



Avendale and Drumclog Church

2024 ANNUAL REVIEW

SUMMARY

The Trustees rejoice in presenting the Annual Review for Strathaven: Avendale Old and Drumclog Memorial Church of Scotland along with the accompanying Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Our objective is to seek to inspire the people of Avendale and Drumclog and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and service.

In the life of our congregation, we aim in all that we do to exhibit the five purposes of the church, namely, worship, service, discipleship, fellowship and evangelism, and to promote these in a healthy balance.

Throughout 2024, we continued to develop our missional activities. These particularly included building links with families and young people in the local area. It has been a blessing to continue to strengthen and expand our partnership with Gilmourton and Sandford Primary schools.

We saw the introduction of our '40 Days of Prayer' when we joined together as a congregation praying and studying the book of Acts with the help of our online Blog. Adult discipleship has also seen the number of Home Study groups now grow to 4.

As well as these and all of our ongoing activities, other highlights for the year included: our Scots Evening, celebrating Drumclog Guild's 90th anniversary, Street Food Sunday, our Christmas Fair and completion of our Strategic Framework.

It was a true blessing to welcome 20 new members into our fellowship, 8 through profession of faith.



When reflecting on 2024, we celebrate a year of rich blessings in the life and work of Avendale and Drumclog. We also look to the future with keen anticipation, waiting patiently for what God has in store for us in 2025 and beyond.

We invite you to have a look on our website at: <https://www.avendale-drumclog.org.uk/>

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

In June 2024 the Kirk Session commissioned a group of our elders to develop a Strategic Framework document as a reference point for planning from 2025-2030. This exercise was in alignment with Presbytery's suggestion that parish churches should have a five-year plan. The Strategy Group proposed as a succinct strapline:

“Inspiring hope, sharing God’s love”

The Strategy Group used the “Five Marks of Mission” (adopted by the Church of Scotland), as a reference point and developed a draft document. The Five Marks are:

1. To share the good news of God's kingdom
2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need through loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

The Group shared the draft document with the congregation through 4 consultations, one of which was specifically with young people of secondary-school age. All the feedback received through the consultation process was adopted into the developing framework.

The [Strategic Framework](#) was finalised in December 2024 and is published in full on the church's website. The document outlines the church's vision, priorities, and values. The vision of the Avendale and Drumclog Parish Church is to “Inspire people in our community to respond to the love of God through Jesus Christ.”

Our Strategic Framework will act as a key reference point for planning, development and growth in the parish of Avendale and Drumclog over the next five years. The following summary of the Strategy Framework in an “easy-to-access” format is also available on our website, and is reproduced on the next page.

Avendale & Drumclog Strategic Framework 2025-2030

Avendale + Drumclog

Inspiring Hope, Sharing God's Love

The Kirk Session and congregation of **Avendale and Drumclog Church** have developed this strategy document that we will use as a reference point for our activities over the next five years, 2025-2030. Here, we set out our vision, priorities, values, enablers, expected outcomes and potential future risks.



UPDATES FROM WORK GROUPS

Each aspect of our church's ministry is supervised by our Work Groups. Each Group now reports as follows.

WORSHIP & PRAYER (LEADERS: HUGH CAMPBELL, ANDY MEIKLE)

Our Strategic Framework clearly tasks us to be missional in outreach, and to develop new ways to proclaim the Good News to congregations, neighbours and those beyond our parish. The long-established Working Groups have succeeded in cultivating and expanding our missional approach in many new ways, and the Worship and Prayer Group has been central in this regard.

The past year has seen continuing innovation in terms of worship

Monthly '**Messy Church**' family-friendly services have been a joy. We have seen growth in numbers and diversify in content: stories, songs, crafts and the opportunity to enjoy a full evening meal have been enjoyed by families new and old throughout the year.

Our monthly '**Ignite**' services cater for those who particularly enjoy a more relaxed and informal type of worship.

Twice-monthly '**Take Time**' Christian Meditation services have proved enlightening and relaxing, hosted both in Avendale Church Sanctuary and in Strathaven's Community Wing.



Our **Home Bible Study** groups grew from 3 to 4 groups. Each continued to enjoy the opportunity to meet together for a number of extended studies on Moses and on 1 Thessalonians. Evening and afternoon meetings cater for many of our members. Further such activities are planned for 2025 and beyond.

We were pleased to provide many special Worship Services in 2024. We welcomed Rev. Blaine Crawford and his family from the USA to our community in July as part of a pulpit exchange with Rev Calum Stark, and our Group supported Blain's preaching whenever we could.

A particularly memorable 'Conventicle Service' was enjoyed by a large turnout at the Drumclog memorial in early June. The weather was kind, and the many visitors enjoyed the open-air service as well as the provided catering.

An innovative 'Christingle' service joined our regular Christmas celebrations of 'Lessons and Carols' at Avendale, and Drumclog's 'Christmas in the Country'.



Prayer continues to be central to the life and mission of our Church. Weekly Zoom prayer meetings continue. A growing weekly in-person prayer meeting is held in Avendale on Mondays after our Haven Coffee Morning. Regular evening Congregational Prayer meetings are a blessing, with their focus being on specific topics, e.g., young people and families in our schools and community.

We continue to offer a pre-service prayer time both at Drumclog and at Avendale. We have a number of volunteers for the prayer sessions both pre- and post- service, and hope to invite more members to participate in this important aspect of congregational prayer activity in 2025.

In terms of ACORN prayer, we now have 2 groups meeting on a semi-regular basis to share testimonies. We have also begun to use Prayer Walks as a means to increase fellowship as we talk to God in the outdoors.

One form of outreach has involved members of our team manning stalls at local events, which have proved successful in inviting members of the public to become aware of our worship activities, and accepting our invitation to join with us for services and other activities. The Gala day event was very successful, The Reindeer Day event, while wet, was worthwhile. Unfortunately, the Balloon festival event was cancelled this year due to bad weather.



Our Good Friday prayer event was held from 10 am till 2 pm on Friday, 29 March 2024. Volunteers were recruited to read and pray. Others offered time to welcome and direct visitors. Arrangements were made with a member to provide live music, with a CD for back-up when needed. Particular thanks in this regard go to Iain Cunningham. So many people commented on the peace and beauty brought to the event by the music that was played. This year's event offered other resources to aid prayer and reflection. People were encouraged to:

- Take a stone, representing their burdens, and to place it at the cross
- Pray for the world, aided by a world map and a selection of world prayers
- Use pen and paper to write their own prayers and prayer requests. These will be prayed over on Easter Sunday
- Focus their thought and prayers through the lighting of a candle
- Take time to be quiet and reflect
- Use the various book resources that were available at points through the sanctuary
- Offer feedback:

Comments that were made included:

"Really appreciate all the readings and prayers"

"Live music was so beautiful. Thank you for the peace engendered"

"Much thoughtful contemplation. Thank you Avendale Church"

"Beautiful music. Lovely serene atmosphere. Perfect peace and time for prayer"

The event delivered much to those who attended and showed that the viability of the event into the future is secure.

MISSION & DISCIPESHIP (LEADERS: MURRAY AND ANNE HERBERT)

In the last three years, as a church, we have concentrated on progressing our shift from **maintenance to mission**. This has involved focussing on the three premises of:

connecting, challenging and cultivating.

Connecting - In building new activities that form a link with the community such as Haven, Crossbeats Radio and Messy Church, we have seen new individuals and families come into the church and later join us regularly at worship.

Challenging - The strategy is then to bring a worship/teaching content that brings the Gospel message clearly to others in a contemporary and relevant way. Ignite (cafe style worship), small group studies such as 3-2-1, for example, have helped to achieve this.

Cultivating - Small group studies have grown (4 are now in operation) and a variety of other activities have provided opportunities for spiritual growth and development.

In initiating outreach and worship activities, the work of the Mission and Discipleship Group simply seeks to create a culture of missional activity and personal growth opportunities. It is fair to say that there has been a shift in our outlook as a church, and many now have captured the vision of bringing the Gospel practically to others. Such things as the hospitality initiatives opening up homes for lunch invitations, or soup and a sandwich, have fostered relationships.

The newly adopted Strategic Framework brings us the focus to drive these activities on in the context of '*Inspiring hope and sharing God's love*'.

Messy Church

Our Messy Church continues to be large and dynamic. Our regular attenders stand at about 95 in total with attendances being between 70 and 80. Although geared for families, this is a truly inter-generational activity with 15 helpers.

In the last year, the leaders (Murray and Anne Herbert) have sought to develop the leadership skills of teenagers within the congregation by involving them in the planning and delivery of the monthly programme. The help of these three teenage leaders has been refreshing and invaluable. Typically, a Messy Church session includes a welcome coffee and chat time for parents while there are games for the children followed by a one-hour session of music, teaching and crafts for all ages. This is rounded off with a delicious 2-3 course meal, which is very popular with the families.



In the last year, we have also run 4 separate Messy Church events at Sandford and Gilmourton Primary Schools. This liaison has been a lot of fun and a fantastic opportunity for us to invite families to the monthly Messy Church at Avendale. Several new families have joined us.

A Messy Church was also piloted at Drumclog last summer. This avenue is likely to be explored further in the year ahead.

Men's Ministry

Two specific groups meet to foster connection and fellowship between men at the moment.

Yarn at the Barn - the *Men's Breakfast* occurs monthly at Barn Street coffee shop on a Saturday morning. Around twenty to twenty-five men meet for a simple breakfast, with a brief, but challenging biblical thought for the month.

Men's Connect - This new group was formed specifically to foster connection and fellowship in the younger men of our congregation. Aimed at the 20 to 40-ish age group, around 17 young men meet (usually around food!).



Women's Ministry

The **Women's Connect** group has been established under the initiative of members of the congregation. Meeting monthly for fellowship and study, the group has established itself as a hugely useful and potentially powerful medium for the young women of the church



Stalls

We seek to have a presence at the major community events (Gala Day, Strathaven Exposition, the Balloon Festival, Reindeer Day, etc) with a stall at which we can engage in conversation with members of the community, offer a craft for kids and more information about the church. Again, this has been a very useful contact point. It was thanks to this that a new family started coming to Messy Church who had no experience of church.

Home Groups

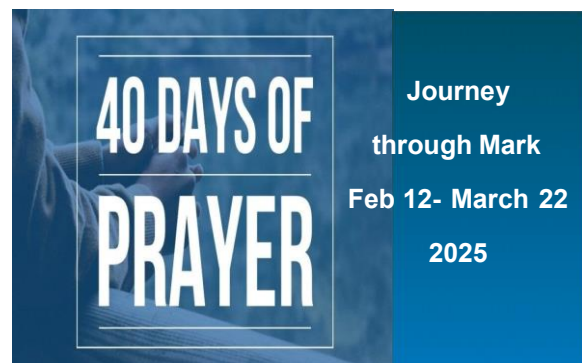
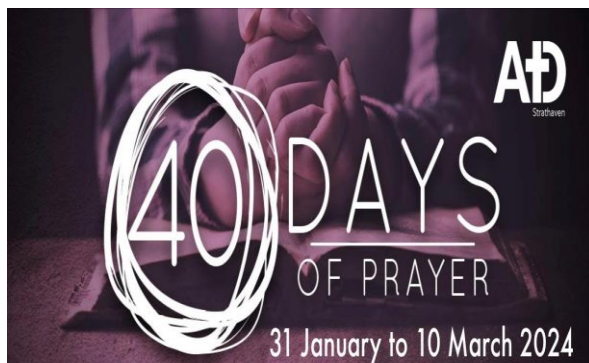
4 groups are now in operation with around 8 to 10 attending each group. Studies in the last year have included looking at Moses and 1 Thessalonians. Our hope would be that these will grow in the coming year.

Crossbeats Radio

We remain committed to both supporting Avondale Radio, our local community radio station, and providing a weekly Christian focussed music show. The church now officially sponsors the Crossbeats show. There is a need to spread the word concerning this show and engage a larger listening public. This is something for the church as a whole to try and do. Discussion about contemporary Christian music gives an opportunity to join a thriving radio community in our area and represent the church to people who are unfamiliar with what a 21st century church looks like.

40 Days of Prayer

2024 saw an initiative to engage the whole church in reading through Acts together, while praying for the community. This was hugely successful. Some 200 journals were handed out and practically the whole church engaged in the 40-day read through supported by a daily [Blog](#) and Bible commentary by certain members of the congregation. In 2025 we intend to repeat the programme, this time basing our read through on the Gospel of Mark.



Hospitality

A number of events have been run in the last year to foster hospitality within and to reach-out to those outside the church. These include a hospitality 'season' during which many members of the congregation ran fellowship lunches or meals in their homes. In addition, a soup and sandwich invitation Sunday was organised.

Larger centrally organised events included a hugely successful community Sunday Steak Pie lunch at Drumclog and 'Street Food Sunday' at Avondale (with 6 different meal options and a lot of visitors). These were ideal opportunities to invite friends and neighbours.



These represent just part of the exciting and dynamic growth areas of the church. It is crucial to maintain prayer over all activities as we seek God's guidance on the avenues we should pursue.



PASTORAL CARE (LEADERS: IAN DOUGLAS, EDITH SCOTT)

Pastoral care continues to be carried out by Avendale and Drumclog Church both formally and informally.

Increasing numbers regularly attending church have encouraged us to take a broader view on how we extend pastoral care to those who are not members. Visitors have now been allocated to those who have become regular attendees at church services at Avendale and Drumclog,

and in the life of the Church, but are not yet members of the Congregation, as approved by Kirk Session.

As a church, we consider ourselves to be outward looking to our community in terms of pastoral care and inclusion, and we are happy to provide opportunities for both. Much of this work is covered in other reports within this document, where there is often a degree of pastoral overlap.

We believe that pastoral care should be provided by all members of the congregation when that is appropriate. This kind of informal care is often delivered by those closest to the person or family involved. It can take many forms and can be sustained over different lengths of time as required. Some examples would include alleviating loneliness, help with shopping or tasks, provision of meals, offering comfort during difficult times, in fact, all the things that are provided by a family to its members.

Formally, care and support are offered by the pastoral team which comprises elders and pastoral visitors. Districts and District Elders/Visitors have been geographically allocated and there is dialogue with the Roll Keeper in relation to new members and changes to the Roll.

Numbers attending worship, as stated, are steadily increasing. We are seeing younger families attending services and other activities. Our welcome teams, which were increased in size last year, endeavour to ensure that all who attend are recognised, appropriately welcomed, and receive all information they may want, whilst at the same time ensuring that every person, from the youngest to the oldest, feels valued and receives a sincere welcome.

We continue to maintain a strong ministry through delivery of flowers to those who need to know that their congregational family is thinking of them in times that are often difficult.

In the autumn of the year, the Kirk Session approved a new and major initiative which falls under the Pastoral Care umbrella. Kintsugi Hope is a Christian outreach that aims to restore brokenness to wholeness in people, just as the Japanese use a method of restoring broken ceramics using gold, and often making them more beautiful than before in the restoration process.

Prior to approval of the course, the pastoral team was involved in meeting with the experienced course facilitator to assure ourselves of the quality, purpose and confidentiality of what would be offered to those who might attend, given that such people could be fragile. The facilitator has run such courses in previous church settings with tangible success. During the conversations there was a focus on the help and resources that would be required, potential numbers and timetables, and of course, examination of the supporting documentation and reading material. We had full confidence in the facilitator and fully believed that this work could make a difference to the lives of those who might attend.

The first course began 6 weeks before Christmas and would continue for a further 6 weeks after Christmas. The course numbers are restricted to up to ten people, and whilst the details of those attending are treated with utmost confidentiality, we requested a brief update on how the course was progressing from the perspective of the course facilitator and this is included below.

“Kintsugi Wellbeing Groups are for everyone and a first adult group has begun in Avendale and Drumclog Parish Church. The group provides a safe, supportive and confidential space, where folk can take time out of their busy lifestyle to reflect on their

emotional and mental wellbeing. The group follows a structured course where participants have the opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other. Laughter can often be heard coming from the group room, but alongside the laughter the group explores some of the big issues that no-one ever talks about: anxiety, shame, disappointment and loss, forgiveness all within a Christian context, supported by Kintsugi Hope. This first group is only the start, a second group is planned soon."

The success of the first group, whilst still running at the time of writing this report, has encouraged our facilitator to continue to plan further courses in the year with the full approval of the Kirk Session.

It has been a busy year, during which the pastoral care team has successfully supported groups and initiatives within the circle of church activities.



YOUTH & FAMILY (LEADERS: SANDI ALLAN, MATTHEW CHAPMAN)

Bugglets and Drumclog Toddlers (Doreen Frew, Lynn Dyer)

Bugglets' new playgroup style evolved over the summer from the more singing focused approach previously adopted. Bugglets provides a friendly, caring, welcoming environment for preschool children (currently particularly toddlers under three) with their parents, carers or grandparents.

The amazing Bugglets team comprises of some members who set up for Bugglets and then return the sanctuary ready for worship, as well as a fabulous group of most willing helpers who play with the children and chat to the adults. Refreshments are now served in the sanctuary with Haven gratefully providing home baking for the adults. We judge our success on this quote “*Bugglets – it’s like a party for Grannies*”.

New families have been welcomed as a result of the work of the Church outreach group at Gala Day, Strathaven Show and Reindeer Day. Other families come along having heard of us by word-of-mouth. Families are invited to events in the church and church services are discussed with those who ask for more details. There are currently 31 adults and 41 children on the register, with the weekly attendance generally being between around 16 and 22.



Bugglets is now well established at Avendale on Monday mornings. It provides an opportunity for play, song-time and stories for babies and toddlers, accompanied by their parents/carers, in a welcoming supportive environment at no cost.

Drumclog Toddlers is also thriving, and is held on a Wednesday morning. This was a new innovation to our list of provisions for community projects which has seen the delivery of our mother and toddler group. The number of kids and carers increased throughout 2024.

Family Corner and Family Room

We continue to offer these welcoming spaces, and find that most weeks we have little ones and their parents/grandparents/carers making use of them, allowing the grown-ups to remain in the service with their wee ones, with the assurance of a quiet space with a live-stream of the service available if they need it. The congregation welcomes the presence of the children and sometimes sit with the wee ones allowing parents to focus on the service.

His Kids (Sandi Allan)

His Kids offers age-relevant Christian teaching to children age 4-12 through Bible reading games, quizzes, crafts and videos, alongside our usual worship and prayer times, during regular Sunday morning worship at Avendale.

The Heart Shaper programme continues to be a valuable resource for this providing subjects from Old and New Testaments over a 2 to 3-year period. There is always a lot of laughter and plenty of enthusiasm during our time out together. We had the pleasure of welcoming new volunteers to the team this session and as well as the help of 2 young volunteers who supported the work with the junior group for their DofE volunteering. It has been great to see them graduate to helping at Messy Church where they lead games and activities.

Although we have a register of 28 children, weekly numbers fluctuate between 8 and 15 over the 2 groups. We have been delighted to welcome new folks this session and to have other children attend more regularly than before as their families begin to engage more in worship and other church activities. Our P7s moved up to Teen Time at the end of the summer session as we welcomed new little ones to the junior group.

During the summer months a slimmed down His Kids continued to provide age-appropriate activities for children during worship with videos and crafts. This allowed all of the team to have at least a few weeks off over the holiday period.

A joint Christmas party was arranged again this year with the Messy Church team as it has worked so well in previous years. The big group games, the 'Minute to Win It' challenges, the amazing buffet and a visit from a well-loved character bearing book gifts for all the children all added up to a wonderful whole family Christmas celebration.



To avoid extra strain on the already very busy schedules of our team and children, the Nativity service this year was arranged very simply, requiring only one rehearsal. His Kids had the opportunity to share the joy of the Christmas Story with the whole church family. The children, ably helped by three rather older Wise Men, either narrated or mimed characters and scenes and the congregation joined in with the Christmas carols in-between scenes. One of our Teens group and a member of the worship team agreed to help by singing beautiful solos. Everyone was fabulous, including the tech team and the band and several of the congregation said, *"It was the best Nativity I have ever seen!"*

It is a pleasure to work with children who are so eager to participate, to learn, to share their knowledge, and to help one another.

Teens (Lesley Steven, Matthew Chapman)

In 2024 we studied Acts along with the whole church. We discussed how our lives look when we follow Jesus with a particular focus on service, built our Bible knowledge, and ended the year with a focus on advent. Our core cohort of teens range from 12-17 years old and we regularly have around ten coming on a Sunday morning. Following the summer break, we responded to the needs and interests of the current group of young people and increased the frequency of Sunday morning Teentime. We now meet on the first and third Sundays of each Month during worship, and this has proven to be a very positive step.

We are delighted that 2 of our young people have given their lives to Jesus in the last few months and publicly declared their faith. We plan to continue supporting the group to grapple with questions of faith as we run a four-week 321 course specifically for teens in March 2025. In addition, we have monthly evening activities.

In the spring, we flung ourselves downhill at pace in rubber tubes and everyone came home in one piece. The Yoofers had a ball Tubing at Newmilns ski centre (as did the leaders!). This was a great outing attended by the majority of the Yoofers and some from Haven Hangout.

A particular highlight for the year was the Bonfire Bonanza at Blackburn mill where teens took on the leaders and won in tug of war in the dark. There was a torchlight scavenger hunt and of course a bonfire with s'mores, hot chocolate, time with God and worship music.



We hope to improve the links between Yoof, Hangout and the upper age group of His Kids in the coming year, allowing a flexible grouping of activity according to age/interest.

Connections between the various youth work streams of the church are valuable. A number of the Yoofers have become part of the Messy Church team, volunteered with His Kids and taken part regularly in the Elastic Band. A key focus for the last term was how to live your life as a Christian with a focus on service and commitment, and we can see how God has led the young people and made a way for them to find their place to serve in our church family.

Study Support Zone (Lynn Dyer)

SSZ operates 2 months before prelims and then again in the months before the main National Certificates for 4th and 5th year students. Initially, social media was used to inform our

community about our services but, more recently, requests have come via word of mouth. Retired teachers and volunteers very generously give up 2 hours to individually tutor students in: Geography, Math's, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Tutors also spend a considerable amount of time in preparation, ensuring course material is relevant to the current courses. This year we have helped a total of 22 students covering 6 different subjects.

Some quotes from our parents and students:

"SSZ has been a lifeline to us. It is a vital service for families who are unable to pay for additional support but need the extra help "

".....such a thoughtful and charitable service"

"The opportunity to have one on one support when you are too shy to ask questions in class is really invaluable"

".....always comes away from his tutor sessions enthused and full of confidence "

"I've heard in the town and seen people online talking about the support the church is offering teens. It is such a good way to be God's hands and feet in our community"

We seek more tutors, especially in Math's, as we currently have a waiting list and it is our wish to support as many students as we can.

Haven Hangout (Calum and Liz Stark)

The past year at Hangout has had a wide variation in number. In the summer months, we were getting around 25. However, since our return this academic year numbers have been slightly lower - around 15 to 18. That said, we have a core group of children and parents with whom we are engaging, enabling us to form meaningful connections and relationships.

So, what is a Haven Hangout evening like? The children register as they arrive and then go up for about just over an hour of activities, and they can choose what they want to do. We have a variety of craft options, a food baking or decorating activity, X-box games, board games, table tennis, air hockey and of course a tuck shop. For the last hour we convene in the Yoof room for hot chocolate and some online whole group games using Kahoot and Blooket, leading into a short talk. This year we were looking at the topic of miracles.

It has been hugely encouraging to see how the children engage with the talks and all the activities. We now have a team of eight to ten who help to run Hangout. This has also been a great encouragement, seeing people from the congregation getting involved and taking ownership of the planning of crafts and activities.

Connect Women

"It's been great to get together with other women in the church family and get to know them better as well as share in some time with God" Connect Member

The women's Connect group started in the autumn of 2024, with the aim of connecting women in their late 20s to early 50s where sometimes it is difficult to meet with Christian friends due to the busyness of everyday life, work, family etc.

The group has been meeting once per month in Avendale Church. On average there are about 12 women there on an evening. There is an attached What's App group with around thirty members.

Monthly meetings are semi-structured and usually have a theme, and always hot and cold drinks and home baking. Themes have included listening to God, my identity in Jesus, and Bible verses to encourage each other. As well as themes there have also been activities - most popular so far has been our Christmas wreath making night in December.



The What's App group serves to arrange monthly meetings but more than that has allowed for all the women involved to share things that are happening for them and to be able to request prayer support from the group.

“Connect has been great to support me by making friends and contacts within the church, both at the evenings and feeling part of a group. It's a lovely community!”

Connect member

Having only been going a few months, so far, the group has made a great start in helping the women of our church to be able to connect on a deeper level with their Christian peers and strengthen their faith and their Christian community.



“The Connect Women group has been a great way to meet new, like-minded people, connect over conversations about what God is doing in peoples’ lives, crafting and of course eating cake and drinking coffee! The people involved in organising it are doing a terrific job and I’m looking forward to what else is in store at Connect! Thank you”
Connect Member

**CONNECT WOMAN
DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES.....**

Thur 13th Feb- Craft night

Thur 13th Mar- Movie Night

Thur 8th May- Dine in and share recipes

Thur 12th June- Nether Lethame Farm outing

More info to follow.
We look forward to lots of time together in the coming months

OTHER ACTIVITIES AND ORGANISATIONS

Avendale and Drumclog church believes that, as well as worshipping and learning together as a congregation, fellowship and growing in friendship are of equal importance. Every Sunday at Avendale, and on the last Sunday of each month at Drumclog, we join together in the church hall for tea/coffee and fellowship.

There are also many other organisations that take place within the life of the congregation:

Haven Coffee - We are thankful for everyone who make each Monday morning at our coffee club so successful. We are also thankful for everyone who loyally come along with their kindness and commitment as a Church family, setting up the Church Hall as well as tidying away furniture for the next club, the amazing home baking, flowers and goodies provided, including doggy treats.

Our wonderful team of volunteers makes this venture so worthwhile for us as a Church family, strengthening outreach and connection with our community and the surrounding villages, offering coffee/tea and chat in a warm and friendly environment.

Concurrently, Bugletts is held each Monday morning and Havens supports their special time together with refreshments and practical help. Several Church groups also enjoy Haven coffee in order to meet-up together to organise future plans. A book stall is on offer weekly as well as on occasion plants and cuttings for the green fingered. Dogs are always welcome, and many appreciate their company and cuteness.

In Autumn, 2024, once again, Haven supported a fund-raising venture over five weeks, for our local Kilbryde Hospice, East Kilbride. We are thankful to everyone who organised this worthwhile cause.



Through Haven, we have the continual opportunity to invite our local community and friends along, enabling us to inform everyone about other Church groups and activities. e.g., Book Club, Craft Club, Take Time, Bethany. Prayer Groups, Haven Hangout, Messy Church. Special thanks also to Fiona from Christians against Poverty for her regular input of knowledge and understanding throughout the year to support with any household issues with her pop-up office.

Haven's motto is on their coffee mugs and aprons. **"He is here. Indeed, He is"**

Drumclog Kirk Guild - meets on the third Tuesday of the month from October till April. Guild meetings are well attended. The Guild has always had a varied and interesting syllabus including talks, films, and demonstrations. New members are always made welcome. The Guild celebrated their 90th anniversary in 2024.

The Craft Club - meets on Tuesday afternoons from 1.30 pm. It provides an opportunity for people to come along and learn a new craft or work on their own craft. It is a friendly group where people can gather together and teach or learn from others in a cosy, relaxed manner.

Avendale Amateur Football Club - Avendale AFC play in the Strathclyde Evangelical Churches League (SECL) and has done so since their formation in 2000. For the last fifteen years the team have played in the top division regularly finishing in the top half of the league.

Bethany - is a group for the bereaved, not just for members of the congregation, but for all in our community. The group meets on Wednesday afternoons in the Church Hall. There is a varied and interesting programme of events and speakers. Sometimes they have day trips or visits to places of interest.

Our church premises are a valuable asset, not only for the congregation, but also for the wider community of Strathaven and Drumclog. Many external groups use the premises each week. This ensures that the buildings are busy and used for the wider benefit of the community. Groups include: Auld Avondale Actors, MacMillan Cancer Care, Strathaven Pilates, Strathaven Striders, Group Pilates, Slimming World, Bunkhouse Country and Western Club, Yoga Club, Power hoop, A-Stars Dance Academy, Young Farmers group. Our premises are also used as a Polling Station.



COMMUNICATIONS (LEADER: CHRIS MACRAE)

As a church we aim to **Connect, Cultivate and Challenge**. One of the main ways in which we do this is via our communications and digital media strategy. We strive to make sure that we are communicating effectively and creatively with our members, those who attend our church and activities, and also those within the community of Strathaven and Drumclog whom we serve and aim to reach and connect with.

The Communications Group consists of a number of people within our congregation who use their diverse skills to deliver the following communication platforms and resources:

- **Social Media** – Facebook & Instagram
- **Live Streaming** of worship services and other events - via our YouTube Channel
- **Website** – the window to everything that happens at Avondale & Drumclog
- **'In The Loop'** – our regular email newsletter to our congregation and those on our mailing list
- **'Crossbeats' on Avondale Radio** – Twice weekly radio show hosted by members of the congregation on local community radio station
- **WhatsApp** – message-based prayer community, used to communicate prayer needs of individuals and the church
- **Printed Media** – design and production of printed materials (flyers, newspaper articles etc.) used to promote what we offer and to publicise events in the local printed press
- **Audio/Visual** – the maintenance and delivery of our audio/visual production for worship services and events

Over the last year, we have continued to set out to grow the reach of our digital communications as a means of engaging with our local community more effectively.



Social Media

Over the last year, we have taken steps to grow our reach on our social media platforms. We have a presence on both [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) where we regularly post information regarding our activities as a church family with the aim of engaging our local community. We have 540 followers on Facebook and 100-page followers on Instagram.

Our overall reach on Facebook in 2024 was around 20,000 people (up by 72% compared with 2023). This is the number of people who saw any of our content from our Page or about our

Page, including posts, stories and advertisement. We had just under 5,300 visits to our Facebook page (up by 23% compared with 2023) and 48 new followers in 2024.

Our overall reach on Instagram in 2022 was 193, up by 43% compared with 2023. This is the number of unique accounts that saw any of our posts or stories at least once.

We also regularly cross-post our content to community social media groups in Strathaven which increases the reach of our content further.

YouTube

We have a channel for Avendale and Drumclog on YouTube - [@AandDChurch](#) - which is used to live-stream our services each week from Avendale. The success of our YouTube channel has been encouraging, with our live-streamed services garnering consistent viewership. Our live-stream reaches on average 11 viewers live, whilst the services are taking place, but we reach on average 101 views of each streamed service per week. This continues to be a success and is an example of how we are committed to making the church worship experience accessible to all.

We also use our YouTube channel to host the 'A+D Podcast' which is an audio series that looks at the 'Stories Behind The Songs'. Each episode looks at a different Christian song or hymn and explores the background to it, what inspired the artist or writer when writing the song, and a reflection from the Bible on how the context of the song flows from there. The podcast is produced by members of the congregation. The YouTube channel is also used to showcase our church praise band - 'The Elastic Band'. The channel hosts videos of the band.

Our YouTube channel had 7,128 views in 2024. Around 5,572 of these views were of our live streams. Our content posted on YouTube in 2024 generated 47,000 impressions, which are the number of times that our video thumbnails were shown to viewers on the platform. Our channel has 212 subscribers, which is 17 more than 2023.

Website

The Avendale & Drumclog Church [website](#) is our main window into what is happening at our church for those in the community and beyond. All of our social media content links back to content on our website and it serves as the place where we can showcase our activities in a more in-depth way. The site includes information on every aspect of our mission and outreach as a church and is regularly updated to keep the content relevant.

All of our services are accessible to watch again via our website. We also host our annual '40 Days of Prayer' blog on the site, as well as publish all of the 'In The Loop' newsletters (see below)

In 2024, we had on average 12,693-page requests per month on our website, which is up by 21% compared with 2023.

'In The Loop'

['In The Loop'](#) is our regular church digital newsletter. It is sent out to members and others on our mailing list, via email. This gives important information to the church family about

everything that is happening at Avendale & Drumclog. We also publish this newsletter on the church website as well.

'In The Loop' has 216 subscribers. This is a very effective way of keeping the wider congregation up to date with everything that is happening in the life of the church. As well as communicating church initiatives, this is way of sharing birthday and other special occasion news around the church community.

WhatsApp Prayer Group

We have a well-established WhatsApp group that has around 50 members which has the sole purpose of bringing before God people and situations for prayer. This praying community share prayer needs every day, ensuring that people's individual needs are covered in prayer. It is a confidential forum, where members can be open and honest about what they are asking for prayer support for. This is a great example of using modern communication to quickly and effectively share prayer needs around the church community.

Audio/Visual

In 2024, we significantly upgraded the AV setup in the Avendale sanctuary allowing us to fully utilise the space we have, both for our services and events at Avendale, but also to be able to offer the space to the community, as a desirable venue for groups and events to be able to utilise. This project involved a whole new PA system, vastly increasing capacity, and providing all musicians with in-ear monitoring technology. We also upgraded our camera and livestreaming system, offering a much more professional broadcast to those watching our services online.



FRIENDS

As a church we support a number of Christian mission organisations and charities that carry out vital work both locally and around the world. These are:



The Church of Scotland



Please take a look and consider how you could support these organisations in prayer, giving or volunteering. See: <https://www.avendale-drumclog.org.uk/Groups/352641/Friends.aspx>

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Please see attached our Annual Report and Accounts prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and the Church of Scotland.

AND FINALLY

There are so many people involved in the day-to-day life of Avendale and Drumclog, and so many who come to the fore when special events are being put on or some task needs done. To all of them is due a heartfelt thanks. There are the Work Groups leaders, the Conveners and members of the Committees, the leaders and helpers in all our activities, the worship volunteers, the Welcome team, the opening team, the pastoral visitors, the AV team, the musicians. Thanks to everyone who willing works to build God's kingdom or who offers a quiet word of encouragement or prayer support; we are richly blessed. And, of course, a special heartfelt thanks to Rev Calum Stark for the commitment, dedication and innovation that he has gifted to us in his third full year as our minister.

In common with other churches, we are always looking for people who feel called to serve in some way. If you feel that this applies to you, please speak to or contact our Minister, Rev Calum Stark (Email: minister@avendale-drumclog.org.uk; Tel: **01357 671557**) or drop us an email at info@avendale-drumclog.org.uk

As we said in our Mission Statement, we strive to be:

“A Church in the Heart of the Community with the Community at its Heart”

Our activities in 2024 are clear testament that we resolutely remain in **MISSION MODE**. As we continue to gratefully work for His glory and His Kingdom, we give praise and thanks to God for what is, what has been, and what is still to come.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

David Moreland
Clerk to the Kirk Session

25 March 2025

