



# together

Orkney - Malawi Partnership | Farewell to Kerr and Moira | Christian Aid

## How to donate to Christian Aid

There will be a street collection in Kirkwall on Saturday 16th May. There will also be envelopes in churches. Give on-line at [Stromness Kirk](#) or [Kirkwall Christian Aid Group](#), or scan the bar code below:



## Please pray for

- The Local Worshipping Communities in Orkney who have vacancies for ministers.
- The Nominating Committees and the work they are doing to bring ministers to the parish.
- The locums, readers, worship leaders and Local Worship Groups who will be helping with worship.
- All parishes in need of ministers.
- The work of Christian Aid in the UK and throughout the world.

## Christian Aid Week, 10-16th May



The focus for the 2026 Christian Aid Week fund-raising is Nairobi, Kenya, in association with local partners Beacon of Hope. Nairobi is a city of vibrant colours and immense poverty.

Together, Christian Aid and Beacon of Hope will be funding and setting up urban farming projects to provide fresh vegetables for those otherwise unable to access them, despite so much produce being exported to the UK and elsewhere from Kenya.

How can you get involved, in the time that you have available? Here are a couple of ideas from the Christian Aid website:

- **Walk 70K in May** and, if you manage it and feel good about it, make a donation yourself if you feel shy about asking for sponsorship. If you have a dog you might want to make the 70K in addition to your regular walks...
- Hold a **Christian Aid Big Breakfast**, maybe before Church, or even one evening - cooked breakfast is great at any time of day. Or make it a **Tea Party** - lots of tea and coffee in the UK comes from Kenya.

Christian Aid first began in 1945 when churches across the UK came together to respond to the urgent refugee crises following the Second World War. Rooted in the Christian faith and supported by churches, their work supports all people in need regardless of belief. Christian Aid Week began in 1957, encouraging communities to work together to fundraise, thus enabling lasting change.

## From a Manse - a fondest farewell...



*One more step along the world I go,  
one more step along the world I go,  
from the old things to the new,  
keep me travelling along with you.*

*Round the corner of the world I turn,  
more and more about the world I learn;  
all the new things that I see,  
You'll be looking at along with me.*

*By Sydney Carter*

This is a difficult piece to write... where do I start trying to encapsulate our time in Orkney? If I had to choose one word, it would be blessed.

Since Kerr & I were called here in 2022, we have been basking in the warmth of Orkney. Not always meteorologically, but certainly humanly. The people of Milestone Kirk wrapped us in warmth and support from Day One and we love them. We were then fortunate to get to know the folks of Stromness, Orphir & Stenness, and, most recently, Firth, and we love them too. There will forever be a piece of our hearts in West Mainland with its huge skies, wild seas and canny folk.

In the wider community, it has been a joy for me working with people from other churches through Orkney Churches Together, and I remain convinced that God smiles when His people come together in love. Another joy for me has been looking after Stronsay and Eday...such wonderful communities and people I will never forget. Leading worship in the Cathedral was also a privilege and I remain especially grateful to Balfour Wylie for his support there.

I cannot write this without taking the opportunity to acknowledge the power of work Kerr has done in leading the union of parishes. He has worked so hard and dealt graciously with so many tricky situations relating to this unprecedented change. He is not one to toot his own horn, but I have been in awe of the way he has gone the extra mile as Moderator to get things to where they are.

In 2023, we took our first Orkney wedding between an Orcadian lass and a lad from Berwickshire... and we have now both been called to Berwickshire in the Scottish Borders. I am Minister Elect for Duns & District Parishes, with a specialism in Mission, and Kerr is Minister Elect for Coldstream & District Parishes with a specialism in Worship. We will most certainly draw on our experiences here in Orkney – both successes and failures as we move forward.

We go trusting in God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with a love for Orkney folks deep in our hearts. God bless you all. Moira & Kerr xx

## From a Manse - Marjory MacLean replies...

We will soon lose two colleagues from the Orkney Islands ministry team, when Rev Moira Taylor-Wintersgill becomes minister at Duns in Berwickshire, and Rev Kerr Wintersgill takes up his new charge right next door in Coldstream. If ever two people demonstrated the breadth of Church of Scotland ordained ministry, they certainly have!

Kerr has served as the first Moderator of the Kirk Session of our united charge, working very long hours to be available for the many different questions and situations we have brought to him from all directions. His willingness to do the unglamorous tasks, and his knowledge of 'tech', mean that he has helped our fledgling union through a great deal of the less visible elements of its transition to the new ways in which we're having to work. And he has always done that with a can-do attitude, and great warmth.

While he has been so busy with all of that, Moira has exercised a great deal of the local ministry in the West Mainland. With her deep pastoral intelligence and reputation as a most thought-provoking and creative preacher and worship-leader, she has been a huge encourager of people's own discipleship in the Local Worshipping Communities she has served. And both together have brought great energy to outreach in those areas too, with missional activities based in church and school (the toast!), and a thoughtful understanding of the rural setting and Orcadian culture in which they happily lived.

We know that for family reasons it's right for them to move back to the Borders where Moira has spent time before. They will be in many prayers here, prayers of thanksgiving and of intercession, as they make that further transition to their new ministries and new routines. MM.

## Church of Scotland Orkney-Malawi Partnership

The Orkney-Malawi Partnership has been running since May 2008, when the former Presbytery of Orkney signed a "Covenant of Partnership" with Thyolo Highlands Presbytery (CCAP). Since then we've enjoyed several exchange visits and had the privilege of supporting a large number of initiatives, including over 40 community boreholes, significant Church and manse rebuilding projects, building of primary school classroom blocks, covid mitigation measures, flood disaster response, self-help projects (particularly for women), joint prayer initiatives and the creation of St. Magnus Secondary School, amongst other projects in the sixth poorest country in the world.

Our Malawian partners hugely value the Partnership and not just for the financial assistance. They pray regularly for us all and hold an annual day of prayer for Orkney Churches.

Our Partnership has been recognised by the Scottish Government as well as the Kirk's World Mission Council and its successors as a model partnership. It is something we should cherish and develop.

At the first meeting of new Orkney Islands Kirk Session in October 2024, our commitment to the Partnership was renewed and local worshipping communities (formerly congregations) were reminded of our pledge to hold at least one fundraising event for the Partnership each year. This can be as simple as an annual retiring offering or as adventurous as folk are willing to take on.

For many years Ian Cooper (former Presbytery Treasurer) dealt with all the financial transactions. This essential component is now being done just as ably by Caroline Butterfield under the new set-up.

Membership of the Partnership Committee currently comprises Sally Bartkowiak (Stromness), Alison Dickie (East Mainland, Sanday and North Ron), June Freeth (OLM), Iain MacDonald (Westray & Papay), Catriona Matheson (Stromness), Liz McVicar (Westray), Elma Moar (Rendall) and James Watson (Kirkwall : East). Please contact any of us for further information.

## Sally Bartkowiak visited Thyolo for the Orkney-Malawi Partnership

In 2019, I was privileged to be one of a group of six who visited our church partners in Thyolo, Southern Malawi, as representatives of Orkney and Stromness. My particular interest was the work of their Borehole Ministry, responsible for establishing wells for villages in the Presbytery area.



**Before**

I kept apologising to my companions for what seemed like endless trips to boreholes in villages at the back of beyond. One borehole looks much like another but you have to remember that each is a blessing to an entire village and makes a huge difference to the health and wellbeing of many people. I was constantly thanked and assured that the difference, particularly to the women, was immense. When I saw how far and over what difficult terrain the water had had to be carried in the past, I could imagine how more local wells have been a huge improvement. These wells were proving worthwhile and often life-changing. The evidence was clear to us when we met those who already had a clean well, perhaps for a few years, and those who were about to get one.

Stromness knows about wells. In 1929, so the plaque at the foot of Springfield Crescent tells us, the pump and the well there – the Pump Well – were sealed because Stromness had finally achieved a piped public water supply. Every home had a tap that simply turned and gave endless clean water from that lovely reservoir at the back of the town. The ability to wash and to stay clean, to cook with healthy water and to wash up the dishes afterwards became routine. Now, nearly 100 years later, wells are being dug in southern Malawi and pumps installed to bring people there the facility that we stopped using in 1929! They are opening up wells and bringing their communities into the Twentieth Century – but not the Twenty-first. For around £6000, a whole village can receive what we take so utterly for granted: fresh, clean, safe water.



**After**