

AUTUMN 2025

 FREE CHURCH
of SCOTLAND

NEWSLETTER

STORNOWAY FREE CHURCH

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PHOTO BY MATTHEW MORRISON

CHURCH FAMILY

BY REV CALUM M SMITH

As I write these words it is just after our August Communion weekend, and I do so with a sense of thanksgiving. We were blessed in being together under God's word and are thankful for the ministry of Rev Callum Macleod, Rev Donald A Macdonald and Principal Iver Martin. They are no strangers to the congregation, but each of them encouraged us and the weekend actually marked 10 years since Iver moved full-time to the Seminary in Edinburgh.

Communion is about being together, as a people and with the Lord, and one of the words that Iver used more than once was familial, the nature of being together as a family. There was a real sense of that, and I want to just outline three things that come to my mind about the Church family:

CHANGING FAMILY

As with any family, the Church family sees change. If there was no change the family line would soon disappear. As we gathered over the weekend, this is something that was apparent in different ways. We were aware of those who had been part of the Church family here but are no longer with us. And there was a sense of remembering those who have lost loved ones. We were also aware of family members moving on, especially with some of our younger folk leaving home and moving away to study. At our fellowship on Sunday evening, we committed to remember them prayerfully. But we were also blessed to see the family grow. In our natural families, new birth is a reminder that the family line will continue, and so it is with the church family. We rejoice in the addition of new members and pray for them and that we will see many more join the family of Christ.

A LOVING FAMILY

As we come together as a Church family, it reminds us of how important we are to one another. Family life can often be marked by various challenges and changing seasons, but strong family bonds are important, and these are founded on loving each other. We cannot live our Christian lives in isolation and expect to grow, we need one another. As John Stott once put it, 'You cannot be good in a vacuum, but only in the real world of people' (Message of Ephesians). The real world of people always presents challenges, but as a Church family let us navigate these challenges together, loving one another. As we were reminded of God's love to us over the communion weekend, let us come away from it remembering the command of Jesus in **John 13:34**, '**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another**'.

A FAITHFUL FAMILY

One of my favourite passages that speaks about the faithfulness of the Church family is in Acts chapter 2. We see clearly there the Lord blessing unity and faithfulness, and in verse 46-47 we read, '**And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved**'. May we be encouraged to continue in faithfulness to the Lord and to one another, and that in so doing the Lord would add to our number those being saved and Jesus' name be glorified.

Every blessing,
Calum M



DIAMOND WEDDINGS

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS MARRIED



Murdina and Donald Buchanan, parents of Kirsteen, Norman and Anne, Grandparents to Eilidh, Catriona, Finlay, Rachel and Cailean, recently celebrated 60 years of marriage! They are pictured above with a Diamond Anniversary card from King Charles and Queen Camilla. Murdina and Donald were married on 18th August 1965 in the Church of Scotland in Miavig, Uig, by Rev. William Macleod.



*Be devoted to one
another in love.
Honor one another
above yourselves.*

Romans 12:10

Jack and Rhoda Libby were married in Stornoway Free Church, by Rev. Donald Gilles (Crossbost) on 27th July 1965. They are parents to David, Donald, Jack and Ewen, grandparents to Linsey, Daniel, Micheal, Stephen, Shaun, Jonathan, Sam, Fraser, Maya and great grandparents to Aaron, Finlay, Isabella, Rory, Flora and Hamish.

**HAPPY DIAMOND WEDDING
ANNIVERSARY TO BOTH
COUPLES!**



SUNDAY SCHOOL PRIZEGIVING

JUNE 2025



On Sunday 22nd June, our church family gathered to celebrate our children and young people and mark their faithful attendance in church over the past year. Every child in Creche, Tweenies, Sunday School and Bible Class received a book and a certificate of attendance. We give thanks for all these families who bring their children to church to learn God's Word.



Teen Macleod (pictured left) and Karen Mackay have stepped back from teaching Sunday School. Ian Murdo Macleod (Elder) thanked them for their years of service and marked their going with a gift from the Sunday School. We are grateful to the Lord for providing new Sunday School teachers who can step into their shoes - Louise Macleod, Sandra Kennedy and Kate Macdonald.



Bible Class has extended to include S4 and we are thankful to Shonnie Macritchie for providing suitable premises in the County Hotel for the teenagers to have a dedicated space every Sunday morning. Jonathan Maciver will lead the Bible Class, with help from his wife Alison, Finlay Cunningham and Kim Macdonald.



Please pray for all involved in this important work. Pray for the children and for parents and grandparents, and all who spiritually impact the lives of our children.

"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children..." (Deuteronomy 6:6-7, ESV)







FREE CHURCH YOUTH CAMPS

CAMPERS SHARE THEIR FAVOURITE MEMORIES

"We read the whole of Philippians at Football camp. The leaders were great at breaking it down for us to understand. My favourite verse was Philippians 1:21, 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' My favourite things were making new friends, getting to play football, and the food! It was 10/10. I loved the sausage rolls. It was so good we nicknamed the cook Fiona, Greg's.

Hopefully there will be a Senior Football Camp next year! My favourite moment was when my pal Jono had 31 goals and another boy had 32 goals and I won a penalty and gave it to Jono to make it even at 32-32 for top goals scorer. Thank you to all at Stornoway Free Church who supported young people getting to camp this year." ~ Alexander Macdonald, Camper



"I had a great time at Oswestry this Summer. I enjoyed spending time with friends and taking part in lots of fun activities, like going to Alton Towers. I'd definitely love to go back again next year. Thanks to the Deacons' Court for their help with camp fees, that was really good." ~ Kenneth Macleod, Camper



“My favourite thing about camp was building relationships with the children and witnessing their desire to grow in their knowledge of Christ. What surprised me most about leading a camp was how much I had to learn from the children. The kindness and care they showed for one another was a powerful reminder of the kind of love Christ calls us to have. I saw God at work throughout the week through the way he sustained everyone in their tiredness, and protected from any illness or injury. Thank you to the congregation for their generous support towards camp fees.” ~ Christina Matheson, Leader at Kincaig Kids 2.

WEDDING BELLS

CONGRATULATIONS SHAUN AND GEORGINA!



Shaun and Georgina got married in Canterbury on the 24th of May 2025. They were married by Jonny Sutton, the pastor of Redeemer Church, Folkestone. They would like to extend their thanks and appreciation for all the prayers and messages of support they have received as they start their married life together.



WILD WEST HOLIDAY CLUB.

28 JULY TO 1 AUGUST 2025

Earlier this summer, over 70 volunteers began to giddy up for our Wild West-themed holiday club! You may have spotted some hay bales outside the church or weathered old cowboys wandering along Kenneth Street, with no sign of their cows. The decor, outfits, songs, drama, crafts, games, snacks and even our accents, had a distinct Western flavour. Over 90 children attended across the week and learned about how God freely offers us salvation by grace through faith in Jesus, all while having a really fun time with friends. It was beautiful to see them all singing and reciting Ephesians 2:8.

Many families stayed for lunch on Friday. All the children received gift bags, including a Christian book, sweets and tiny water pistol! Thank you kindly to all who prayed for the club, please pray for the seed that was sown. Thank you to all who gave financially, including funders WIDT and the Co-op Cromwell Street. We thank God for his goodness and pray his continued blessing.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.





MAIRIANNE CAMPBELL MOVING ON

FAREWELL FROM MAIRIANNE, OPERATIONS AND OUTREACH SUPPORT MANAGER

"...tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done." (Psalm 78:4)

It is time for me to say farewell. I took up the post as Youth and Secretarial Assistant in this congregation in January 2009. The post then transitioned to Operations and Outreach Support Manager in April 2024. Rev Iver Martin was my first 'boss' and I'm very thankful to him, Rev. Kenny I Macleod and the Kirk Session for their leadership and the immense privilege of assisting them in the admin and pastoral care of the young people in the congregation. I have also been fortunate to work with Rev James Maciver and Rev Calum Murdo Smith in the years following and thank them for their integrity and servant-hearted approach to ministry and management.

I have always loved working with young people and discipleship is still my passion. I'm hugely grateful for the experiences this work has afforded me over the years - from camps galore to counselling training. I have learned so many skills in this job but the ultimate privilege has been in witnessing God at work in people's lives. Being in post for 16 years has given me a 'long view' of discipleship and seeing God growing young disciples over years has encouraged my own faith hugely. It's also shown me how "it takes a whole church to raise a child" and that it is God's work in which we are honoured to partner with him.

Back in 2009, Facebook had just begun its meteoric growth and iPads hadn't even been invented. Our congregation had a website and sermons on CD but no social media. The Covid Lockdown in 2020 expedited the move to livestream services, and now we have over 1,500 subscribers to our Stornoway Free Church YouTube channel, and over 100 households tuning in live every Lord's Day. The congregation has over 2,000 followers on Facebook and Instagram. Pray that these will all become followers of our Lord and Saviour!

I will be taking up a post in Advocacy Western Isles in late September and I am looking forward to a new challenge, though I will certainly miss working in ministry. I plan to stay in the congregation, so it's not quite goodbye, you will still be seeing me around!

I'm afraid I cannot possibly thank everyone adequately. Thank you to all who have supported and prayed for me; to my colleagues and the volunteers I've worked with; to the leadership who have invested in me; to my family and boyfriend for your patience, love and care. God bless you all for your kindness.
Love, Mairianne



WHAT'S ON IN SEPTEMBER

upcoming events

- 4th Explorers starts back, Mini Explorers at 6pm, Juniors at 7-8.15pm
- 5th Fridays at the Free, 12-3pm
- 6th Church Day Out, Coll Centre, 1.00-4.00pm
- 7th Back to Church Sunday - Sunday School & Bible Class restart
- 8th Toddlers every Monday during term-time, 1.00-3.00pm
- 8th Kirk Session at 7pm, Session Room, Kenneth Street
- 12th 55+ Fellowship with Rev Gordon Macleod, 2.30-4pm
- 12th - 14th Christians in Sport Weekend of Faith and Sport
- 14th Big YF with Josh Strike from Christians in Sport, 7:45pm, MA Hall.
- 15th Deacons' Court at 7pm, Session Room, Kenneth Street
- 19th Fridays at the Free, 12-3pm
- 30th Craft Group, 7:15pm
- 1st Oct. Congregational Bible Study, in the MA hall at 7:30pm.
- 4th Oct. Women for Mission Soup and Pudding Lunch, 12-2pm

Keep an eye on the weekly bulletin & on our website for info on the other groups we have and when they meet, including online prayer meetings, ladies walking group, Women for Mission, and various fundraising events.

CONTACTS

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