



IN THE LOOP

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Summer at last

It might be hard to believe it - but summer is here. Whatever, your plans are let us hope we can all benefit from some good weather.

Coming up this summer Jennifer will be running the Summer Holiday Club from July 29 - 31. This is a great opportunity to support her in her developing work with the primary schools. Volunteers are required so please contact Jennifer directly if you can help out.

Also in this edition of the LOOP we have details of the pulpit swap with Peter Bynum and an update on the CEW post.

The BBQ last week at Drumclog was a great success and big thanks to Maz for his skills on the BBQ. This Sunday we are repeating the end of session celebration BBQ at Avendale. This is both a celebration event for us all to share and an invitation opportunity. Let's make the most of it and invite friends, contacts and especially those who are already involved in our various activities - from Bugglets to Haven, Craft Club to Messy Church. Wherever we are active let's have a think and see who we could encourage to come along.

Summer is a good time to reflect on all we have done this session and get ourselves ready and prepared for the restart at the end of the holidays.

Of course church doesn't stop and we hope you find encouragement in a fellowship when you are away, or join us at home online.





At the time of writing - Scotland are still in the World Cup! So we're sending off reinforcements in the form of the Stark boys. We really do hope Calum, Liz, Douglas & Fergus have a wonderful time in the USA this summer, whatever happens on the field. We will all miss them and hope they come back refreshed and having benefitted from the change of scene. While they are away, we welcome Peter & Stephanie Bynum and their daughters Molly and Kate. We look forward to Peter leading us in worship and opening up God's Word to us.



Peter and his family are very happy to be spending a month in the heart of Scotland! A native North Carolinian, Peter graduated from Davidson College. After working on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. for a few years, he received his juris doctor degree from the University of Virginia in 1996 and began a career in commercial real estate law. God, however, had other plans for Peter. Following the Lord's call to service in the church, Peter obtained a Master of Divinity degree from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia and was ordained in 2009. He later earned his Doctor of Ministry degree from Columbia Theological Seminary in Georgia. After serving congregations in Rocky Mount, NC, Concord, NC, and Mount Pleasant, SC, Peter became the Senior Pastor of the Larchmont Avenue Church in April of 2021.

Peter and his wife Stephanie have been married for 26 years and have two daughters: Molly (24) and Kate (20). The girls will be joining Peter and Stephanie in Strathaven for the final two weeks of their stay. In addition to getting to know the good folks of Avendale and Drumclog, Peter is looking forward to hitting the Scottish links and learning more about Scottish Covenanter history.

Family Service

CHURCH BBQ

This Sunday 21 June



PLEASE COME

TELL A FRIEND



29-31 July

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKER

Jennifer has had a busy few weeks. The barn dance was a great success with a real mix of people - young folk, older folk, folk in the church and many invited as friends. What a success and something to be repeated!



At the end of term we received a very encouraging report and assessment of Jennifer's role from the head teacher of Sandford and Gilmourton, Louise Crawshaw. It really highlights the importance of the role and we thought it would be helpful for us all to be able to read this for ourselves. The conclusion is very encouraging indeed.....



Gilmourton & Sandford Primary Schools
Community Engagement Worker (CEW)
Summary Impact Report



Reporting Period: October 2025–June 2026

Prepared for: The Kirk Session and Project Board of Avendale & Drumclog Parish Church

Purpose: To review activities, progress, and measurable impact to support the continuation of post.

Prepared by: Louise Crawshaw (Head Teacher)

Summary

The role Community Engagement Worker has become successfully embedded across Sandford and Gilmourton Primary Schools since October 2025, and the appointment and subsequent dedication of Jennifer Templeton. With discretion and enthusiasm, Jennifer has become an integral part of both school communities, bridging between them and strengthening social, learning, and pastoral networks throughout the Upper Avendale and Drumclog area.

While the core activities of the role, while in school, aligns largely with that of a School Support Assistant, focusing on academic, pastoral, and operational support without the responsibility of behaviour management, Jennifer has also now introduced opt-in faith-based activities as an after-school club in each school.

Feedback from school leadership, teaching staff, and pupils demonstrates that the CEW has become an indispensable asset, helping to optimize learning time and contributing positively to the established nurturing environment in each school.

Since taking up the post in October 2025, the CEW has demonstrated adaptability and reliability in three key areas:

Academic & Classroom Support

- ∑ **Targeted Interventions:** Facilitates 1-1 and small-group sessions focusing on early reading (segmenting and blending), reading fluency, and confidence.
- ∑ **Curriculum Reinforcement:** Supports numeracy, literacy, and Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL) using digital tools like Sumdog.
- ∑ **Task Rotations:** Assists teachers with classroom floor rotations, offering immediate support to pupils before being prompted.
- ∑ **Creative & Practical Projects:** Leads resource-heavy, small-group arts and crafts (e.g., constructing complex Viking longhouse and longship models).

Pastoral & Community Engagement

- Σ **Opt-in Faith-Based Clubs:** Establishes and runs after-school clubs for P3–5 pupils based on Christian values, currently engaging 10% of pupils at Sandford and 14% at Gilmourton in the first taster sessions.
- Σ **Seasonal Input:** Delivered Bible story-based inputs during Easter Celebrations to promote after-school club activities.
- Σ **Playground & Wellbeing Support:** Conducts playground supervision, leads games, and provides critical pastoral check-ins for pupils who seek out trusted adult connection during break times.
- Σ **Community Events:** Actively supported school fayres, involves pupils in contributions to church events, and hosts wider community events to strengthen local community networks.

School Operations & Volunteer Coordination

- Σ **Volunteer Management:** Coordinates the volunteer rotas for both schools covering outdoor learning, allotment maintenance, and reading.
- Σ **Increase supervision and safety-Site Support:** Chaperones pupils during swimming lessons and school trips, to increase supervision and safety
- Σ **Strategic Impact**
 - Σ **Mitigation of Lost Learning Time:** As a reliable, discrete additional adult, her presence ensures that, in the example of a 12-week swimming lesson block, a class is not left without a teacher's oversight, preserving valuable instructional time.
 - Σ **Administrative Relief for Leadership:** By taking ownership of the scheduling and administration for school volunteers, the CEW has relieved the Head Teacher and office staff of a significant administrative burden.
 - Σ **Enriched Curriculum Delivery:** Teachers report being able to accomplish more ambitious, hands-on learning projects and experiential activities with concrete resources, including outdoor play and aspects of gardening, that would otherwise be impossible without an extra pair of hands in such small schools.

Stakeholder Feedback

Teaching Staff Perspective

"Mrs T working in my class has been hugely beneficial both for myself and the children. It has allowed the class to accomplish more... It has also meant that small groups of children have had quality, unrushed time spent with them on learning."

"She is flexible and adaptable... She helps with targeted support in maths and literacy. She provides 1-to-1 reading sessions to help an individual build reading fluency and confidence [and] develop their gross motor skills during fitness sessions within a quiet safe environment."

Pupil Perspective

- Σ **Academic Support:** *"She helps me with my work on a Thursday. She has helped me with reading."*
- Σ **Pastoral Safety:** *"Another adult in the playground is good. It feels better."*
- Σ **Engagement:** *"We'd like her to come in more days because she's brilliant!"*

Conclusion

The Community Engagement Worker has proven to be a highly effective, trusted, and responsive presence in both schools since October. In the Head Teacher's view, the post successfully achieves the intended dual purpose: it provides the Church of Scotland with a meaningful, respected footprint in the local community through developing opt-in faith-based activities, while simultaneously fulfilling a critical educational and pastoral need on the school floor.

On behalf of the staff, pupils, and families of both school communities, I want to extend our deepest, most heartfelt gratitude to the Kirk Session and the Project Board. Your vision and generosity in funding this 18-hour post have contributed positively to the day-to-day learning and wellbeing of our children. Jennifer's dedication has enriched our learning and curricular offers, lightened our administrative load, and brought joy and increased feelings of safety to our playgrounds. We are profoundly grateful for this partnership, and we earnestly hope to see it continue so that together, we can keep fostering this outward looking, community focussed and connected environment for our young people.

Games Success

A big thanks to Anna for organising another fantastic lunch and games afternoon last Sunday. We'll certainly be hoping for more of these after the summer - a great way to have fun and fellowship together..



INVITE
YOUR
FRIENDS

STILL ON OVER
SUMMER

MEN'S
CONNECT

The Haven
AVENDALE CHURCH KIRK STREET

Every Monday 10-11.30
real coffee - great cakes

www.avendale-drumclog.org.uk

A+D
Strathaven

**Bugglets
Play Group**

Come and play, chat and enjoy
crafts and singing. A warm
welcome awaits you!

Mondays 10 - 11:30
Avendale Church Sanctuary

**CROSSBEATS
Radio**

**Avondale
RADIO**

A+D
Strathaven

Games
Songs

**DRUMCLOG
TOTS**

Lots of fun for babies and toddlers!
wednesdays 10-11 Drumclog Church

As we've said - church doesn't stop for the summer - so make sure to let folk know that all these things are continuing over the summer.- Usual times - usual spaces and usual faces.

Men Connect have been meeting fortnightly to discuss the recent Pentecost Podcasts and intend to keep going over the summer. Details from Chris Somerville and Calum Steven.

Bugglets, Haven and Tots going all summer.



Christians in sport

We all know Calum's interest in all things sporty. What a summer it's going to be with the Commonwealth Games, the tennis and of course the World Cup.

Football may not be your thing but there are even the usual subtle and friendly rivalries in the congregation about allegiances to the Dons, the 'Well, the Accies,.....and the rest.

It is always encouraging to see sportsmen and women who are Christians standing out for their faith. But that can bring added pressure as, in the public eye, every move and attitude is seen and judged. We should pray for them in their position as role models and ambassadors for Christ.

Here are 2 touching stories from the World Cup.

Curacao and German players pray together



It was widely reported in the media that an unusual event occurred at the end of the match between Germany and World Cup newbies Curacao. The reports ran in the press all over the world as well as across social media outlets. Many of the major British newspapers and platforms covered the story - but here is a link to the small Caribbean state's own press.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Scottish star talks of the importance of the Bible to him



Meanwhile, as the country basks in the glory of topping their group (hopefully not briefly), the BBC reported that upcoming star of the team - Ben Gannon-Doak rates Bible reading as really important to him.

Read more [HERE](#)

Pastoral care

From the pastoral care team

KEEP US IN THE LOOP



Celebrating and supporting our congregation in good times and difficult times is core to how we love and serve each other. It is something we all do already but it's very helpful when that information is shared.

So we're asking that if you know of anything, particularly an illness, grief or other concerns you contact Edith Scott at [07800 822223](tel:07800822223) or Ian Douglas at [07742 022423](tel:07742022423) so that information can be shared appropriately for pastoral support.

But of course we also want to celebrate good news as a church. Maybe you know that someone is having a big birthday or other great news. If it's something to be shared we can share it here and keep us all in the loop!

On June 26th, we
send congratulations
to Ruby Stewart on
her 100th birthday!!

