



Avendale and Drumclog Church

2025 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 2025.

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 2025, we continued to develop our missional and discipleship activities. It was a true blessing to welcome further new members into our fellowship.

We saw the continuance of our '40 Days of Prayer' when we joined together as a congregation praying and studying the Gospel of Mark with the help of our online Blog and accompanying Audio Blog. Adult discipleship has also seen our Home Bible Study groups continue to flourish.

As well as these and all our other ongoing activities, highlights for the year included: performances of the Mark Drama (performed by members of our congregation), Street Food Sunday, and our Christmas Fair.



We have also continued 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.

2025 saw an increase in our relationship with the two rural primary schools. The church hosted assemblies, special services and a joint Christmas event. More volunteers supported the work within the schools - providing inter-generational contact which has been mutually beneficial. Also - at the end of 2025 - we took a step of faith by recruiting and employing a Community Engagement Worker.

When reflecting on 2025, we celebrate a year of rich blessings in the life and work of Avendale and Drumclog. We also look to the future with excitement, waiting patiently for what God has in store for us in 2026 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, baptise 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 four 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 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 acts as a key reference point for planning, development and growth in the parish of Avendale and Drumclog from 2025 to 2030. 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.

Avendale Drumclog

Inspiring Hope, Sharing God's Love

Our Vision

Inspire people in our community to respond to the **love of God** through Jesus Christ.

Our Priorities

Encourage **faith**, prayer, and Bible reading in an active, worshipping Christian **community**;

Baptise, **encourage** and **inspire** new believers as they develop in faith;

Share the **good news** of God's love;

Use abilities and **skills** in the service of God's kingdom;

Respond to human need through **loving service**,

promoting **peace and justice** in society;

Look after **God's earth** well.

Our Values

Integrity; faith; hope; love; **joy**; peace; patience; kindness; **generosity**; faithfulness; gentleness and self-control



UPDATES FROM OUR WORK GROUPS

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

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

It is well-established that prayer, in all its forms, is central to our programs of worship in Avendale and Drumclog. Our Strategic Framework clearly tasks us to be missional in outreach, and to develop new ways to proclaim the Good News to all. Our Working Groups have succeeded in cultivating and expanding our missional approach in many new ways, and the Worship and Prayer Group has been busy in this regard throughout 2025.

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 diversity 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 **'Ignite'** services cater for those who particularly enjoy a more relaxed and informal type of worship. In 2025, guest musicians have enthralled the congregation with their own worship songs. Iain Cunningham, Sam Hibbard and Lewis Haxton are the first in a long line of performers who will join with us in celebrating the love of God.

Twice monthly **'Take Time'** Christian Meditation services have proved enlightening and relaxing, hosted both in Avendale Church Sanctuary and in the comfort of a member's house.



An innovative 'Christingle' service again joined our regular Christmas celebrations of 'Lessons and Carols' at Avendale, and Drumclog's 'Christmas in the Country'. Big Sing and nativity services were enjoyed in 2025.

Our Home Bible Study groups grew from three to four groups. Each continued to enjoy the opportunity to meet for several extended studies. Evening and afternoon meetings cater for many of our members. Further such activities are planned for 2026 and beyond.

We were pleased to provide many special Worship Services in 2025. We are fortunate to be able to call on the skills of several retired Ministers who regularly worship as valued members of our congregation. In July, Rev Calum Stark and his family ventured across the water to preach in and worship with the Congregation at Peekskill Presbyterian Church. Services in Avendale and Drumclog were ably led by Revs Melville Crosthwaite, Iain Cunningham and Charles Lines.

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

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, and the new outreach opportunities introduced by our new Community Engagement worker Jennifer.

A group of volunteers visit Sandford and Gilmourton Primary Schools, working with pupils and staff to enhance the curriculum. We pray also for the continued success of our two Toddler groups: Bugglets at Avendale and Tots at Drumclog.



We continue to offer a pre-service prayer time both at Drumclog and at Avendale. We have several volunteers for the prayer sessions both pre- and post- service and have a generous number of members involved in delivering all-age talks, readings and prayers during our services. We hope to invite more members to participate in this important aspect of congregational prayer and worship activity in 2026.

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

Our Good Friday prayer event was again held. 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. Thanks 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.



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. Strathaven Gala Day event was very successful. The Reindeer Day event, while wet, was worthwhile. Strathaven Balloon festival event was windy and worthwhile, reaching many families with invitations to join us for, friendship and fun at events like Super Sunday at the Farm or Street Food Sunday. These contacts often grow into a closer contact with our faith fellowship.



There is so much more going on in our Church: Kintsugi Hope supporting emotional health, 40 Day reading programmes, Holy Week Devotions, Book Groups, Connect groups for Men and for Women, Bethany bereavement support and many others which are well supported. We are all “Alive and worshipping in Avendale and Drumclog”.

MISSION & DISCIPESHIP (LEADERS: MURRAY AND ANNE HERBERT)

In the last four years, as a church, we have concentrated on progressing and maintaining 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 (four 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 sustained 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 homes for lunch invitations, or soup and a sandwich, have fostered relationships.

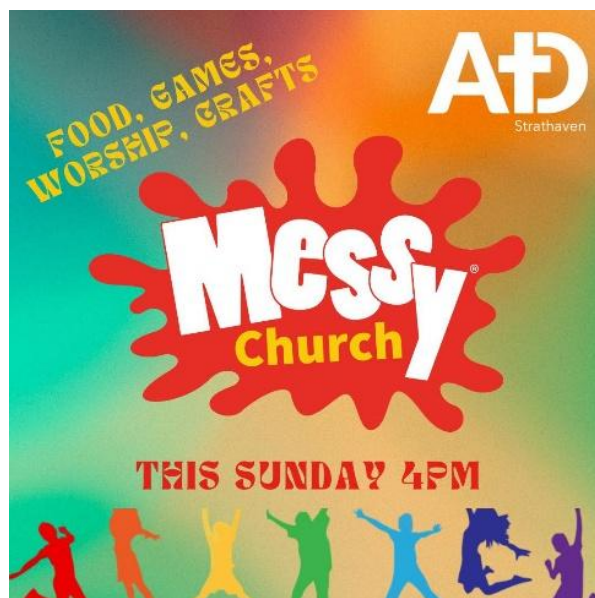
The Strategic Framework brings us the focus to drive these activities on in the context of *‘Inspiring hope and sharing God’s love’*.

Reflecting on 2025, we can be encouraged that our missional activity as a church is developing. There genuinely seems to be something about our culture and commitment that

is bearing fruit. And so, as a church, we are encouraged by the progress of activities such as Haven Hangout, Haven, Bugglets, Drumclog Tots, Messy Church, the Sandford and Gilmourton Schools' connections, our AV interface and website development, the SAGE group and the two Connect groups. And this is not an exhaustive list!

There is much, much more going on. Jennifer Templeton's new role as a Community Engagement Worker (CEW) started in 2025 and is developing, and it is good for us to continue to support and encourage her by prayer and by practical help. The point is that all these things are part of our mission as we seek to connect with our community, and they give us opportunities to share our faith.

The Mission and Discipleship group simply hopes to prompt and encourage members to be active in missional activities. It also seeks to encourage personal discipleship through prayer and Bible reading. Where possible it will create new opportunities in which people can be involved.



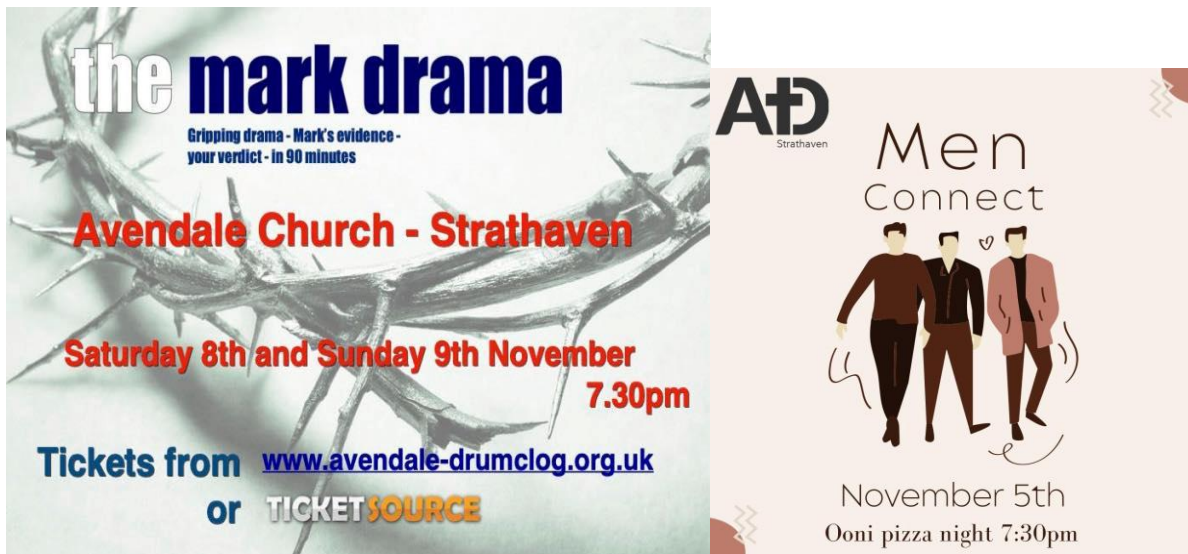
Messy Church

Messy Church has developed a strong link now with the Sandford community. A large proportion of our attendees come from the village. So, we see strength in the liaison with Jennifer Templeton in her role as Community Development Worker.

The whole team is very committed to providing the best experience possible for unchurched families. This includes the catering team, welcome team and the helpers who support with crafts and teaching. It has been good to bring two of the older teens in the congregation into the leadership team. Work like this needs constant refreshment of ideas - new helpers will always be welcome.

The Mark Drama

The main 'new' activity before Christmas was the **Mark Drama**. Over two hundred people attended the drama over the two days. It was held in November. The provision of someone to play the key role of Jesus was miraculous as the person we had planned to play the part had to pull out just one week before the event. We are indebted to Jamie Payton who directed the drama and Innes Garmany who stepped in at the last minute (both from St Silas Church in Glasgow). The remainder of the cast were from our own parish.



Men's Ministry

Two specific groups now meet to foster connection and fellowship between men.

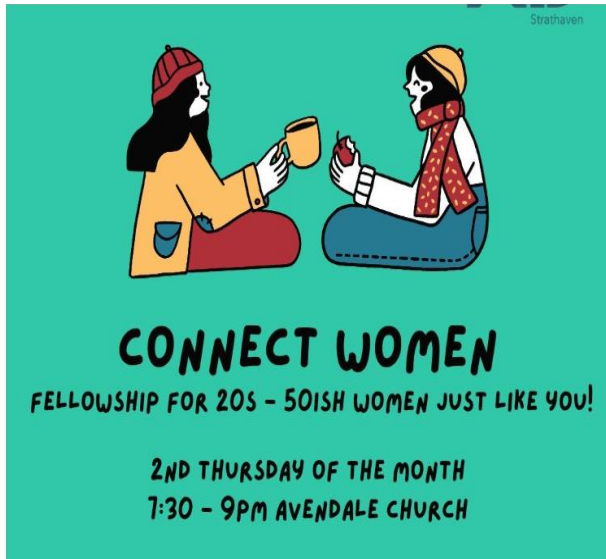
Yarn at the Barn - the *Men's Breakfast* occurs monthly at Barn Street coffee shop on a Saturday morning. Around twenty to twenty-five men meet for a simple breakfast, with a brief, but challenging biblical thought for the month.

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

Sage - Another new men's group is run by Andrew Lacey and Alastair Strang. Throughout the year visits are run for the 'slightly older men' to many interesting places including the David Livingston Memorial and Scottish Fire & Rescue HQ, culminating with a Christmas lunch.

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.



'SAGE' Men's Group

*Occasional outings to interesting places
(with coffee shops!)*



Riverside Museum & The Tall Ship Tuesday 7th October

Leaving Strathaven at 9.45am

Enjoy a guided tour of The Tall Ship
and time to explore the Riverside Museum

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

Four groups are now in operation with around eight to ten attending each group. Studies in 2025 included looking at the Gospel of Mark and Introducing Jesus from the Gospel of John. Our hope would be that these will grow in the coming year.

Avondale Radio

Our weekly slot on Avondale Radio is one of the big opportunities to engage with the community. This includes the station's own in-house community. (There are sixty volunteers and presenters in the Avondale Radio team and the Crossbeats team try to build relationships with this group).

It has been astounding to realise that Avondale Radio now records 250,000 listens every month. How many of those are for the Crossbeat's show, we do not know, but the opportunity

is there! At present five of us (Calum and Liz Stark, Graeme Lacey, Chris Macrae and Murray Herbert) produce the weekly Sunday show.

We find that our connection with this community enterprise is helpful. It keeps us in the public eye. However, we do need to develop some kind of strategy to make much more of this opportunity. Preparation and completion of the one-hour show takes two to three hours of work a week. This is a considerable commitment. It would be helpful to have some way of publicising and using this whole opportunity better. Perhaps someone in the congregation might take on a publicity role, particularly as we have ready access to sharing information about what is going on in Avendale and Drumclog on air.

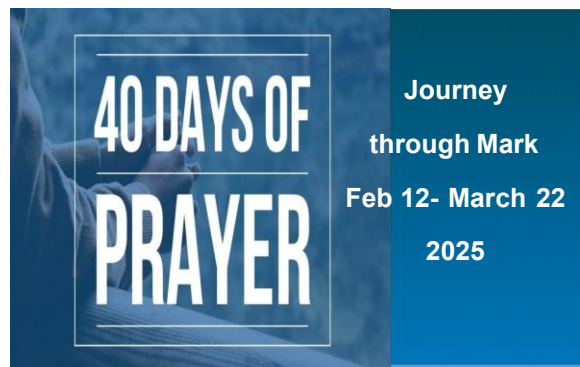
40 Days of Prayer

In 2025 our **40 Days of Prayer** was based on the Gospel of Mark. Six different writers from our congregation prepared the Blog commentaries, and six different readers from our congregation recorded the daily scripture readings and blog. Over two hundred journals were prepared and distributed. The intention, and hope, is that *everyone* in the congregation took part. The Home Groups also used the materials as the basis of their weekly studies.

We thank Andy Lacey who has put in a huge amount of working proof reading and collating the writers' blogs. Chris Macrae also has had a considerable job collating and uploading both written and audio files to the website. We appreciate hugely their willingness to do these things, particularly on top of all the other unseen things that they do.

In 2026, we are repeating the 40 Days of Prayer based on Paul's "Letters from Prison". We encourage people to consider sharing their journeys and learning with others, if they wish by buddying up in pairs or small groups.

In the last two years we have been aware that people from outside our church are joining us, using our material for the 40 Days of Prayer. Some live in remote places with little local fellowship. We, therefore, want encourage members to let others know about the website link so that they can join us.



Hospitality

Several 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 Avendale (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 is recognised as being a fundamental element in relation to the wellbeing of the congregation of Avendale and Drumclog Parish Church.

The numbers attending Sunday Worship have been steadily growing throughout 2025. In addition, there are also increasing numbers who have connected with the church through initiatives such as Haven Coffee, Messy Church, Bethany, Kintsugi, and other established and well attended groups within the church ‘umbrella’. The work of these groups will be further amplified within other Group Reports.

Pastoral Care is provided to all members of the congregation, in addition to those who are not formal members, but who attend Church on a regular basis. It is appropriate that Pastoral Care

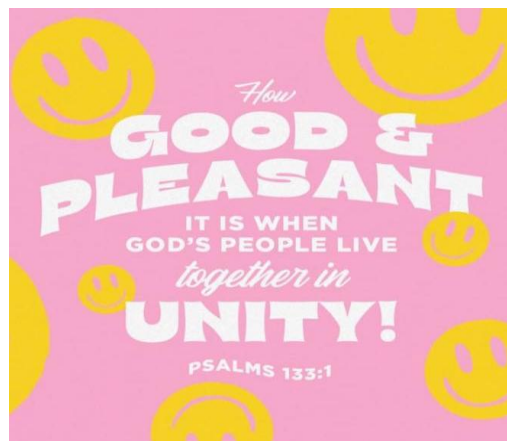
is provided to members by elders and suitably experienced visitors drawn from the congregation.

With increasing numbers and the demographics of the 'established' visitors, it has been challenging to ensure that adequate and suitably experienced elders and pastoral visitors are available to meet the needs of a growing congregation. To this end, the Pastoral Team has spent a significant amount of time ensuring that, as visitors retire having given many years of faithful service to the role, there are sufficient visitors available for Districts and church attendees. This has resulted in examining the postal areas and District allocations, with some 'redefining' of Districts established with the approval of the Kirk session.

In addition to the roles associated with pastoral visiting, there is a continuing ministry by way of delivering flowers to those who are experiencing illness, loss, or difficulties in their lives. This important conduit between the church and the church family reinforces the care and compassion shared in our church community and is appreciated by all.

There continues to be a Welcome Team at every service - again this ensures that a warm welcome is extended to all those who attend services and additional events throughout the year.

Throughout 2025, a number of the congregation have been hospitalised, and pastoral support has been provided to those requiring transport to appointments, visits to those in hospital, and meal support for family members whilst their loved ones are receiving treatment in hospital.



The Pastoral Team relies heavily on communication from elders and pastoral visitors as to illness and difficulties experienced by members and the wider congregation. There is an established protocol for notifying the Pastoral Team of such matters, and this has worked well during the year.

The Kintsugi Wellbeing Group established its role throughout 2025, and the feedback from attendees has been extremely positive from the two courses run last year. Other courses are being organised throughout 2026, and this important initiative provides a safe, supportive, and confidential space where people can take time out of their busy lifestyles to reflect on their emotional and mental wellbeing.

Throughout 2026, the Pastoral Team will continue to build on the dedication and enthusiasm of the elders and pastoral visitors, identifying additional resources where appropriate, and providing support to those requiring additional care within the church family at Avendale and Drumclog.

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

Bugglets - Doreen Frew

At Bugglets this year we increased numbers attending regularly at our Monday session. Families with children and babies, some as young as three weeks old, giving us totals in the range of 20 children and 6 babies, occasionally more. We have created a larger amount of space in the sanctuary to accommodate this. Lots of toys are available along with play dough and crafts. A team of helpers are on hand to join in and give assistance when needed.

All families gather for tea, coffee and cold drinks with snacks. We finish with games and songs. We continued to meet throughout the summer months because many folks find this a vital resource during the long weeks of summer holidays. Older siblings up to P2 were also catered for with crafts and activities suitable for their age.

Some of the families attending Bugglets have come along to events held at Avendale and to church on a Sunday morning.



Drumclog Tots - Jennifer Templeton

The Tots group continues to thrive, meeting every Wednesday morning from 10-11am. There are around sixteen tots (up to age three) with their parents/grandparents who enjoy playing with toys, healthy snack and song time. Jennifer Templeton, our CEW, facilitates this group, and is ably helped by a team of around twelve volunteers. Jennifer reports that it is often

difficult to encourage the attendees to make their way home as they are enjoying such good company with one another!

Family Corner and Family Room

These welcoming spaces continue to be well used. Most weeks we have little ones and their parents/grandparents/carers making use of the toys in the corner at the rear of the sanctuary, allowing the grown-ups to remain in the service with their wee ones. The Family Room offers a quiet space with a livestream of the service and supports adults as well as children who benefit from some time out from the buzz of the service. The congregation welcomes the presence of the children, and some choose to sit with the wee ones allowing parents to focus on the service.

His Kids - Sandi Allan

His Kids offers Christian teaching to children from age four to P2 in our Juniors and P3 to P7 in our Senior group during regular Sunday morning worship at Avendale. Through bible reading, games, quizzes, crafts and videos, with times of worship and prayer for both age groups together, the children can learn, ask questions, deepen their understanding of our Christian faith, and find support to develop their own relationship with God.

The Heart Shaper programme continues to be a valuable resource, providing subjects from Old and New Testaments over a two-to-three-year period. There is plenty of fun, a lot of laughter and boundless enthusiasm during our time out together. We have had the pleasure of welcoming a new volunteer, Anna Elliot, to the team this session and occasional help from Lesley Steven, ensuring a full rota each week.

Although we have a register of twenty-two children, weekly numbers fluctuate between eight and twelve over the two groups. We have been delighted to welcome new children this session and to have other children as others attend less regularly due to family commitments. 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 continues to provide age-appropriate activities for children during worship with videos and crafts. In 2025 we used the DVD series What's in the Bible? and when this was complete, began the Superbook series.

The Nativity service was arranged very simply again, requiring only one rehearsal. His Kids had the opportunity to share the joy of the Christmas Story with the whole church family. The children mimed characters and scenes to a poetic narration with a sung refrain between each part of the story. They were ably helped by members our Teens group who narrated the story and a couple of enthusiastic parents. The congregation joined in with the refrain with gusto. Everyone was fabulous, including the tech team and the band.



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 family games, a very busy craft room, an amazing buffet and a visit from a well-loved character bearing book gifts for all the children all added up to ensure we had a wonderful whole family Christmas celebration.

As always, 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.



Haven Hangout - Liz and Calum Stark

2025 has seen a significant change for Hangout. At the start of the 2025 we had about sixteen to twenty children coming along, however the change in the academic year meant that in September we had a sudden influx of a lot of P6 aged children. This has been a huge shift, and our numbers have now been significantly higher on a consistent basis, in the mid-thirties. The kids coming are loving the crafts provided and the food aspect- decorating baking and making smoothies or milkshakes.

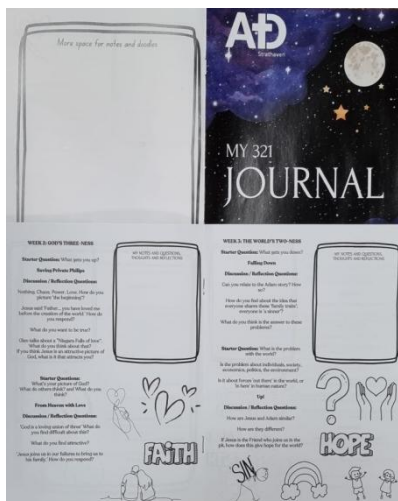
Investment from the church in some areas has really helped - such as buying beanbags to allow us to create chill spaces. Also, the significant purchase of Cornhole has added a great new game to the activities we are offering.

We have been encouraged by new helpers coming onboard. What has been most exciting to see is that we have children regularly returning and we are able to build relationships not only with the children but also their parents.

A key aspect of Hangout is that we go through to the Yoof Room for the last fifteen minutes of the evening to have fun and games, all with a Christian aim and a small talk or video. We have been hugely encouraged by how the children have engaged.

Teens – Matthew Chapman and Lesley Steven

We continue to form meaningful relationships with our young people S1 upwards, supporting them in their faith journey. Many have been with us for a long time - some their whole lives, and we should not underestimate the importance we all play as their church family to nurture and support their spiritual growth through such a challenging part of their lives. On Sunday mornings we regularly have 8 teens at every session, and we welcome teens who are visiting our church from time to time.



We provide a regular teaching and social programme throughout the year. In March we engaged with a specific initiative - the 3-2-1 course. This covered the basic principles of Christianity through thought provoking video material and challenging questions. We provided the group with custom made journals in which to record their ideas and thoughts as they interacted with the course material. Part of this program involved various crafts.

The leaders have found that providing the young people with tasks, puzzles and crafts to occupy their hands has freed their minds to ponder the teaching material, and this has facilitated deeper and wider discussions.



In the Autumn term we began to use the Scripture Union materials with the apt title “Rooted”. We have covered: The Seed; The Soil; New growth. Next year we will be looking at our skills and what the future holds – next steps! The SU material lends itself well to supporting young people through many of the challenges they face.

Looking ahead to later in 2026, we have sourced appropriate teaching materials (thank you to the congregation and Neil Spence for their ongoing support in funding these resources) and we will plan how to most effectively use these to engage our Teens. We plan to work through the 40 Days of Prayer in the lead up to Easter, joining the congregation and using this during the week to prompt discussion on our WhatsApp chat to engage young people with their faith through the week. Once a month 10 -15 teens meet on a Sunday evening for a "Teen Social". These have proved to be a great success, bringing in younger members and bringing together teens who attend Drumclog with those who attend Avendale. These socials provide a space where young people have been happy to bring along their friends.

When the weather is favourable, the group spends most of the evening outdoors engaging in team games, tug-of-wars and gathering round a bonfire for a chat, hot chocolate, snacks and quiet reflection as darkness falls. During the colder winter months, we meet indoors, enjoying all sorts of different activities including indoor team games; pizza making; an escape room; favourite board games and finally gathering round a wood-burning stove to share food together, chat and spend time reflecting on the word of God in the Bible and prayer. These evenings, full of fun, friendship and laughter are for those in P7 and above, which makes the transition from His Kids to Teens smoother for our young people.

We are very grateful to Lesley Steven for her diligent and inspiring leadership over the past years and invaluable contribution to the smooth organisation and running of the group, but unfortunately, she is having to step back from this role in 2026. We are, therefore, actively looking for someone to co-lead with Matthew, particularly for the Sunday morning sessions.

Thank you to our minister Calum, the Kirk Session, all the Teens helpers who so willingly volunteer and the wider congregation for their ongoing support.



School Study Zone (SSZ) - Lynn Dyer/Hugh Campbell

As in previous years, SSZ operates in Avendale before the prelim exams and then again in the months before the main National Certificates for 4th, 5th and 6th year students starting again in February.

It is testament to the value of the scheme that students have returned to take advantage of support for the next stage of their academic career. Retired teachers and volunteers very generously give up 2-hours to individually tutor students in: Geography, Mathematics, and Physics. Tutors also spend a considerable amount of time in preparation, ensuring course material is relevant to the current courses.

Connect Women – Grace Lacey, Jen Sommerville, Dyan Spence, Sandi Allan

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

The group has been meeting roughly once per month, mainly in Avendale Church, although sometimes we arrange to meet at Drumclog Church or an outdoor venue for a walk. An average of 12 women attend each event but the group’s What’s App chat has around 40 members.

The monthly meetings are semi structured, usually have a theme, and always have refreshments and snacks. Themes in 2025 have included Notebook making, a Movie, Dine-in/Recipe sharing, and Games. The best attended event we organised was our Open Night in November to which we invited Women’s Health Specialist Dr. Becky Howie. There were 46 women in there from all over our local area! As well as themes, there have also been activities with our Christmas wreath making night in December proving even more popular than last year.



“I really appreciate the new friendships and companionship I have experienced through the Connect group.” New Connect member

The What’s App group serves to arrange monthly meetings but more than that, it has facilitated the connection of those who can’t always make it out in the evening or like a bit of extra fun in between the regular sessions to meet up for coffee, chat and a game of Carcassonne, or a weekend dinner at the Taal.

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 halls for tea/coffee and fellowship.

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

Haven Coffee - Having started in the spring of 2022, our lovely happy Haven time has continued to be sustainable and successful for both church fellowship and outreach to the local area of Strathaven and beyond.

An autumn donation in 2025 from our weekly financial gifts benefitted the charity of Provost Margaret Cooper which supports Sense Scotland as well as Guide Dogs for the Blind Association and another six local charities.

Haven’s kind and generous team of thirteen volunteers sustain our café with wonderful home baking and savouries (new for 2025), as well as fresh flowers for the tables. The team expresses thanks to all for their continued support and loyalty.

Concurrent with Haven Coffee, Bugletts is held each Monday morning. Haven supports Bugletts special time together with refreshments and practical help. Also, several Church groups enjoy Haven coffee to meet-up together to organise future planning.

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.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) have been available for consultation during the year.



Church life is very important to provide support for each other, and so many appreciate the welcoming space which Haven provides each week. All are welcome at Haven Coffee. Please come along and think about who you could invite.

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.

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 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.

Avenale Amateur Football Club - Avenale 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 Bethany has 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
- **Livestreaming** 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 558 followers on Facebook and 103-page followers on Instagram.

Our overall number of views on Facebook in 2025 was around 60,000. This is the number of times our content was played or displayed. Content includes reels, posts, stories, and advertisements. We had 3,700 visits to our Facebook page and 18 new followers in 2025.

Our overall reach on Instagram in 2025 was 103. 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 livestream reaches on average 12 viewers live (8% more than in 2024), whilst the services are taking place, but we reach on average 108 views (7% more than in 2024) 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.

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 7,878 views in 2025 (11% more than in 2024). Around 5,332 of these views were of our live streams. Our content posted on YouTube in 2025 generated 53,154 impressions (13% more than in 2024), which are the number of times that our video thumbnails were shown to viewers on the platform. Our channel has 233 subscribers, which is 19 more than 2024.

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 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 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 the 'In The Loop' newsletters (see below)

In 2025, we had on average 17,238-page requests per month on our website, which is up by 36% compared with 2024.

'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

We continue to offer a high-quality 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.

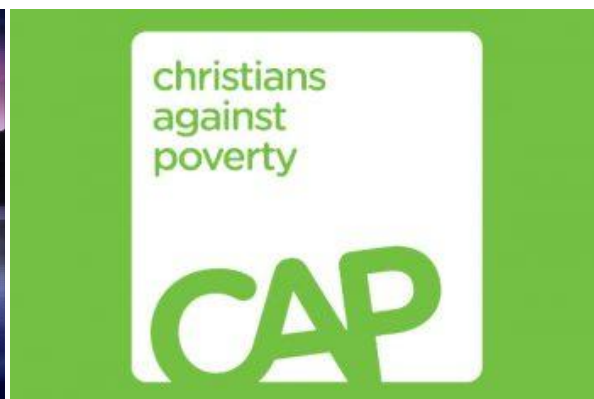
FRIENDS

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



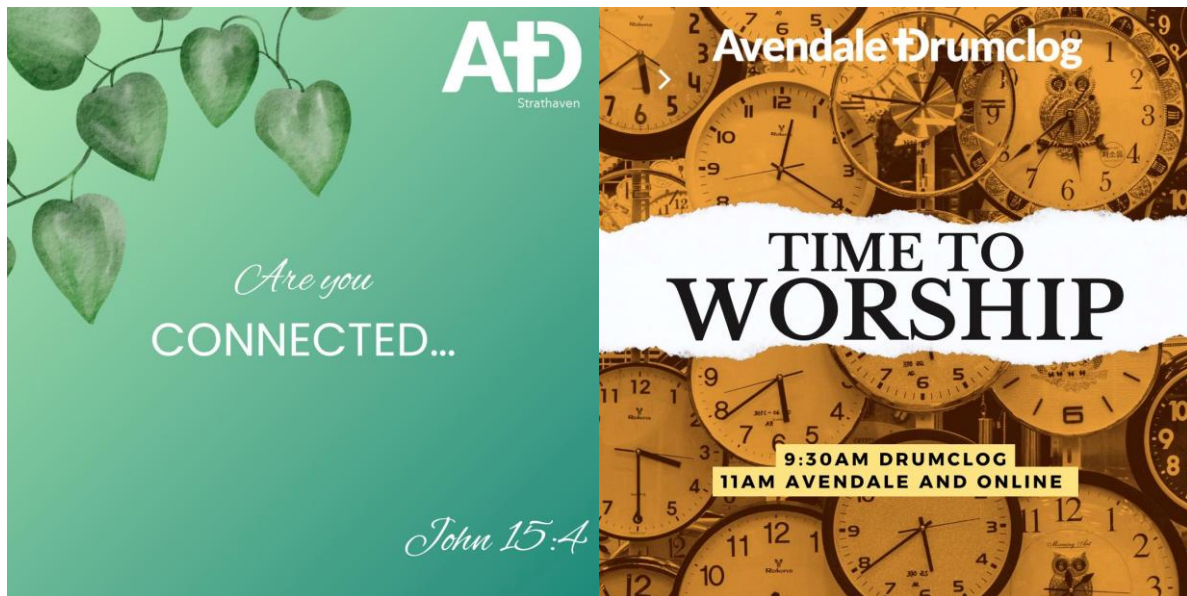


Please take a look and consider how you could support these organisations in prayer, giving or volunteering. See: <https://www.avendale-drumclog.org.uk/Groups/352641/Friends.aspx>

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.

Our Annual Report and Accounts include the required information in relation to our Congregational Roll and Congregational Finances, as well as Buildings and Fabric related matters.



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 willingly work to build God's kingdom or who offer 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 fourth 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 during 2025 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

24 March 2026