crossreach which is one of the Guild's projects. She gave an interesting talk about all the work Crossreach does with vulnerable families and the young children and went into great depth about this. We were pleased to present her with a cheque to support this good work. The picture below shows our Guild Christmas party bash. Good fun was had by all. We had lovely food, music and company.



We have a full syllabus planned through to March with good speakers so please come along and enjoy a day of fellowship. It's not too late. All are welcome.

Christine Duns
President

Prayer submissions from visitors to our Church here in Holytown September 2024 (Family through the marriage of one of Jim & Alice Smith's sons)

Thank you for sharing your hearts this morning and the distressing news about your kirk in Holytown. Here is a verse that comforts us in times when we feel bewildered and that things are hopeless.

[2 Chronicles 20:12 and 15](#). God's people are facing innumerable enemies and they pray: 'Oh God,.....we have no power: 'face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.'

God then spoke through his prophet to them. "This is what the LORD says to you:

Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's."

Here is Ngaire and my prayer for you and your dear brothers and sisters in Holytown Kirk.

O God,

We thank you that we stand together in your presence today, gathered around Jesus who is our hope our joy and peace. Through Jesus, we stand with the great company of men and women and little ones following Jesus throughout the world and across thousand of years. As we consider the Kirk here in Holytown, we confess we do not know what to do. We lift our eyes to you whose eyes see our past and present and future and so we pray: release us from fear and discouragement. Lead us forward in your gracious love, peace and joy. Help us to remember all your sweet promises in Jesus Chris our Saviour so we as a people of God stand together in confidence of your presence and purpose for our fellowship at this time. Amen.

Rev Dr Peter Moore and Mrs Ngaire Moore, Holytown (30th September 2024)

**You are invited to Holy Communion
Sunday 26th January 2025 at 10 am**

"Do this in remembrance of me."

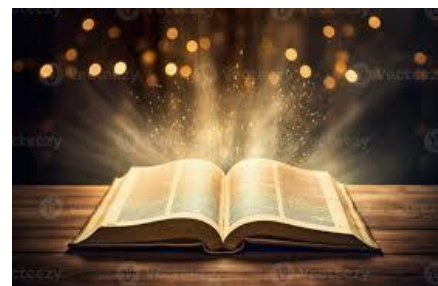
**All are welcome to attend
& participate**

(Communion will be conducted by Rev Terence C Moran BD, Cert Min)



Sunday Readers 2025

We warmly invite all members of the congregation to contribute to the service by volunteering to read from scripture during the service. Should you wish to do so, please contact our Locum Bill Hastings or one of the Elders. Plenty of notice is always given for you to prepare in advance for the reading that is chosen.



Financial Statement as at 31/12/24

General Account

Balance held in Bank Account as at 31/12/24 £ 4357.70

Income for 2024 £ 57088.44

Expenditure for 2024 £ 56160.74

Fabric Account

Balance held in Bank Account as at 31/10/24 £ 798.22

Income for 2024 £ 162.11

Expenditure for 2024 £ 5065.62

Consolidated Fabric Fund

Balance held by General Trustees on
our behalf as at 20/09/24 £ 2510.78

Already refunded to us for Fabric repairs and
Insurance costs £ 7505.01

Claims for repairs and insurance fees have been claimed up to the end of July.

A claim was submitted on 13th December for £2108.09 which we were advised would not be paid until January 2025.

The final figures for this account will be supplied by the General Trustees by the end of January.

Investors Trust Accounts

Balances held as at 15/11/24

General Purposes Fund £10387.96

Reserve Fund £ 2589.00

Boys Brigade £ 1204.04

Legacy Fund £ 923.78

Sunday School £ 486.15

These figures include interest added in November.

Comments

The offerings of £200 from the Watchnight service held on Christmas Eve were donated to St. Andrew's Hospice. Your continued support in these fundraising efforts is appreciated.

The accounts for all the organisations have been audited and the next stage of transferring the information into the format required by Presbytery and Stewardship & Finance in Edinburgh has commenced and will be passed to the external auditor by the end of January.

Thanks to everyone in the Duty Teams for their assistance every Sunday in counting the offerings and yes, the debate goes on as to which team is the “dream team”. Special thanks go to Isa Hinshelwood for filling in for me when I am absent from Church, it is greatly appreciated.

Susan Reid, Treasurer



A quarterly newsletter is produced in advance of the Communion Service and will be distributed by an Elder. Ideally, we wish to reduce our printing costs, so if you have an e-mail address and wish to be added to the distribution, do please let us know.

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