

# Dalserf Parish Church



### December 2023

#### **Mission Statement**

"Dalserf Church exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ through the preaching of the word and witness of every member"

#### All Welcome

Worship at Dalserf Church is at 11.30am Sundays, all year through

Worship at Rorison Church
Has been suspended until further notice.

#### **Announcements**

<u>Baptisms</u> Samuel Stuart Eathorne Sunday 5th November 2023

#### Church Calendar

Sun 3rd Service Dalserf (First Sunday of Advent)

Sun 10th Service Dalserf (Second Sunday of Advent)

Sat 16th Christmas Carol Concert (Dalserf 2:30pm)

Sun 17th Service Dalserf (Third Sunday of Advent)

Sun 24th Service Dalserf (Fourth Sunday of Advent)

Sun 24th Watchnight Service (Dalserf Church 11:30pm)

(Refreshments will be served prior to this, in Hamilton Hall, from 10:00pm)

Mon 25th Christmas Service (Dalserf Church 10:30am)

Sun 31st Service (Dalserf Church 11:30am)
(Lesson in Carols, Readings on the Birth of Christ and Carol Singing)





At this time of change and uncertainty within our Church, we would ask that we bring our Locum Minister, Kirk Session, Congregation and all members before God asking him to Bless us in his infinite mercy.

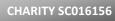
# Prayer for Others

May the light of God surround you,
May the love of God enfold you,
May the power of God protect you,
May God place his healing hands upon
you and heal you quickly,
May the presence of God watch over you,
Wherever your God is,
Amen









# Pastoral Letter





'Yakisuigi'...that's the word that Wull Armstrong, of "Wull's Wood" in Carluke, was looking for to describe the burnishing on the beautiful wooden cross which was dedicated in church at the end of October. Yakisuigi, is the Japanese method of preserving wood by lightly charring the surface and then treating it with oil, and our wooden cross for the Reflection Garden that Wull crafted and kindly donated to us, has been finished this way. As well as preserving the wood, all the beautiful graining has been highlighted. I think everyone will agree that it looks beautiful and will hopefully be a real feature in the Reflection Garden, bringing solace to those who sit and reflect.

As far as the garden is concerned we are due to receive the delivery of plants/bushes etc from the Woodland Trust mid-November; bulbs have been planted; the broken fence is due to be fixed, also mid-November and the cross is due to be in place towards the end of the month. Therefore, hopefully it won't be too long before you see the transformation.

This reminded me of the verse from 1 Corinthians Chapter 3 verse 13 which says,

#### ...the fire will test the quality of each person's work.

This verse comes in a chapter where Paul is being pretty blunt to the church. In fact, in the first verse he says:

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit, but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ.

You see, the Church were arguing about who they followed, Paul or Apollos. They had lost sight of the fact that the church is a community of people who are centred around Jesus, not a human leader.

Paul uses a farming metaphor.

#### I [Paul] planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.

This is an analogy that I use regularly, encouraging everyone of their role to spread the Good News of The Gospel. However, it's not about the messenger...it's about the message. Yes, it is our job to pass on the Good News, but we are not in control of what happens next, it's the Holy Spirit that works in and through other people's lives.

Paul then uses a building analogy where he says:

#### For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The work we do as a church, both as leaders and as individuals must have Christ at its foundation, especially if we want to grow the Church here in Dalserf and around the country. If we remember this, then hopefully when our work is tested with 'fire', just like Yakisuigi, it is not destroyed... but it brings out the beauty of the grain.



### **Pastoral Letter**



On November 11<sup>th</sup> we hosted the Guild Christmas Fair, and what a busy time we had! However, everyone's hard work and efforts paid off, and the fantastic sum of was £2,314 was raised, which will be distributed amongst local charities, as well as national Guild chosen charities. It was also great to see Hamilton Hall once again so busy with familiar faces, enjoying fellowship over tea, coffee and home-baking.

The following day we had Remembrance Sunday with short memorial services at Netherburn and Ashgill, followed by our main service in Dalserf. It was lovely to see the Girls Brigade at all of these services and especially to have them sing in church. Thanks, must also go to Elaine Smith who played the Trumpet; our church Piper, Ross Forrest; our church soloist, Hazel Blair; our church 'pop-up' choir; and last but not least Kieran Hunter our organist.

As I compose this letter, we are waiting on the Rev David Coleman the "eco-congregation" chaplain coming to lead our service here at Dalserf. I am sure we will be challenged both individually and as a congregation to consider how we care for this beautiful planet that God has blessed us with and to think about the people we share it with.

At the beginning of this month I had the honour of Baptising Stuart Eathorne, who recently celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was a special day, and after his Baptism, Stuart professed his faith and became a fully communicant member. However, we will celebrate two more professions of faith this month – Tom Carson on 19<sup>th</sup> November and Karyn Scotland on 26<sup>th</sup>. Together with these three professions, and the recent transfers of membership, we have welcomed **fifteen** new members to our congregational role since August. It is really encouraging to see our congregation grow, when other churches are faced with falling numbers.

I'm hoping that you have all 'saved the date' for our first, and what hopefully will be an annual, Christmas Carol Concert? Saturday 16th December is the date, with a 2.00 for 2.30 start, when we will have several guest artists coming along to perform and entertain...our choir will be singing... hopefully the Girls Brigade will join us again...you will also get the opportunity to sing some of your favourite carols...and after you've enjoyed a cup of tea and a mince-pie, you will leave with the Spirit of Christmas in your heart, so why not take some time out of your busy Christmas schedule to come along and savour a musical treat and a time to worship in song.

We will be having a Watchnight Service on Christmas Eve and new this year will be a Christmas Morning Service at the earlier time of 10.30am. I would love to share Christmas morning with you here at Dalserf...but we will also be live-streaming the service, so if you can't make it along, we will bring the service to you.

So, as we approach Christmas why not give the people you meet a special Christmas gift...tell them about why we celebrate Christmas...plant for them that little seed... and let the Holy Spirit nurture it and help it to grow.

God Bless you and yours this Christmas.





# **Eco Congregation**



#### **Eco Congregation**

Bird boxes and, bird feeders have been placed around the church to encourage wildlife. Hopefully you will also start to see some difference in the garden too. Liz and Louise Reynolds have planted native narcissus, alliums, and crocus bulbs at the bottom of the Hamilton Hall Garden. They have also planted up some containers with bulbs for spring colour and others with plants that will brighten up the winter. We are expecting native bushes from the Woodland Trust soon.

As we prepare for Christmas, we need to consider how the commercial Christmas that surrounds us contradicts the poverty of that first Christmas. As we do that, we should think of others who will experience poverty this Christmas. We should also consider how our Christmas affects the world we live in. During the festivities it is easy to ignore the waste, the needless plastic and the overindulgence that surrounds us. Enjoy your Christmas but as you do think how you can make a difference.

If you are looking for a different type of Advent, please have a look at the eco-congregation website and watch the Advent 2023 daily video reflections.

ADVENT: Keep Awake! . CALENDAR. PRAYERS. VIDEO REFLECTIONS. (ecocongregationscotland.org)

#### **Tom Anderson**

On behalf of The Eco-congregation Group





The Guild have had 2 really good informative meetings and going by feedback were thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Our Christmas fayre took place on Saturday 11th November when we raised the incredible sum of £2314.07

All I can say is a massive thank you to all the people who were involved, to the people who made things, baked, manned the stalls, served the teas and did the dishes (both men and women helped) and also to those who supported us by coming along. Again, a huge, big thank you to you all, once again!

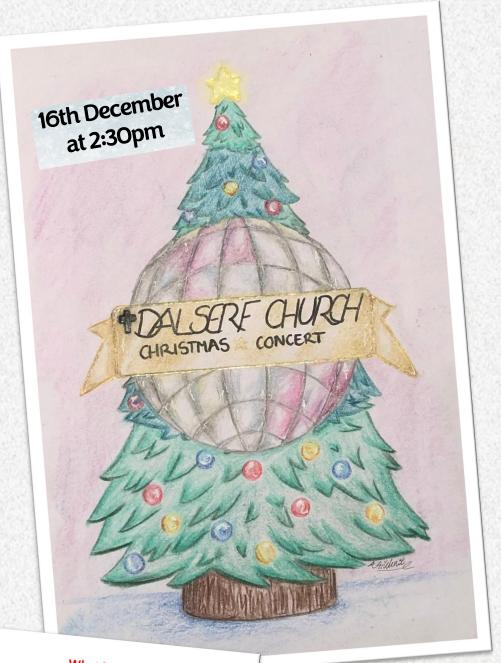
**God Bless** 

Anne McHolm

# Message from The Kirk Session

The Kirk Session wish all our congregation and all who live within our Parish,
a very Merry Christmas and
a Happy and Peaceful New Year.
May God Bless all of you and
grant you His Peace







# Dalserf Parish Church Guild

Rorison Church Ashgill ML9 9AY

# What is on this December at Dalserf Guild

# Wednesday 8th December

Christmas Quiz and Carols – Rev Fiona Anderson Starts at 7.15pm

# Wednesday 13th December

Christmas Meal at Carrigan's, Hamilton



# Dalserf Parish Church Guild

Rorison Church Ashgill ML9 9AY

# What is on this January at Dalserf Guild

# Wednesday 10th January Business Meeting

& Sales Table

# Wednesday 24th January

Scots Night Entertainment & Supper Kenny Maison and friends Starts at 7.15pm

"The angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favour with GOD." (Luke 1:30)





# Christmas Special "What is your favourite biscuit?"



For those of you who missed the first edition of "What is your favourite biscuit?", you can find it at the Meet the Members section of the website.

This month is a special edition, a bit like the big family box of biscuits you would get so that when Christmas visitors came round there was always something for them to have with their tea... and you would not need to offer them the Tunnock's Caramel Logs! (or was that just me!)

Once gain we will try and ask the difficult questions that will tell us a lot about the people of Dalserf Parish Church. The questions are slightly different and reflect the Christmas season.

This edition features our Session Clerk, Joan Pollok, our organist Keiran Hunter, two new members. Jane Hefford and William Kent and our new "Youtuber" is from South Dakota in the USA, Jenny Leiseth. Thanks to all of them for being willing to put their views out there.

However, we have had the answer I did not want, the "Jaffa Cake". In the case HMRC v McVities the court ruled that Jaffa Cakes are cakes and not biscuits. This ruling saved McVities £3million! So, I would just like to say to Mr McVitie's lawyers that the views of the participants do not reflect those of the Keeper of the Biscuit Tin. And it gets worse look up VAT Notice 701/14 and you find Scottish snowballs mentioned there to! Anyway, have a lovely Christmas, especially you Mr McVitie!

The Keeper of the Biscuit Tin.



Kieran



Jenny



Jane



William



### 1 What is your favourite biscuit?

Joan Chocolate gingers

Jenny Chocolate chip

♦ Keiran Tunnock's Caramel Wafer

♦ Jane Jaffa Cake

William McVities' Dark Chocolate Digestive

#### 2 What is your favourite Christmas movie?

♦ Joan It's a Wonderful Life

♦ Jenny The Christmas Story

♦ Keiran Love Actually

◆ Jane Elf

♦ William It's a Wonderful Life

### 3 Which famous person would you like to invite to your Christmas dinner?

Joan Nelson Mandela

◆ Jenny Jesus (and Fiona)

♦ Keiran Miriam Margolyes - I absolutely adore her humour and wit!

Jane John Wayne

· William Billy Connolly

### 4 What is your favourite Christmas Carol?

♦ Joan O Come all Ye Faithful

Jenny Joy to the World

• Keiran See amid the Winter's snow.

Jane Silent Night & Mary's Boy Child

• William O Come all Ye Faithful

# 5 What is one thing that you think is special about Dalserf?

 Joan Dalserf is special because of the people and the love and fellowship that it conveys.

◆ Jenny Absolutely everything! Rev. Fiona's worship and sermons so tremendously heartfelt. The music is glorious. The members are extraordinarily full of warmth, joy and with a welcome that radiates to South Dakota!

 Keiran Two things; The friendliness and fellowship of everyone at Dalserf and the fresh way Fiona brings presbyterian worship to life and relates it to people of all ages and stages.

 Jane Coming to Dalserf was like a home coming. The hymns, the service, and the welcome are what made me want to stay.

• William The warmth of the welcome and friendship.

# Reflection 💙

In her final days in Royal Deeside, the Queen posed a question that will resonate with every Scot. Looking out of the window of Balmoral Castle towards the river and the mountain peaks beyond, she queried, "Who would not want to be here?"

Sheena and I have just returned from an amazing short break in the North West of Scotland near Ullapool. That was the wonderful week when the sun shone from dawn to dusk with commensurate temperatures. Despite many similar holidays over my lifetime I have never witnessed such a dramatic landscape in such magnificent conditions. Such is my personal love of the mountains and the lochs, I must have "Highlander" genes in my bloodstream. To describe the scenery as "awesome" is to belittle it in a grand manner. My heart and soul were moved by the sight and I rejoiced in such grandeur. As I stared at their magnificence I could not help but feel my own smallness and insignificance. Compared to them I was a mere speck of dust. I was reminded of the saying in Psalm 8: "What is man that You are mindful of him?" The mountains, glens and lochs reminded me of God's almighty power, yet, as the Psalm says, "He made us a little lower than the heavenly beings". We are not insignificant in His sight. The skyline, filled with towering mountains, reminded me of God's love for the human race.

Modern life seems to instil in us that humans are in charge and in control. Reflecting on the might of creation and the sheer majesty of the landscape certainly brings one "down to earth". Those hours of solitude, well away from the "madding crowd" lent themselves to contemplation of life, and, now that I'm eighty, my own mortality.

On this journey I visited a cousin that I had not seen for some time, in her home in the village of Comrie, near Crieff, and found to my amazement that she had just celebrated her hundredth birthday. Although somewhat less than agile, she still lives on her own and is mentally very sharp, and she drove her car till she was ninety three. Sheena and I have looked after another cousin of mine for six years since she was diagnosed with severe dementia at the age of eighty. That lady, in sharp contrast, has to stay in a care home with 24 hour attention. She has no recollection of "anything". There is no conversation, only the constant repetitive whisper "I don't know what I'm doing, I don't know what I'm doing." To me her life ended years ago, and yet here she is struggling to face another day. I could not help but compare the two, as I had seen them only days apart. The 100 year old was a "normal" church goer. The second dedicated her life to her Lord, and served as a teaching missionary, under the Church of Scotland, for most of her life in the remote countryside of Nigeria, witnessing and suffering under civil wars and unrest.

God says "My ways are not your ways," but with such a close personal relationship to those two ladies, I cannot help but question the Lord's logic in these matters. I have to realise though that my thoughts are not his thoughts, and my plans are not His plans. I personally thank God for my parents, my siblings, my upbringing, my education, my job, the lady who agreed to be my wife, my own family, my good health, my church and my faith.

However as I contemplate my own mortality. I feel certain and accept that when  $\underline{He}$  decides to call me home,  $\underline{He}$  will decide when I take my final breath, and He will decide on the last beat of my heart.

**Bruce Archibald** 





#### **Greetings from Kieran**

From a small village in rural Dumfries and Galloway to living and working in Central Scotland, at 26 years old my life has already been a rich tapestry of experiences that have been richly enhanced by the people I have been fortunate to be mentored and supported by along the way.

I grew up in a village called Eastriggs in Dumfries and Galloway, roughly 3 miles from the English border, brought up by only my mother in a small council house loving very much on the breadline. Music was never to be the career-destination for me... I originally wanted to study politics and international relations! But a period of work experience in my secondary school music department ignited a passion for music that I could not ignore. From that moment, I worked tirelessly to improve my singing and piano skills with the aspiration of studying music at university. In coming from a very low-income household, affording music lessons was not on the cards but to the rescue came my standard grade music teacher, Mr Scott. Donald Scott, the man who I owe my entire career to, gave me a weekly piano on a Tuesday lunchtime and I quickly improved my skills to get to where I wanted to be... the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

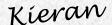
In 2015, I received an unconditional offer to study the BEd Music degree at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. For four years I studied voice, piano, keyboard harmony and education studies. My singing teacher, Iain Paton, and piano teacher, Bingbing Li, further nurtured my passion for music and performing. During the summer holidays, I had occasional organ lessons with Edward Taylor, Assistant Organist of Carlisle Cathedral, where I learned to love the organ. I took my newfound passion for liturgical music to St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral in Glasgow where I sang in the choir for six years under the direction of Frikki Walker. Frikki's passion and expertise was second to none outstanding and inspirational. His teaching, whether direct or indirect, has shaped my understanding of choir training and liturgical music so positively. Through this, I have been fortunate enough to sing in Portsmouth, Lincoln and Manchester Cathedrals.

Since 2019, I have worked as a music teacher at Coatbridge High School. I absolutely adore working at this school and working with the young people there. Since 2022, I have worked as the Principal Teacher of Employability, working tirelessly to ensure all young people achieve a positive post-school destination. Additionally, I musically direct the annual school show, facilitate numerous musical events throughout the year, and actively involve myself in the wider school life to ensure each young person receives the highest quality of education provision possible. Further to my work at Coatbridge High, I also work with the SQA as an appointee. Each year I undertake marking duties as a visiting assessor, visiting schools to assess pupils at National 5 and Higher level for practical performances. I also mark the National 5 listening exam each year and, for the first time this year, I have undertaken the duties of 'Assessment Validator' for National 5 music where I quality assure the upcoming listening exam for the current exam year. I simply adore my job and would not have it any other way!

Then we come to Dalserf... I only came for a week to help out stating very clearly to Fiona on the phone, "I don't want a regular commitment!" but I was so overwhelmed with the welcome I received, and the breath of fresh air Fiona breathes into your typical presbyterian worship that I have never been away since and don't intend on going anywhere any time soon! I hope that my enthusiasm for music will help to enhance the fantastic worship that Fiona brings to Dalserf.

Outside of work and music I love to go travelling. My partner, Jordan, and I love going on holiday. Being together for nearly three years we have shared our many interests with each other. Jordan now adores going to the theatre to watch a musical, something he wouldn't have dreamed of before meeting me. I now love travelling and going on holiday, something I'd never been able to afford before becoming a teacher. So far, we have visited Turkey (twice!), Gran Canaria and Spain... where next!? Jordan is my rock. My soulmate. The one who continually supports and challenges me. I am so fortunate to be supported by someone so caring.

Well... that's me. I am very much a 'take me as you see me' person. I will be very well turned out one week, then playing organ in my shorts the next. As the famous goes "I am what I am!". I've survived 26 years living by it so far...... here's to the next 26!





# Treasurer 💙

#### DALSERF CHURCH GIFT DAY

Dalserf Church Kirk Session would like to thank all those who donated to the church's gift day appeal. Dalserf has been given one year's reprieve to prove to the Presbytery that we are a viable church both in finance and in membership, and that we have good prospects for the coming years. The amount raised, £2150, doubled by a member to £4300, plus an increasing membership, will go a long way to ensure our future. Very many thanks for your generosity.

#### Bruce

#### Be a Proud Member of Dalserf!

Several times during our church's negotiations regarding the formation of the new Clyde Valley cluster, several members of other churches have referred to Dalserf as a "Gathered" church, referring to the fact that we do not have a local congregation, but that our members come from a wide area geographically. Their reference is often in a somewhat derogatory tone as if Dalserf was somewhat inferior to them.

I try to respond that the fact that we are a gathered church indicates that we are very much a Missional Church and the fact that members go out their way each Sunday to come to Dalserf indicates a strong and committed membership. The fact that Dalserf has survived in its present position for over 350 years indicates that being a gathered church is one of our strengths. Our regular attendance is the envy of many a "local" church.

I have speculated why this is the case. We sit in a special position in the heart of the attractive Clyde Valley, overlooking the fertile fields of the Dalserf "haugh" and the treelined valley escarpment. We are close to the lovely village of Rosebank and Dalserf Village is a delight in itself. Our appearance is like a picture postcard from another time, full of echoes of times gone by. This quiet pastoral and rustic place that offers a serene existence, in contact with a landscape and surroundings that have remained faithful to a way of life typical of rural Scotland many years ago, and in the hospitable nature of its people. A land of farmers and artisans, men and women who have preserved the essence of their customs and traditions. Dalserf has come into the present day without abandoning its most distinctive feature: the heritage of its forebears who were used to surviving in difficult times and conditions, buffeted by, an often hostile, destiny. Sheltered by the valley sides with a view that stretches down to the river Clyde, the people of Dalserf Church have remained loyal to their ancestral roots, always displaying a dynamic and enterprising spirit that neither globalisation nor the progressive uniformity of todays society have been able to overturn.

We welcome visitors to enter a unique space and time that speaks of land, work, sweat, effort, sacrifice and dignity, and most important of all, a committed Christian Faith. Our doors are open to visitors who arrive with the curiosity and respect of a pilgrim.

So be proud of being a member of Dalserf Church. Hold your head up high and in the words of the Moderator "Remember who you are".

#### Bruce



# Dalserf Kids' Zone

This month's Bible Hero is a young woman who, when given some shocking news, was willing to accept God's plan for her, no matter what other people thought. Like David, Noah, and Daniel, who we have looked at in the last three magazines, she put her trust in God. As we head towards Christmas it is appropriate that we are looking at the story of Mary.

This story can be found in the New Testament of the Bible in Luke Chapter 1.

Long ago, about 2000 years, when King Herod ruled Judea (now part of Israel), God sent the angel Gabriel to a young woman who lived in the northern town of Nazareth. The girl's name was Mary, and she was engaged to marry Joseph.

The angel Gabriel said to Mary: 'Peace be with you! God has blessed you and is pleased with you.' Mary was very surprised by this and wondered what the angel meant. The angel said to her 'Don't be afraid, God has been very kind to you. You will become pregnant by the Holy Spirit and give birth to a baby boy, and you will call him Jesus. He will be God's own Son and his kingdom will never end.' Mary was very afraid, but she trusted God. 'Let it happen as God chooses.' she replied to the angel. Gabriel also told Mary that her cousin Elizabeth, who everyone thought was too old to have children, would have a baby boy whom God had chosen to prepare the way for Jesus.

Mary said goodbye to her family and friends and went to visit her cousin Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah. Elizabeth was very happy to see Mary. She knew that Mary had been chosen by God to be the mother of his Son. An angel had already told Zechariah that Elizabeth's baby would prepare people to welcome Jesus. He was to be called John. Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home to Nazareth.

Mary must have been stunned by the news she was given, what would people think of her. But she trusted in God's plan for her and new that God was with her all the time.

So, when you are given some difficult news or wonder what people might think of you, remember God has a plan for your life and he will help and guide you.

We have another "jigidi" for you to try and you can find it at <a href="https://www.jigidi.com/solve/bfpo22zt/mary/">https://www.jigidi.com/solve/bfpo22zt/mary/</a>

I hope that you have a lovely Christmas and I hope that I will see you at some of our services.

God bless,

Rev. Fiona

Last month's Daniel Quiz result.
Well done Honest Seal!





# Notice Board

#### **Prayer List**

If someone from church is sick or in hospital and requires a visit or their name added to our prayer list, please remember to let your Elder know, who will pass on the information to me.

Fiona

#### Live Streaming



Our Services are being recorded and streamed live on YouTube.

We have two cameras recording. Both are mounted on the front balcony. If you do not wish to be shown on the recording, then please sit underneath the main balcony.

If you want to watch the services just go to the website and look for the link. If you click subscribe, then you will be sent the link automatically.

Please let us know what you think about the new streaming service. Message us at <a href="mailto:dalserf.org">dalserf.org</a>



Interested in becoming a Dalserf Member?

Please let me know.

It would be great to have you with us!

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### Items for next Newsletter

If you have any news or information that you wish to submit for the newsletter for February 2024,

please contact the editor by Sunday 14th January 2024.

# Rorison Hall Bookings Booking Secretary: Anne McHolm mcholmanne3@gmail.com

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