Sowing the Seed

The Magazine of
Dalserf Parish Church
Winter 2026

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Dalserf Church Christmas Eve 2025



Welcome to Dalserf Parish Church

Sunday Worship • 11.30am

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Looking Back & Looking Towards Christmas

As Christmas approaches, it's lovely to look back on a busy and encouraging few months at Dalserf Church, with plenty of opportunities to worship together, enjoy each other's company and make music.

In September and October, we held rededication services for the Guild, Girls' Brigade and Boys' Brigade as they began their new sessions. It's always encouraging to see our organisations welcoming people of all ages. I've also enjoyed helping out in class at Netherburn Primary School and getting to know the children a little better.

Our community ceilidh was another great success, and we're planning another one on Friday 29th January. Keep an eye out for the tickets going on sale! Stormy weather forced us to postpone the Boys' Brigade Battalion Parade, which we hope will now take place on Sunday 13 December at our usual service time of 11.30 am.

We enjoyed a lovely Songs of Praise evening with Frank Morrison, and our Church Choir and Community Choir are both going well. Our Youth Choir has made an encouraging start with five members, all from Netherburn. We'd be delighted to welcome more young singers.

At the end of November, we'll mark the beginning of Advent with Communion in the morning and Songs of Praise in the evening. We're looking forward to welcoming back Summer Brass, and I hear their bandmaster, Ian, has some fun planned for us!

It was a real pleasure to welcome a group of ladies from Hamilton Mosque to Dalserf. We shared something of how we worship and what goes on in our church, then enjoyed doing a craft together. We're looking forward to visiting them at the mosque soon. It's lovely to see friendships grow as we get to know one another. You can read Rae Hunter's account of their visit to Dalserf on page 13 of this edition.

During Advent, we will again be posting onto our social media pages daily Advent readings, brought to you by members of our congregation. I hope you will take time to engage in these readings as it's a lovely way for us to journey together through Advent before arriving at Christmas Day itself.

There will also be opportunities to pause and reflect during what can be a busy time of year. Our Christmas Memorial Service on 3rd December is especially for anyone who finds this season difficult, perhaps because of bereavement and grief, loneliness, or other circumstances. Everyone is welcome.

Rev Fiona Anderson Christmas Message

The message of Christmas is that God comes close. He comes into our ordinary lives, into our joys and worries, our celebrations and sadness. The light that shone in Bethlehem still shines today, reminding us that we are never forgotten and that God's love is always within reach.

We see that same light in the kindness shown across our church and community, in friendships formed, in music shared and in the care given to those who need a little extra support. In these everyday ways, we share the love of Christ.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Dalserf Church this year. I am grateful to all who worship with us, give their time and talents, or encourage us along the way.
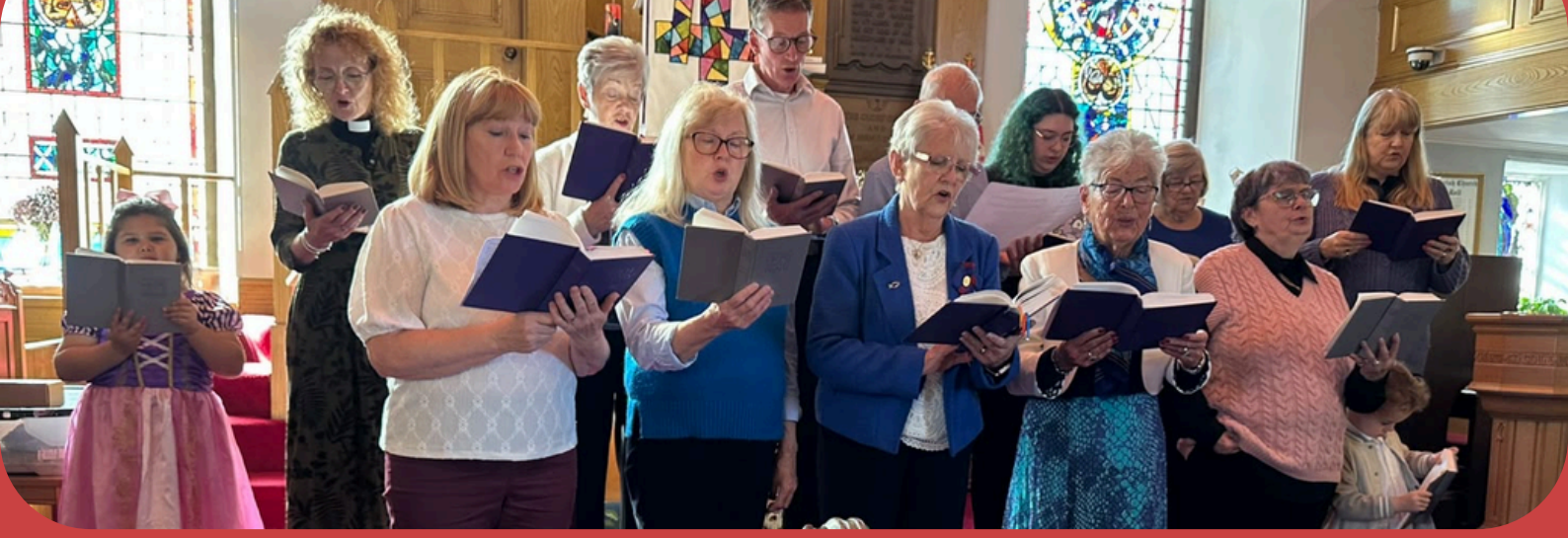
Whether you are celebrating with loved ones, remembering someone special or facing Christmas with mixed emotions, may you know the comfort of God's presence.

Wishing you a joyful and peaceful Christmas and every blessing for the New Year.
With warmest wishes,

Fiona



The Dalserf Christmas Calendar can be found on page 22 and has a full list of services and events.



Dalserf Choirs

Shannon Kilday - Musical Director

If there is one thing I have learned as Musical Director at Dalserf Parish Church, it is that a choir is about so much more than singing. It's about people, friendships, laughter, building confidence and, above all, feeling part of something. One of the things I love most is seeing people from different backgrounds and generations come together through a shared love of music.

Our Church Choir helps lead the singing at our Sunday morning services. It's been lovely to see the choir grow in confidence, especially when I ask them to sing a familiar hymn in a slightly unfamiliar way! They've taken to it with great enthusiasm, and I'm grateful for the time and care they give to supporting our worship.

Our Community Choir brings together people from Dalserf, Larkhall and the surrounding areas. We meet every Tuesday evening and are busy preparing to sing at Birkenshaw Welfare Guild and take part in our November Songs of Praise. It's been lovely to watch friendships develop along the way. We spend plenty of time learning songs, of course, but there's always room for a good chat and a laugh, too.

Our Youth Choir gives younger singers a chance to make friends and find their voices. We play singing games and try out new songs without worrying about getting every note right. I love seeing them enjoy themselves and watching their confidence grow as they discover what they can do.

I feel very lucky to work with all three choirs. Each has its own character, and there's nothing quite like hearing a room full of people singing together.

If you enjoy singing, or have always fancied giving it a go, you'd be very welcome to join us. You don't need to read music or have sung in a choir before. You might come for the singing and find yourself staying for the company. There's always room for another voice!



Shannon

What's Your Favourite Biscuit?

Recently it has been great to have Piper and Erica bring along their Mum and Dad, Kirsty and Gordon. So we thought that you would like to find out more about our newest family at Dalserf.



What is your favourite biscuit?

Gordon- My favourite is a Fox's classic. It reminds me of going to my Gran's house when I was younger as she always had a healthy supply!

Kirsty- Mine is whatever viral type of biscuit M&S has created- I love to try all the new weird and wonderful creations they come up with.

Piper- Mine is a penguin biscuit because I like to hear the jokes on the packet- I sometimes get one in the church hall.

Erica- I like a gingerbread man because of the icing.

What do you enjoy most about Christmas?

Gordon- I love to see the excitement on the kids' faces and seeing them take part in their shows and Nativities.

Kirsty- I love the build-up to it with all the magic that's created. I love the family and togetherness aspect too.

Piper- I love putting out reindeer dust for Santa and the reindeer and decorating our tree. I also love when 'Peppermint' our naughty elf visits us and does lots of cheeky things!

Erica- I like when Santa leaves lots of nice presents and I like to watch 'The Grinch'.

What is your favourite Christmas Carol?

Gordon- O Holy Night is my favourite as I just think it's a lovely Christmas song.

Kirsty- My favourite has always been O Little Town of Bethlehem. My Great Gran had a little church ornament that played that song and has been passed down through the years now to us. I fondly remember listening to it as a child and now my own children can play and enjoy it too.

Piper- I like Away in a Manger, we're learning to do the actions for it in nursery too!

Erica- My favourite song is Jingle Bells as it's got bells in it like the Church bell.

What is your favourite Christmas food?

Gordon- Turkey sandwiches and turkey curry week following Christmas- can't go wrong!

Kirsty- Nothing beats a Christmas dinner for me! It's more than the food though, I just love the togetherness that you rarely get at any other meal.

What do you enjoy most about Dalserf Church?

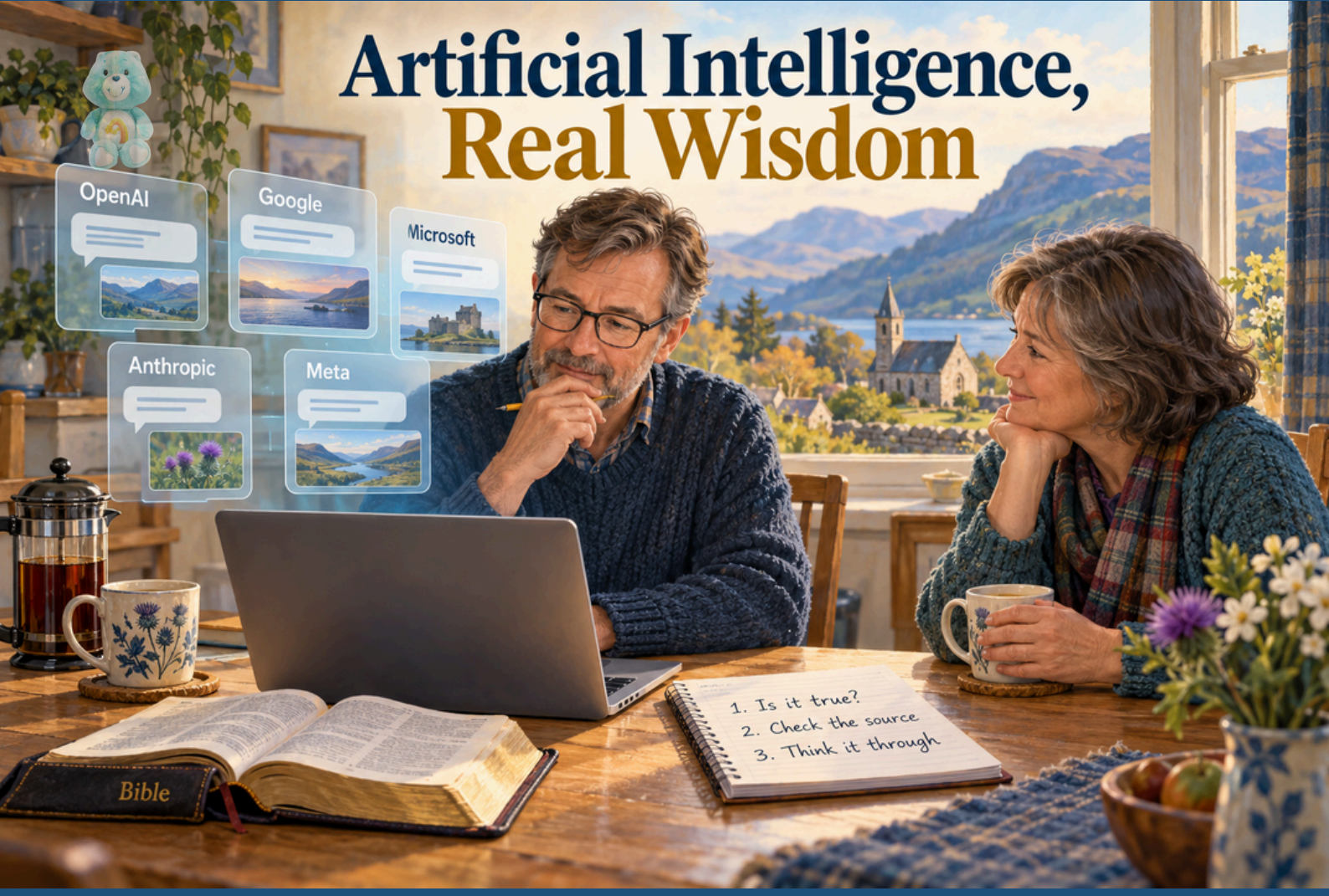
Gordon- I love the feeling of community it gives. I value hearing God's word and being encouraged to reflect on how I live my life.

Kirsty- I love how welcome everyone has made us feel. Everyone has made such an effort to make us all feel like part of the church and it's so lovely and appreciated.

Piper- I like making stuff at Sunday school and playing the musical instruments to the songs.

Erica- I love going to Sunday school and I love wearing the yellow jackets to go across to the hall. I love Fiona too.

Artificial Intelligence, Real Wisdom



Science Fact, not Science Fiction

Mearns Castle High School has just appointed a Principal Teacher of Artificial Intelligence. It is a striking reminder that AI is becoming part of everyday life, including how our young people learn. Once the stuff of science-fiction films, it can now help write an email, plan a lesson, produce a picture or answer a question before the kettle has boiled.

For some, that is exciting. For others, it is unsettling. Most of us are probably somewhere in between, wondering what it means for our children, our working lives and even our faith.

As Christians, we need neither fear every new development nor accept it without question. We can approach AI with curiosity, common sense and confidence in God. Perhaps the most useful question is not simply, "Should we use it?" but, "How can we use it well?"

There is still a place for a blether

One of AI's attractions is speed. If you are struggling to find the right words for a letter or trying to organise a busy week, a little help can be welcome.

But some things deserve more than a quick answer.

Imagine you are worried about someone in your family, facing a difficult decision or wrestling with a question about faith. A computer might offer suggestions, but a friend from church might put the kettle on.

That friend may know something of your story. They can listen, ask the awkward question you need to hear, pray with you and phone a few days later to see how you are getting on.

"Keep doing the thinking!"

There is a difference between accepting help and handing over the whole job.

A teacher might use AI to suggest ideas for a lesson. A pupil might use it to explain something they have not understood. Both can be helpful. But if it supplies every answer before the pupil has tried, something valuable is lost.

Learning involves effort. Anyone who has helped a child with knowing their times tables or learned a musical instrument knows that.

The same is true of faith.

Reading a Bible passage slowly, wondering what it means and discussing it with others can deepen our understanding. Finding the words for a prayer can help us recognise what is troubling us. Working through a difficult conversation can teach us kindness and courage.

We do not need to struggle unnecessarily, and accepting support is no weakness. But we should leave room for the experiences through which we grow.

An instant answer may give us information. Wisdom develops as we think, pray, listen and put what we learn into practice.

Stop before you share!

We have all seen an astonishing photograph or a dramatic headline online. Perhaps it appears in a Facebook post or arrives in the family WhatsApp group. It looks convincing, and the temptation is to share it immediately.

AI gives us another reason to pause. Images can be invented, and an answer can sound confident while being wrong.

A few simple questions help: Who published this? Can it be checked elsewhere? Is there a reliable source behind the claim?

Taking a moment to check is an act of care. It protects our neighbours from unnecessary worry and helps us avoid passing on something untrue.

Christians are called to speak truthfully. That responsibility applies just as much to what we share on a screen as to what we say across the garden fence.

"There is no shortcut to kindness.

The Bible reminds us that we are made in God's image. Our value does not depend on how quickly we work or how much information we know. We are people created to love and be loved, to share one another's joys and carry one another's burdens.

A chat after kirk on a Sunday, a visit to someone who is housebound or a proper conversation over a cup of tea may seem ordinary. Yet these are often the very places where God's love becomes real.

AI can be useful, but we still need one another.

That is why our Dalserf Saturday Afternoon Teas during the summer are so popular and so important. OK, the cakes are great but the main thing is the connection with people.

Make room for what matters

Used thoughtfully, AI may help us spend less time on routine tasks and more time on people. It can offer a starting point when we feel stuck or help make complicated information easier to understand.

The opportunity is to put that help to good use.

If it saves us half an hour, perhaps we can spend that time visiting someone, taking a walk, reading our Bible or enjoying an unhurried conversation.

However, the church has something precious to offer in a fast-moving world: a community where people are known by name, welcomed as they are and reminded that they matter to God.

We do not have to understand every new invention to live faithfully. We can keep learning, ask sensible questions and encourage one another.

And whatever technology brings, there will still be a place for prayer, kindness and a good blether over a cup of tea.

What do you think?

Look at the image at the top of this article. AI was asked to produce an image to summarise this article. This was produced in 1 minute and 12 seconds.
What do you think about its attempt?
Are you impressed or worried?



Geneva Two Tales of a City

The Reformation Wall by Sandra Hoey

Earlier this year, while on holiday in Geneva, we visited the Reformation Wall in the Parc des Bastions. It is a magnificent monument in a beautiful park, and what struck me most was how peaceful it felt. We spent some time sitting quietly and taking it all in. If you ever find yourself in Geneva, I would recommend a visit.

Geneva played an important part in the Reformation of the 16th century. The 100-metre monument, built between 1909 and 1917, stands against part of the old city walls. It commemorates two anniversaries that fell in 1909, the 400th anniversary of John Calvin's birth and the 350th anniversary of the founding of his academy, which grew into the University of Geneva.

At the centre stand four five-metre figures, each holding a Bible. Behind them is carved the Reformation motto, Post Tenebras Lux, meaning **'After Darkness, Light'.**

Guillaume Farel helped persuade Geneva to adopt the Reformation in 1536. When the young John Calvin passed through the city that same year, Farel persuaded him to stay and help build the Reformed church. Calvin went on to become one of the most influential theologians of the Reformation. Théodore de Bèze, a scholar of Greek and Hebrew, succeeded Calvin and helped spread Geneva's influence beyond the city.

For those of us from Scotland, there is a familiar face among the four. John Knox spent part of his exile in Geneva, where he ministered to an English-speaking congregation. He returned home in 1559 and went on to play a leading part in the Scottish Reformation.

Sitting in that quiet park, I found it striking to think that a city so far from home had played such a part in shaping our own church.

www.geneve.ch/reformateurs

The Church of Scotland – Geneva by Tom Anderson

A couple of hours on the plane, one stop on the train, and there we were in Geneva. Fiona, Shannon and I had picked a lovely September weekend for our visit. There wasn't a cloud in the sky, and one of our first walks took us down to the lakeside, where the famous Jet d'Eau was sending its plume of water high above the lake. It was every bit as good as the postcards.

Of course, Geneva has its own Church of Scotland, and those of you who know Fiona can probably guess where we were heading on Sunday morning. We walked through the quiet streets to the Kirk, where we were warmly welcomed. It was lovely to see the Right Rev Susan Brown introduced as Locum Minister for a short term in Geneva.

After the service, we were invited to stay for the monthly church lunch. Over soup, cheese and cake, we got chatting to folk from all sorts of backgrounds. There's something about sitting down to a bowl of soup together that makes it easy to get to know people. By the time we left, it felt as though we'd spent the morning among friends.

Sandra's article takes us to the Reformation Wall and Geneva's links with the Scottish Kirk. For us, the pleasure of that Sunday was seeing a little of the Kirk's life in Geneva today. If you find yourself there on a Sunday, do drop in. The lake and the fountain make a fine postcard, but it's the welcome at the Kirk that I'll remember most.

www.churchofscotlandgeneva.ch

The Man in the Pew: Meet Bob Whitelaw



A Life of Faith, Family and Adventure

Every Sunday, a lifetime of stories comes through Dalserf's church door. Among them is that of Robert Whitelaw, known to us as Bob: a former paperboy, soldier, elder and traveller who married the girl next door.

Now 88, Bob was born in Larkhall in 1938. His father worked for the Home and Health Department, but wartime service took him to Burma before he returned home in 1945.

Bob attended Larkhall Academy and spent seven years delivering newspapers for ten shillings a week. Leaving school at 15 without a career in mind, he received some firm encouragement from his father, who "dragged him" along to Dalziel Steelworks. Starting as an office boy, Bob began a working life that would take several turns.

From 1957 to 1959, he completed National Service with the Royal Corps of Signals. Afterwards, he returned to the steel industry, working in Dalziel, Bellshill and Glasgow. He later joined the Post Office's supplies and logistics department, becoming a Higher Executive Officer.

The most important introduction of his life, however, happened in Victoria Street. His neighbour, Anne Gebbie, became his wife in 1962.

Faith – a source of strength

Together, Anne and Bob made their home in Merryton and enjoyed travelling, with cruises and visits to the West Indies and Croatia among their adventures. Anne's death eight years ago brought deep sadness, but Bob's faith remained a source of strength.

For 39 years, he served as an elder at the United Reformed Church and Trinity Church, continuing until Trinity closed in 2025. That steady commitment reflects the quiet service which helps sustain a congregation.

Bob has recently moved into sheltered accommodation in Larkhall, just around the corner from where he was born. After journeys to distant places, life has brought him close to his beginnings.

We are delighted to welcome him into our Dalserf church family. Next time you see Bob, stop for a blether. Behind the familiar face is a wealth of memories, years of faithful service and a story worth hearing.

Welcome, Bob. We are very glad you are among us.



Summer Brass: A Decade of Music & Faith

What began with the hope of bringing together a handful of brass players has grown into a thriving musical fellowship. **Ian W Dickie, leader of Summer Brass**, reflects on ten years of making music, building friendships and seeing God at work in people's lives.

My idea was simple: musicians could come together during the summer break from their own bands, enjoy playing and share in fellowship. I imagined six or seven players might join me, but to my surprise, around thirty came along that first year.

More Than Music

We began by offering a Christmas carol concert at Calvary Church in Motherwell, as a thank-you to Pastor David Simpson for his support. Having had the privilege of conducting bands there for more than twenty-five years, it was lovely to mark the beginning of this new venture in a familiar and welcoming place.



A Safe Place

From the outset, my hope for Summer Brass has been to create a safe, friendly environment where people can meet, make music and experience something of God's love through what we play and share.

Over the years, the band has grown. Around ninety-five people now take part across our seven-week summer season. The encouragement this brings, and the difference it makes in people's lives, have been remarkable.

Although Summer Brass is a Christian band, not everyone who joins us shares that faith. Everyone is welcome, and our members understand and respect the Christian heart of the band. Music brings us together, and friendships grow as we rehearse and perform.



Faith Rediscovered

Some of the most precious moments have happened through conversations with individual players.

One member, who had not played for twenty-five years, picked up his instrument again through Summer Brass. He subsequently returned to the Salvation Army and recommitted his life to God. What a story! That makes my heart sing.

After a concert, another person told me that the music and spoken word had helped him rediscover his faith. "I haven't felt like this for years," he said. Moments like these remind me why Summer Brass matters.

Others have asked for copies of music or lyrics because something they heard touched them deeply.

After one rehearsal, a member asked where he could get a Bible. I later brought him one from a bookshop in Keswick and told him, "All you need is in there." We embraced and wiped away a few tears. It was a simple exchange, but a deeply moving moment in which we sensed God at work.

Sharing the Joy

What began with one concert a year has grown to nearly twenty engagements, sharing music with audiences across Scotland. My aim is always to make our concerts uplifting, helping people experience the joy of worship and perhaps reconnect with a faith they have not thought about for some time.

The quieter, devotional pieces are especially meaningful to me. There is something about a gentle melody that invites us to pause, listen and become more aware of God's presence.

Summer Brass is a wonderful group of people who freely give their time and talents. I believe the warmth of Christian fellowship is felt throughout the band, including by those who would not describe themselves as Christians.

In God's Hands

I pray for Summer Brass every day, and I have seen those prayers answered in many ways. Although I lead the band, I firmly believe it is in God's hands. He deserves all the glory and praise.

Please keep Summer Brass in your prayers as we continue to make music, build friendships and share God's love.

God bless,

Ian W Dickie

Leader, Summer Brass

Correspondence

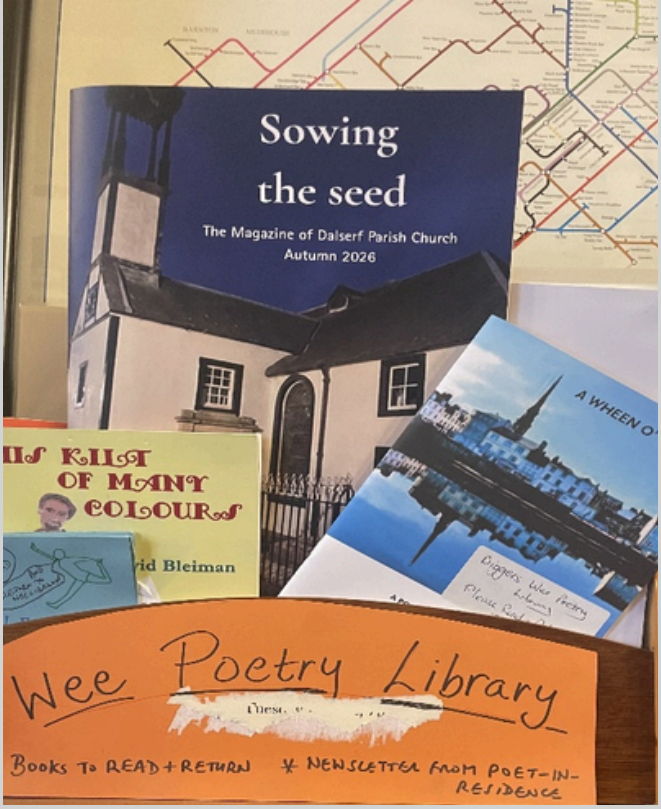
Sowing the seed at the 'Diggers'

On Monday evening the 28th of September this year, I had the opportunity at the 'Diggers grave yard shift' aka The Athletic Arms, in Edinburgh to read my poem 'The Dancin Chandelier'. Most of you will know of it. A poem, that was inspired with my love of 'Summer Brass Band', as well as the movement of our Dalserf Church Chandelier.

I was delighted to also open the autumn edition of 'Sowing the Seed' and seeing 'The Dancin Chandelier' in full glorious colour, with a snapshot of me presenting a framed copy to Ian Dickie, Summer Brass's Band leader.

So, I thought this event was an appropriate time for me to now Sow the Seed. I planted it in the 'Digger's Wee Poetry Library'. The 'growers' there well accepted it, so let's see what fruit it may bear.

Rose Macgregor



Dalserf Saturday Teas

I would like to say a great big thank you to everyone who supported our Saturday Teas. Whether you came along for a cup of tea or coffee and a piece of cake, or helped behind the scenes, you made the afternoons a pleasure.

Thank you to the bakers, those who served the teas, cleared the tables and washed the dishes, and those who took time to chat and make people feel welcome. I'm also grateful to everyone who donated baking ingredients or helped financially.

A special thank you goes to Josh, who came along to help as part of his Duke of Edinburgh's Award. He was willing to do anything he was asked, picked things up so quickly and was a joy to have with us.

The money raised went to Dalserf Church, the Girls' Brigade, the Boys' Brigade, Sunday School, MAD Ministries and Dalserf Primary School. It also helped pay for the bus that brings children to our Christmas and Easter services. We were also able to support Kilbride Hospice, St Andrew's Hospice, Marie Curie, the food bank, Larkhall and District Volunteer Group, Larkhall Men's Shed, CHAS and Guide Dogs for the Blind.

A great big thank you to you all!

Anne McHolm

Digital Dalserf Community

I felt able to reconnect with my faith

Hi, my name is Anne and I have been worshipping online with Dalserf for quite some time and have also watched all the previous services online and find it a blessing. It has allowed me to reconnect with the word of God after drifting away from the church because of a minister whose behaviour did not reflect Christian values.

I have always had a strong family/church connection since baptism and I always had faith. Then 7 years ago I lost my younger daughter to a brain tumour and I definitely felt lost and questioned my faith.

However after some time I knew there was something missing from my life and started watching various online church services until I came across Dalserf and Fiona preaching and tuned in the following week then the next until it is my must do on a Sunday morning and I felt able to reconnect with my faith.

Fiona reminds us that even when things go wrong, God's love remains constant and I cling on to that and feel online worship has a lot to offer... and the children are so informative and entertaining.

Anne Bonneyman



Remembering Ann Carson

Ann Carson, who was born in Law Village on 11 February 1937, passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by love, on 26 October 2026, aged 89.

Ann devoted an extraordinary 43 years to nursing, 29 of them serving the people of Lanarkshire. Her career took her from the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow to further training and experience in London, Leicester and Glasgow.

Ann eventually became Supervisor of Community Nurses and Midwives, retiring as Health Centre Manager at Carluke. Nursing was more than a career for Ann; it was a vocation, and her compassion and dedication touched countless lives.

Ann celebrated 60 years of marriage to her beloved husband Tom this year. Their life together was filled with love, laughter, dancing, travel and many happy memories. She also treasured her lifelong friendship with Moyra, which spanned 67 years, and the special relationships she shared with family and friends.
Faith was an important part of Ann's life. Having been baptised at Law Parish Church, she later became a member of Dalserf Church, where she faithfully served as an Elder for 25 years, stepping down only last year. She was greatly respected and valued by those she served.

Ann will be remembered as a kind, practical, honest and sharp-witted lady, with a wonderful sense of humour and an answer for everything. Above all, she was deeply loved. Her life was one of service, faith and friendship, and her presence will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Ladies from Hamilton Mosque visit Dalserf

On Saturday 12 September, I, along with other ladies from Dalserf Church, was delighted to welcome ladies from Hamilton Mosque. We began in the church, where Fiona told our visitors about our church and its history. She also explained how we worship on a Sunday. Janet Callander spoke about our Guild and the work that it does.

We then went over to Hamilton Hall, where the ladies were given stones to paint and take home with them. The usual treat of tea and home baking was served.

Fiona has since received a letter saying how much the ladies enjoyed their time with us. They have kindly invited the Dalserf ladies to visit the mosque soon.

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting them and am looking forward to seeing them again when we visit. What I took from their visit was how much we have in common, even though we worship God in different ways.

Rae Hunter



Supporting the life and work of Dalserf Church

"Freely you have received, freely give." Matthew 10:8
Thank you to everyone who supports Dalserf Parish Church. Your generosity, through your giving, your skills and your time, helps sustain our worship, care for our buildings and support our ministry within the parish.



Dalserf Treasurer
Margaret Baillie

As we look ahead, we face a significant financial challenge. We have been advised that our contribution to **the Church of Scotland's Giving to Grow scheme will be around £74,000, compared with £54,000 this year. This is an increase of £20,000**, alongside our continuing commitments to staff, building costs and the work of our church.
With costs rising, I would ask everyone to prayerfully consider their giving and, if circumstances allow, whether they could increase their contribution. We know that household budgets are under pressure too, and we are grateful for every gift, whatever its size.

Ways to give

Standing order

A standing order is our preferred method of regular giving. It is convenient for you and provides a steady income that helps the church plan ahead. You choose the amount and how often you give. Please speak to me if you would like a form or further details.

Sunday offerings and envelopes

Offerings can be placed in the collection plates during Sunday worship. If you prefer, you can join our Freewill Offering Envelope Scheme and receive a supply of numbered envelopes for your cash or cheque donations. Please make cheques payable to Dalserf Parish Church.
White Gift Aid envelopes are also available in the pews or from me.

One-off gifts and bank transfers

One-off donations are always welcome. If you would like to make a gift, including by bank transfer, please speak to me or one of the elders. Gifts may also be made anonymously.

Making your gift go further

Gift Aid

If you are eligible for Gift Aid, the church can reclaim an **extra 25p for every £1 you donate**, at no additional cost to you. You simply need to complete a Gift Aid declaration.

To qualify, you must pay enough UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the relevant tax year to cover the Gift Aid claimed on all your donations to charities. Please let us know if your circumstances change and you no longer pay enough tax. Forms and further information are available from me.


Dalserf Parish Church
Gift Aid Declaration & Standing Order Form
Charity Number: SC 016156
Gift Aid allows the Church to reclaim tax on your donation at no extra cost to you.
Donor Details
Title:
Surname:
First name(s):
Home address:
Postcode:
Gift Aid Declaration
Please tick ONE box:
I want to Gift Aid this donation

Other Ways to Give

Our Gift Day

We plan to hold a Gift Day in March, offering an opportunity to make a special contribution over and above our regular giving. It is a chance to reflect on God's generosity to us and respond as we are able. Further details will follow.

Supporting Dalserf as you shop

You can also help raise funds through easyfundraising. Participating retailers, for example Amazon, make a donation to the church when you shop through the easyfundraising website or app, at no extra cost to you.

To get started, register free at:
https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/dalserf-parish-church/

Then begin your shopping through easyfundraising, choosing your retailer before making your purchase. It is a simple way to support Dalserf through purchases you were already planning to make.

Remembering Dalserf in your will

A gift to Dalserf Parish Church in your will can help support its mission and ministry for future generations. If this is something you are considering, thank you for remembering the church in this thoughtful way.

Other income and charitable giving

Our investments also provide income through interest and dividends. Alongside this, fundraising activities such as the Saturday Teas support specific charities, with the money raised held for those causes and distributed annually.

Thank you for all that you contribute to the life of Dalserf. Every offering, practical task and hour freely given is valued.

If you have any questions about giving or the church's finances, please speak to me or any of the elders.

Margaret Baillie - Dalserf Treasurer

Scanning this QR code to sign up for easyfundingraising, particularly useful if you use your phone to shop.

Support Dalserf Kirk's Ministry

If you would like to support the worship, ministry and outreach of Dalserf Parish Church, you can make a donation by bank transfer. Every gift helps us continue our work in this community.

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Bible & Christmas Carol Study:

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel - Hope in the waiting

By December, darkness settles early over the Clyde Valley. Curtains are drawn, lamps are switched on, and the lights of a Christmas tree in a window can make home feel wonderfully welcoming. But Christmas lights cannot brighten every corner of our lives. Worries, loneliness and grief can remain, even when everyone around us seems to be celebrating.

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" gives us words for that mixture of longing and hope. Its haunting melody allows us to acknowledge the darkness, while its joyful refrain reminds us that God has not forgotten us.

An ancient prayer

Although often sung among Christmas carols, this is an Advent hymn, preparing us for Christ's coming. Its roots lie in ancient Christian prayers known as the "O Antiphons", each addressing the promised Messiah through a biblical title. John Mason Neale translated a Latin form of the hymn into English in the nineteenth century.
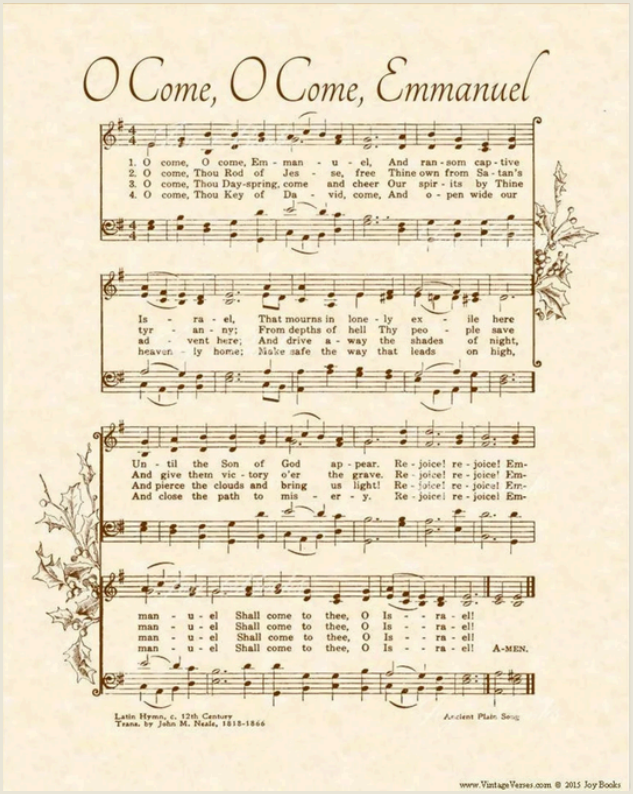
These titles are more than beautiful poetry. They help us understand who Jesus is and why his coming matters.

Emmanuel: God with us

Matthew 1:22-23

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

In Matthew 1:23, the Gospel connects Jesus' birth with Isaiah's promise of a child called Immanuel, meaning "God with us".



Joseph receives this assurance in the middle of his uncertainty. His plans have been overturned, and the future looks very different from the one he expected. God's message does not explain every difficulty, but it gives him a way forward.

We, too, may approach Christmas carrying unanswered questions. Emmanuel assures us that God enters the realities of human life. In Jesus, he shares our vulnerability, knows our sorrow and draws near to us.

God's presence does not depend on our having a peaceful home, a happy family gathering or everything neatly organised. He is with us in the life we actually have.

The Root of Jesse: hope from a stump

Isaiah 11:1-3
A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord
— and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

Isaiah 11 begins with an unexpected picture: a new shoot growing from a tree stump. Jesse was the father of King David, and the passage looks towards a ruler from David's family, filled with God's Spirit and committed to justice.

A stump suggests something cut down, perhaps like the Sycamore Gap tree that was cut down and thought of as finished. But like that tree that grew new shoots so God promises new growth.



That is a powerful Advent image. We may look at a damaged relationship, a weary community or our own faltering faith and see little possibility of change. Isaiah invites us to leave room for God's renewing work.

The promised ruler judges fairly and defends the poor. Christian hope therefore shapes our actions.

We too can nurture new growth when we offer forgiveness, support someone struggling or speak up for a person whose voice is overlooked.

Dayspring: light for our path

Luke 1:78-79
because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

The old word "Dayspring" means the dawn. In Luke 1:78–79, Zechariah speaks of God's tender mercy bringing light to those living in darkness and guiding our feet towards peace.

Dawn usually arrives gradually. The landscape becomes clearer a little at a time.

Faith can feel like that. We may receive enough light for today through a passage of Scripture, a quiet prayer or the kindness of another person. We do not always see the whole road, but we can take the next faithful step.

At Dalserf, we can help others glimpse that light through a welcome, a phone call, a visit or an invitation to share in worship.

Questions for Reflection

- **Where do you most need the reassurance of God's presence this Advent?**
- **Where might God be nurturing new growth in your life?**
- **Whose Christmas could you brighten through a simple act of kindness?**

Prayer

Lord Jesus, Emmanuel, draw near to us in our waiting.
Bring hope where we feel discouraged,
light where we struggle to see,
and peace where we are troubled.
Help us recognise your presence and
share your love with others this Advent.
Amen.



Christmas Colour

When the mist hangs over the Clyde and it's dark before teatime, a splash of colour indoors is especially welcome. Two Christmas favourites, the poinsettia and the Christmas cactus, can brighten a room well into winter. Both like a bright spot, but they have rather different ways of telling us what they need.



Who killed the Poinsettia?

If you're buying a poinsettia on a chilly day, ask for it to be wrapped for the journey home. A plant that has been standing by a draughty shop door can start dropping its leaves a few days after you bring it home. Choose one that looks fresh and has plenty of green leaves below the coloured top. Those bright red parts are actually modified leaves called bracts. The tiny flowers are tucked in the middle.

At home, give it a bright spot in a comfortably warm room, away from the radiator and the draught from the front door. A windowsill that feels warm by day can get surprisingly cold behind closed curtains at night. Water when the surface of the compost just starts to feel dry, and let the pot drain before putting it back in its decorative cover. It's easy to miss a puddle collecting inside that festive foil.

You can keep a poinsettia for another year. The challenge is getting the colour back. In autumn it needs bright days and long, uninterrupted nights for several weeks. Even switching on the room light in the evening can interrupt the dark period, so a room that's rarely used after dusk can come in handy.

A Christmas cactus for years to come

A Christmas cactus comes from tropical forests, where it grows in dappled shade. Indoors, it likes bright, indirect light and regular watering while it's in bud or flower. Let any excess water drain away. If the buds drop before they open, check whether the plant is getting a blast of heat from a radiator by day or a cold draught at night.

Once the flowers fade, give it a rest in a slightly cooler spot and water less often, allowing the top of the compost to dry a little without letting the whole pot dry out. Return to regular watering in spring, then give it another cooler spell with less water in early autumn until you see new buds.

A Christmas cactus can live for years, and it's easy to grow a new plant from a cutting in spring. If you have an old favourite, why not pot up a cutting for someone at church? You might find yourself passing on the story of who gave you yours, too.





Naturally Dalserf

A Winter Welcome for Wild Birds.

Across the Clyde Valley, bare branches make birds easier to spot. Yet winter brings a challenge: finding enough food during short days to survive long, cold nights. How can we help?

Who's Visiting?

Our gardens can offer help, whether we have a large plot or space for just one feeder. Robins, blackbirds, blue tits, great tits and chaffinches are familiar visitors. Goldfinches bring flashes of red and gold, while long-tailed tits may arrive in a lively little flock. Near woodland, watch for a great spotted woodpecker or a nuthatch.



One particularly striking local bird is the male bullfinch.

What's on the Menu?

What should we offer our feathered neighbours? Sunflower hearts suit many tits and finches, while nyjer seed may attract goldfinches and siskins. Suet balls or blocks provide valuable energy, and mealworms appeal to robins. Buy peanuts guaranteed free from aflatoxin from a reputable supplier, offering them only in a rigid metal mesh feeder. Remove nylon netting from fat balls, as birds can become tangled.

Feed Safely, Feed Seasonally

The RSPB has updated its guidance: seeds and peanuts should now be offered only from 1 November to 30 April. This aims to reduce trichomonosis, a disease which has badly affected finches. Winter feeding remains helpful, especially during cold spells.

Keep It Clean

The RSPB now also advises against bird tables and other flat feeding surfaces, where contaminated food can collect. Choose hanging feeders that keep food dry and are easy to clean. Place them somewhere sheltered, with nearby escape cover, but away from hiding places where cats could ambush birds.

Offer only enough seed or peanuts to be eaten within one or two days. Remove old food before refilling. Clean and disinfect feeders weekly, rinse thoroughly and allow them to dry. Wear gloves, clean outdoors and wash your hands afterwards. Clear fallen food and droppings, and move feeders weekly.

Provide a bird bath only if you can change the water daily, disinfect it weekly and keep it ice-free.

Let Nature Lend a Hand

Help also grows naturally. Berry-bearing shrubs, ivy, hedges and seedheads supply food and shelter. A less tidy corner supports insects for birds to find.

For our church community, caring for these small neighbours is a simple expression of care for creation. It also invites us to pause. Put the kettle on, look out of the window and see who arrives. A flutter of wings reminds us how much beauty is close at hand.

Recipe Page

Share Your Favourite Recipes!

Have you a much-loved recipe that deserves to be shared? We are putting together a new Dalserf Church recipe book, our first since 2007, and we would love you to contribute.

Our bakers are rightly renowned for their fabulous cakes and biscuits, but we are also looking for soups, main courses, puddings and preserves. Whether yours is a treasured family dish or a simple everyday favourite, it will help make this a collection to savour.

Please include your name and, if you wish, a short story or family tradition connected with your recipe. A photograph of the finished dish would be lovely too.

There are three easy ways to contribute:

- WhatsApp: Photograph your recipe and send it to 07471 077920.
- On paper: Write it out and hand it to Anne McHolm, Margaret Baillie or any elder.
- Email: Send your recipe as a Word document to dalserf@mail.com.
-

The deadline is 14th January, but why wait? Send yours while it is fresh in your mind! Together, let's celebrate the food, friendship and memories shared around Dalserf's tables.





Clootie Scones - Lily Budgell

Makes 26 large scones

Ingredients
900 g self-raising flour
255 g margarine
225 g caster sugar
1 apple, grated
100 g sultanas
100 g currants
2 tablespoons treacle
4 teaspoons mixed spice
4 eggs
Enough milk to bind the dough together

Method
Preheat the oven to 180°C and lightly flour a baking tray.
Put the flour in a large bowl and rub in the margarine with your fingertips until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.
Stir in the sugar, grated apple, sultanas, currants, treacle and mixed spice.
Add the eggs and mix, then add the milk a little at a time until the mixture comes together into a soft dough.
Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, roll it out and cut into rounds with a large scone cutter.
Place the scones on the prepared tray and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until risen and golden brown.

I hope that you enjoy them!



Ceilidh-Take My Hand and We'll Go Dancing

....and our Dalserf dancers certainly gave it laldy at our 2nd Annual Ceilidh on Friday 9th October. Wheechin and jigging to the fabulous Frank Morrison's Scottish Dance Band and Janette Foster from Country Bake providing the scran and treats. Many thanks to these wonderful people and to everyone who was involved in making this such an entertaining night. The event was well attended.





Generations of families came with auld and young acquaintances, to gather in friendship and the spirit of love. The hall was filled with warmth and happiness. Little Elliot could show us a step or two. Alix and sister Jocelyn took their partners reeling round the room.
It was a grand night.

Rose Macgregor

Ceilidh
Glad you enjoyed it, Rose. It was so good Robert Wilson has arranged another one for January.
So if you enjoyed the last one or missed out, watch out for tickets being sold by Robert.

Editor



DIARY FOR DECEMBER

Thursday	3rd	10.00am	Laughs & Crafts at Rorison Hall
Thursday	3rd	6.30pm	Boys Brigade at Rorison Hall
Thursday	3rd	7.00pm	Christmas Memorial Service at Cooperative Funeral Parlour
Monday	7th	6.30pm	Hansel & Gretel Children's Pantomime at Rorison Hall
Tuesday	8th	12.30pm	Guild Christmas Lunch at Carluke Bowling Club
Wednesday	9th	10.00am	Netherburn Primary Christmas Service at Dalserf Church
Wednesday	9th	7.15pm	Guild at Rorison Hall with Kenny Maison & Friends
Thursday	10th	6.30pm	Boys' Brigade at Rorison Hall
Sunday	13th	11.30am	Boys' Brigade Battalion Parade at Dalserf Church
Monday	14th	7.00pm	Girls Brigade Coffee and Carols at Rorison Hall
Thursday	17th	10.00am	Dalserf Primary Christmas Service at Dalserf Church
Sunday	20th	11.30am	Family Nativity Service at Dalserf Church
Thursday	24th	2.00pm	Christmas Service at Ashlea Court
Thursday	24th	11.30pm	Watchnight Service at Dalserf Church
Friday	25th	10.30am	Christmas Morning Service
Sunday	27th	11.30 am	Readings and Carols Service





DIARY FOR JANUARY

Sunday	3rd	11.30am	Sunday Service at Dalserf Church
Wednesday	13th	7.15pm	Guild at Rorison Hall, Business Meeting and Bring & Buy
Wednesday	27th	7.15pm	Guild at Rorison Hall- Robert Nimmo
Friday	29th	7.00pm	Dalserf Ceilidh at Rorison Hall

Boys Brigade, Girls' Brigade, Community Choir, Youth Choir and Laughs and Crafts at usual times

DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

Wednesday	10th	7.15pm	Guild at Rorison Hall
Wednesday	17th	7.30pm	"Feeding the Five Thousand"
Sunday	21st	7.00pm	Songs of Praise in the Valley at Dalserf with "Arietta Choir"
Wednesday	24th	7.15pm	Guild at Rorison Hall

Boys Brigade, Girls' Brigade, Community Choir, Youth Choir and Laughs and Crafts at usual times





Church of Scotland Guild

Dalserf Parish Church Guild

Rorison Church

Ashgill

ML9 3AF

A warm welcome awaits all.

What's on at Dalserf Guild

Wednesday 9th December at 7.15pm
Kenny Maison & Friends

Wednesday 13th January at 7.15pm
Business Meeting and Bring & Buy

Wednesday 27th January at 7.15pm
Robert Nimmo

Wednesday 10th February at 7.15pm
Bible for Bairns

Wednesday 24th February at 7.15pm
Smile Children's Charity

A Snapshot of Dalserf



Puzzle Page

D	A	L	S	E	R	F
B	L	E	S	S	E	D
S	E	L	F	I	S	H

CLUE – Jesus, the promised...

The Dalserf Cipher

Use the key below to solve the Dalserf Cipher message.
The message is from Psalm 31 verse 2.

L	I	T	A	M	Z	N
D	A	L	S	E	R	F

J	M		U	G		Z	W	K	S		W	N			
Z	M	N	C	O	M		I		A	B	Z	W	V	O	
N	W	Z	B	Z	M	A	A		B	W		A	I	D	W
U	M														

All the right letters in the wrong places!
Fill the spaces above with the letters directly below to get a Bible verse from 2 Chronicles 20.

D	H	E	D	B	A	B	B	E	E	A	F	D	A	I	D	O	R
O	O	U	N	I	S	C	O	L	R	A	G	E	D	N	F	T	
T	O		R	O	T	T	T	T		G	I	R	S		O		
Y	R			S			U	U			O	S					

Cipher Help

A	S
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	
H	
I	A
J	
K	
L	D
M	E
N	F
O	
P	
Q	
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U	
V	
W	
X	
Y	
Z	R

Youth Work

Boys' Brigade

How would you tell the story of Noah and the Ark using just three emojis? That was the challenge for our Junior Section one evening this autumn. Each boy was dealt a handful of emoji cards and asked to choose up to three to help tell the story. The boys enjoyed deciding which parts to include, and it gave everyone a chance to join in.

We welcomed several new recruits when our session began in September. We now have 14 boys on the roll, with around 10 attending each week. Five of our regulars are in the Junior Section, where another highlight was a visit from church elder Graeme McCulloch. Graeme brought along pre-cut parts and put his teaching skills to good use, showing the boys how to assemble their model cars. It was an evening everyone enjoyed. Thank you, Graeme, for coming along to help.

Our Anchor Boys have been keeping busy with team games and crafts. As Remembrance Sunday approached, they drew poppies on cards headed 'Give thanks'. Making the cards gave us a chance to talk with the boys about why we wear poppies and remember those who lost their lives in war.

There's still plenty to look forward to before we finish for the year, with the church pantomime and our own Christmas party to come. From all of us at the Boys' Brigade, we wish everyone at Dalserf a happy Christmas and New Year.
Hugh McGregor
Captain

Sunday School



There's a lovely sense of fun, friendship and learning at our Sunday School. Seven children come along regularly, and it's a pleasure to see them enjoying their time together.

Our Sunday School is run by church volunteers, and each session complements the children's address during the Sunday service. The activities help bring Bible stories to life and give the children a chance to put what they hear into practice by being kind, sharing and working together.

Crafts are a particular favourite, and the children love showing the congregation what they've made. It's especially lovely to see them working on a group project, sharing ideas and then spotting their finished work on display in the church.

Helping at Sunday School is rewarding for the volunteers, too. The children's enthusiasm is infectious, and they often help us see a familiar Bible story in a fresh way.

We'd love to welcome a few more volunteers. Everyone has something to offer, and helping out is a lovely way to share your time and talents, learn from one another and get to know the children and families of Dalserf Church.
Janet Callander

Inspiration, Achievement and Festive Cheer at Girls' Brigade



Commissioning Celebration

We were delighted to celebrate the commissioning of Karyn Scotland and Ellie Rodger as leaders in 1st Dalserf Girls' Brigade. Both also received their Queen's Award, the highest award achievable in Girls' Brigade. Congratulations to you both on this wonderful achievement. We are very proud of you!

Our session began on Monday 7th September, and it was lovely to welcome everyone back, alongside seven new members: five Explorers and two Brigaders.

Inspirational Women

This year's theme is Inspirational Women, with a special focus on women in the Bible. It will link activities across all four areas of our badgework: Educational, Service, Spiritual and Physical.

Several visitors will help us explore the theme. Fitness instructor Anne introduced the girls to circuit training and explained the importance of keeping active. Some activities were challenging, but everyone was willing to give them a go!

Shannon also visited to introduce the new Youth Choir. The Explorers enjoyed singing games, while the Juniors and Brigaders sang familiar songs with some fun actions.

Renewing Our Commitment

Our Rededication Service took place on Monday 5th October. The girls did a wonderful job singing "Our God Is a Great Big God". Thank you to everyone who joined us and supported the girls.



Looking Ahead to Christmas

For our themed fun night, the girls will dress as something beginning with the same letter as their first name. We look forward to seeing the imaginative ideas the girls and their parents devise!

On Sunday 29th November, we will sing at the Ashgill Christmas lights switch-on. Please come along to support us and join in some festive favourites.

Our Coffee and Carol Evening takes place on Monday 14th December in Rorison Hall. Everyone is welcome to bring their singing voices and enjoy fellowship and festive cheer.

It promises to be a lovely way to finish the year together and share something of the joy of Christmas with our church family, friends and local community.

Entry will be by donation, with proceeds going to charity. As part of their badgework, the Brigaders are researching charities before choosing which one to support. This gives them an opportunity to learn about others' needs and make a difference.

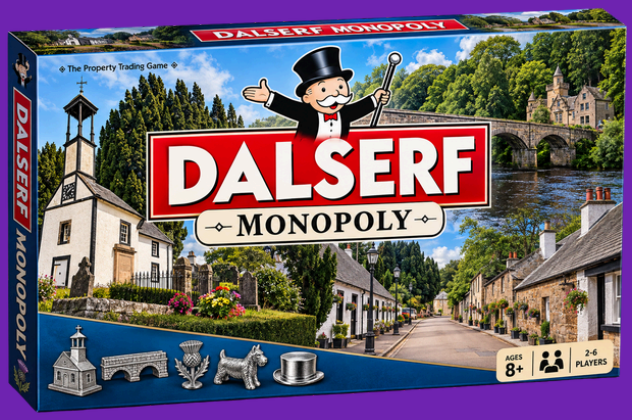
Thank you for your continued encouragement and support of 1st Dalserf Girls' Brigade.

Sarah-Jane

Leader in Charge

Dalserf Kids' Zone

The Great Dalserf Christmas Toy Hunt!



Christmas lists have changed a lot over the last 40 years! From RubiK's Cubes and Care Bears to Game Boys, Furbies and games consoles, every generation seems to have had that one special toy everyone wanted for Christmas.

In the magazine we have hidden eight popular Christmas toys from over the years for you to find. And while you're searching, why not ask someone older or younger than you: "What was the toy you really wanted for Christmas?"
You might discover that our Christmas lists have changed enormously, but the fun of Christmas, sharing memories and being together never gets old.
And remember, the greatest Christmas gift didn't come wrapped in shiny paper. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. And that is a gift we can share in all year round.

Challenge

We've hidden pictures of eight famous Christmas toys somewhere in this magazine. Do you know what they are and can you find them all?

But watch carefully. Some might be hiding in very unexpected places!



Rubik's Cube, Care Bear, Game Boy, Tamagotchi, Furby, Nintendo Wii, Minecraft LEGO and squishmallow.

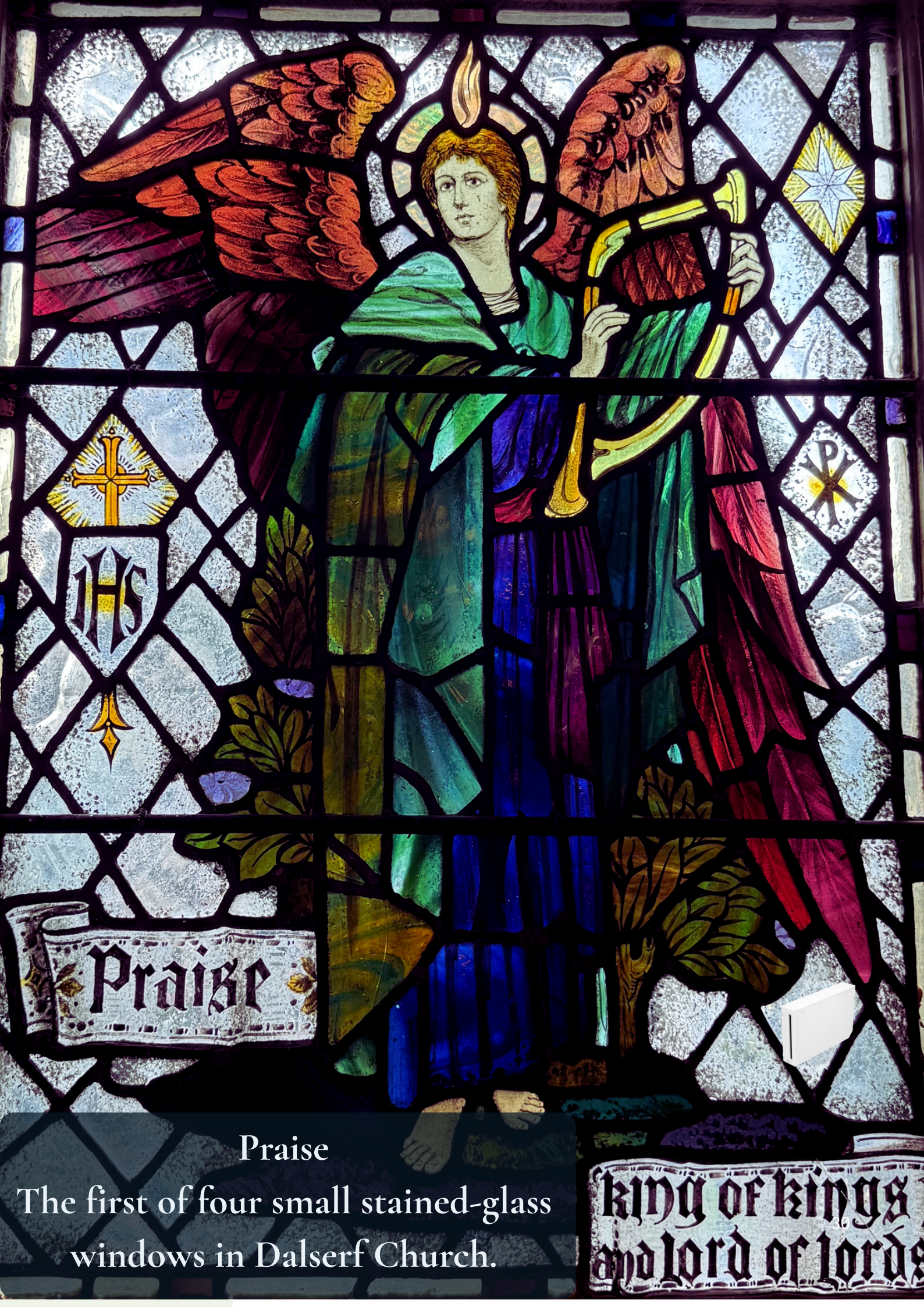


Elizabeth's Story

"Hello! My name is Elizabeth, and I want to tell you about the day Mary came knocking at my door.
But first, I need to tell you something about me.
My husband Zechariah and I had wanted a baby for many years, but we had never been able to have one. We were getting old and had given up hope. Then something incredible happened. An angel told Zechariah that we were going to have a son!
We were to call him John.
Six months later, I heard someone arriving at our home. It was my young relative, Mary, who had travelled all the way from Nazareth to see me.
"Elizabeth!" she called.
At the moment I heard Mary's voice, something extraordinary happened. The baby inside me leapt for joy!
Suddenly, I understood. God was doing something even more wonderful than the miracle He had already given Zechariah and me.
Mary was going to have a baby too.
But her child would be very special indeed.
"Blessed are you among women," I told her, "and blessed is the child you will have!"
Mary stayed with me for about three months. Can you imagine the conversations we must have had? Two women, both expecting babies that nobody had expected, wondering what God had planned for our children.
My son John grew up to prepare people for the coming of Jesus. But Mary's baby was the one we had all been waiting for.
Jesus, God's Son.
At Christmas, you might think the most important people are those with the biggest presents, the brightest decorations or the best Christmas parties.
I learned something different.
God's greatest gift arrived through an ordinary young woman who trusted Him.
And my little baby recognised Jesus before either of them had even been born!"

So, among all the excitement this Christmas, remember what made that first Christmas so special.
God was keeping His promise. Jesus was coming, and even before His birth there was joy because He was near.

Rev Fiona



Praise

The first of four small stained-glass windows in Dalserf Church.

Dalserf Church



Locum Minister
Rev Fiona Anderson
fanderson@churchof
scotland.org.uk



Session Clerk
Janet Callander
sessionclerk@dalserf.org



Treasurer
Margaret Baillie
dalserf@mail.com



Property Convener
Robert Wilson
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Safeguarding
Coordinator
Hugh McGregor
safeguarding@dalserf.org



Presbytery Elder
Tom Anderson
presbyteryelder@dalserf.org

Dalserf Church Notice Board

We regretfully announce the sad death of Ann Carson, an Elder here at Dalserf for 25 years. Please keep her husband Tom and the rest of the family in your prayers.

We are delighted to welcome Jim Young, Ruth Wilson, Christine Lindsay and Robert Lindsay into membership.

Dalserf Parish Church Flower Rota		
Date	Name	Event
06 December 2026	Lee Nimmo	
13 December 2026	Rae Hunter	
20 December 2026	Rev Fiona Anderson	Nativity
27 December 2026	Janet Callander	
03 January 2027	Liz Lawson	
10 January 2027	Sheena Archibald	
17 January 2027	Tom Carson	
24 January 2027	Helen Forrest	
31 January 2027	Beatie Anderson	
07 February 2027	Mrs J Gilchrist	
14 February 2027	Mrs M Paterson	
21 February 2027	Bert Gold	
28 February 2027	John Wilson	
07 March 2027	Margaret Baillie	
14 March 2027	Joan Polock	
21 March 2027	Janette Gouldie	Palm Sunday
28 March 2027	Mrs M Watt	Easter Sunday

Dalserf Church & Hamilton Hall
Dalserf Church Officer
& Hamilton Hall Bookings
Norah McGuikin
0795 5856326

Rorison Hall
Church Officer
& Rorison Hall Bookings
Anne McHolm
mcholmanne3@gmail.com
01698 886658

Church Musical Director
Shannon Kilday

Roll Keeper
Hazel Blair

Flowers
Lily Budgell

Digital Dalserf

As well as our website www.dalserf.org you will find us at...

YouTube

Dalserf Church's YouTube channel shares live and recorded weekly worship services, helping people stay connected with our church wherever they are.



Facebook

Dalserf Church's Facebook page shares worship, news, events and encouragement, connecting our church family and community throughout the week.



Instagram

Dalserf Church's new Instagram Site will allow you to keep up to date with what is happening at Dalserf and also get regular messages of Christian joy and love.



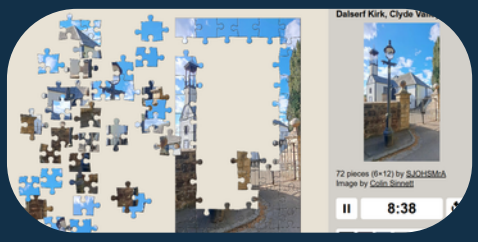
TikTok

Dalserf Church's new TikTok page shares short, engaging glimpses of church life, faith, events and community, bringing Dalserf's message to a new audience.



Jigidi

Dalserf Church's Jigidi puzzles offer a fun way to connect with the church, with puzzles linked through our Facebook page and website.



...but you can't beat coming along to church and sharing in worship and fellowship!

Advent Readings

Join us throughout December for daily Advent readings on our social media pages as we journey together towards Christmas.

