



The Magazine of Inverurie West Parish Church

FEBRUARY 2026



Inverurie January 2025.
Photograph by Angela Fern
(Used with kind permission)
Scottish Charity SC016907

REFLECTION

Kenneth Steven's reflection expresses much of what we are all feeling just now: a longing to see the first snowdrop!

After Winter

Sometimes we cannot see the stars

The dark is down and holds us bleak and lost

Sometimes all that we can do is wait

For believing is just too big and too alone

Until a snowdrop pushes up the sky

And suddenly the snow is only slush

The winter no more than a waiting for the sound

Of geese in thousands overhead.

From Kenneth Steven's Anthology - Letting in the Light (SCPK Publishing)



From the West Manse



I'm hoping that by the time you read this, someone will have spotted a snowdrop or a crocus. As of the time of writing, I myself have seen neither petal nor stem. I suspect that, brave as these little spring heralds are, they are mindful of the 'wobbly polar vortex' we experienced recently and are keeping their heads down for another week or two.

What I do know is that at some point they will appear. They always do. Having grown up amongst Ontario flowers (who have learned from hard experience that to appear above the ground before at least a few months of the year have passed is horticultural suicide), it always astonishes me how early the first blooms begin to appear in the UK.

Unlike the brassier daffodils - which I admit I love - the snowdrops and the crocuses arrive without trumpets or fanfare. Gently, quietly, yet determinedly they simply turn up. And when their job is done, they seem to me to disappear equally quietly. (Once again unlike the daffodils who are drama queens and tend to make a bit of a song and dance about collapsing in on themselves before conceding the stage.)

But what is a snowdrop or a crocus's 'job' anyway? Well, if daffodils tell us that spring has arrived, snowdrops and crocuses remind us that spring is coming. They tell us, quietly but firmly, that even the bleakest winter can't last forever. The ground may be hard, and the polar vortex may still have a few wobbles left in it, but we are not to give up hope.

If you will indulge me and allow me to continue to give human characteristics to flowers, it's a job that takes courage. Why? Because snowdrops and crocuses don't wait for the cold to go before they speak up. Instead, they act as soon as their own deeply embedded rhythms tell them that their moment has arrived. They 'read' the earth's signs, telling them that the frost no longer grips as tightly as it did, and they respond.

Some of them don't make it. Winter doesn't give in easily. But here's the thing, these delicate flowers don't act alone. They work together and there is power in that. There is no agreed collective noun for crocuses but two which are often used are a 'carpet' or a 'chorus' of crocuses. Both of these express this sense of connection and unity. 'Chorus' is particularly apt as it echoes some of the popular collective nouns for snowdrops, such as a 'joy' or 'hope' of snowdrops.

Working together with joy and with hope. That's how we resist the cold and prepare for the spring - literally and figuratively.

Jesus famously told his disciples to 'consider how the wild flowers grow' (Luke 12: 27). He wasn't naive about the dangers or instability of the world. He often warned his followers about the risks they would face. But he also regularly reassured them that the God of creation was still in charge.

There are rhythms embedded so deeply that no human behaviour can permanently disrupt them. But that's no excuse for us remaining underground. We are still called to face the frost, to grow, to persevere, to bloom; to collectively bring colour, joy and hope wherever we have been planted.

At Easter, we know that hope will burst forth and the daffodils will blaze. But for now, and whatever the weather or the world throws at us, we have the less showy path of the delicate but deceptively resilient snowdrops and crocuses to guide us.

And if it helps, at our editorial meeting just before I finished this letter, Margaret Hearne reported to me that she had seen snowdrops in her garden that day. The first 'joy of snowdrops' is already with us.

Every blessing

Rhona

SOCIAL/FUNDRAISING TEAM UPDATES



Last year we again ran our reuse/recycle pre-loved baubles and other Christmas decorations. It was very successful and raised over **£230** for church funds. Thank you to everyone who donated (and bought!) items.

Joyce.





Guild Report January 2026

Our December meeting was a celebration of Christmas. We had a “wee party” with a selection of Christmas eats. We were entertained by Chris and Alan Gardner who gave us songs, stories, facts and a few cryptic questions we had to solve as a group. It was an excellent afternoon of wonderful company and entertainment.

The January meeting sadly, due to the snow, had to be cancelled. We hope to have Margaret Hearne and Laurence Young later in the session.

Our next meeting is on **Monday 9th February** when Ann Marie, our co-ordinator, will be giving a talk about her New Zealand wanderings. Remember we will also have our **bring and buy sale**.





All are very welcome.

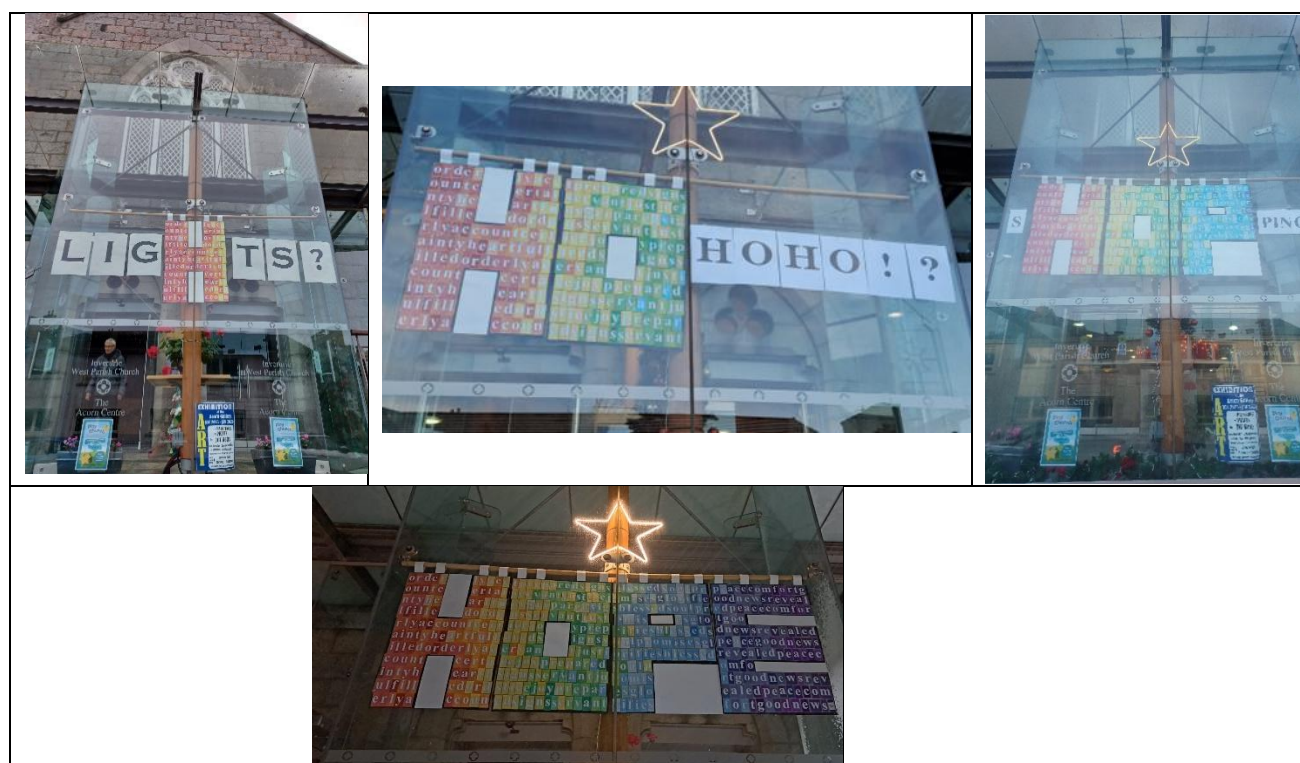
Margaret Harrow

HOPE FOR ADVENT

Many thanks to all for contributing to our Advent art project. It was a truly collaborative project. Folk donated recycled card to make our letter tiles, everyone had a go at colouring in, words were added to the crossword during services, the project team spent many evenings cutting and sticking the letters and the patient folk at the Acorn centre engineered the final display.

The lectionary for Advent was from the gospel of St Luke – an orderly account - so words were the building blocks for the project.

			
Initial ideas	Creating the crossword for the services.	Cutting and sticking	The beginning of HOPE



UBUNTU UPDATE

After a busy period of sales in the lead up to Christmas, new stock is now available in the shop and your ongoing support in 2025 was much appreciated.

If you can't find the gift you are looking for in the shop, why not consider a **Gift for Life** card from **Transform Trade**. These charity gifts are truly meaningful presents for your loved ones and friends and feature stories of farmers and producers sharing just how impactful your support is, plus a blank space for you to write your own greeting.

Transform Trade was set up in 1986 to build a world free of injustice in trade and was known as **Traidcraft Exchange** until 2022. They have a brand-new range of cards for 2026 with 100% of the profits from the sale of the cards funding their work with producers around the world. Prices range from £10 to £40 and there are cards for many different occasions.

Gifts for Life cards are available as both physical cards and e-cards. Physical cards include a greeting card envelope as well, whereas e-cards are delivered straight to the recipient's inbox on a day of your choosing.



More information about the cards can be found at:
<https://store-transform-trade.org/collections/gifts-for-life-cards-1>

Church Calendar/Ways of connecting October 2026



If you are worshipping from home, you can connect as usual via the West church website and youtube channels.

Sun 1 Feb 11 am Morning Worship. Hospitality after service.
3 - 4.30 pm Play Church Interactive storytelling and drama for the whole family.

Sun 8 Feb 11am Morning Worship. Hospitality time after service.

Mon 9 Feb 2 pm Guild meeting.

Weds from 11 Feb 7.30pm Zoom Bible study. All are welcome.
Contact Rhona for the link.

Sun 15 Feb 11am Morning Worship. Hospitality after service.

Sun 22 Feb 11am Morning worship. Followed by informal communion

Encounter If you have any material for Encounter email:
encounter@inveruriewestchurch.org by Wed 18

Children are welcome at all services. Most weeks during term time we offer Junior Church for children who wish to go downstairs partway through the service. Activities and toys can also be found in our 'play as you worship' box in the sanctuary.

The prayer group continues to meet regularly on Thursday mornings. Prayer requests can be sent to olive.duncan@hotmail.co.uk or duncan.linda1@btinternet.com

CHRISTMAS CARD DELIVERY SCHEME



Happy New Year to All.

*The Inverurie Churches once again had a very successful Christmas Card delivery scheme. The sum of over **£1300** was raised and has been sent off to support the ongoing work of Christian Aid. This could not be done in an ever-expanding Inverurie without our large band of volunteers. Many thanks to each and every one, not forgetting everyone who posted cards and to the shops who hosted our boxes.*

Christian Aid Committee

RAFFLE BLANKET

Back before Christmas the church had a competition called 'Guess where the squirrel has stored his Winter 'stash' of acorns?' This was to raise money for seeds and compost for Spring-time planting!



The competition was a version of lucky squares. Liz Young painted a wonderful picture which had been divided into 100 squares. Competitors had to **guess under which square the squirrel had chosen to hide his acorns.** The winner got a beautiful crocheted, sparkly 'Christmas' blanket donated by **Linda Mathers.**

This is a picture of the blanket Linda crocheted, and the proud possessor of the blanket is **Joy Doorghen** who provided this picture of the blanket.

THE CHURCH GARDEN

(This article was submitted to Encounter in August 2025 but because of space constraints we were unable to include it and then we (or more accurately, I – Robert) lost track of it because the issues from September have been very full. Apologies to Biff and the Garden Team. Notwithstanding, the images showing the results of the volunteers' work and the skill of the artist(s) are worth recalling and – with another winter storm headed towards us – it is nice to look at how beautifully the work has been done and look forward to enjoying the garden when sunnier climes return).

From Biff Barrow:

Thank you to everyone who popped into the garden for our open evening. The evening sun was warm - so much so that someone commented that with our newly painted furniture (turquoise) and whitewashed walls – was all that was required in the Hospitality Area was some pink bougainvillea for it to feel that we were in the Mediterranean! 😊

Thanks too to Dorothy, Laura and Kenneth for some lovely home bakes which always go down well! Remember it doesn't have to be advertised as an 'open' session for you to pop by.

At the moment our lovely volunteers from '**Inspire**' are there on a Wednesday morning for a cuppa and to tend to their raised beds which this year have produces radishes, lettuce, rocket and some very pretty flowers.

We also have two beds allocated to the Gardening Group at Grampian Opportunities, but rest assured you don't have to be a gardener to visit, the seating area is always available for folk to just look at the garden - and enjoy!

We would however really appreciate it if you did visit.
We have a bunch of volunteers who drew out the outline and coloured in the final design once it had been agreed on

'All things bright and beautiful' was the inspiration..... what does that conjure up for you?

We look forward to hearing your suggestions about how we develop the garden. Just leave any suggestions at the Acorn Reception

Many thanks,

The Garden Team



Photo - 2 INSPIRE



Photo - 1 Linda and Dorothy

And photos of the mural sent in November 2025 ...



Photo - 3 Mural and benches

Photo - 4

All things Bright and Beautiful



WHO'S WHO AT THE WEST

Minister	Rev Rhona Cathcart r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org	620285
Session Clerk	Morag Mitchell sessionclerk@inveruriewestchurch.org	629312
Church and Acorn Centre Administration	Judith Will admin@inveruriewestchurch.org	670850
Church Officer	A team approach will be implemented.	
Rollkeeper	Chris Gardner rollkeeper@inveruriewestchurch.org	07791 630495
Safeguarding Co-ordinators	Valerie Napier Gail Buchan	623279 622145
Transport Co-ordinator	Linda Mathers	07842 195032
Acorn Centre Management Team	Laura Gray lauragray25@btinternet.com	620658
Environmental Matters Team	Joy Doorghen doorghens@outlook.com	620823
Fabric Team		
Finance Team	Alan Sharp sharp3@btinternet.com	
Treasurer	Alison Blair treasurer@inveruriewestchurch.org	620677
Committed Giving Envelopes	Cindy Farquhar Cindyfarquhar25@yahoo.com	
Gift Aid	Mark Paterson mgpateron@talktalk.net	01467 625675
Junior Church Team	Biff Barrow biff.barrow@tiscali.co.uk	623096
Pastoral Care Team	Rev Rhona Cathcart r.cathcart@inveruriewestchurch.org	620285
Social/Fundraising Team	Joyce Petrie joycepetrie21@hotmail.com	620932

CONGREGATIONAL ROLL

There are no changes to the roll

Please advise the Roll Keeper of any change of address:
rollkeeper@inveruriewestchurch.org

FLOWER CALENDAR – JANUARY/FEBRUARY

January Convener: *Eleanor Mitchell*

18th January Betty Reid

25th January Joyce Petrie

February Convener: *Linda Duncan*

1st February Irene Jamieson and Linda Mathers

8th February -

15th February -

22nd February Alan and Margaret Harrow



Thanks to all who donate, arrange, or deliver flowers.

ENCOUNTER ONLINE – Currently we are producing and distributing Encounter online and in print. If you have not already provided details of your e-mail and would like to ensure you receive the online version, please contact the Session Clerk (01467 629312).

