



Cumbernauld Old Parish Church



Newsletter – February 2024

Dear Friends

It's hard to believe that my time as a Team Minister at Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum St Mungo's is coming to an end. It will always be the place in which I was ordained, and I will treasure not only the beautiful stole you gave me at my ordination but the friendships I have made and the time we had together in what is a challenging time for the church.

We know, that as we move ever closer towards our union with Kildrum St Mungo's, what is familiar to us is beginning to change. For both congregations, some of these changes may be welcome but others may not sit so easily with us. Some changes may even be painful and all of this without any real certainty of what the future will look like.

In these times of incredible change, it is natural to want to hold tight to those things that give us most comfort. It is natural to want to retreat from the world in all its complexity and long for something simpler; for things to stay the same somewhere. It is natural to want to focus on how the changes within the church will affect us.

When wrestling with how best to navigate these stormy waters, I have been both comforted and inspired by the very first pioneers of the Christian faith in our land. These people sailed across the water in flimsy boats, not sure of what they would encounter when they arrived, if indeed they would survive the journey. One of these people was Columba, who settled in Iona and, over time, this became a monastery that tended to people's mental, emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing. >>>

The monastery was noisy because it was populated by not only priests and monks but by teachers, scholars, craftsmen, artists, farmers, people who cared for sick people and animals, and children. Worship and contemplation was an integral part of that busy, community-focussed way of life and yet, far from being a place of escape from the world around them, theirs was a place where people were equipped to be sent out across the country, to be salt and light to the communities they encountered.

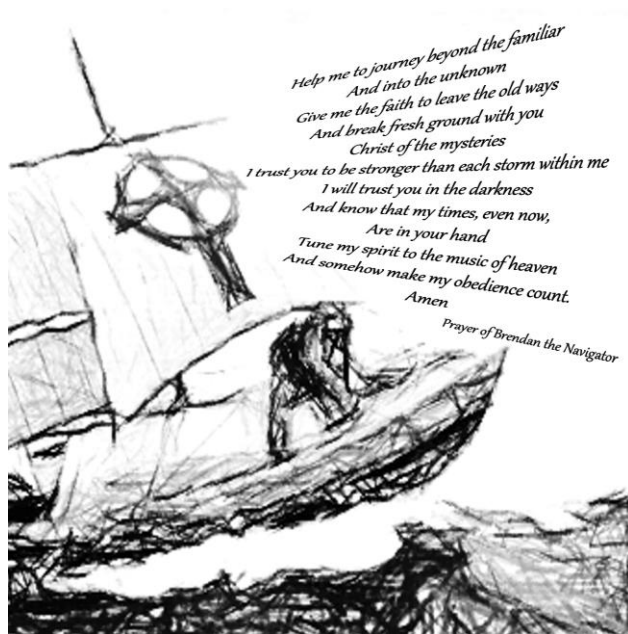
However, the Picts and others they knew they would encounter had fearsome reputations. It would have been difficult to leave the safe community they knew and loved and head off into unknown territory, not knowing how their endeavours might turn out. In addition, those who had come with Columba knew and understood the Irish culture but would have to work hard to understand the Pictish ways and adapt their practices accordingly. As they did so, they lived out Paul's statement to the Corinthians.

"I didn't take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ—but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn't just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!" 1 Corinthians 9:21-23

Their love for Jesus and for all people was such that they were willing to step away from what was comfortable and known and into the dangerous unknown. In taking those risks, they established communities across the country where many people encountered Jesus for the first time and turned to Him because of how the Christians lived.

It is because of their willingness to bring the good news about Jesus to our country and because that good news was passed on from generation to generation that the congregation of Cumbernauld Old exists today. >>>

Even our building stands testament to how we have changed and adapted over the years to meet the needs of the community – whether that be rebuilding the ruined walls, adding the balconies or ramp or taking out the flagstones and adding pews. Our heritage is a people who have been faithful to bring the good news to the community and adapt our worship space to meet the contemporaneous needs. That baton is now in our hands.



What will we do with the baton we have been given? Will we drop it, preserve it, or run with it to pass on the good news – even at personal cost to ourselves? Will we try, like Paul and the missionaries from Iona, do whatever it takes to keep our bearings in Christ but engage with our community, trying all sorts of ways so that some might discover a new life through Jesus? Can we resist the temptation to cling to the familiar and safe – to preserve what we know in the hope it will see us out but risk there being no-one on to whom we can pass our rich legacy? >>>

As we wrestle with this, let's take comfort in the courage of our ancestors who knew what it was to face fear of the unknown and yet press on. Let's remember also who walked with them, giving them their courage to keep going in the dark and stormy times, and who promised, when He told the apostles to go into all the world to make disciples, he also promised that he would be with us always, to the very end of the age.

I am sad to be moving on from Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum St Mungo's, however I look forward to seeing the fruit of your hard work and deliberations as the new congregation of Cumbernauld Trinity is established, and to see you flourish and grow with the wind of God's Spirit in your sails as you set course for a new chapter in the rich life of the church in Cumbernauld.

Grace and peace

Rev Fiona Crawford

Team Minister: Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum St Mungo's



Sacrament of Holy Communion



The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated
in Cumbernauld Old Parish Church on
Sunday 3rd March at 11.00am.
All welcome!

Church Register

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals
(conducted at Cumbernauld Old Parish Church,
or by the Ministry Team)

Baptisms: None

Weddings: None

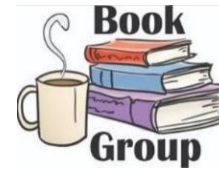
Funerals:

	Date of Funeral
Isobel Sillitto	18/12/2023
Anna Love	18/12/2023



The Craft Group has now resumed after a well earned Christmas break and we meet in the Session House on Thursday afternoons between 1 and 3pm.

Some of our activities are knitting, crochet and paper-crafts, so if you craft and like the company of like-minded people, then please come along and join us – you will be made very welcome. We are currently working on Easter projects, although you are welcome to bring your own work too.



Do you like to read and enjoy talking to others about books? Then this could be just the group for you! We meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 2pm in the church.

The group is supported by the local library and led by Moira, one of the librarians, who brings copies of the book for everyone. One of our recent books had the intriguing title Mrs Death Misses Death by Salina Godden and the group also read and enjoyed The Heretic by Liam McIlvanney, which was set in Glasgow. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 7th March when February's book The Bones of You by Debbie Howells will be discussed.



Cumbernauld Old Parish Church continues to support Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Baby Bank which is always in need of donations of clean, good quality children's clothing and shoes and new underwear. The kindness and generosity in this community is immense – we know times are tough for so many, but if you are able to help, they would be so very grateful of your support.

There's a box where you can place your donations at Church every Sunday, so any help at all would be very welcome.





February 2024 Update

Who is in the Transition Group?

Elders: Margaret Cassidy, Chris Dunn, Alex Edwardson, and Alex Mearns

Former Session Clerk - Cumbernauld Kildrum: John Kusel

Depute Session Clerk - Cumbernauld Old: Elizabeth Sneddon

Session Clerks: Morag Rusk and Brian Smillie

Team Ministers: Fiona Crawford and James Gemmell

Since our last newsletter, the Transition Group had been preparing a mission audit that would support a proposal to have two centres of worship. Sadly however, upon reviewing the Property report for the St Mungo's building, it was discovered that the required repair work, predominately in the sanctuary, would make any proposal of two centres of worship unviable. Upon discussions with the Presbytery Clerk, however, there was agreement that the strategic location of the St Mungo's building was such that it would be prudent to propose that we explore using it as a mission hub, with local community partnerships that would both strengthen community engagement and provide a regular revenue stream. It has been proposed that we would allow a period of 5 years to determine whether this was achieving its missional aims whilst also being financially viable.

This means that it is proposed that the principal centre of worship will be the Cumbernauld Old building, although it is important to note that mission, discipleship, and community outreach must also happen in this building. Similarly, as part of its aims as a mission hub, it is anticipated that alternative forms of worship outside of Sunday morning worship, e.g. Café church, would be explored in the St Mungo's building.

In terms of the manses, an offer has been accepted on the St Mungo's manse and the Kildrum manse will be put up for sale when the relevant notice period for the existing tenants has expired.

Given the proximity of the Cumbernauld Old manse to the church, extensive work was done to explore whether it would be possible to combine a commercial let and church activities in the building. >>>

Unfortunately, despite having had fruitful discussions with a local party, the cost to secure a 'change of use' from the Council, together with the ongoing maintenance costs, the Kirk Session agreed that it was time to sell the manse. A working group has been formed, however, to explore the extent to which some of the grounds and perhaps the outhouse could be retained.

What has been agreed under the Presbytery Mission Plan?

As part of cluster negotiations, it was agreed locally that the congregations of Kildrum linked with St Mungo's and Cumbernauld Old churches would unite. Upon doing this they would receive permission to call one Minister of Word and Sacrament.

The cluster also agreed that the Kildrum Sanctuary would close but it was envisaged that the Kildrum halls would remain for the lifetime of the plan, alongside the St Mungo's building and Cumbernauld Old's buildings. Full details of what has been agreed can be found on the Presbytery Mission Plan.

Proposed plan for union in summary

- All existing manses will be sold and a new, energy-efficient manse will be purchased;
- The principal centre of worship will be the current Cumbernauld Old building;
- The current St Mungo's building will be used as a mission hub, with a period of 5 years to achieve its missional aims, whilst also being financially viable.

Next steps

- Kirk Sessions to vote on the draft Basis of Union.
- Once approved, Presbytery will vote on the draft Basis of Union. The National Office must also approve the Basis.
- Consideration to be given as to whether any adjustments will be required to the Cumbernauld Old building as the new principal centre of worship.
- Community partners are to be sought for the St Mungo's building.
- A strategic mission plan for both centres is to be developed.

Food Bank Update

Up to 1st February 2024 we have supplied almost 100 food parcels to those in need in our community since we reopened forty weeks ago. Seven has been the maximum in any given week with the average being 2 – 3 people.

On Thursday 10th December the church Christmas Gift Service took place in support of the food bank at Bethlehem House of Bread at Cornerstone Church. The vast quantity of wonderful gifts received was overwhelming. A transit van was needed to transfer them for distribution at Cornerstone where over eighty households were expected to attend their Christmas event. As always, we were humbled and indebted to everyone for all their support and generosity not just at special appeals but throughout the year.

The Village Food Bank held its own Christmas celebration on Thursday 21st December with festive music and home baking. It was enjoyed by all who attended.

We have resumed holding the food bank in the Session House as the numbers currently attending can be accommodated there. This will reduce heating and lighting costs.

We plan to hold our **Easter Egg Appeal on Sunday 17th March**. As before, all donations of Easter Eggs can be brought to church on the day. They will then be shared with Bethlehem House of Bread at Cornerstone for distribution to families locally. Fair Trade eggs are available from our Fairtrade Group and some retail outlets. Donations of Farmfoods vouchers are also welcomed.

In our very troubled world with all its violence and injustice we can sometimes feel overwhelmed, helpless or even hopeless. However, it's worth remembering that we are not asked to solve the problems of the world on our own; we are simply asked to love our neighbour, to bring a little light and hope into their lives.

Mission Circle



The BIG Red Bucket still makes an appearance in the Church vestibule on the first Sunday of the month for those who wish to "pop in a pound" for South Africa.

Including an annual donation, the December and January buckets together raised a tremendous £180.

That amount helped feed the young people who attended the church holiday club and, as the new academic year got under way, bought school shoes for 10 children, helped pay their fees and the remainder bought groceries for needy, mainly child-led families.

I've just received a letter from the Kirk Session of Mamelodi Presbyterian Church in Pretoria expressing their sincere gratitude for the support they are receiving. They really appreciate that people who don't even know them care enough to extend a helping hand.

Thanks again everybody, Elizabeth



Fairtrade Group report



In November 2023, we offered the congregation the opportunity to purchase Fairtrade 'Real Advent Calendars' from the Meaningful Chocolate Company. These lovely chocolate-filled calendars allow children (large and small!) to enjoy a flavoursome countdown to

Christmas while learning the story of Jesus' birth through an accompanying story and puzzle book. There was an enthusiastic uptake of this offer and we hope that the calendars helped to make the season of Advent more enjoyable and meaningful.

We were delighted to be take part in the Christmas Fayre held at St Mungo's Church on Saturday 2nd December. We offered a Fairtrade stall with festive foods and gifts and were pleased that many purchases were made and that we had a further opportunity to promote the Fairtrade message.



The Fairtrade group met on 30th January and we have decided to go forward promoting ethical trade making the following changes to our practice –

* we will continue to run a monthly mini-stall on the last Sunday of each month apart from in December, January and July. Teas and coffees with Fairtrade home-baking will be served in Church at the end of these services, when you will have a chance to purchase your favourite Fairtrade items. >>>

* this monthly stall will be reduced in range to the items we feel are most popular with the congregation - coffees, teas, chocolate bars, jams and savoury sauces. We are attempting to offer ethically-traded goods at the most reasonable price we can acquire them.

* we will still be running, with the help of Gavin's Mill, a larger stall, including a wider range of food and gift items, 3 times a year to celebrate Easter, Fairtrade Fortnight (September) and Christmas.

We look forward to your continued support as we promote ethical trade. We are grateful for your encouragement and for all your purchases which make a huge difference to the lives of the producers who are responsible for growing the crops and foods we all enjoy but possibly take for granted.

Fundraising Update

The Fundraising Team are busy making plans for fundraising events for this year, having already starting off in February by 'Burns by Candlelight,' featuring a mix of songs by Robert Burns and inspired by Burns written by Siobhan Argyle, one of our talented organist team.

In the Spring we are bringing back our Quiz Night hosted by Calum Cormac by popular demand. This will be held in the Bowling Club as usual. Please keep an eye on the weekly intimations and the Cumbernauld Old Facebook page for further information.



As always, we continue to leave tubes of Smarties in the vestibule to be enjoyed then the tube used to save 10p and 20p coins which continued to raise money throughout the year last year. So please help yourself and then help us!

Just a quick reminder that Cumbernauld Old Parish Church is registered with Give As You Live. By using www.giveasyoulive.com you can then shop from many well-known online retailers and again Cumbernauld Old will get a percentage from each purchase made.

Thank you to everyone who help us support the church through fundraising; your support is very much appreciated.

Property Report – January 2024

There have been no Property Committee meetings required since the last Property Report as the Property Convener continues to action items requiring attention. Weekly Fire Alarm testing, Fire Extinguisher checks and monthly Emergency Lighting checks have been carried out as usual by Walter Snedden. The Property Convener continues to ensure any maintenance issue are followed up and resolved.

The Manse remains empty and for insurance purposes the Property Convener makes twice-weekly checks on the Manse to ensure it is secure and there are no water leaks, etc and the building continues to be maintained.

The Manse had a serious water ingress near the end of 2023 into the Green Room and the ground floor lounge due to a blocked gutter with leaves. The gutter was cleared to prevent any further water damage and this has been reported to the COS Insurance Services. We are still awaiting a response to carry out repairs. The Manse has had its Intruder Alarm recently serviced and no issues were found.

The Church and Session House 5-yearly Electrical Inspection (EICR) was carried out on 5th December 2023 by CMC Electrical (Scotland) Ltd and a couple of minor issues were resolved on the day. Both buildings are fully compliant with the current electrical regulations. The Church and Manse Gutters have recently been cleared of leaves and vegetation and the Manse had two downpipes unblocked. The Church had eight slate repairs carried out at the same time. The Church, Session House and Manse Fire Extinguisher service was carried out on Thursday 25th January and, due to changes to the regulations, a new CO2 Fire extinguisher has been mounted adjacent to the large electronic organ to the left of the pulpit. Two extinguishers at the end of their life have been replaced. The Church first Fire Alarm service of 2024 was carried out on 2nd February 2024 and no problems were encountered.

I would like to thank all who have helped with property issues since the last Property report.

Matthew Sime

Arria Voices

We are now halfway through our 2nd year of singing together!

We performed to a crowded church at our Christmas concert on 20th December. A great time was had by all and we raised £241 for Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders). The evening was a mix of uplifting festive music, contemplative moments and singalong Carols.

The star of the show was, of course, the wonderful Arria Voices! Community choir extraordinaire (even if I do say so myself!). Accompanied by the superbly talented pianist David Swan, the singing group performed a mix of traditional and modern Christmas songs and carols with a section dedicated to Christmas on the Screen (music from festive movies). We were delighted to have Double Bass player Ali, a musical colleague of David's, join us for the evening.

The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the World Première of 'Peace at Christmas', a brand-new Christmas Carol written by Arria Voices!!! We are so lucky to have the wonderful powerhouse of talent that is Siobhan Argyle working with us. Siobhan held song-writing sessions with the group, the result being this lovely new carol! There is such a wealth of skills and talents within our group and we were thrilled that Caroline was able to sign our new Carol in Makaton. The choir learned how to sign part of the chorus and many signed as they sang at the concert.

We are an inclusive and friendly group. We meet on Wednesday evenings at 7.00pm in the church and everyone is welcome! We would love to have more people join us, please do spread the news! There is no audition, no need to be able to read music, no previous singing experience necessary.

We aim to provide a safe, encouraging and respectful space for people to express themselves and connect with others.

If you 'can't sing, won't sing or don't sing' then this is the group for you! If you were told at school to mime, or that you "can't carry a tune in a bucket", or that you are "tone deaf" then come and join us! >>>

Reasons for joining us include:

- Singing for joy;
- Singing for all of the physical, emotional, mental & social benefits that singing – particularly with singing others – brings;
- Singing for fun!

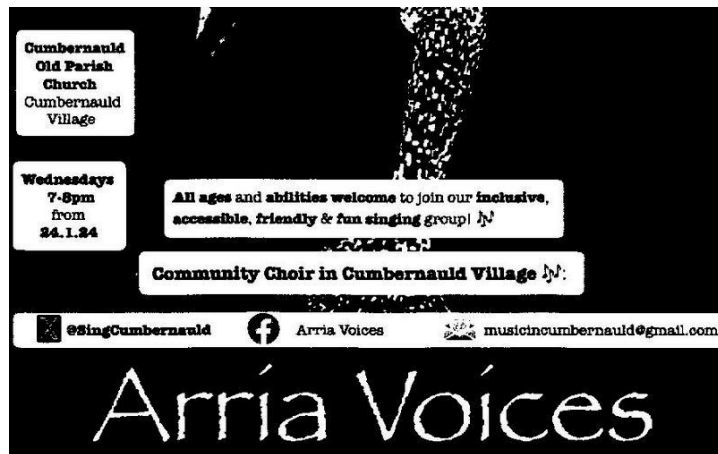
Whatever the reason, you are welcome! Singing is for everyone!

Date for your diary: Friday 21st June. 'Music for a Midsummer's Evening'. concert in Cumbernauld Old Parish Church at 7.30pm

We are indebted to the musicians who have generously given their time and considerable talents free of charge. Thanks to all who helped out on the night, the preparation and the clearing up as well. An

amazing array of festive nibbles appeared as if by magic, hot drinks were dispensed and enjoyed, and this was all much appreciated.

Thanks also to the Kirk Session for the continued use of the church as a venue for our community singing group.



Cumbernauld Village Community News

From North Lanarkshire Council:

The Cumbernauld Village Conservation Area is under revision in order to modernise and update the current information held. It has been over a decade since the last revision, so we are seeking the community's opinion and feedback on the boundary, buildings of special interest and much more. The works are being carried out by Smith Scott Mullen Associates in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council. The main consultation will commence at Cumbernauld Library from Monday 4th March 2024 with various informal drop-in sessions and one of the consultation events will be held in Cumbernauld Old Parish Church on **Sunday 10th March**, straight after the morning service. The Church building, Manse, Glebe and Burial Grounds are all within the Conservation Area, so it would be great to get the congregation's opinions. It is extremely important the community provide their feedback as funding applications, and much more, require updated Conservation Area documents.

Village Community Council:

Spring has certainly sprung so we will be resuming our efforts maintaining the Cemetery and other public spaces around the Village. We are always on the lookout for helpers so please get in touch with Liz Snedden if you would like to volunteer.

There are a lot of ongoing projects in the Village, including an application to transform the old red blaes pitch, work on the Langriggs and various heritage projects. We will be meeting on the following dates this year:

Thursday 8th February	Thursday 18th April	Thursday 13th June
Thursday 15th August	Thursday 10th October	Thursday 12th Dec.

Please do come along to find out more about all of the ongoing projects and share any ideas you have for the future of the Village.

Thanks, Lisa Snedden



A Wee Contemplation Over Coffee or Tea

Listening

'So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.' Romans 10:17

Listening is not always easy. By listening, we make sense of, we assess and then respond in an active process. It involves five stages: receiving, understanding, evaluating, remembering, and responding. Sometimes, we get it wrong and misunderstand which can lead to wrong conclusions and sometimes we add bits on and the whole story escalates into a drama. We need to focus on what the person is saying and ask the correct questions to get a grasp of the matter to enable us to respond appropriately. Listening is much harder than talking! A good listener is a valuable friend.

'Be still and know that I am God'. Psalm 46: 10

Faith is built on our trust and belief in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. With faith, we are able to communicate with God through prayer but it should not be a one-way process. It helps us all, to settle and allow quiet times in God's presence, to sit, to wait and to listen to Him. Listen and wait for God's prompting in our lives. If we ask, he will respond and when he does, we should trust His response. That is faith, even if we don't like the answer we receive or the time or patience that this process sometimes takes. God's timing is perfect, he knows us inside and out, he sees the bigger picture; even when we don't like the picture. We have to leave it all with Him. We have to trust and obey as the hymn goes...

*When we walk with the Lord, in the light of his word,
What a glory He sheds on our way! When we do His good will,
He abides with us still and with all who will trust and obey.*

**Trust and obey, for there's no other way
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.**

>>>

Before he ascended to heaven, Jesus' asked Peter to 'Feed my lambs, take care of my sheep, feed my sheep'. He was asking him to be a 'fisher of men'. We are called to be God's disciples in this world today and when we find it overwhelming as we all do at times, remember, **'I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me'. Philippians 4:13**

Lord, come and be lifted up in my life today, may I look up and look to you. Arise and shine in my life.

JG

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Session Clerk's Annual Report 2023

As the transformation of the Church of Scotland takes shape and the effects of a painful reorganisation start to emerge across and within many new Presbytery and Parish boundaries, the five Church of Scotland congregations in Cumbernauld are also experiencing significant change in response to the modern day challenges that we all face within the Church of Scotland including falling membership, a drop in income, a shortage of ministers and an estate of ageing buildings that have become ever more costly to maintain. While these statements are all true, they should not necessarily be viewed as fatalistic. Indeed, every challenge presents an opportunity and the congregations of Kildrum, St Mungo's and Cumbernauld Old have taken this opportunity to confront the challenges and develop a collaborative plan that should prove to be both affordable and pragmatic. The plan has taken several turns and twists over the past year. However, as time progresses, the path has and will continue to become clearer. It would be great to be able to give you a view of the landing place. Unfortunately, as I write, that has still to be fully defined. The work continues though, mostly behind the scenes, but continues at a pace towards the best outcome for all.

In May of 2023, Kildrum and St Mungo's united as one congregation. The plan is that Cumbernauld Old will unite with Kildrum/St Mungo's in 2024 with the new united congregation known as Cumbernauld Trinity, a name chosen jointly by the respective congregations.

One prerequisite for Cumbernauld Old to enter into union was to change from a Model Deed to a Unitary Constitution. This basically changes the operating model from a Kirk Session with oversight for temporal and spiritual matters and a Congregational Board with responsibility for all matters relating to fabric and finance to a Kirk Session with responsibility for everything. This change took effect from 22nd June 2023. The last meeting of the Congregational Board was held on 24th August 2023.

Last year, a Transition Group was established, led by Team Ministers, Reverend Fiona Crawford and Reverend James Gemmell, with representatives from the congregations at Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum/St Mungo's.

This group was established to develop strategies to take the Mission Plan forward, consider the optimum use of buildings, develop a sound financial plan and manage the practical and legal steps towards the union. The Transition Group has met regularly since inception and are actively working towards an outcome that will meet the future needs of the new parish of Cumbernauld Trinity in full collaboration with the respective congregations, Kirk Sessions and the Presbytery of Glasgow.

While work continues towards a successful union, church life within the parish and congregation of Cumbernauld Old continues with the help and will of a small army of people working tirelessly, often behind the scenes and mostly without being asked or expecting praise in return. The people of Cumbernauld Old truly give of their time talents and money willingly. That's what keeps us going and I hope to touch on much that goes on at Cumbernauld Old in this report.

The Ministry Team

Over the year, Team Ministers, the Reverend Fiona Crawford and the Reverend James Gemmell continued to share responsibilities across the two parishes of Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum/St Mungo's. They led worship services and special services and conducted Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, and on the occasions where our Interim Moderator was unavailable, moderated Kirk Session meetings with prior permission. Fiona predominately at Cumbernauld Old and James at Kildrum/St Mungo's. Fiona led on the Cumbernauld Old move to a Unitary Constitution. Both Fiona and James have shared responsibility for developing a joint Mission Plan and helping the respective congregations plan and deliver a successful union within a reasonable timeframe. The expectation is that Fiona and James will move to new roles within the Presbytery of Glasgow early in 2024. As I write, this is under review, however, it is unlikely that their time will be extended.

At Cumbernauld Old, Fiona and James were assisted by our Deacon, Valerie Cuthbertson, DCS, who provides almost all of the pastoral support. Valerie continued to offer her full support through visits, or by other forms of communication when appropriate over the past year.

Valerie has led the Prayer Chain for many years, working with a small group of volunteers who pray weekly for people that Valerie has identified. Valerie selects and shares appropriate prayers with the group, but names are only shared if that is the wish of the individual, otherwise names are kept strictly confidential. Please speak to Valerie if you would like to join the Prayer Chain or learn more. Valerie and Anne Walker, an Elder at Cumbernauld Old, also conduct funeral services. Last year the Ministry Team conducted 18 funerals of which 6 were for members.

Until September of 2023, the Reverend Julie Moody, Minister at Milton of Campsie Parish Church, held the position of Interim Moderator. It is the responsibility of the Interim Moderator and the Kirk Session to lead, pastor and equip the congregation through the period of vacancy and technically the congregation of Cumbernauld Old remains in a vacancy situation until the union takes effect.

After two years as Interim Moderator, Julie stood down in September to be replaced by the Reverend Mark Malcolm, Minister at Chryston Parish Church. The congregation sent Julie a bouquet of flowers and a small gift as a token of their appreciation for her help and support during her time as Interim Moderator. Mark took up the role of Interim Moderator in September and has worked closely with the Kirk Session to ensure that the life and witness of the congregation continues seamlessly. Mark's role as Interim Moderator is to provide the link between the congregation and Presbytery, to ensure that the congregation is fulfilling its obligations and that the people who serve at Cumbernauld Old are encouraged and enabled.

It is Fiona and James who share day to day responsibilities across the two congregations of Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum/St Mungo's with responsibility for developing strong inter-congregational relationships, development, outreach, worship and pastoral care, working closely with Julie and latterly Mark, Valerie and the Kirk Session, Congregational Board before dissolution and the wider congregation.

Worship and Discipleship

At Cumbernauld Old, Sunday worship services take place weekly at 11am and, over the year, were mostly led by Fiona. James conducted worship once a month. When Fiona was on leave the weekly services were mainly led by Ivar Struthers, an Elder at Cumbernauld Old and a Reader with the Presbytery of Glasgow, and several retired ministers also provided pulpit supply. Quarterly Communion Services took place on the first Sunday of March, June, September and December.

We held a special service for Fairtrade in March, an Easter Egg Gift Service in April, a Maundy Thursday Communion Service during Holy Week, a Good Friday Vigil, Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday Services, a Harvest Service in October, a Remembrance Service in November, a Rainbow Service and a Christmas Gift Service in December, an all-age service on Christmas Eve and a service on Christmas Day. In September, those who wished to do so from the congregation were invited to reaffirm their baptismal vows at a Sunday Morning Worship Service and fifteen members took part in this. This took place on the same day as two children were baptised and this added to the significance of reaffirming our vows.

As you can see, the church is very much open and we are pleased to see around fifty people regularly attending Sunday worship and more for some of the special services. More people, still, regularly view our worship online. It would be good to have more people join us in person on a Sunday morning and the hope is that we can welcome more people back to church over the coming year.

Our discipleship focus last year was Prayer and Mission. During Lent, we ran the 'Prayer Course:' a series of eight sessions working through the Lord's Prayer. This was open to all members from both congregations, held during the day at Cumbernauld Old and repeated in the winter evenings at Kildrum/St Mungo's to allow those in full or part time employment the opportunity to attend. In August, training on 'Leading Prayers for Public Worship' was held. This enabled members to explore how to craft a prayer for use in a service of worship.

Our exploration of mission was shared with Kildrum/St Mungo's. During May and June, a group from both congregations attended an 'Introduction to Pioneering and Planting' course, with a view to better understanding mission in the 21st Century. A group from both congregations also attended 'Mission Possible', a Presbytery-led event in September that provided a range of workshops on mission.

In terms of developing links with other congregations in our cluster group, and in addition to Fiona and James periodically swapping pulpits, we held two Elders' Conferences in collaboration with Kildrum/St Mungo's in March and June. This enabled Elders from the respective congregations to come together to share and explore ideas. Three joint services were also held over the year: the first on Pentecost, hosted by Cumbernauld Old, a second during Advent, held at Kildrum/St Mungo's, and a Christmas Eve Family Service again hosted by Cumbernauld Old. Over Holy Week, James and Fiona led a Service at Abronhill, we hosted a Good Friday Vigil and we participated in a Cluster group Easter Sunday Evening service, held at Moodiesburn.

In August we joined the other Cluster Group congregations for an outdoor Cluster Picnic at Cumbernauld Field and, in September, we hosted a Cluster Group evening service with the theme on 'What Faith Means to Us.' The ministers from each of the Cluster congregations also meet regularly to pray and to discuss progress towards fulfilling the Mission Plan, and the planning of cluster-wide events.

The Parish

Following the union of Kildrum with St Mungo's in May 2023, Cumbernauld Old is currently one of four parishes in the Cumbernauld area. In terms of population, the parish of Cumbernauld Old remains one of the largest in Scotland and is physically and dynamically challenging to cover as it spreads across almost the entire north area of Cumbernauld from Castlecary in the east to Croy in the west. As I write, we still do not have visibility of the results from the 2022 census, but council records suggest that the population of the parish of Cumbernauld Old is currently around 16,500 people.

The parish is split into Districts with an Elder or Visitor assigned to each of the Districts. The size of the parish and the lack of a physical presence north of the M80, which splits the parish into a north/south divide, presents a challenge in reaching out to everyone in the community. There are currently 27 Districts in total, 6 of which are outside the parish boundary which is not uncommon or exclusive to Cumbernauld.

The Mission in Action group, working with Fiona and James, is currently looking at mission opportunities within the parish to raise the profile of the church and the work we do, to have a greater presence in the community and build and develop strong and lasting relationships within the community and with neighbouring congregations particularly across the congregations of Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum/St Mungo's. When the union with Kildrum/St Mungo's comes into effect the new parish of Cumbernauld Trinity will have a population of around 33,000 residents.

Congregational Statistics

Cumbernauld Old is very much a 'hands on' congregation thriving on personal interaction and a welcoming church accustomed to greeting new and returning people to church through our wide interaction with people and families celebrating a life event, engagement with local and national organisations and the local and wider community.

Last year we were pleased to celebrate 3 Baptisms and welcome 4 new members through Profession of Faith. We also welcomed 2 members by Transference of Certificate and 2 members were restored to the Communion Roll by resolution of the Kirk Session. On 31st December 2023 the Communion Roll stood at 245. I am pleased to report that there was no reduction in the Communion Roll in 2023. The Supplementary Roll also remained steady at 120. The challenge, as always, for all of us this year is to encourage more people to come to church and be involved in church life, to reach out more to the community and to create greater opportunity for mission and community interaction. George and Sandra Moffat are our Congregational Roll Keepers and are responsible for keeping the Communion and Supplementary Rolls updated and in order.

In addition to reporting on the rolls, Glasgow Presbytery also requested a report on age profile of regular worshippers last year. I am pleased to report that the age profile shifted ever so slightly downwards last year with an increase in 25-44 year-olds, but the percentages in older age groups remain similar to the previous year with 30% of regular worshippers between the age of 45-64 and 60% between the ages of 65-84.

The Kirk Session

Cumbernauld Old now operates a Unitary Constitution, the change from Model Deed taking place on 22nd June 2023 which basically means that the Kirk Session now has oversight of the life and service of the church, responsibility for temporal and spiritual affairs and all matters relating to property and finance.

On 31st December 2023, the number of Ruling Elders stood at 36. As we remain in a vacancy situation, Mark, as Interim Moderator, moderates the Kirk Session. Last year, all Kirk Session meetings were held face to face and, as you can imagine, the Presbytery and Mission Plans and the union with Kildrum/St Mungo's were a particular focus for discussion and decision-making in 2023.

Several of the Elders on the Kirk Session represent the congregation, locally, nationally and worldwide, maintaining our links with internal and external groups and organisations.

Presbytery Elder

Last year Liz Dalling continued to represent us as Presbytery Elder. Liz represents the congregation at Presbytery and reports to the Kirk Session on all relevant business.

Safeguarding

John Telford, Alex Edwardson and Annette Campbell continue to manage our Safeguarding responsibilities. They have devolved responsibility to co-ordinate and manage all aspects of the safeguarding of children and vulnerable people on behalf of the Kirk Session.

The Safeguarding Team liaises with the central co-ordinators and owns the local registration process, maintains and updates the register and completes the annual audit for attestation, identifies and co-ordinates all local training requirements and ensures all documentation is relevant and updated.

World Church

Ivar Struthers continues as our World Church representative. Ivar keeps the Kirk Session and the congregation informed of the issues and events affecting churches and people internationally and shares information from the Church of Scotland World Mission Council including initiatives and appeals and co-ordinates campaigns locally.

Data Protection

Ivar Struthers continues as Data Protection Co-ordinator. Ivar is responsible for producing local plans and reports and raising awareness of Data Protection requirements and keeping the Admin Team and Office Bearers up to date and compliant with evolving Data Protection regulation. However, it is worth noting that it is the responsibility of everyone who holds data for whatever reason to ensure that they comply with current legislation.

Stewardship

In November last year Annette Campbell stood down from the role of Stewardship Convenor. The Stewardship Convenor is responsible for the effective Stewardship of time, talent and resources. Thank you to Annette for giving of her time to fulfil the role Stewardship Convenor. As I write this role is still vacant.

Cumbernauld Churches Together

Sandra Moffat continues as our representative on the Cumbernauld Churches Together Forum. Cumbernauld Churches Together is a collective of local church groups from different denominations who jointly plan special services and events in the Cumbernauld area. Last year the Cumbernauld Churches Together committee was dissolved. Although the representatives no longer meet as a group, they did agree to continue to make contact with one another on an ad hoc basis to deal with any matters that may arise.

Partner Plan & Mission Circle

Elizabeth Snedden continues as Partner Plan Correspondent. In 2023 we maintained our link with our Missionary Partners, Graham and Sandra Duncan in South Africa. This partnership continues as a locally supported partnership and the Duncans' work is partially funded through the monthly Mission Circle donations. Elizabeth now provides a 'big red bucket' which you will find in the vestibule on the first Sunday of every month where you can drop in your donation. If you would like to know more about the Mission Circle or the work that your donations support, please speak to Elizabeth Snedden.

Christian Aid

Liz Dalling and Leslie Littlejohn continue as our Christian Aid representatives. In addition to other Christian Aid responsibilities, Liz and Lesley organise the annual collections during Christian Aid Week which takes place in May. Last year the Christian Aid campaign raised a total of £1120 from various events. If you would like to help or learn more about Christian Aid please speak to Liz or Lesley.

As you can see, we are well represented across a range of activities and responsibilities. We owe thanks to all who represent us and carry out this work on our behalf.

The Congregational Board

Cumbernauld Old operated the Model Deed constitution until 22nd June 2023 when the Unitary Constitution was formally adopted. The last Congregational Board meeting was held on 24th August 2023.

The Congregational Board had responsibility for all matters Fabric and Finance with a total of 45 Members of the congregation serving on the Congregational Board and listed as Trustees at that point. This included 32 Elders. Gillian MacDonald continued as Clerk to the Board until dissolution. The congregation owes huge thanks to Gillian for the many years of dedicated support she gave as Clerk to the Board. Last year all Board and Trustee meetings were conducted face to face. Julie, as Interim Moderator, moderated all Congregational Board meetings.

Finance

Although the Board has responsibility for finance, the Finance Committee continues to have delegated powers to manage the church finances and make decisions on behalf of the Board and, post-22nd June 2023, the Kirk Session.

The Finance Committee meets monthly to review income and expenditure, ensure that regular financial commitments are met and makes decisions and actions accordingly. Barrie Sheppard continues as Treasurer, Janice Smillie as Finance Convenor and Liz Dalling as our Gift Aid Convenor. Barrie, Janice and Liz are fully supported by the Finance Committee and together they share the day-to-day management of tasks relating to the church finances. This includes receiving and paying invoices, issuing cheques, reconciling monthly income and expenditure and managing budgets, submitting quarterly Gift Aid tax recovery claims and compiling the Annual Accounts.

During 2023 we continued to accept weekly cash and cheque and Freewill Offerings at the door on a Sunday, however, from 7th January 2024, weekly Offerings will again be taken during the service. There will be no change for all those who give by Standing Order or by other means. We are also pleased to report that 75 members of the congregation now give by Standing Order, which makes the task for the Banking Team less onerous on a Sunday. All Offerings make a difference to the life and work of the church and are greatly appreciated.

If you are a taxpayer you can also complete a Gift Aid form that enables the church to reclaim 25p from every £1 received at no cost to you. Last year we reclaimed £7953 through the Gift Aid scheme from HMRC. If you are a taxpayer and donate by Freewill Offering or Standing Order and have not yet completed a Gift Aid form please speak to Barrie, Janice or Liz.

Thanks to the continued support of everyone in the congregation, we met our financial obligations in 2023. We could never have achieved this without your generosity which is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

However, one area of concern on the 2023 Accounts was the General Fund Expenditure of £69,263 against an Income of £59,208. This represented a shortfall of £10,055. Despite this shortfall we were still able to meet our financial obligations last year as we had carried forward a positive balance in the General Fund of £27,300 from 2022, however, this has now reduced to £17,245 and is not sustainable in the longer term.

Property

Although the Board, and the Kirk Session post-22nd June 2023, is responsible for property, the Property Committee has delegated powers to attend to all matters relating to the Church buildings, Manse and grounds.

After eight years as Property Convenor, Matt Sime retired from the role on 31st December 2022, however, kindly agreed to stay on until a new Property Convenor was appointed. We owe huge thanks to Matt for staying on in the role last year. The plan is to have a team that operates similar to the Finance Committee to share the workload, however, we do need to have a new Property Convenor in post and at 31st December 2023 the role was still not filled. We also need volunteers from the congregation and community to step forward to form a team that can share the routine and unplanned practical and administrative tasks. Your help is needed to keep the church open. Any help that you can give and expertise that you can share will be very welcome. Thank you to Walter Snedden who has kindly volunteered to carry out the weekly fire alarm checks. There are lots more routine tasks to be covered. Should anyone be interested in taking on the role of Property Convenor or have the time and skills to join the team please speak to Interim Moderator, Mark Malcolm or Team Ministers, Fiona and James.

Last year Matt and the Property Committee continued to deal with matters of property including the day-to-day management of tasks relating to church property, including routine maintenance work, annual safety checks and servicing and any urgent repairs etc. While the church and Session House are in full use, the Manse remains vacant. Last year running costs for the Manse and grounds cost around £8000.

This includes heating and lighting, insurance, Council Tax, grass cutting, general ground maintenance and minor repairs. Larger essential repairs were also carried out that added to the cost of maintaining the vacant Manse. We have made several attempts to find a suitable tenant to generate income, however, to date we have had no success. As I write the Manse remains vacant.

Presbytery Plan and the Union of Cumbernauld Old with Kildrum/St Mungo's

Last year progress on the Presbytery Plan and work towards the union of Cumbernauld Old with Kildrum/St Mungo's continued at pace. In February the Kirk Session approved amendments to the Presbytery Mission Plan which had previously been approved and submitted to Presbytery. In May, Glasgow Presbytery formally approved the Presbytery Plan.

The congregations of Kildrum and St Mungo's formally united on 11th May, the united congregation now known as Kildrum/St Mungo's, and Cumbernauld Old's application to move to a Unitary Constitution was approved on 22nd June. These were all necessary steps toward the union of Cumbernauld Old and Kildrum/St Mungo's.

The Church of Scotland Trustees have granted permission for Cumbernauld Old and St Mungo's to retain their respective church buildings. The understanding is that both will remain as places of worship. Kildrum church building closed at end of December 2022. Permission has been granted to retain Kildrum Church Halls. St Mungo's Manse is actively up for sale and Kildrum/St Mungo's plan to dispose of Kildrum Manse in due course. At the point of writing, permission is being sought to retain the Cumbernauld Old Manse for a period of three years as a space in which we can develop community engagement, mission, and discipleship opportunities. This is to be reviewed at intervals not exceeding three years.

In November, the Transition Group submitted a ten-point draft document entitled 'Basis for Union' to Glasgow Presbytery outlining the terms and conditions for the union of Cumbernauld Old with Kildrum/St Mungo's which was approved in principle by Glasgow Presbytery.

This document lays out the agreed proposals on name, property, finance, place of worship, parish, the Kirk Session, congregational management, ministerial charge and support and manse. While the document outlines the high-level terms and conditions of the union, the Transition Group still has much work to do to plan the route to union. The task is made more difficult by the ever-changing roadmap, however, the aim is to get to a landing point and a successful union mid-2024. Before the union can take effect though, the uniting Kirk Session and Congregation need to approve the 'Basis for Union'. At present a date for the congregational vote has yet to be tabled.

Mission & Outreach

The Mission in Action group continues to work on behalf of the Kirk Session on a Mission Plan for the parish and local area through collaborative working with partner churches. The Mission in Action group met regularly throughout the year to review the local and wider Mission Plan. The plan contains key elements of outreach and mission, some arising from the 2019 LCR Plan and others from interaction with partner churches in the area particularly with the congregations within the Presbytery Plan Cluster group and Kildrum/St Mungo's with whom we plan to unite in 2024. The Mission in Action Group are currently working with Fiona and the Pew Review Group to determine what changes can be feasibly made to the seating within the church to facilitate greater mission opportunities. This work continues into 2024.

Two initiatives instigated by the Mission in Action Group in 2022 continued to thrive and grow last year:

Community Singing Group

A weekly singing group, led by our organists Lynn Strang and Siobhan Argyle, assisted by talented local musician David Swan, takes place in the church on Wednesday evenings at 7pm. Lynn encourages participants to enjoy the benefits of singing and teaches a wide variety of popular songs. The group known as 'Arria Voices' perform at Church services and concerts. The Singing Group is open to everyone in the community and no previous experience is necessary.

Book Group

A monthly book group, led by local librarian Moira, meets on the first Tuesday afternoon of the month in the church at 2pm. This is an opportunity for people to enjoy fellowship and discussion on the book of the month as chosen by Moira and supplied by the local library. The Book Group is open to everyone in the community.

We also have a Fairtrade stall in church on the last Sunday of every month selling Fairtrade goods, a Mission Circle 'Big Red Bucket' in the vestibule for donations towards the work of Graham & Sandra Duncan in South Africa on the first Sunday of every month, a Craft stall selling hand-crafted goods in the vestibule at Easter and Christmas with proceeds going to local and wider charities, a Coffee Jar Appeal in the summer which in 2023 supported the charity, SiMBA, and we also actively supported many local and international appeals and campaigns throughout the year, including the local Foodbank and Baby Bank.

In May we held a Coronation lunch in the church grounds, to which various people active in the local community were invited, alongside the congregation of Kildrum/St Mungo's. The community choir Arria Voices and local musicians also took part.

In September we participated in 'Doors Open Weekend' when we opened the doors of the church and Manse to the local community and invited a local Art Group to display their works.

Over the past year we have also sought to encourage and develop partnerships with local musicians and, on occasion, the groups they themselves work with. This has included a range of musical evenings that also serve as fundraisers for both parties.

Post-Covid, a relationship developed with Glencryan Additional Support Needs School. This began over Advent 2022, when some of the older pupils came on a trip to the church to learn more about the various artefacts in a church and developed into Fiona leading an Easter service and classroom discussions using multi-media. The school are keen to further develop this relationship.

Foodbank

I am pleased to report that the Foodbank restarted towards the end of 2023. The Foodbank now meets in the church every Thursday from 10.30am – 12.30pm. A group of volunteers from the church and community operate the Foodbank in partnership with Cornerstone 'Bethlehem House of Bread'. After a slow start the numbers have started to pick up as word spreads that the Foodbank has reopened. Your Easter, Harvest and Christmas Gift Service donations were passed to Cornerstone by the local Foodbank and were distributed to people and families in the local area. Thanks to everyone who kindly donated to all the annual appeals.

Youth Organisations

The 1st Cumbernauld Boys' Brigade Company continues to thrive under the leadership of Captain Jordan Watson and his team. On 31st December 2023 the Boys' Brigade had 41 Boys on their roll. Jordan and the team are doing a tremendous job attracting and retaining local boys to the Boys' Brigade through creative and new initiatives as well as traditional activities. The Boys' Brigade meet at The Forge, Balloch on Thursday evenings during term time.

The Girls' Brigade and the Sunday School ceased to operate several years ago. We continue to look at opportunities to restart the Sunday School but as yet this has not proved possible, however, we did celebrate the Baptism of 2 children (3 Baptisms in total) in 2023. This gives us encouragement and hope for the future.

Adult Organisations

The Ladies' Circle and Men's Group continued to meet over the past year, The Ladies' Circle meet at The Forge, Balloch on a Tuesday afternoon. If you would like to learn more about the Ladies' Circle, please speak to Jean Stewart.

The Men's Group normally meets in the Session House at the Village on alternate Tuesday evenings for 'in house meetings' with guest speakers or day visits on a Wednesday to external venues, however, last year's meetings proved to be less frequent.

New members are always welcome. You will be made most welcome if you would like to come along on a Tuesday or Wednesday. Keep your eye on the Church News for forthcoming dates and activities. If you would like to learn more about the Men's Group, please speak to Duncan Whyte.

Fundraising

In 2023 the Fundraising team continued to focus on frequent small fund-raising events throughout the year. The Fundraising Team held a Quiz Night in March, a Coronation Lunch in May, two musical evenings in May, both organised by our organist, Siobhan Argyle, a Silent Auction in July, a Summer Songs of Praise in August, a concert by the Bruadar Duo in October, organised by our organist Lynn Strang and her musical partner, Kieran McCrossan, another Quiz Night, a Car Boot Sale and a Christmas Songs of Praise in November.

The 'Fill a Smartie Tube with 20p's' initiative also saw a steady flow of filled tubes coming in and the Christmas Cards were again very popular. All in all it was another great effort from the Fundraising Team in 2023. Thanks to everyone who helped, donated, attended events and purchased goods.

Craft Group

The Craft Group meets in the Session House on a Thursday afternoon at 1pm. The group supports both the church and local and international charities through the sale of their crafted items which include knitted and crocheted goods, cards and novelty goods at Easter and at Christmas and donated items. You can often find the Craft Group Stall in the Vestibule throughout the year as you arrived at church on a Sunday. If you wish to learn more about the Craft Group, please speak to Dorothy Roberts.

Admin Team

The Admin Team continues to manage all admin-related activities within the church. This includes maintaining Office Bearer contact and email lists and Elder District lists, producing and printing the weekly Order of Service and Church News and Orders of Service for special services, printing, bundling and distribution of the quarterly magazines, distributing minutes of meetings, maintaining the photocopier and ordering ink and stationery among many other tasks.

Thanks to the Office Bearers who have supplied email addresses, information can now be distributed electronically to most members of the Kirk Session and the wider audience. This makes the Admin Team's task less onerous and information can be distributed instantly. Thanks to the Admin Team for keeping everyone informed and up to date during the past twelve months.

Communication

Magazines and Newsletters

Last year, we again published the church magazine quarterly. The magazine is distributed by Elders and Visitors during quarterly communion visits and keeps members of the congregation updated on the church life. Ivar Struthers continues as Magazine Editor. If you have any good ideas, would like to advertise a group or organisation or simply have an item of interest that you would like to share with the congregation please email Ivar at ivar.struthers@btinternet.com by the advised closing dates for news bulletins or quarterly magazines.

Website

Ivar Struthers continues to manage the Cumbernauld Old Parish Church website. The website has information on weekly and special services and activities, organisations, groups and items of community and wider interest. There are also links to other local and national websites. In fact, you can access almost everything you need to know online. Please take the opportunity to visit us at cumbernauldold.org.uk and you will be able to see just how much is on offer and hopefully find something that interests you. We also have a Facebook page ([/cumbernauldold](http://cumbernauldold)) which has links to the services, topical prayers and general information.

Live Streaming

We also livestream services every Sunday at 11am. These can be accessed from our Facebook page, although one doesn't need to have a Facebook account to view them, The advent of live streaming means that those who are unable to come to church for whatever reason can now participate from their homes and the ability to view remotely has been well received from people both at home and abroad.

We do hope though that those who are able and feel comfortable to come to church will continue to do so. The church is open with worship services taking place in the church every Sunday at 11am. A warm welcome greets all regular and new attendees and visitors. Children are especially welcome at our services.

At the beginning of this year's report, I gave an update on the changing world within the Church of Scotland and the impact at congregational level, mapping progress over the last year on the Presbytery Mission Plan and Cumbernauld Old's proposed union with Kildrum/St Mungo's. As you can see from the report, significant progress has been made on both, particularly on the union. At the time of writing, we cannot be entirely sure what the final outcome will look like, however, as 2024 begins, we are getting ever closer.

While all the hard work continues towards a successful union, you can also see from this year's report that church life at Cumbernauld Old continues to thrive and grow. It takes a huge collective effort from everyone to make all of this happen. As ever, we are indebted to the army of people who truly give of their time, talents and money. Thank you to each and every one of you. We can look forward to 2024 and the union with Kildrum/St Mungo's with hope and encouragement.

Brian J Smillie
Session Clerk
January 2024

