

EDITION 3



WINTER 2025

BLACK ISLE EAST CHURCH DIGEST



WELCOME!

We are now in Winter 2025 and here is the 3rd edition of our Church Digest.

The “Church Digest” aims to give us insight about church life in Black Isle East Church of Scotland – especially as we develop as a new expression of church in this area in the mid- 2020s. It also reminds us of opportunities to connect to mission-related activities happening around us in the Beauly Firth area and organised by the new Presbytery of Clèir Eilean ì – the church of Scotland in the Highlands and Hebrides.

Black Isle East Church of Scotland has been in existence for almost two years now, as congregations from the villages of Avoch, Fortrose and Rosemarkie and Cromarty have come together as one church - meeting for worship on Sundays in Rosemarkie. Encouraging activities and events across the new wider parish – we've had Explore groups in Avoch and Cromarty as well as regular groups meeting in Fortrose-Rosemarkie. As you can see from the cover - building renovations are also under way ... More information about what we do can be found on our website - especially on the “Activities” page.

We hope that you will enjoy reading about the joint life of our congregations in the east of the Black Isle!

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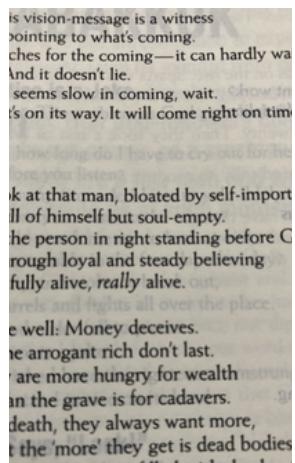


BIE ACTIVITIES - PT.1

Church Groups and Activities

Current News

Black Isle East Church has activities and groups that meet throughout the week.



EXPLORE - Explore your faith! Find out more about faith, God and the Bible by coming along to our ***Explore group*** and our ***Summer Special events***.

DEEPEN - Deepen your faith - join our weekly Bible Studies and Prayer Meetings!

Bible Study meets Thursday at 3pm in Fortrose.

Prayer Meeting takes place on Thursday evenings at 7pm - 7:30 pm on Zoom.

CREATE - Celebrate arts and creativity in church and develop your God-given artistic gifts!

Make a Joyful Noise our music group, meets on Thursday afternoons at 4:15 - 5:15 pm in Church.

The Crafts Group meets at 2pm on Tuesday afternoons in the Seaforth Hall.

Visual Artists share their work from time to time on Sundays and for Summer Specials.



We gather to respond to God's goodness



We seek to be witnesses in our era



We look outwards to the society around us



We aim to follow the inspiration of our Creator

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

Rev Dr Warren Beattie

Ness Bank Church of Scotland in Inverness

Situated on the riverside, in the heart of Inverness, next to the Castle, Ness Bank Church aims to be “a church without walls reaching out in faith to their parish and beyond”. Their website - www.nessbankchurch.org.uk - claims “at the heart of all that we do week by week is our faith in Jesus Christ and central to that is our Sunday morning worship.”

During the week Ness Bank partners with Inverness Foodstuff to provide lunch for the homeless three days a week (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday) along with a range of medical and practical support services. The halls are also used to provide addiction support for alcohol and drug abuse, as well as rehearsal space for several musical groups. The church’s own organisations – Crafties, Toddlers, Guild, Boys Brigade, and Messy Church – also meet there regularly. And over the winter Ness Bank hosts a Cosy Café in the Bught area of their Parish.



The Rev. Stuart and Elspeth Smith joined the church in June 2024. Stuart recently quoted words found in a reflection on the centenary of the current church building in 2001: “Now is the time to take a fresh look at old problems, a time to dream dreams and see visions.”



The current vision is to redevelop the Sanctuary space – at a cost of over £1 million! – to improve access and open a café that will bring thousands of visitors to Inverness into a place of Christian welcome, witness and worship.



“Now is the time to take a fresh look at old problems, a time to dream dreams and see visions.”

Photos - <http://www.nessbankchurch.org.uk>

SING A NEW SONG

Robert S Moore

Immanuel (Ruth Campbell)

This year, we have added something new to our annual Christmas music repertoire - "Immanuel" by Ruth Campbell. This has a local connection as Ruth, who was born in Inverness, also taught for a time in Fortrose Academy. She now lives in Ayr but often features with her group when local churches in the Beauly Firth area have a "Praise and Worship" evening.

Ruth, along with her colleague Susan Stirling, played and sang, last year, in Fortrose Free Church. She has also performed at the "Refuel Festival" in Fochabers, so some of you may have had the pleasure of hearing her in other settings.

Last November, on her Facebook page, Ruth wrote:

"Well, the wait is over ... Here is our new song "Immanuel! I've always wanted to write a Christmas song and back in September I sat at my piano and asked God what would you like me to write?

'What love from the Father, who gave us His son' is how it started and over the next few weeks the song grew. I had to keep checking and going back to my bible, who came first - the shepherds or the Kings - where was the star?!

I knew that I had a deadline looming and God graciously gave me this song in time to share ... [at]Christmas."

**"God sent His son,
to a manger and cross -
for He loves His dear children
and wants none to be lost."**

One of the key lines from the song "Immanuel" captures the heart of the Christmas message: "God sent His son, to a manger and cross - for He loves His dear children and wants none to be lost."

You can listen to "Immanuel" on Apple Music, Spotify and Amazon.



Photo from RC- Susan Sterling, Tim Ness and Ruth Campbell

FAITH IN SCOTLAND

Jack Kernahan

Going Forward - a conference at Highland Theological College (Aug 2025)

This important two-day conference about the Church and the Future, organised by Highland Theological College (University of the Highlands and Islands), was held in Dingwall at the end of August. Several speakers gave great encouragement for Churches to move forward in faith with confidence.

Elaine Duncan, chief executive of the Scottish Bible Society, stressed the vital importance of reading and spreading God's Word. 6.1 billion people have the Bible in their own language. Translation should lead to transformation and there are many programmes and 'tools' available to help in 'spreading the Word.'



Images- Scottish Bible Society



Elaine gave offered examples from the Scottish Bible Society: a new contemporary version of the Story of Jesus, his church, and the world he came to save - entitled *Love, Death & Resurrection*. Another project that aims to encourage bible reading with the younger generation is entitled *Bibles for Bairns*. The work of the Scottish Bible Society reminds us that we need to provide the bible and its contents in forms that connect with readers of all ages in today's Scotland.



FAITH IN SCOTLAND

Jack Kernahan

Going Forward - cont.

Jim Stewart was another speaker who looked at the issues facing the church in today's world. He discussed the need for the church to take more seriously the issues of connecting with the wider world beyond the church.

In an age when many are indifferent about Christianity it was sobering to be reminded that it took only one generation for God's people to turn away from Him after entering the Promised Land. He reminded his audience of comments in the Old Testament like Deuteronomy and Joshua that encourage passing on the Good News to the next generation. *"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds ... Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road."*



LIFE|EXPLORED



Jim stressed the importance of developing intergenerational worship in churches and of being ready to offer support to schools where that is possible. He also talked about the importance of reshaping church structures to have more activities that were *relational* giving examples of activities like Alpha and Christianity Explored, as well as encounter groups in church and home and new ventures like Messy Church.

Black Isle East has been paying attention - our Explore and Bible Study groups meet regularly offering a range of spaces to interact and reflect!



Life Explored images from Christianity Explored; Photos- BIE

GLOBAL LINKS

Douglas and Linda Simpson

Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)

Douglas and Linda joined a major fundraising project called Stride, the aim of which was to raise funds for Medical Aid for Palestinians to support the people of Gaza.

The charity MAP has provided medical aid for 40 years for the people of Palestine who suffer relentless attacks and harassment from illegal settlers and from the Israeli military.

They provide immediate medical aid for those in need while developing local capacity and skills to maintain a health care system which under tremendous strain in the West Bank and has been all but obliterated in Gaza.

In addition to their work in health care, an important aspect of MAP's work is to bear witness to the injustices and humiliations experienced by Palestinian citizens every day of their lives under what amounts to a two-tier system of everyday life. They have a strong voice in the UK and internationally ensuring that the ongoing plight of the indigenous people and the political and social barriers which mitigate against their reasonable expectations of health and dignity are properly addressed.

Particular areas of activity include Women's and Children's Health, Emergencies and Complex Hospital Care, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Campaigns and Advocacy and Disability.

Following the events of October 7th (2023), there has been a huge loss of life and destruction in Gaza (over 70,000 people according to the Hamas-run health ministry) and given the constant brutal onslaught on defenceless civilians in the West Bank the need for principled and courageous organisations like Medical Aid for Palestinians has never been greater.

The basic idea behind Douglas and Linda's charity walk (with Katherine) was to walk or run the equivalent of the perimeter of Gaza, a distance of 98 km, during October. According to Linda, "Katherine ran, while (not surprisingly!) Douglas and I walked ..."

Their efforts have been rewarded - thanks to the generosity of friends in the church and local community a total of £1,700 has been raised while the overall project raised over £300,000.

**"Katherine ran, while
(not surprisingly!)
Douglas and I walked ..."**



Photo- Douglas and Linda Simpson with daughter Katherine

CREATIVE CHURCH - CRAFTS PROJECT

Warren Beattie

Knitted Poppies for Remembrance 2025

As we know from an earlier edition of the Church Digest with the report on the Crafts Group's embroidery to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Rosemarkie church building - "crafts" play a creative role in the community and in the life of the church - and this Autumn was no different!



An imaginative project that has emerged this year - with a lot of thinking and knitting behind the scenes - has been a project to create Knitted Poppies for Remembrance Sunday.

Edith Grigor conceived the project and shared the knitting with Sheila Paterson and Rosalyn Penwright - working away over many months gathering materials and then getting on with creation itself!



The Knitted Poppies were put up at two sites - on the black metal arch at the entrance to Black Isle East at Rosemarkie and under the stone arch of the gates at Fortrose Cathedral where the Memorial notices are located in Fortrose.

We commend the Knitted Poppies for Remembrance team on their conception and completion - this brought a deeply moving artistic enhancement to the settings of our Remembrance services this year.



Photos: Black Isle East

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2025



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Friday 12th December - Community Network Team
"Seasonal Soup and Sweet lunch"
with seasonal refreshments and carol singing
from 12-2:30 p.m. in Avoch Church Hall

Wednesday 24th December - Christmas Eve
"Watchnight Service of Carols and Readings"
preceded by seasonal refreshments
from 10:45 p.m., community carol singing 11:15 p.m.

Thursday 25th December - Christmas Day
"All-Age Service for Christmas morning"
preceded by seasonal refreshments
from 10:00 a.m., service starts at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday 28th December
"Seasonal Service of Carols and Readings"
including some elements in Scots and Gaelic.

The Make a Joyful Noise music group will be supporting congregational singing throughout the season and sharing musical items from Christmas Sunday onwards.

ADVENT SERVICES

30th November - 1st Sunday of Advent (All-Age)
7th December - 2nd Sunday
14th December - 3rd Sunday
21st December - 4th Sunday (All-Age)

Throughout Advent we will focus on themes connected with the coming of Christ Jesus from the Old Testament book of Isaiah and paired readings from the New Testament on the theme:
"A future vision - prompts present faithfulness"



Ava Simpson - 'Best day Ever' (Crayon on Paper)



Every Sunday morning - the service is followed by a time of tea and coffee. (Photo: BIE)

CREATIVE COLLECTIVE - VISUAL ARTISTS

William Mather

Blame Bez and Oho!

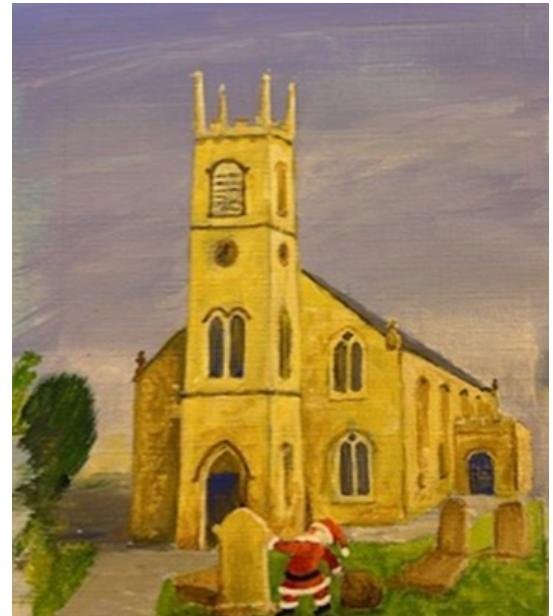
Blame Bez. He's the main one – and his mate Oho. Thanks to them a group of us got together with some fun bits-and-pieces for a display.

There were paintings and drawings and some wonderfully coloured fabrics and needlework. We found a corner in the church and balanced our work on pews, a table and the tops of some old sound-amplifiers.

And it was all thanks to these two characters Bez and Oho – full names: Bezalel and Oholiab. Bez started it off. He had skills, ability and teaching in all kinds of artwork. Then Oho came along and he was very good with his hands, He made making with amazing colours – blue, purple, scarlet and even touches of gold. They were also into wood and stone-carving.

Bez was also the first person in the Bible to be recorded as filled with the Spirit. What a great combination – an artist and craftsman filled with the Holy Spirit of God! Of course, many of us know the stories. Read all about it in Exodus 35 and 36!

**“ ... all thanks to Bez and Oho – full names:
Bezalel and Oholiab -
read all about it in Ex 35 & 36!**



Ian Bassham - watercolour on paper;
artwork for Christmas Card to celebrate the
200th anniversary of the Rosemarkie church building.

**The caption reads:
“I’ve been coming to this building for 200
years and I still can’t find the chimney!”**

Editor’s note: ‘Saint Nicholas’ should try again this
Christmas - he’ll find the scaffolding for the
renovations a big help ...

So, Bez and Oho are our inspiration and of course the Psalms are full of enthusiasm to use the arts in poetry, musical instruments and singing – ‘sing a new song to the Lord’! (Psalm 144:9).

With encouragements from our minister, Warren Beattie, those involved in the exhibition were a collection of creatives from the church: Stewart and Edith Robertson, Douglas and Linda Simpson, Ian Basham, Sylvia Brooks and William Mather.

“Art matters” says the author Alistair Gordon-quoted in a recent sermon by Warren – “because the Bible is gleaming with creativity and the arts” - I’m sure Bez and Oho would agree.

William Mather
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BLACK ISLE EAST CHURCH DIGEST

**Join us on Sunday Mornings at 10:30 a.m.
and throughout the week**

For more information visit:

Website: blackisleeastchurch.com

Facebook: Black Isle East Church

Email: blackisleeastchurch@gmail.com

Location: High Street, Rosemarkie, IV10 8UF

Minister: Rev Dr Warren Beattie

*Cover Photo by Stroma Beattie
Scottish Charity Number: SC004472*