

# TOGETHER

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## Kirk Session Dates

Upcoming dates are:

- 10th March
- 13th May

The on-line meetings, at 19.30, are for the whole Parish. Anyone can attend as an observer and there is a video recording of each meeting. Your Session Elder has details.

## Have you Got News?

Please send in your local news for TOGETHER - see the back page to find out how.

## Please pray for

- Rev Alison Dickie and her family as they settle into life in East Mainland.
- The church in Orkney.
- The people of Greenland.
- The work of Orkney Foodbank.
- The Unity of the Christian Church and the work of The Kirkwall Council of Churches.
- All people living in fear, especially in Iran, Sudan and Ukraine.



## The new team minister settles in

Rev Alison Dickie took her first service in East Mainland Kirk five days after her January induction in a joyful ceremony led by Rev Shuna Dicks, Moderator of the North East & Northern Isles Presbytery. Alison is minister of Orkney Area 2, East Mainland with Sanday and North Ronaldsay.

Alison comes to us from Carlingwark in Kirkcudbrightshire, but was previously minister in Orphir and Stenness, Hoy & Walls and Flotta. Since the Rev Christopher Wallace retired Val Kitchen, a Reader and member of the congregation, has held the reins with Rev Liz Kay as locum minister for much of the summer. Val was then helped by Rev Fraser Macnaughton and Rosemary Moon. Val says "We are so looking forward to welcoming Alison and her family to join our East Mainland community. She can be assured of our love and support throughout her ministry. We know that Alison loves to light a candle as part of her Sunday service...so may **her** light shine to lead us, her new flock, to live in the Jesus way and draw ever closer to God." Alison is pictured with Stella McBurnie and Shuna Dicks from Presbytery, and Marjory MacLean.

You can watch Alison's induction [here](#) (unedited).

## From a Manse

Welcome to the first issue of our united parish newsletter – not an original parish in the geographical sense but a single worshipping parish made up of 18 local communities, served by 7 ministers alongside readers and worship leaders. As such, we are richly blessed – and wonderfully diverse. This newsletter is one small way of helping us feel connected across the parish: Mainland, islands, villages, kirks and halls, and to remind ourselves that we belong to one another in Christ.

This column is titled *From a Manse*, and does not belong to any one minister. This first piece is written on behalf of the newsletter committee, and future reflections will be shared by different ministers on a rota basis. In the same spirit, this newsletter itself belongs to all of us. It will only truly reflect parish life if it carries your voices, your stories, your notices, and your ideas.

We hope to publish the newsletter monthly, sharing news of worship, events, pastoral life, local initiatives, and moments of thanksgiving from across the parish. Please consider sending in short items, photographs, dates for diaries, or feedback on what you would find most helpful or encouraging to read.

As we begin this new venture, may it strengthen our sense of being one parish with many communities, walking together in faith, hope and love.

Yours,

Rev Julia Meason

Minister for Kirkwall East, Shapinsay and Flotta

## The Good Grief Café

Despite bad weather, the first gathering at the Good Grief Café provided a welcoming space to share grief. Isabel Wilson, Reader in Training from Stromness, commented “Conversation just happened. Those who came really took ownership of the room and just spontaneously moved through what was important to them. It was good.”

The next gathering will be on Sunday 8th February at 2pm in the Corner Room, King Street Halls, Kirkwall.

## Stewardship campaign

*Julia Meason is leading on a stewardship campaign for the whole of Orkney parish. She introduces it here:*

As we enter Lent, we’re going to embark on a stewardship campaign, focusing mainly on finance. During this stewardship season, a brochure will be circulated to our local worshipping communities, setting out clear and accessible financial information, delivered alongside a worship series that invites us to reflect prayerfully on giving.

Our theme this year is joy: not a fleeting happiness, but the deep and sustaining joy that comes from knowing we are loved by God and called to take part in God’s work in the world. Stewardship flows from that joy. When we give of our time, our abilities and our financial resources, we do so not out of obligation, but as a grateful response to God’s generosity to us.

Your giving supports every part of our shared life as a church. It enables our Worship and Music, nurturing prayer, praise and spiritual depth. It sustains Discipleship and Pastoral Care, supporting people of all ages in faith and in times of need. It underpins our Mission and Community work, helping us serve others and share Christ’s love across our islands.

Thank you for all that you do to support the ministry of our churches. I hope this stewardship season will encourage you, celebrate what we’ve achieved together, and inspire us to continue giving and serving with joy as we follow Christ.



**The Good Grief Café**

*A space to share, listen, and be alongside others*

**An informal, welcoming space for anyone living with loss**

- Second Sunday of every month
- From January
- 2.00 pm
- Corner Room, King Street Halls

**Not counselling • Not faith-based  
Everyone welcome**

For more information:  
Rev Julia Meason –  
JMeason@churchofscotland.org.uk | 874789

Isabel Wilson –  
IWilson@churchofscotland.org.uk

## Who's Who in the parish - Rev Kerr Wintersgill

Kerr combines his ministry in the West Mainland of Orkney with a number of other roles, including Moderator of the Orkney Parish Session. We caught up for a chat and to find out more about him.



### ***Kerr, have you always felt called to faith and the ministry?***

“No. I came to faith in my early twenties, so I didn't go through Sunday School and church youth groups. In my younger days I worked at a number of jobs including in the license trade - indeed the pub that my family owned on the Great Western Road in Glasgow is still called Wintersgill's, although it's long since nothing to do with us. I eventually found my niche in IT, working in both sales and training on Microsoft software. My first call to ministry came in 2010 and I was ordained in 2022, coming to Orkney as my first charge. Of course I am joint minister with my wife Moira and I am sure she will be under the Who's Who Spotlight soon too.”

### ***You are Moderator of the Orkney Parish Session. What does that mean?***

“Basically, I chair the Session meetings. It's a new post for the new Team Ministry and it could be anyone of our ministers who is Moderator. Orkney is currently the largest team ministry in the Church of Scotland. We are spread over so many islands and our connectivity - or the challenges of it - mean that we need to be able to offer worship in many different places and communities. That's why,

when we have our current vacancies filled, there will be eight on the ministry team, although not all full-time. We are incredibly blessed to be so well resourced with ministers, and indeed with Ordained Local Ministers and Readers, both active and in training, and Worship Leaders. The huge benefit of the united parish is that, as things settle down, we will have more time for spreading the Gospel, instead of being so top-heavy with administration.”

### ***You are a Chaplain to the St Magnus Way. What does that involve?***

“Orkney's long distance footpath from Egilsay to St Magnus Cathedral can be divided into convenient sections, suitable for most fairly fit walkers. When we first arrived Moira and I led an ecumenical walk along the Way, having produced a leaflet for each section with reflection and prayer for each part. That material is still available. I am not fit enough at the moment to lead another walk but, if anyone wanted to organise a Parish Pilgrimage, those materials are available for use.”

### ***Why do you think it's important that we have this new parish newsletter?***

“When I first came to faith I was worshipping at a church without a minister and I needed a greater sense of fellowship. Orkney is such a widely spread parish and we hope that this newsletter will keep everyone in touch with what's going on throughout the parish. That it will give everyone a sense of belonging in the parish. There is a lot going on, and it will help people to feel part of something that's bigger and more vibrant than any of our individual charges. We live in a world where communication should be so easy - hopefully this monthly newsletter will help us all to feel and see the benefits of being one parish and to really feel part of it.”

### ***Kerr, you are a very busy man. Do you have any time for relaxation and hobbies?***

“The short answer is no! But part of that is having two spaniels, a springer and a cocker. They absorb any spare time for sure. I do like working with my hands and hope, one day, to get back to doing some silversmithing. I'm also interested in restoring old Bibles, particularly rebinding them, but I'll need a bit more time than I have at present to get under way with that!”

## The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

In his address for the St Magnus Cathedral on-line service on 18th January, Jim Wallace reminded us all “that ‘difference’ must not be confused with ‘division’. And unity is not uniformity. Learning from different traditions can enrich our experience of worship and bring us to fresh discoveries and insights into our faith.” You can hear Jim’s full address [here](#).

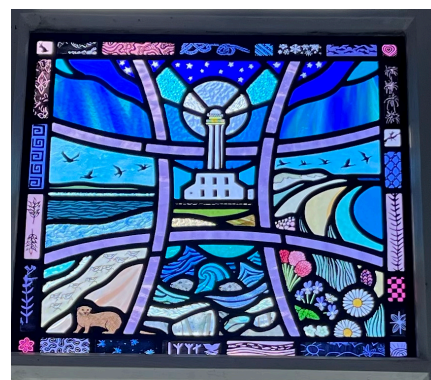


Christian Unity is seen on these islands in the work of the Kirkwall Council of Churches. Each year they organise the **Good Friday Walk of Witness** which moves between churches of different denominations around Kirkwall. The number of participants, for all or some of the walk, seems to grow each year. The Team Ministry at the Orkney International Island Games was also organised by the Council.

Rev Julia Meason says “The Kirkwall Council of Churches matters because it brings Christians of different traditions together in shared prayer, service, and witness, reminding us that what unites us in Christ is deeper than what divides us. Through friendship and cooperation, it makes Christian unity visible and practical in the life of the community.”

### Sanday Kirk’s stained glass windows

New stained glass windows made by Orcadian Shona MacInnes were recently installed in Sanday Kirk. One is a memorial window while the others reflect the life of the community on the island. They were funded through a grant from the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme. Cross Kirk was sold to FOSK, the Friends of Sanday Kirk, and that has been a boon to both the worshipping and wider communities. The Kirk now rents the space each week, in the same way as other community groups, and is therefore freed from anxieties about the roof and heating bills. The Sanday Band rehearses in the Kirk, and ‘Giggle & Jiggle’ and exercise classes also take place there. It is a concert venue and will soon also host cinema nights.




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### Together - the Orkney Islands Parish Newsletter

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This is the first attempt at producing a parish-wide newsletter and it has been put together by a small team: Sally Bartkowiak in Stromness; Helen Lumsden on Westray; Rev Julia Meason in Kirkwall; Rosemary Moon on South Ronaldsay and Roger Neville-Smith on Stronsay. None of us are designers and we hope the layouts will get better in time and with experience! If you are skilled at desk top publishing, please do get in touch!! We have produced it to be read on a computer or tablet but know that some copies will have to be printed for those who don't Do Tech. Please send YOUR ideas for features and your news to [rosemarymoon@mac.com](mailto:rosemarymoon@mac.com). Don't wait: please do it soon...