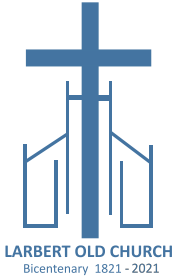




Larbert Old Church



Spring Bulletin 2023



**Joint Communion
at Larbert East
Sunday 5th March
10:30am**

~ The Blessings of Spring ~

There are many blessings,
that each new Spring brings
you can see it bloom about
and hear the song it sings.

With winters bleakness over,
and brighter days ahead
comes promises of new life
Springtime loves to spread.

As God unfolds the flowers,
and their buds begin to show
He gives to us the assurance
grace in our hearts will grow.

He sends us the robin's song,
with the promise to provide
a shelter under His mighty wing
where in His love we can abide.

He melts the snowy covers,
and sends the refreshing rain
sprinkling us with His mercies
to heal winter's ache and pain.

God's given to all His Son,
to shed upon us a new light
and the real blessing of Spring . . .
is keeping Jesus in our sight!



MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERIM MODERATOR WALTER WILLIAMSON MBE

My dear friends, in 1982 an American rock band called "Survivor" wrote a song called the "Eye of the Tiger". It became the theme song for the 1982 motion picture Rocky 3, starring Sylvester Stallone. In it are these words "Rising up to the challenge". The story revolves around Rocky who has had a string of ten successful title defences but is now faced with a new and younger opponent. Rocky eventually overcomes and wins the second match against Lang the younger opponent.

This story reminds me of us at Larbert Old "rising to the challenge". We are now in our first year of becoming part of the newly formed Forth Valley and Clydesdale Presbytery. This new Presbytery has been faced with the challenge of carrying out a Mission Plan for the whole of its footprint which includes the previous Falkirk, Hamilton and Lanark Presbyteries, and has as its Presbytery Clerk, the Rev. Julie Rennick, former minister at Larbert West.

Over the next coming weeks and months, we will be faced with having to rise to the challenge of what the shape of the future of the church in the Larbert area will look like. Clearly changes will be made. No longer will six churches in our area continue to be a part of this community as they were. No longer will we have ministers at each of the churches and no longer will six church buildings continue to exist.

What lies ahead of us, remains uncertain. Will our beloved church remain as a place of worship? Will we see a union of one or more churches? Will we be able to continue to serve the community that uses our halls?

At the time of writing this, I simply do not know. However, what I do know is that like Sylvester Stallone in Rocky 3, the team of Margaret Hall, Joanna Stevenson, Eric Appellbe and Iain Scoular will do their utmost to engage and actively involve themselves in consultation during the period of forming a mission plan and forensically examine all possibilities and opportunities to ensure they will do everything possible to put a case together that will ensure Larbert Old Church remains a thriving, community orientated part of God's church for the future.

What can you, the congregation do? Quite simply you need to pray for the team, give them your support and reassure them that they are acting in the best interest of Larbert Old church.

Janis and I wish you all the very best wishes for 2023 and we hope for a year that reconciles some of the unrest our country is going through at this time.

Every blessing to you and yours.

Walter



WORDS FROM THE MANSE

Hello from Bonnyside,

The last time I sat down to write an article for the Church Bulletin we were looking forward to Advent and all the excitement of Christmas. Now here we are at the beginning of another year with the season of Lent approaching and looking forward to the celebration of Easter.

This time of the year is always a time of new things and looking forward. The changing seasons from winter into spring is one of my favourite times. As new growth starts to spring from the ground, the shoots are through on the daffodils, crocuses and snowdrops and they herald the return of new life in what has been a dormant garden here in Bonnyside. Of course, this too signals the need for the work to commence in getting the garden ready, clearing the vegetable patch, sorting the greenhouse, readying the trays for the seeds and of course removing all the dead wood and weeds. This year Leslie-Ann is embarking on a new venture, an Allotment! With her new-found love of gardening borne out of the years of Covid, she has been able to negotiate a space in the Church Allotments and is excitedly making plans to grow more vegetables and fruit there. We are very fortunate to be able to be alongside some experienced gardeners, Jim and Mary, Eric and Margaret, Bill and Margaret and the Iain's, all of whom have a proven track record in growing. We have so much to learn and the folks at the Allotments have already been so kind in offering help and advice.

Our Life as Christians we can learn a lot from gardens and allotments. I read this quote the other day, “Be in your garden, and your garden will teach you everything”. It may not teach us everything but it certainly will help us develop in our Christian life. Here’s a few thoughts:

“Gardening makes you slow down”

There’s nothing like waiting for seeds to sprout out of the soil, then waiting for those seedlings to grow into mature plants, and then finally for those plants to bear fruit you can eat. It doesn’t happen overnight. In a world that keeps promising that we can have whatever we want whenever we want, gardening is a constant reminder that good things are worth waiting for. When it comes to the spiritual life, we don’t arrive all in one fell swoop. Healthy growth is slow. Gardening cultivates our patience. The seed packet tempers our expectations, that if all goes right, it will be a month, two months, three months before we see fruit. The same can be true of our spiritual disciplines. It may take months, even years, before we see the benefits of them.

“Gardening starts with the soil”

You don’t have healthy fruit without healthy plants. You don’t have healthy plants without healthy soil. Roots are crucial for a healthy plant. Sure, leaves are pretty, but it’s the unseen roots that determine how successful a plant may be. There’s a lesson there. What’s unseen, buried in dark, is the true measure of what our fruit will look like. Our own private devotional life can be the indicator of our ability to be peaceful, joyful, patient, Spirit-filled people.

As Paul writes to the Ephesians, “Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.”

Soil needs fertilizer. The best fertiliser is the footprints of the gardener, a person who cares and pays attention. The next best fertiliser is compost, the dead, useless and fruitless parts from last season. Pain, suffering, and wounds can, like compost, be what feeds new life in us. Plants may prove vulnerable to disease because of a lack of some nutrient in the soil. In the same way, if we continually find ourselves vulnerable to particular sins, is there something out of sync with our “soil,” that space that waters and nourishes our soul?

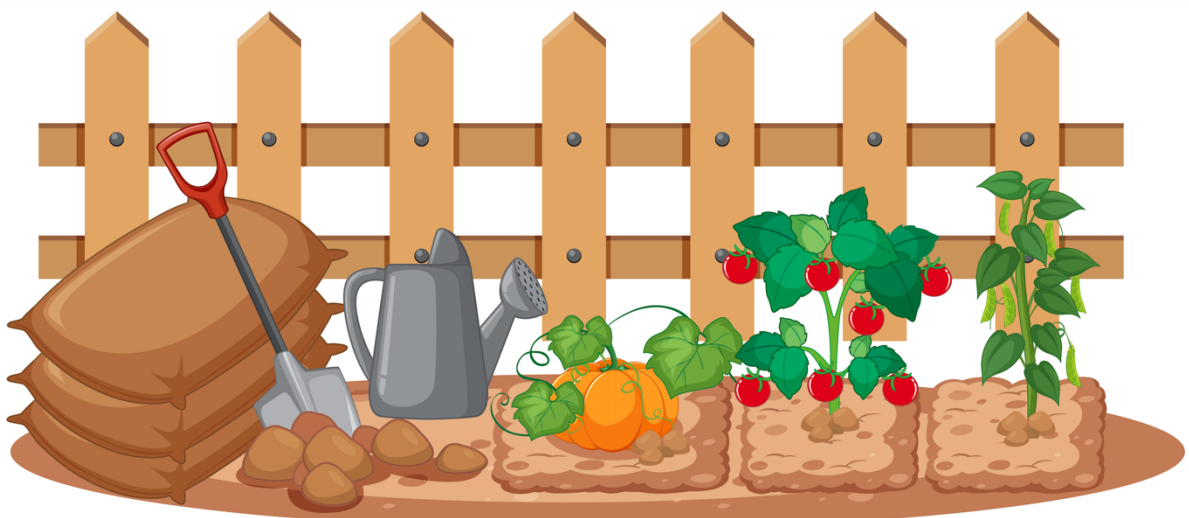
Gardening involves paying attention to diversity

A garden can be a wildly diverse place. Tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, beans, radishes, cabbages. Leafy greens and crunchy roots. Cool spring and autumn veggies and hot summer veggies. Plants that thrive in the sun and plants that need shade. Plants that need a lot of space and plants you can cluster close together. There are dozens of different varieties of tomatoes. But there's no one single strategy for growing everything.

Church community is certainly a diverse environment like our allotments. What grows for one of us may not grow for the rest of us. Prayer may be a practice that feeds my soul, but it might not yours. We're all unique, and our souls all respond to spiritual disciplines in different ways.

Gardening is good for the soul. It helps us slow down. It helps us pay attention. It helps us watch things grow. It helps us shape our imagination to see how we ourselves are growing deeper in the life of God. As we step into this new year in our Church I pray that whatever God grows in us will bring him a rich Harvest especially when we grow together.

Many Blessings
Iain



NEWS FROM THE KIRK SESSION

The main matter that has been exercising the Session has, of course, been the Presbytery Mission Planning Process and the implications for Larbert Old. You may be aware that the previous Presbytery Mission Planning Team resigned *en masse* and there is now a Mission Planning Action Group with different personnel from across the Presbytery in place.

The Larbert Old Session has met all its obligations with regard to responses to the Group and now awaits the outcome of the further Presbytery deliberations. The most recent step has been to identify clusters of churches willing to work together. That has proved difficult to progress in this area and while an appropriate response has been submitted from Larbert Old to Presbytery, the matter is by no means resolved.

It is understood that the number and positioning of ministry posts is to be calculated by Presbytery on the basis of population figures and financial contributions. Presbytery has now advised that they have consulted an independent statistician to have their calculations tried and tested. We await their conclusions.

In the meantime, we are required, amongst other things to identify what Larbert Old does under the 5 Marks of Mission viz;

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Session will continue to prayerfully consider each heading and provide an outline of those 5 marks as they impact on our church. Perhaps you have particular information that might provide some detail. If there is anyone who would like to contribute in any way to our deliberations, please do let me know.

Looking back at the Session minutes of meetings, did you know that in 2013 when the split took place 228 members of Larbert Old indicated they were not intending to leave the Church of Scotland. Despite all that has happened in the 10 years since then, the Roll Keeper has confirmed that as at 7th February 2023 we still have 218 members on the Communion Roll. The Roll has been reviewed and revised and not just Grace Church leavers have been removed. Given the doubts over the continuation of Larbert Old at that time, it is a magnificent achievement to still be here, after 10 years of vacancy and Guardianship, continuing to thrive as well as being financially sound with good facilities used by many in our local community.

Other matters before Session are reported in other parts of this Bulletin but you will want to know about a couple of matters that may not feature otherwise;

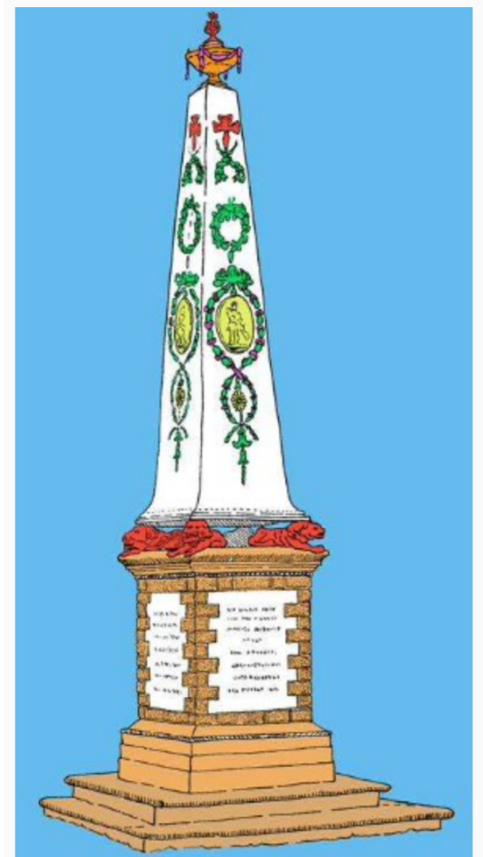
- Falkirk Council has let us know that planning permission and full funding has been secured to move and upgrade the Bruce Obelisk currently resident in the car park. The project is intended to commence at the end of March 2023.
- Larbert Old has been added to the Forth Valley Climate Action Network with a view to identifying any matters that should be actioned by us eg. sustainable building management, community engagement etc (Mark of Mission no. 5)

If you want to know more about the changing face of the church, there is an interesting interview with the Rev Dr Doug Gay, author of *Reforming the Church*, in the February issue of Life & Work. A photocopy can be made available or better still you could subscribe to L & W through our Convener, Joy Simpson

Eric Appelbe
Session Clerk

The Bruce Obelisk:
Innovation and
Symbolism in Cast Iron

<http://www.ourstoriesfalkirk.com/story/the-bruce-obelisk-innovation-and-symbolism-in-cast-iron>



MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

I hope our readers had a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas and New Year. As we start a new year and look ahead there is much in the news internationally as well as locally to concern us all. In addition, here at Larbert Old we are worried about what the future holds for our beloved church and congregation and for our ministry in the Larbert community.

So, I am happy to bring some good news about the positive and compassionate contribution Larbert Old is making. In December I made payments on behalf of our excellent Social Committee to help make a difference to people who are facing war, violence, hunger, and illness:

- £2,000 was sent to our partners in Ukraine to help to buy generators and stoves for the winter
- £500 was sent to KLSB in Stenhousemuir to help local families in need
- £500 was sent to CEA Ltd (Committed to Ending Abuse) to help victims of domestic abuse
- £500 was sent to Falkirk Foodbank
- £250 was sent to Maggie's Centre at Forth Valley Royal Hospital
- £250 was sent to Strathcarron Hospice

In addition to these donations, our Church collected retiral offerings of over £3,000 last year for a wide range of charitable organisations such as the Salvation Army, Strathcarron, Erskine Hospital, Edinburgh Direct Aid and Save the Children.

With your generous donations we have therefore been able to help so many people in need and I thank you on behalf of the Kirk Session for this. As I write, we are finalising our formal accounts for 2022. These will be presented to the congregation in due course following consideration and approval by the Kirk Session and our Independent Examiner David Neilson. In the meantime, I can report that our total income increased by 33% on 2021, amounting to £136,556. This was largely due to generous legacies left to us by former members and to community users of our halls during the year. Our offerings via standing order and envelopes have sadly fallen by 10%. Our expenditure increased by 6% on 2021. We fully repaid our loan to the Church of Scotland General Trustees and paid £43,416 in Ministries & Mission, Locum Minister costs and dues to Presbytery. Our monthly expenditure averages £6,000 so we need to maintain and indeed increase levels of giving for 2023. In addition, we plan to re-slate our hall roof this year so every penny counts!

We rely on the generosity of our members to further our ministry so I would politely ask, if you have not given in recent months, to reconsider. I am happy to receive donations by cheque or if you are able to set up a monthly standing order, we would be very grateful. Our bank details are provided below. If you can gift-aid your donation we can recover income tax so please let me know and I will send you a declaration form.

Thank you for your support.

Joanna Stevenson
Treasurer
Yew Bank
Central Park Avenue
Larbert FK5 4GR
Tel: 01324 570134

BANK DETAILS
Virgin Money
Larbert Old Church
82-66-04
50046083

COMMUNION SUNDAY 5th MARCH 10:30am AT LARBERT EAST CHURCH

As part of the 'ACross Larbert' initiative our forthcoming Communion on Sunday 5th March will be worshipping together in Larbert East Church starting at 10:30am. Please note there will be no service at Larbert Old that morning, Larbert East Church have live coverage of their service and the link will be posted on our on Facebook page and Website to allow anyone to view the service.



2nd LARBERT BOYS' BRIGADE



Dear All,

As I write this piece it is February 2023 which is an important year for 2nd Larbert Boys' Brigade Company as we will be 120 years old having been formed in 1903. Before anyone asks, the boys have, no I was not a founding member. In addition to this piece of history, we were also one of the founding members of the Falkirk & District Battalion.

I can remember back to our centenary year when a certain Eric Appelbe was the Company Captain. We adopted the slogan, for that year, of "a 100 for 100" seeking to have a hundred members in our hundredth year. The recruitment drive seemed to have worked and I believe the challenge was achieved. Every boy was given a mini football with the Boys' Brigade logo on it and the years 1903-2003. Well, we don't have a hundred members today and the ball might be a bit flat, but we are not burst. The Company carries on giving the boys life skills that we hope they will take with them on life's journey and make them the good citizens of the future.

The greatest asset we have is the staff and the fact that we can still see the funny side of things. On Saturday 28th January, Larbert Old hosted the Battalion's Anchor Boys Fun Day. 98 primary 1 – 3 boys were in attendance. It was mayhem. One of the activities laid on for them was a craft to make a spider. Lynne Whitfield and Isabel Lawton and two seniors were there with our boys. During craft time one lad turned and looked up at Lynne with a deadpan expression on his face was heard to say "I thought that this was to be a fun day". Perhaps he didn't like making spiders!

Since starting back after the Christmas holidays we have been busy in all sections trying out new skills and games. In the Juniors we celebrated Australia Day. Having done a bit of research on the internet, I found that a traditional game in Australia was to nibble on a biscuit to see if they could shape it into the outline of the country. This went down a treat and while Australia was not found, an empty packet of McVities Chocolate Digestives was!! Other brands are available.

The Company section have enjoyed playing a selection of games and quizzes based around television programmes all presented to them on PowerPoint. The technological age has arrived. We also found a set of carpet bowls and carpet and this proved a very popular activity and one we will repeat in the near future.

The Boys' Brigade programme is centered round six core activities and they apply no matter what section you are in. They are:- "Get Active" (games & sports), "Get Creative" (arts & crafts), "Get Adventurous" (outdoor activities), "Get Learning" (speaks for itself), "Get Involved" (community) and "Get into the Bible".

As this article is for the church magazine, I thought that I would end with something from "Get into the Bible" which really pleased me. The item was called the "Wise and Foolish Builders", the parable taken from Matthew 7 verses 24 – 27. The challenge was learn the passage, understand it and then retell the parable in a modern day context. There were four groups. Each came up with a different slant from football managers, rich and poor men, rogue builders and this last version, which I want to share with you all.

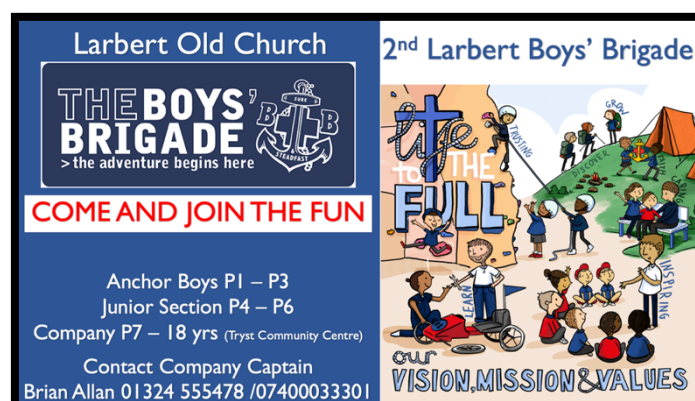
"Two people buy the same Lego house kit. One person reads the instructions and follows them because he knows that if he follows the instructions his house will be strong, safe and secure.

The other guy reads the instructions but doesn't follow them and thinks he can do it on his own. He finished the construction and as quickly as it was built it was destroyed because he thought he knew better."

Not bad in 10 minutes.

So, there you have it my summary of the Company's activities. As every officer is challenged to leave the boys having done or learned something new each week, I hope that this article has done the same for you.

Brian
2nd Larbert Boys' Brigade Captain



TEA AND COFFEE IN THE HALL AFTER SUNDAY WORSHIP

Tea and Coffee is now served in the Hall after the service on a Sunday Morning, please come over and join us for a chat and catch up. The children from the Sunday School have their own table for juice and biscuits.



Flowers continue to be placed in the Church every Sunday and then delivered to people by whom we consider flowers would be appreciated. It may be to signify a celebration, an anniversary or a bereavement or just to let someone know that we at Larbert Old are thinking about them, even if they are unable to come to church.

Please contact me if you know of anyone to whom a delivery would be welcomed.

Irene Coulthard 01236 824278 or 07802493440

COMMUNION ROLL

At the present time there are 218 people on the Communion Roll. Sadly, since the last bulletin 6 of our members have been called to Higher Service. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of the following:-

Mrs Janet Bell
Mr W Allan French
Mrs Isabel Webster
Mrs Rena Gray
Mrs Helen Robertson
Mrs Suzanne Colville

We are pleased to welcome three new members to Larbert Old – Mrs Janette Johnstone, Mrs Janine Turpie and Mrs Janice Wilson.

Mary Petrie (Roll Keeper)

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AROUND THE GROUNDS



Over the winter Kenny and his team have been working really hard to keep on top of all the little jobs needing to be undertaken. The new leaf blower has been well used, we have a lot of leaves to be collected, the car park, drains and gutters all gather leaves during the winter. The grass is looking as though it won't be long until it gets its first cut, and a huge amount of time has been spent clearing drains of built up leaves, you can see the before after photos of the drain before and now after it has been cleaned and a new cover fitted. Although we don't own the grounds in front of the railings, time has been spent making that area look maintained and smart. The next project is the area to the left as you come down the ramp to the car park.



Left side is drain cover prior to cleaning.

Right side is drain cleaned and cover refitted.



Two pictures of the area now cleared of leaves. A total of 8 builders bars were taken from this area below the sycamore trees.

Next task is to clear the moss from the low wall.



DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998

Retention of Membership Information- Fair Collection Notice

The Kirk Session of Larbert Old Church will use the personal details which members have provided to us for the purpose of administration in connection with their membership of the Church of Scotland in accordance with the decisions of Session and within the constraints laid down by the Acts and Regulations of General Assembly. Such information will not be given to anyone outside the structures of the Church of Scotland without permission.

The expression 'members' includes past and present members together with those persons, not being full members, who have indicated their wish to be associated with the activities of this Congregation. Minimal information may also be included in respect of the immediate family of members.

These personal details include personal identifiers such as names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and dates of adding to or removing from the Communion roll or any Supplementary Roll and may also include information regarding Givings. Some additional information may be held for the purposes of Safeguarding legislation. If a member wishes, for good reason, that some information remains confidential, they have a right to request that we preserve such confidentiality, provided that we are able to maintain contact with them through normal channels.

It is possible that some data held for pastoral purposes by the Minister or Elders falls into the category of sensitive data as defined in the Act. We will use this data only for the purpose of the Kirk Session's pastoral oversight of the members of the Congregation and will destroy it when our purpose with it has been served.

All information held by us is governed by the security, confidentiality and other Principles of Data Protection contained in the Act and members have the right under the Act to apply for a copy of their personal information and to have any inaccuracies corrected.

On behalf of the Kirk Session.



SOCIAL COMMITTEE

On Saturday 4th February Gordon Robertson returned to Larbert Old church halls to perform a tribute to Michael Bubl  and friends. It was a fantastic night of music, entertainment and dance! The night raised  1,500 for Ukraine. Thank you to everyone who supported this event: those who helped set up on Saturday, came along on Saturday night, donated prizes for the raffle and gave empty bottles for decorations. A huge thank you to Larbert Village Primary school for allowing us to borrow their staging.

Our next up and coming event is the Daffodil Tea which will be on Saturday 18th March at 2pm, more details will be announced nearer the time in church, on Facebook and our website.

Many thanks again for your contributions and support.

LARBERT OLD CHURCH HALLS

DAFFODIL TEA

Saturday 18th March

2pm

Entry by Donation



KNIT 'N' NATTER GROUP – TUESDAYS 1PM-3PM

Thank you to everyone who supported our stall at our Christmas Fayre in November. We were very grateful for donations of chocolates oranges, chocolates, wool, knitted items, some members, two of whom are in their nineties, and can't manage to come but still knit at home donated lovely items and last but certainly not least our customers! Many of whom are loyal and support us year after year!

We try hard to knit some new things and last year we added highland cows and Santa chocolate orange covers to our range and these were a sell out! Thanks go to Maddie and Sallie for most of these. We were asked for sheep and penguin chocolate orange covers so we will try to fulfill these requests!



We raised a fantastic £600 which was donated to charity. (See Joanna's article to which charities we have helped.)

At present scarves and hats continue to be knitted for this year's shoebox appeal. In November I managed to send over 20 shoeboxes for the Blythwood Appeal, with the help of many in our group and congregation who knitted scarves, hats and mitts! Lovely bags were also added to some boxes thanks to Sallie and her sewing machine!

Baby hats for Forth Valley hospital neonatal ward are frequently knitted throughout the year and Marlyn kindly hands in bundles from time to time. A letter of the hospital's appreciation is on the hall corridor notice board. Recently Sallie, Joy and Ann Ryder quickly (and expertly!), sewed some beautiful syringe driver bags for the Oncology Department when we heard of an urgent request. Squares have been (and continue to be knitted) to create blankets for various causes. Stirling women's aid group received our last blanket. Does anyone else know of charity or organisations who would value a blanket? Would anyone be willing to sew our knitted squares together? Either at home or at our group.

We have about twenty knitters who come along when they are able, I know knitting can be easily done at home but coming together as a group provides great fellowship as well as support and inspiration. So if you're able to knit, or even if you're not, why not come along on Tuesdays 1pm-3pm?

We hope to have a small stall at the Daffodil Tea on Saturday 18th March. Again, we value your suggestions, donations and of course custom! Thank you Susan 0798985895



What's on in our Church?

Our halls are really busy - please see the groups that run during the week and contact them through their own Facebook page, website, or direct message us on larbertoldcontact@gmail.com and we'll help you get in touch

YOUTH

Monday and Wednesday 9:30am – 11:30am – Playgroup
Wednesday Evening – Rainbows, Brownies and Guides
Thursday 9:30am – 11:30am – Mother and Toddlers
Friday Evenings – Boys' Brigade Anchors, Junior, and Company Section
Saturday Mornings – High School Math Tutoring

FITNESS GROUPS

Monday 7pm – 8pm Charley Masterton Yoga
Tuesday 10:30am – 11:30am – Physioled Pilates
Tuesday and Wednesday Afternoon – The Yoga Space with Laura
Tuesday 6:30pm – 7:15pm Pi-Yo with KMac Fitness
Tuesday 7:30pm – 9:30pm – D and E Dancing
Friday 11am-12pm Sweaty Mamas (starting March 2023)

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Monday and Tuesday evenings – Spanish Lessons
Tuesday Afternoon – 1pm – 3pm – Knit and Knatter
Thursday Afternoon 1-3pm – Auchenbowie Ladies (every second week)
Thursday Evening – Alcoholics Anonymous
Saturday 7:30am – 10:30am – Slimming World





<https://www.larbertoldchurch.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/LarbertOldChurch/>

<https://churchofscotland.org.uk/home>

Interim Moderator	Mr Walter Williamson.	Tel: 01506 823234
Locum Minister	Mr Iain Scoular	Tel: 07717 131596
Session Clerk	Mr Eric Appelbe	Tel: 01324 556551
Treasurer	Mrs. Joanna Stevenson	Tel: 01324 570134
Hall Convenor	Mrs Sallie Allan	Tel: 01324 555478

We wish to be righteous,
but often find it tough and
dangerous to be Your disciples
in a hostile and angry world.
Rescue us, we pray,
in our times of wavering
and lack of conviction.



Contact Details

<https://www.larbertoldchurch.org>

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<https://churchofscotland.org.uk/home>

