

ST. NINIANS OLD PARISH CHURCH

PARISHIONER

SUMMER 2026



Helpful Contacts

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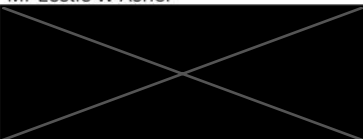
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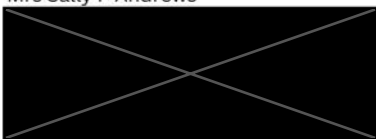
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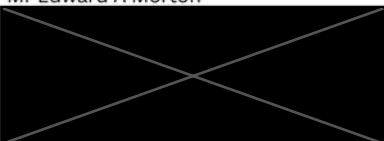
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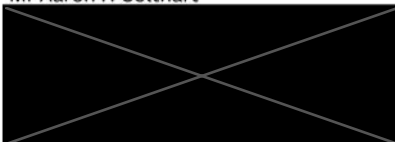
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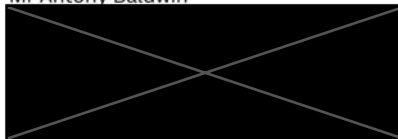
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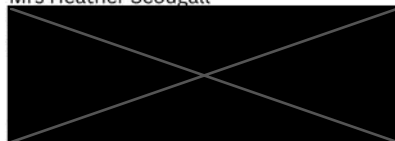
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Gift Aid & Freewill Offering Convener

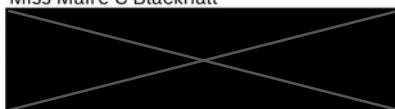
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From the Manse

Dear Friends,

As we enter the summer months, many of us look forward to a change of pace— an opportunity to rest and spend time with family and friends after all the activities of the previous session. Summer offers us a valuable reminder that rest is not only necessary but part of God’s will for us.

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus says to His disciples: “Come with me by yourselves to a remote place and rest a while” (Mark 6:31). Even in the midst of busy lives and demanding responsibilities, Jesus recognised the need for rest, renewal, and quietness. As we pause over the summer before the new session begins in September, may we each find time to rest, to appreciate the wonder and beauty of creation, and to be renewed in body, mind, and spirit.

This year, as we look ahead to the autumn, we do so with a special sense of anticipation as we prepare to mark the 275th anniversary of the opening of our present church building. On Sunday 13th September, we will gather for a Service of Thanksgiving, when the preacher will be the Right Reverend Gordon Kennedy, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

That service will give us an opportunity to give thanks for God’s faithfulness and goodness and to recall with gratitude the generations who have worshipped, witnessed, and served here before us. It will also be an important moment for us to rededicate ourselves as a congregation as we look to the future. While much changes in the life of the world and the Church, we continue to place our trust in a God who does not change and who has promised to be with His people always.

Although many activities slow down during the summer period, please remember that the pastoral care of the congregation continues throughout these months. If anyone would like to speak with me or arrange a visit, please do not hesitate to get in touch. I am always happy to meet with people and to offer whatever support or encouragement I can.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Rev Jake Lehman, who has been with us for his familiarisation placement since last September. Jake will complete his time at St Ninians Old at the beginning of September, and we are grateful for the contribution he has made to the life of our congregation. It has been a personal joy for me to work with Jake and to have him as a valued colleague and friend. We wish him every blessing as he seeks to discern where God is calling him to serve as a minister within the Church of Scotland. Please continue to keep Jake, Melissa, and the family in your prayers.

I send you my warmest good wishes.

Every blessing,

Your minister and friend,

Gary

The Rev Gary J McIntyre

Services

Services are held on Sundays at 10:30am and are followed by a further time of fellowship in the Church or the Parish Halls (on the third Sunday of the month).

The Sunday Club meets during the school term.

The Prayer Group meets in the McMichael Chapel following the service on the last Sunday of the month.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated on Sunday 14th June.

There will be a Family Service, including the Sunday Club prize-giving, on Sunday 21st June.

St Ninians Primary School will hold its end-of-session service in the Church on Friday 26th June at 10am.

Eccles Court

A service is held in Eccles Court on the last Wednesday of the month at 2pm.

The Kirk Session

The Kirk Session will meet in the Parish Halls on Tuesday 16th June at 7pm.

Minister's Holiday

Gary will be on holiday from 3rd to 25th August. In his absence, the services will be conducted by the Rev Jake Lehman, who will also provide pastoral cover.

Easter Holiday Club

MOIRA PARRY

Our joint Church Holiday Club with Park Church was held in April at Park Church.

We had twenty-six children attending, and they came from nine different schools. We also had three teenage helpers from Stirling High School and Bannockburn High School.

The title of the club was *A Tale of Two Kings*, and it focused on David and Jesus, the King of Kings. Park Church Hall was transformed into a medieval castle, and the adults leading it took the roles of a captain, a princess, and a squire.

As well as listening to Bible stories, the children took part in making shields and scratch-art swords, creating bunting, writing psalms, blot painting, and many other craft activities. They also played corners games, danced the Macarena, sang action songs, took part in relay races, jousted and fenced with pool noodles, and hit a nine-foot-high picture of Goliath with indoor snowballs.

We had twenty-four adults helping with and setting up the club. Thanks to all who helped to make this club a success.



St.Ninians Old Parish Church – 275th Anniversary

A number of events will be held to celebrate the 275th anniversary of the opening of St Ninians Old Parish Church.

SONGS OF PRAISE

There will be a Songs of Praise service on Sunday 6th September at 7pm. We look forward to being joined by our friends from Holy Rude Viewfield and Park Church, as well as other congregations in the area. There will be a further time of fellowship in the Parish Halls following the service.

FLOWER FESTIVAL

We plan to decorate the Church with floral arrangements for our anniversary weekend, 11th–13th September. If you would like to donate flowers or create a floral display, please speak to Elaine Walker. Elaine can be contacted on 07935 154067.

The Church will be decorated on Friday 11th September and will be open for visitors on Saturday 12th September from 11am to 3pm.

SOUP AND SANDWICH LUNCH

A special anniversary soup and sandwich lunch will be held on Saturday 12th September from 12 noon until 1:30pm.

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

The highlight of our anniversary celebrations will be a Service of Thanksgiving on Sunday 13th September at 10:30am, when the guest preacher will be the Right Reverend Gordon Kennedy, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. We hope that as many people as possible from the congregation, parish, and beyond will join us for what promises to be a joyful occasion. Following the service, there will be a special anniversary lunch provided by Bella Catering, together with the customary cutting of an anniversary cake. Tickets will be available in late July and August. Please book early, as numbers will be limited.



St.Ninians Old Parish Church

275th Anniversary



1751 - 2026

Kirk O Muir

The annual open-air service at Kirk O’Muir will take place on Sunday 2nd August at 12 noon.

Kirk O’Muir is situated in the Carron Valley. In the distant past, there was a chapel and later a school on the site, but these have long since disappeared.

It is a peaceful spot nestled among the hills and overlooking

the Carron Reservoir. A service has been held there on the first Sunday of August for well over a century. We sing well-loved Psalms and Paraphrases and give thanks to God for His goodness and mercy through all generations.



The General Assembly

The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church of Scotland. The Assembly meets annually to hear reports from councils and committees, make laws, and set the agenda for the national Church.

The Assembly was first held in 1560, the year of the Scottish Reformation, which marked the beginning of the Church of Scotland.

At this year’s General Assembly, the Moderator was the Right Reverend Gordon Kennedy, and His Majesty the King was represented for a second year by Lady Elish Angiolini.

The Rev Dr Alistair May was formally appointed Principal Clerk of the Church of Scotland.

This was the Rev Jake Lehman’s first General Assembly, and he has kindly shared his reflections with us.

Reflections on the General Assembly

From the 15th-18th of May, Gary and I attended the Church of Scotland General Assembly. Being a relative newcomer, this was my first General Assembly, and



my overall impressions were of a church that is approaching the future with a sense of hope and doing so realistically and faithfully. There were many important decisions made that will influence the life of the church and the members and leaders of it, and the discussions that led to those decisions were made prayerfully with thoughtfulness and

respect...even if passions were at times high and opinions were varied.

Among the highlights for me were the strong sense of support for the ecumenical relationships that the church has built in recent years. We were joined not only by Presbyterian representatives from various places around the world, but also by an Episcopal bishop, Methodist and United Free Church leaders, and not one, but two Roman Catholic Archbishops among others! The inclusion of these ecumenical partners was warmly welcomed and greatly appreciated by the Assembly as there was clear consensus that we are far better off when we look at what we hold in common rather than at what has held us apart.

Another highlight was the passing of the Church's apology for its historical involvement in slavery. I realise that for some, this may seem like an error of the distant past, but in making apology, the church not only named the ways that it has directly benefited from the horrors of slavery but also acknowledged how slavery continues to affect our lives through advantaging some at the cost of others. After the apology was read in the presence of the Assembly, in a very poignant moment, we heard responses from representatives of the church in Ghana, Nigeria, and the Caribbean. It was clear that the apology meant a great

deal to each of them and would serve as a step toward further actions and partnerships aimed at enabling equality and justice for those affected by the legacies of slavery.

All in all, it was a blessing and a privilege to be a part of this General Assembly as I continue to learn with greater depth how the church operates. It was clear that the focus of the church across Scotland is not on maintaining the church, but on following Christ and caring for one another and all people that we are freed to love and serve. Despite the challenges that we face together, there is great hope for the future of the Church of Scotland, and I am grateful to be a part of it!

Your partner in Christ,
Jake

Prayer

REV GARY J MCINTYRE

Gracious God,

As the days grow longer and the warmth of summer surrounds us, we give You thanks for the beauty of creation and the opportunities this season brings for rest and renewal. In the midst of holidays, gatherings, and quieter moments, help us to recognise Your presence and Your goodness.

We thank You for our church family and for the fellowship we enjoy – for friendships formed, support given, laughter shared, and faith strengthened through worship and service. Bless all who are part of our congregation and draw us ever closer in love and unity.

As we look ahead, fill our hearts with hope and anticipation for all that You are doing among us. Guide us into the future with courage and faithfulness and make us ready to serve You and our community with open hearts and willing hands.

May this summer be a season of peace and joyful expectation, as we continue to walk together in Your love.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Camino de Santiago

HELEN WYND



For many years I have considered walking to Santiago de Compostela, so when my friend turned 50 and said it was on her bucket list, I didn't need any persuading.

Our time was limited due to work and family commitments, so we opted for starting at Baiona – roughly 128 km from Santiago.

There are many ways of completing the Camino, but walkers must complete at least the last 100km to be awarded the credentials. Lots of folk walk for over a month from France. The closer to the destination the busier it gets, with numerous

different routes converging and more stall holders and buskers appearing.

Some walkers carry all their kit. One Chinese lady had a rucksack and a small, wheeled suitcase behind her which was attached to a strap round her waist. Other pilgrims have their main luggage transferred between accommodation. The traditional accommodation for pilgrims is the public albergues – basic dormitory bunks (often with bed bug issues) and communal meals with the option of devotions in the evening. There are now more modern private albergues and many small hotels along the route – these tend to be booked well in advance.

We took the soft option of using a travel company to book simple hotels and organise baggage transfer. However, I did miss the fellowship and devotions of the more spiritual options and would have enjoyed the freedom of walking as far as I wanted then looking for a bed for a night.

The paths are well signposted and now there are a variety of phone apps for all the routes – if one is determined to be attached to a phone all day. People making phone calls and speeding groups of cyclists on the path seemed a little incongruous and intrusive.

We walked for six days, initially together but splitting after a couple of days as we walked at different paces. Everyone's Camino is different – some people like to chat to everyone they meet; others enjoy peace and solitude while some carry burdens, memories or are doing it as penance. There were also many just

doing it as a long-distance walk. There is a sense of community on the Camino, looking out for each other and often seeing the same people over several days.

Some of my highlights were; swimming in the sea at Baiona, seeing a small “Christ the Redeemer” statue in a garden in Arcade de Riba (I had to reassure Mike I was in Spain and not Rio), arriving on 1st May in Pontevedra to find the town celebrating with pipes, singing, dancing and beautifully decorated Christmas tree-like cones, enjoying the public hot springs in Caldas de Reis, seeing a huge local market in Padron, enjoying the views of Santiago Cathedral.

Arriving in Santiago de Compostella was interesting. I went straight to the cathedral for the pilgrim’s mass. The church was full to bursting with tourists, cruise passengers and some pilgrims. The priest who led the singing had a beautiful voice and various overseas priests participated. For many years the botafumeiro (the big swinging incense burner) was only used on special occasions, but now if payment of around £550 is made then the priests will use it. I was fortunate to see it but didn’t feel the way I expected to.

On my way back to the airport, I stopped at Barga – a beautiful city. I went to a small church where a lady with a beautiful singing voice was leading worship for the regular congregation. I was glad I had happened upon the service as for the first time on my trip I found a sense of spiritual fellowship.

I was open minded as to what my Camino would turn out to be. I enjoyed the peaceful stretches, the anonymity, talking to all the animals I met (and a few humans), watching the morning mist clear and some beautiful views. I didn’t find it life changing, I found it confirming. I am grateful for my faith, family, life, health and the beautiful spiritual places we have in Scotland.



Devotional by Jake

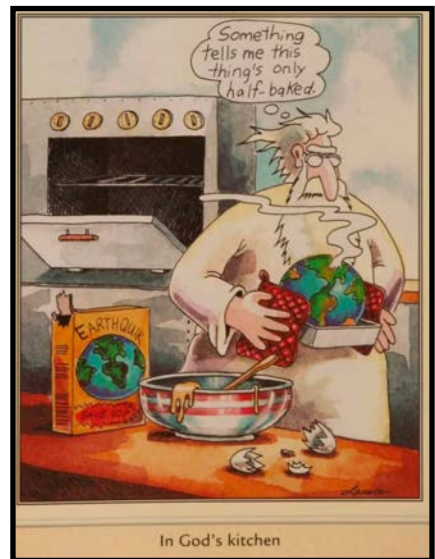
“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...and God saw that it was good.” - Genesis 1:1,12b



As I was growing up, my favorite comic strip was *The Far Side* by Gary Larson. I don't know how popular the comic was in Scotland, but in the US, Gary Larson was the comic king. For most of my childhood years, on Christmas morning I would receive the coveted gift of a Far Side Calendar from my grandparents in my stocking. The calendar featured a new comic for every day, so I could start every day with a bit of (often dark) humor like the comic that you see below.

Larson's humor came in that he had a way of taking our experience with the world and twisting it just a bit to show the underlying comedy. As we look at the comic, I think we can all readily admit that we've all thought the same thing from time to time. We've looked at the way the world works, or sometimes *doesn't* work, and thought, "Something tells me this thing's only half baked." And in one sense, theologically speaking, we're right. Christ has come and Christ has risen, but we're still working and waiting for Christ to come back and make all things right. So, in a way, yes, "this thing's only half baked".

But on a deeper level, we know that what God created was and still is *good*. The opening chapters of our bibles proclaim that truth from the very beginning. The words of Genesis are written to assure us that when God set out to create all things, God created exactly what God meant to create. The book does this poetically by repeating that wonderful phrase in each stanza, or on each "day" of creation, "and God



saw that it was good". This repetition assures us of the profound truth that as God looks at each of us and at all creation, God does not see it as "only half-baked", but what God sees is good.

There are no doubt many things in our lives and the world that can make us doubt this reality, and there are certainly things that happen in our lives and this world that are not *good*. But as we move through these months of summer and witness the vitality and vibrancy of God's creation around us, may it reassure us of God's goodness and remind us that as part of that creation, we are not "half-baked". Instead, may we know that we and all people are shaped and made in God's image, and seeing each of us and all that he has made, God looks and sees "that it is good". Thanks be to God.

Yours in Christ,
Jake

Verse

Submitted by MARY JENKINS




Pastoral Care Group

GRACE McINTOSH

If you know of anyone who would benefit from telephone contact or a visit from a Pastoral Care Group member, please let me or the Minister know.


Prayer Group

If you have a situation, you would like the Prayer Group to lift in Prayer you can make your requests known by:

 Placing a tag on the tree in the McMichael chapel

 Placing a card in the box in the McMichael chapel

 Completing the online form <https://forms.gle/TuAjqoCdwy54E9RKA>

 Comment on this post

Social and Fundraising Committee

Picnic

We are looking forward to the picnic that will be held in the Manse garden on Saturday 27th June from 2pm to 5pm. You are invited to bring your own food and refreshments, as well as a chair!

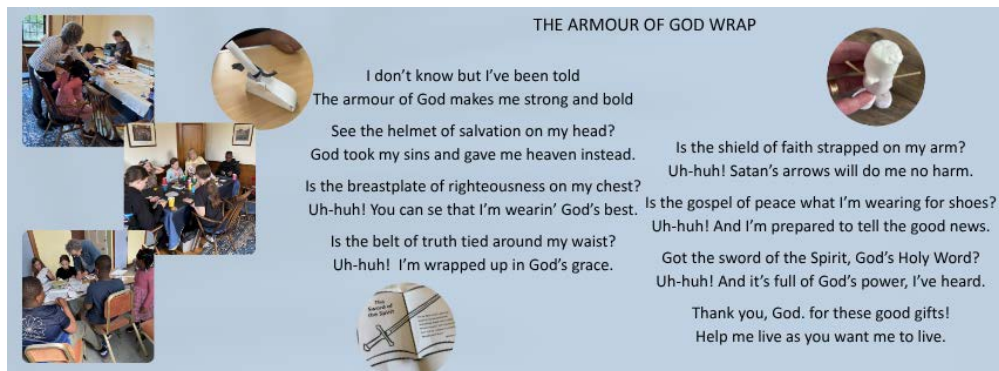
Soup and Sandwich Lunches

Soup and sandwich lunches will resume on Saturday 3rd October at 12 noon in the Parish Halls.

Sunday Club

Our young people, have been learning about the Armour of God.

THE ARMOUR OF GOD WRAP



I don't know but I've been told
The armour of God makes me strong and bold

See the helmet of salvation on my head?
God took my sins and gave me heaven instead.

Is the breastplate of righteousness on my chest?
Uh-huh! You can see that I'm wearin' God's best.

Is the belt of truth tied around my waist?
Uh-huh! I'm wrapped up in God's grace.

Is the shield of faith strapped on my arm?
Uh-huh! Satan's arrows will do me no harm.

Is the gospel of peace what I'm wearing for shoes?
Uh-huh! And I'm prepared to tell the good news.

Got the sword of the Spirit, God's Holy Word?
Uh-huh! And it's full of God's power, I've heard.

Thank you, God. for these good gifts!
Help me live as you want me to live.

Tuesday Group

MIRANDA MILLER

The recent AGM of the Tuesday group was held on the 31st of March at the King Robert hotel. There was a very good attendance of members, and it was decided to go ahead with the order of a new pulpit fall. It was also suggested to purchase a new projector which could be used by all church groups.

The new session will resume on Tuesday 29th September, when the annual afternoon tea will be served. The annual subscription will remain at £10 which will include the cost of the afternoon tea.

The programme for the remainder of the session still has to be confirmed by the new committee members. It is anticipated however, that the Scots' afternoon will go ahead as normal on the 24th November.

The committee would like to thank all those who attended the last session and we look forward to welcoming you back in September. Everyone is welcome so please come along we are always looking for new members.

Christian Aid

ELAINE WALKER

Thank you so much for your generous donations during Christian Aid week in Scotland. As the Parishioner went to publication the final amount was not available, but Gary will announce it in due course.

There will be another chance to support Christian Aid on October 24th when we host a coffee morning in the Parish Halls. Anyone who would like to help on the day or would be happy to bake for the event can speak to me at church or phone me on 07935154067. Thank you.



Stirling Kirks Together – All Age Friendship Lunches



Thank you for your continued support of the Stirling Kirks Together All Age Friendship lunches. Due to your generosity and attendance at these lunches several local organisations have received significant donations to support their work in the local area.

Start-Up Stirling and Stirling Food Train each received £300. Stirling Food Train have indicated that the funds they received will help them to continue to assist their members to stay in their own homes. In the last year Start-Up Stirling have distributed over 150,000 meals at their Foodbanks. Community donations continue to help make these meals healthier by providing fresh fruit, vegetables meat and dairy.

In addition to these donations' funds were directed to Park Church towards the running costs of the lunches and Clackmannan District Brass for their accompaniment at the Lessons and Carol service in Park Church on Sunday 7th December.

Marathon Hike for Cancer Research UK – Thank you

JAKE LEHMAN



On the 27th of June, Jake will be participating in the Lake District Big Hike 2026 to raise money for Cancer Research UK. **Thank you to everyone who has donated**

so far! Because of your generosity, nearly £1000 has been raised!

Jake will complete the Marathon distance hike of 26.2 miles through the hills of the Lake District and because we have far surpassed his fundraising goal of £300, he'll be hiking in a kilt!

There's still time to give, so if you would like to make a donation, do so at the link below or by scanning the QR code. If you prefer cash or check, you can give directly to Jake at any time. Every donation is very much appreciated as we take steps toward beating cancer together!



<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/jakes-big-hike-18>

Cowper and Newton Museum

MARGARET & JIM MACLEOD

On a lovely Spring Day we visited the tranquil town of Olney, only a few miles from where we live in Milton Keynes.

The museum there celebrates the lives and works of William Cowper, the 18th century poet, and John Newton, clergyman of the local church and writer of 'Amazing Grace'. The two men were great friends and colleagues, collaborating on the famous Olney Hymns.

The museum was once the home of Cowper and contains many of his personal effects. He was a favourite poet of Jane Austen and Robert Burns, among many others. He battled life-long depression, and his poetry and letters speak movingly of his struggle.

The Newton room was very interesting indeed. John Newton was once captain of a slave ship and was involved in the slave trade for many years. Caught in a violent storm and facing shipwreck and death, he prayed to God and resolved to change his life and dedicate it to God if He would save his life. He did indeed survive and 'Amazing Grace' tells us the story of his conversion. He became extremely active in the Abolitionist movement and was a spiritual influence on William Wilberforce.

Other interesting exhibits include a history of the lacemaking industry, detailing the poverty and hardships of the lace workers, and the two beautiful gardens that inspired Cowper - one a walled flower garden and the other a Victorian-style kitchen garden. Both are peaceful places to enjoy and to relax in.

All in all, a wonderful place to visit if you are ever in the area.



Photo Gallery

PETER KALE

Bunessan



Four Score by James Chapman Craig Born Dunfermline 20/11/1859

submitted by MARION JACKSON

Eh, megstie me! I'm awfy dune, I'm scarcely fit to walk,
The only thing there's smeddum in's my tongue,
I aye can talk!
But wae's me, man, my sicht's faur through,
I'm nae use, wantin' specs;
But mind you, man, I'm eighty noo,
An' sae I needna vex.

I've seen the day I could ha'e run
A mile juist fast enough,
But noo at a' I cudna rin
I ha'e nae ony puff;
An' though I had, I cu'dna dae't,
My legs are stiff an' sair
Wi' that confooded rhumatiz
I scarce can cross the flair.

What? My hearin'? Nae sae bad,
No mebbie juist sae gleg
As when a weel-faured, strappin' lad
I courted my wife Meg.
But, man, though I was deaf's a post
I cu'dna weel complain
For I'm gey auld, an' age, ye ken,
It disnae come it's lane.

But, man, wi' a' my troubles
I'd bold be to complain,
For I've a roof abune my head
An' what's mair it's my ain.
An' there's my guid auld wife besides
Aye joggin' on fu' canny,
Richt prood to share whate'er betides
An' cling to her auld mannie!

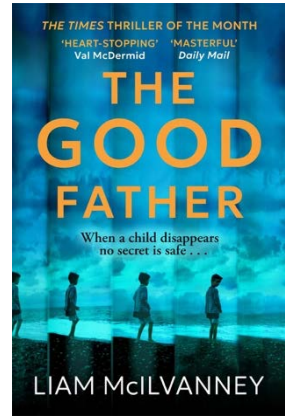
Book Review – The Good Father by Liam McIlvanney

AVRIL SCOTLAND

Being the son of the late William McIlvanney and the nephew of the acclaimed sports journalist, Hugh McIlvanney, Liam McIlvanney has big boots to fill. I had read a couple of his well-received earlier books which were very much in the tartan noir genre, but truth to tell, I felt they suffered in comparison to his father's Laidlaw series, source material of the much-loved Taggart. And, of course, his father had written Docherty, surely the best book ever written about life in the Scottish mining villages. In the Good Father, Liam McIlvanney has stepped away from detective fiction and entered into literary thriller mode. He has found his own unique voice.

Gordon Rutherford is living a quietly idyllic life. He has a fulfilling job as a Professor of Literature at Glasgow University, enjoying his teaching and his research into the Scottish Ballads. He and his wife, Sarah, have a fine, but unostentatious house in the safe, middle-class village of Fairlie. Gordon is geographically just where he wants to be, a stone's throw from the waters of the Firth of Clyde in his beloved Ayrshire. His seven-year-old son, Rory, and their dog, Bonnie, complete his happiness. Gordon has it all. Until he hasn't.

This book plunges right into the narrative, entirely without preamble. It is Saturday. Sarah, a lawyer, also leads a busy life, so Saturday is Gordon's day to be in charge of Rory. It's not an arduous task. Rory is playing happily on the beach with Bonnie. This has been his only home, and he has been brought up with a healthy respect for the dangers of the sea. Early swimming lessons were a given. Surely Gordon can get on with a bit of reading, it's work related after all — and he can see boy and dog from the window. Till he can't. Every parent, and grandparent will know that stomach plummeting feeling. But he can't have just disappeared. He'll have seen something of interest further along the beach; a friend will have happened by, and he'll be away kicking a ball somewhere; he'll be hiding. But he isn't and Bonnie comes back with one sandal. Friends are called; he may be lying hurt somewhere. Soon it becomes clear that they need to alert the police. The days go by and the search continues. Friends and neighbours are kind but sympathy like the well-meant food offerings, has a pre-determined life span. The gossip begins: the parents must be involved: they



must know more than they're saying. Recriminations are inevitable, though Sarah can make Gordon feel no worse than he already does. The police follow leads but all end in disappointment. Hopes are raised and dashed. Initial interest begins to fade and police withdraw manpower. Gordon and Sarah are in a state of suspended animation; they can't give up; they can't move on; it is impossible to resume any form of social life; they are part of a club no one wants to join.

They must do something. And so, begins the Do-It-Yourself phase.

Gordon contacts a man in Largs whose son had disappeared under similar circumstances four years earlier. Together with Gordon's cousin, an ex-policeman and Sarah to coordinate, they form a plan of action. Leads are followed by. Hopes are raised, only to be dashed. Gordon meets with the local busybody, the scourge of those who disregard parking regulations. She does indeed have interesting information about a suspicious vehicle parked on the relevant dates. This leads to Gordon and Sarah making a dash to Cork, armed with flyers. Again, it comes to naught. As the pace of the book accelerates, we think — so this is how it's going to go— determined dad succeeds where police failed. So far, so formulaic. This level of frenzied activity cannot be maintained, and ,in fact, the best hope comes from the police, who have found a boy in Aberdeen. Gordon sets off full of hope, but again it all falls apart.

Acceptance creeps quietly over Gordon. Hope drains away as Rory's birthdays come and go, and then the totally unexpected happens. Sarah finds she is pregnant. Twins are born and joy tiptoes back into their lives. Equilibrium has returned; life has become bearable, sometimes even happy but Rory's disappearance has irrevocably altered Gordon's outlook on life. His work suffers. He finds no pleasure in teaching and, although he can still write and research effectively, he can see his beloved ballads only in terms of violence, vengeance and cruelty.

And then there is a phone call. Rory has been found. He is on his way home.

This needs no spoiler alert as we have not even reached the midpoint of the book - and it is from this point that the book really takes off, we enter into much darker territory. Rory had disappeared as a child of seven. He has returned seven years later on the cusp of adulthood. The re integration into the family is handled carefully and seemingly goes remarkably smoothly. But where has Rory been? What has happened in the seven years.? Cracks appear in the smooth veneer of everyday life. There are incidents, but surely those had to be expected? Small acts of cruelty, but nothing that can't be smoothed over,

forgiven. Gordon had failed his son once; he can't fail him again. But how far is Gordon prepared to go? As we draw to the shocking crisis scene, we find out. Very far indeed.

This book throws up all sorts of questions. We are all aware of the ferocity of parental love, the desire to protect, the willingness to absorb culpability - but is it always appropriate to do these things? Is it always the best way forward? Is Gordon in fact being a good father? He does indeed shield his son, protect his family, but at what cost to himself? He does, in the end, achieve some form of peace. But has he sacrificed his soul?

That this is a 'literary' thriller is in no doubt. McIlvanney is a professor in the University of Otago, New Zealand, specialising in Scottish studies and literature. Gordon's specialty is the Scottish Ballads, and these resonate throughout, in the various quotations and even in the use of the number seven. Echoes of James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* lie close to the surface. There are references to Edgar Allan Poe, not Scottish, but definitely dark. This is very much a novel seen through one lens, told from one viewpoint. On first reading, I thought Sarah's character underdrawn. What were her thoughts? How complicit was she? On further reflection I came to the realisation that this narrow focus adds to the strength of the narrative. Gordon knows the mistake was his, the guilt is his and he must shoulder it. It inevitably consumes.

This is definitely not a deck chair read but it is a truly absorbing read, a book that does what all good books do, it makes us think. It causes us to examine our own beliefs, our own values. I am sure those with a much greater understanding of faith than my own could have a really deep dive into the moral dilemmas it presents. What is certain is that it is most beautifully written, from sense of place to the well-considered literary and linguistic choices. There is violence but no gratuitous description of that violence. The twists and turns in the narrative continue right to the end. As stated, there are quotes and allusions aplenty, but the quote not used that came to me was Yeats, "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold." But that is a quote occurring to me regularly in these troubled times.

The Parish Register

Baptism – “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”

5th April 2026
Cooper Ronnie Thornton
Son of Dave and Linda

10th May 2026
Charlie William MacLean
Son of Alasdair and Sarah-Jane

Deaths – “I go to prepare a place for you”

23rd February 2026
Mrs Nancy Hunter
21 Hillview Drive
Bridge of Allan

15th April 2026
Mrs Sheena McVean
Roselea Court Care Home
Stirling (District 39)

26th February 2026
Mrs Margaret Gilvear
Sevenairs
Polmaise Road
Stirling (District 5)

22nd April 2026
Mr Francis Mackay
Fairview Nursing Home
Bannockburn

13th March 2026
Mrs Magda Grant
212 Windsor Road
Falkirk

5th May 2026
Mr Andrew Brown
29 Whins Road
St Ninians (District 16)

6th April 2026
Mrs Kathleen Robertson
Annfield House Care Home
Stirling

7th May 2026
Mrs Mary Hutchison
Bankview Care Home
Banknock
Bonnybridge

6th April 2026
Mrs Madge Donoghue
Bridge Cottage
Chartershall

9th May 2026
Mrs Alison Dick
Roselea Court Care Home
Stirling (District 39)

12th April 2026
Mrs Dorothy Burns
121 Kenningknowes Road
Stirling

22nd May 2026
Mr John Gilvear
Auchenbowie Home Farm
Stirling

We remember all who have been bereaved in our prayers

Collectively Yours

IAN CAIRNS

This quiz originally appeared in Essential which is the quarterly journal of the ME Association. It is reproduced in the Parishioner with the kind permission of the Editor.

ME – Myalgic Encephalomyelitis – is a complex illness which commonly follows an acute, viral infection. Some 250,000 people in UK suffer and it manifests as chronic fatigue accompanied by pain in the muscles and joints, “brain fog” and sensitivity to light and sounds. About 25% of patients are extreme cases, cannot work or study, and are confined to bed long term. However, much work is being put into understanding ME including a current examination of DNA samples from 100,000 patients. Long Covid has similarities to ME.

I do hope you enjoy this quiz. Answers will be given in next quarter’s Parishioner.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Crows _____ | 15. Parrots _____ |
| 2. Larks _____ | 16. Mosquitoes _____ |
| 3. Owls _____ | 17. Cockroaches _____ |
| 4. Apes _____ | 18. Gnus _____ |
| 5. Ferrets _____ | 19. Butterflies _____ |
| 6. Starlings _____ | 20. Geese _____ |
| 7. Lemurs _____ | 21. Jays _____ |
| 8. Rattlesnakes _____ | 22. Elephants _____ |
| 9. Buffalo _____ | 23. Cats _____ |
| 10. Hippopotami _____ | 24. Moles _____ |
| 11. Rhinoceroses _____ | 25. Goldfinches _____ |
| 12. Giraffes _____
(when standing still) | 26. Racoons _____ |
| 13. Giraffes _____
(when on the move) | 27. Ravens _____ |
| 14. Porcupines _____ | 28. Ladybirds _____ |

ST.NINIANS OLD PARISH CHURCH

PARISHIONER

AUTUMN 2026



The Autumn Edition of the Parishioner
will be out in early September

Submission Date for Articles is:
Sunday 16th August

Thank you

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