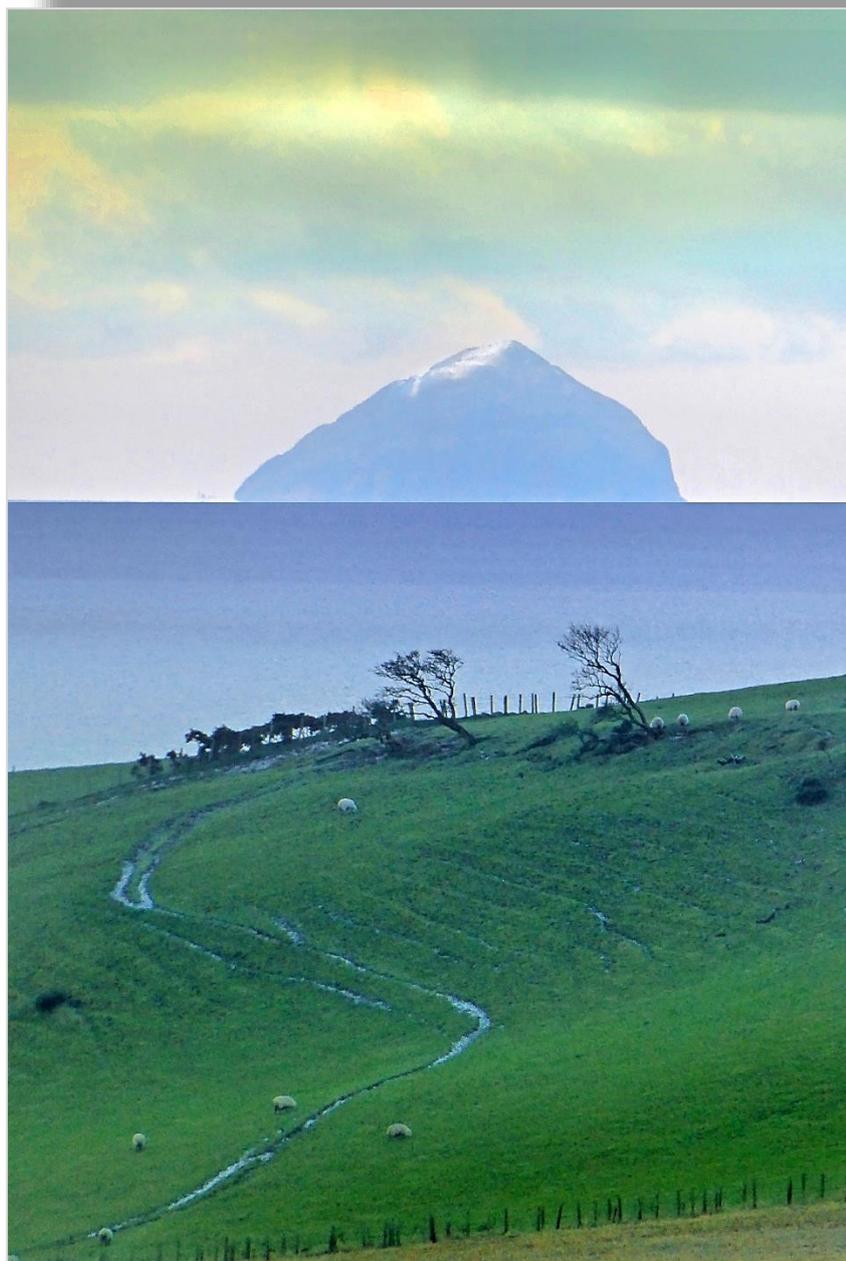


Church Matters

West Kilbride Parish Church Magazine
Issue No. 67 February & March 2021



From Law Brae

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Contact Details

Church Office:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10.00 -12.00 noon (working from home)

Phone: 01294 829902 (answer phone outside Office hours)

E-mail: office@westkilbrideparishchurch.org.uk

Website: <https://wkpc.church/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/westkilbrideparishchurch>

Twitter: @WKPC

Minister: James McNay; Phone: 01294 823186; Mobile: 07486 882099;

E-mail: jmcnay@churchofscotland.org.uk

Session Clerk: Carol Fulton; E-mail: sessionclerk@westkilbrideparishchurch.org.uk,

Prayer Chain: 07826 652331

Registered Scottish Charity SC013464

Minister's Letter

Lockdown 3.0

'Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty' PSALM 91

Dear Friends,

As I write this, we are currently in the midst of lockdown 3.0 – or is it 2.0, I'm not quite sure!

What I do know is that when we went into lockdown in March 2020, I don't think that we would have envisaged still having the same restrictions in January 2021!

However, the restrictions are here for good reason – and I hope that you are all keeping safe and well. We do have the encouragement of the vaccine being administered (perhaps by the time some of you have read this, you will already have had your first dose) but obviously it is going to take some time for any kind of normality to return to our daily lives.

People are still dying from coronavirus – and many are still seriously ill in hospital – and it is those who are suffering and their families that we remember in our prayers. We also give grateful thanks for the medical provision that we have in this country – and we also remember the NHS staff and all key workers and give thanks for them all.

Life at the moment is very different in the Manse. The boys are at home – and so we are home schooling. Anna is teaching her classes online including live lessons from home – and so life is a bit of a juggle the same as many other families are experiencing. The boys seem to prefer Anna as their teacher and don't like 'Daddy daycare' so much!

Obviously things are rather different in the church at the moment. Though the building was opened at the end of August and we have had services in the building since then, we had to close from Boxing Day onwards – and the building will be closed until at least mid-February and possibly beyond.

Though this is difficult, it is important that we play our part in doing what we can to keep people safe and that we abide by the restrictions.

This has meant going back to an online service only – and we have tried to record most of it in the garden once more in an effort to make it clear that the church building is closed and we are taking restrictions seriously. It is rather chilly doing the service from the garden however!

Though the church building is closed at the moment, it does not mean that the church is closed. As well as online morning services, we are holding a 4pm Sunday Zoom Service for families, and we have our evening reflection on a Sunday night too at 6.50pm.

The Messy Church team are working hard as well and are producing an online Messy Church video once a month. Lifegroups are continuing to meet online via Zoom – as well as ‘People who Pray’ on a Tuesday morning and the Wednesday Fellowship on a Wednesday Evening.

I’m also delighted that we are managing to run an Alpha Course online along with 200 other churches as part of Alpha’s #invitescotland initiative. We currently have 12 who are taking part in this.

So despite the restrictions, there are still things happening in the church family – and I am really grateful for all those who have taken the initiative to make things happen during this time. We have some amazingly gifted and talented people in the congregation.

This is a difficult time – and we aren't through it yet. And perhaps you yourself may be struggling at the moment. At this time, it is important that we continue to trust in the Lord – the one who is our refuge and our strength – and that we support one another. The Lord is the one whom we can trust – he is the anchor for our soul. And during these volatile and difficult times, he is the one we need more than ever.

Please be assured of our prayers for you. And if you need any help or support or prayer, please feel free to get in touch:

Tel: **823 186 / 07486882099**

Email: jmcnay@churchofscotland.org.uk

Yours in Christ,

James

What's On?

Sunday Morning Worship at 10.30am.

Available online via our website:

wkpc.church/live

or

you can watch via our [Facebook Page](#) or [YouTube Channel](#).

If you don't have internet, you can also access a service via our phone service. Simply phone: **01294 444199**. Local charges apply.

Sunday Afternoon Zoom Service at 4pm.

(Zoom details below)

Sunday Evening Reflection at 6.50pm via our website, Facebook Page and YouTube Channel.

People who Pray

Tuesday Morning, 9.30am – 10.30am via Zoom (Zoom details below).

Wednesday Fellowship

Wednesday evening, 7.00pm until 8.00pm via Zoom (Zoom details below)

Lifegroups

Lifegroups are meeting at various points during the week. If you would like to join one, please get in touch with the minister who will point you in the right direction.

Messy Church

Messy Church is on the first Saturday of the month at 2pm. The video is available on our website - <https://wkpc.church/whats-on/messy-church/>

Zoom Details

All our online meetings are held via the Zoom platform. To use Zoom, you will need to go to zoom.us or download an appropriate Zoom App.

For all our meetings the log-in details are:

Meeting ID: 933 921 8888

Passcode: wkpczoom

(Please note that the passcode is all lower case).

Try Praying?

The desire to reach out to God is basic to many, many people. Trypraying is a resource for people like that: no church connection or interest, but open to find out about God. The trypraying booklet is a 7-day prayer guide and is now being used by many to pass on to friends and family with a few words of encouragement, 'Why don't you try praying for a week and see what happens in your life?'

Trypraying is something that was started in Edinburgh to encourage people who are non-religious to 'try praying' and see what happens. Perhaps you have heard of it and seen the banners outside different churches?

A trypraying booklet is given to help and guide someone through 7 days of prayer.

At the moment, with everything that is happening in the world, people are looking and searching for answers – and so we are going to promote trypraying here in West Kilbride!

The banner will appear outside the church during February (God-willing) with booklets available to be taken by those who are passing by.

The trypraying movement also encourage those within the church to use the booklet to pray for 7 days – and then to pass the booklet on to a non-believer.

There is also a trypraying app available.

Please do pray for this exciting initiative – and if you would like a booklet to pray through and then to give away – then please get in touch with me.

We believe in prayer and that God still speaks – and as people seek the Lord, who knows what exciting things he may do!

James McNay

Church Register

**The following people have passed away recently.
Please remember their families in your prayers:**

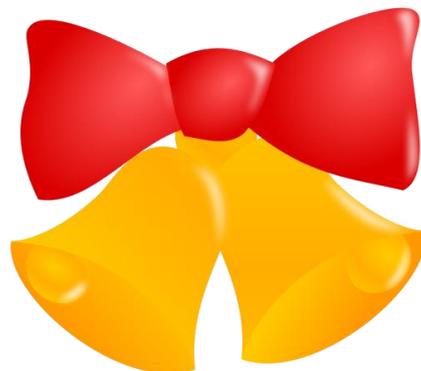
Linda Black,	Simson Avenue, died 30th November 2020.
Moira Pearson,	Marine View, Ardrossan Road, died 7th December 2020.
Carole Withers,	Overton Court, died 13th December 2020.
Hazel Koerner,	Gateside Street, died 13th January 2021.
May Adam,	Cumbrae Lodge, Irvine (previously Gateside Street), died 16th January 2021.
Anne Malloch,	Nethermiln Road, died 18th January 2021.



Wedding

Rachel Howie (Largs) married Jonathan Gray on 2nd January 2021 in West Kilbride Parish Church.

Congratulations to the new Mr and Mrs Gray!



Session Snippets

The Kirk Session held a Zoom meeting on the evening of 26th January. There were 32 session members “present.” The meeting was opened by James with a reading of psalm 91 which concerns plague and pestilence and how God offers protection.

After opening devotions, the business of the meeting commenced. Apologies were accepted as were the minutes of the previous session meeting. There was no correspondence brought to the session for consideration.

There were two team reports on behalf of People and Policy (Colin MacDougall) and Finance (John Coy).

Colin covered safeguarding and Health and Safety. With regard to safeguarding, the team have to prepare an audit check list, and a register of training of those who work with children and vulnerable adults. Both of these have to be made available to Presbytery for their annual inspection of records. The session was able to approve these two items for presentation to Presbytery.

The continuing work by the team regarding Health and Safety was also presented. This covered Covid mitigation measures, and an in-depth risk assessment of the buildings and environment. This was carried out by various walk rounds with checking of fabric and various items of equipment including electrical items. This is done on a 3 monthly basis and records updated.

As always Colin and his team produce meticulous reports for the consideration of the session which makes our work of signing them off much easier and ultimately help to keep us all safe.

Colin also highlighted the fact that domestic abuse appears unfortunately to be more prevalent during lockdown restrictions. He mentioned that there has been a recent initiative by Boots and other pharmacies whereby a person who is subject to abuse

can ask for “ANI”. The acronym ANI means “action, needed, immediately”. On hearing this the pharmacist can provide a private space and advise the client as to help available. I would also add there is a host of useful information on the Church of Scotland website regarding safeguarding and “looking out for one another” during these difficult times which is all our business.

John Coy gave us a brief report on our financial situation. It seems that although our income has decreased over the last year it has not been by as much as one might have feared. Indeed, he is confident that we are due a rebate from HMRC through our gift aid contributions to offset his current deficit figure. He also mentioned that our retiring offerings this Christmas that went to Mary’s Meals and medical aid for Palestine are up on normal.

Other business included James informing the session that 11 people were signed up for an Alpha course via Zoom and one person presenting them self for membership.

Carol advised us that the Church Roll as of now, stands at 368.

James went on to discuss the “Try Praying” initiative. This is being promoted throughout the UK. The proposal which was accepted was that the church should display a banner and make prayer booklets available in a safe and accessible way outside the church. The initiative is aimed at those who may not consider themselves religious and don’t go to church. The challenge is to pray for seven days and see what it does for you.

The meeting was shorter than normal and may give the impression that the church is hibernating during these difficult times of lockdown. However it can be seen that a lot of work is still going on in the background to ensure that when the wakeup call comes our church will be physically there and functioning for us all. Spiritually, of course, the church never closes.

Stay safe!

Richard de Courcy

Yours Sincerely

Lesley Armitage

I am the second of four children, two girls two boys, brought up in north-west London, South Wales and Kent. Had I only lived in London and Kent my upbringing would have been severely limited, but the small market town in South Wales, with its different social mix and culture, and the physical freedom offered by its mountains and river, was a revelation. The other great social education was visiting my grandparents in the Yorkshire pit village where my father was brought up. Buckets on an overhead cable transported coal for miles and the smell of the huge slag heap permeated everything, while lavatories were at the ends of gardens which were filled with neat rows of vegetables.

My family were churchgoers, indeed our lives in north-west London were quite strongly focussed on our church, its activities, and socially with fellow parishioners. But its Sunday school was so-o-o-o boring. In South Wales and Kent we attended sung Eucharist, which I came to enjoy because of all the singing, but even then I complained that the sermons never related the Bible to everyday life.

I love travelling, especially long trips when all I have is a bucket shop return air ticket and no other plans. Nearly all my travelling has been done on a shoestring, even if it did mean living off boiled rice with a little onion and stock cube for flavour when my weekly £3 ran out. Some would have thought me mad but to me it was worth it. People often exclaim, 'Aren't you afraid of travelling alone?' Obviously I try not to do anything stupid or offend

local culture with my western habits, but no, I love it. Local people often reach out to you as a lone person, if only to tease you to the great amusement of all around!

I became a Christian in Kathmandu. It was the 1970s, when many young adults had headed east seeking something mystical aided by smoking hashish. I checked a few things in my father's atlas and expected to go trekking in the Himalayas. More fool me; wrong season. Instead I spent most of my vacation attached to the Christian hospital in Mussoorie, a hill town about 6500 feet up in the Himalayas with a Main Street three umbrellas width wide, and if a vehicle appeared everyone leaped up into the nearest shop.

While in Kathmandu I had been pointed in the direction of Dilaram House, an organisation set up to help drug addicts return to ordinary life through Christian faith. At that time the house contained a mixture of ex-addicts, an ex-pusher, and 'waifs and strays' like me. There were daily Christian worship, teaching and fellowship and for the first time I saw Christians living out their faith.

When my trekking idea came to naught I wrote to various missionary hospitals but then was left with the dilemma whether to stay longer at Dilaram House or go south. I prayed an 'if you exist God please show me what to do' type of prayer and opened my Bible in two places, one said 'the lands yet to the south' and the other 'if you have made an arrangement, especially if it is written down, you cannot later change your mind'. That was it. All the confirmation I needed of a living, caring God and what I had to do.

Back in London a fellow student invited me to a couple of All Souls' monthly invitation services. A church that takes very seriously its teaching, training and social responsibilities, and where I became a regular attender.

Before this I did my biology degree as a mature student which led to a research expedition to the Galápagos Islands - truly amazing - and as a result of this I decided to try once again for a place at medical school. I had already had one university maintenance grant so set about writing almost one hundred letters seeking funding from various charities. Very luckily two of them responded. I only mention this as an encouragement to other late starters or career changers. I have been truly humbled by the people I have met who are wives and mothers, work part- or full-time and still manage to study for qualifications that will improve their job prospects.

Once qualified, ongoing training meant more changes with regular moves in the UK which I enjoyed, and showed me just how different were the cultures of various places, together with the questionable bonus of Liverpool's Toxteth riots.

So, what brought me to Scotland? Since childhood it has always attracted me and I was undeterred by the truly awful weather of our two family holidays in The Highlands. Since then, I have made numerous visits including a field course in Millport, a winter on Skye, and many brief trips to the north coast.

My last employment was with Lanarkshire Health Board. When that ended I knew I wanted to live at or near the sea as I had missed it too much when living inland. After several months see-sawing between east and west coasts looking at houses and getting nowhere, I woke

one morning with 'it's West Kilbride' in my mind so here I am and have been for 9+ years, and I have been attending the parish church since my arrival.

In my experience not all places are welcoming to outsiders so one of the real joys of West Kilbride is its friendliness, and also its cheerful helpfulness during this pandemic.

Here I have come to enjoy services without a fixed liturgy and learned much from James's Bible based teaching. I have enjoyed watching the baptisms, growth and development of the children in our church family, how they often look out for each other during their part of the service. To attend the parish church here in West Kilbride really does feel like a family gathering. As a result I am extremely grateful for the streamed services during the pandemic; they take a lot of preparation and I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed in any way.

When I look back over my life with all its stops and starts and detours I see God's hand over it all, making the connections happen even before I became a committed Christian, and then bringing me here.

Your sincerely,

Lesley Armitage

Handy Hints on How to Survive Lockdown

Members of WKPC share some of the things that have helped them through Lockdown.

When needing motivation to get out and take some exercise, remember 'there is no bad weather only bad clothes'. We live in a temperate climate and unless we have a hurricane we all have hats gloves and scarves, woolly jumpers and padded coats. What is more refreshing than a walk in the rain some people visit Scotland just for that experience!

Extreme gardening can take your mind of things, if you have a garden of course. All weather gardening, winter tidying, cleaning tools and pots, getting ready for spring takes the mind away from anxiety and worry. Fresh air is a tonic for any listlessness. Being out in God's own fresh air is a cure for much lethargy. Make it a discipline like reading the Bible, take an hour off from what one is doing and get out into nature. The house always seems much cosier and warmer when you get back in!

Brian Murray

At first lockdown seemed easy – weather was good; long hours of daylight; plenty to do in the garden! Time went on – missed friends, church worship, freedom. Really appreciated the online service, phone calls with friends, Messenger video chats with the 'Thursday night' church friends, walks. The summer relaxation – the online service and being able to see others of the church family, good weather, being able to have a few friends and family in the garden (socially distanced!) for a special celebration!
Walks.

Winter lockdown – back to the start, only worse as it is dark and cold, but I still have my husband for support plus I still have the online service, telephone calls and messenger chats, walks - and books.

Moira Mackinnon

The Golden Girls ask, "Don't start to look for our halos, you won't find any," but as Ruth says, "These are the things we have enjoyed and been blessed by that have helped us through lockdown":

Praying in the morning
Praying at noontime
Praying (and dancing) before the sun goes down!

and in between,

we watch - the news
we watch The Golden Girls
we walk and talk to the Lord while enjoying His creation
we keep in touch with family and friends
we have had time to read
we have learnt to Zoom into the Church prayer meetings
and value these times of being together

Individually,

Ruth is in a ukulele group
Lynne enjoys doing jigsaws
Jean enjoys a programme called Reflections, showing beautiful scenes with lovely Bible verses. (Daystar Television)

We enjoy and give thanks for the blessings we receive each day (good health, good food and good friendships).

Thanks be to God!

The Golden Girls

A New Year

As the New Year lies before us
The Lord has gone ahead
So let us live with confidence
fearless as we tread

His Word a shining light
A path for our feet to follow
So let us live with boldness,
Not anxious for tomorrow.

For God has put a new song,
On every heart to sing.
So let us live to worship,
The glory of the King.

The old has passed away,
It's time for 2021,
So let us live expectantly
For the day of the Lord will come.

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

Is 43:18, 19

I love this Scripture as it is telling us not to look back on the former things, the mistakes we've made, our past pains, hurts and disappointments. I am sure that many of us will be pleased to leave at least the Covid element of 2020 behind in last year's diary and keen to look to 2021 with great expectations for protection against the virus for ourselves, loved ones and key workers etc. We must keep moving forward to complete what the Lord has purposed for our lives. Time never stands still or turns backwards, so let us live 2021 with our eyes focussed on the Lord who has already gone before us (not trailing behind us!) and not waste time looking back at the things we can never be able to change but forward to the things we can potentially make a Godly difference to in the days before us.

Anne Kean

Virtual Praise!

James Green and Chas Tosh report on how our worship videos are put together.



It has now been 10 months since Covid-19 rules stopped all live singing in church. We have had to innovate to continue musical forms of praise in WKPC streams and in the live services which were permitted in the church sanctuary between lockdowns. So how have we been putting together music recordings? What problems have we had to overcome?

Each worship song starts its journey as a backing track. This is necessary as each contribution is recorded in a separate location as we need to abide by social distancing rules – without a backing track (tempo-track) everyone would be singing or playing at different speeds and nothing would fit together!

With the backing tracks ready, praise contributors can record their contributions. This requires a “play” device with headphones to listen to the track and a “record” device with microphone to make the recording. It has been a technical challenge to make this happen as play and record devices are different depending upon what each household has available. This means that many types of mobile phone, tablet computers and personal computers have been used with different recording software.

Once each contributor has recorded their part, the next challenge is to send them to the producer! With so many different types of recording devices, there is no single set of instructions covering how to do this but somehow, we have managed, and the process is now relatively slick!

The next stage of the production process is where the producer brings together the different parts with the backing tracks using digital audio workstation (DAW) computer software. This enables the parts to be edited and mixed so that the parts in the song are balanced. At this point, some additional instruments can be added in the arrangements to complete the worship song.

Music has such power to convey God’s word and is an important part of worship, hopefully our music recordings have helped to fill some of void that Covid-19 restrictions have brought.

James Green

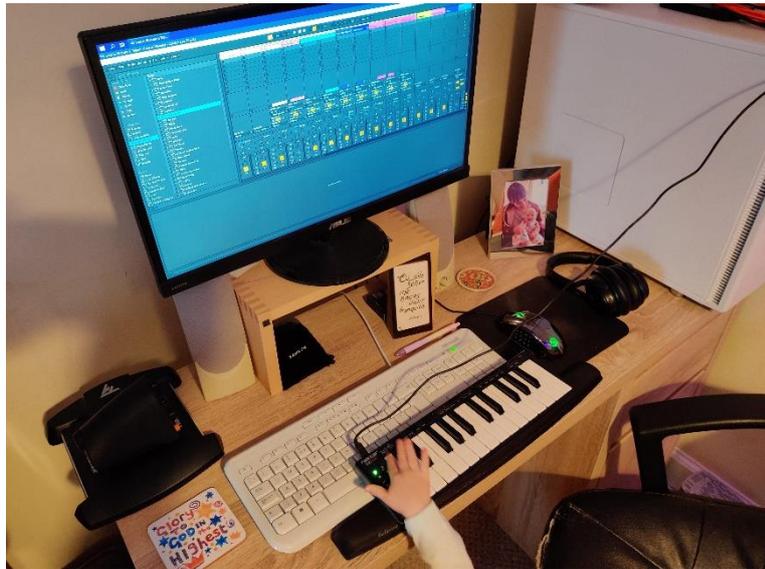
Praise Music

I use my computer and a program called *Ableton Live* to produce the music that I've done for the church. This is a kind of "Digital Audio Workstation" that allows me to mix together lots of individually-recorded and created different parts to make a whole song. What's more, I'm not just limited to physical instruments I own – I have access to a huge library of different virtual instruments that can be mixed in too.

So, how does this work? Well, first I need something to work with. The first thing I usually do is set the tempo and create a very simple guide beat to keep me in time, which I'll delete later. I then record a melody line and chords using the tiny MIDI keyboard you can see in the picture (the tiny hand is Annie's!).

To finish off I'll usually add a bass line, also in MIDI.

MIDI is a bit like sheet music: just like sheet music doesn't sound like anything until a musician picks up an instrument and plays it, so MIDI is just a set of instructions which the computer uses to play its instruments. So, I can enter the MIDI notes using my keyboard, edit them on my computer, and then assign any one of thousands of real or synthesised instruments to 'play' the notes in the final track.



With a melody, some chords and a bass line I have a basic foundation to work with which allows me to start recording vocals or live instrument accompaniments (e.g. my guitar). I have a USB condenser microphone which plugs into my computer, and which I use to record vocals and my guitar. Even with a proper mic, the realities of home recording mean that every recording needs to be

processed to clean it up. Sometimes others in the church will send me parts that they've recorded, in which case I also need to try to place them in the song with the correct timing – it's very sad if you've worked hard on a recording and I place it wrongly so it sounds like you're off!

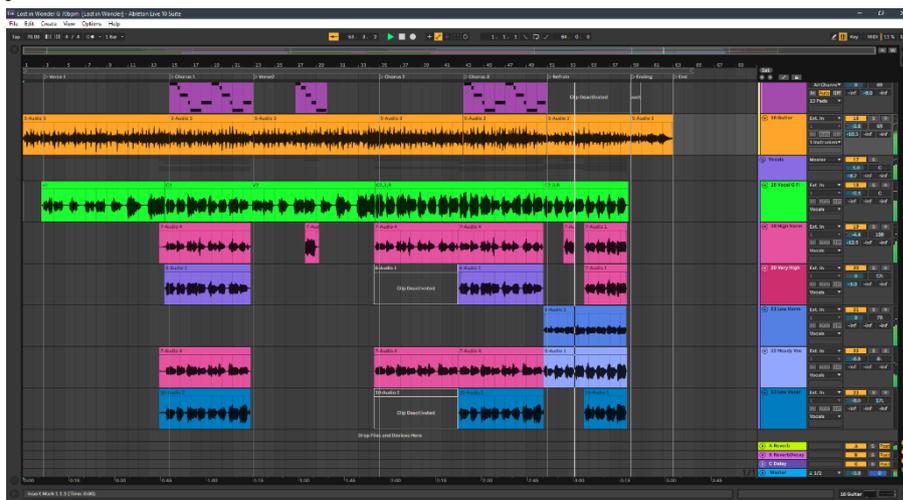
At this stage I'll also experiment with different instruments, harmonies, rhythms, accents and the like: if I don't yet have a 'vision' for the song then I'm searching for inspiration as I do this, hoping something will stand out and give me a hook to hang the rest of the arrangement on; if I do have a vision in mind, I'm searching for the right pieces that will make that idea start to come together. This is often the most difficult part because it's the most creative – yet it's also often the most rewarding, as suddenly I discover an instrument or a combination of parts that inspires and excites me.

I'm often asked if I'm the one playing all the instruments on a track. The answer is both no and yes: no because in most cases I'm not playing an instrument "live" with the sound you hear on the final track, but yes because I did input all the notes and other instructions necessary to get the computer to produce that sound – often by playing the notes on my MIDI keyboard.

Finally comes the mixing and mastering, which is by far the most time-consuming part of the process. It's important for the final track to sound clean and not too busy or crowded. This is a lot harder to achieve than it might seem! Because in the experimental phase I often add in lots of different parts for various instruments while looking for something that works, I'll often end up liking several different parts that don't necessarily go well together. I have to decide what to cut out entirely, what to focus on, and what needs to be pushed to the side or trimmed in the EQ (Becky just asked me what this means: it's adjusting the volume of, say, the high or low or middle part of a sound to try and balance it against other sounds). This is also the phase where I have to remember to listen on a few different speakers, as every speaker sounds slightly different and those differences can have a dramatic and unexpected effect on how the mix comes across.

Mastering is definitely the area I most want to improve on: I can do an OK job, but I know I have so much more to learn to get tracks sounding properly 'loud' and balanced and clear. I'd also like to learn

how to play a drum kit: I'm used to laying down beats for EDM, not for worship music, and if I have to add a beat to a song, I'll often look up drum scores online



or listen to another recording and try to copy what the drummer is doing. For example, in "Cornerstone" I adapted a drum score I found on the internet and for "Way Maker" I watched another drummer and adapted what I saw!

This picture shows a snippet of the arrangement for "Lost in Wonder" which was a fairly simple track – mostly just me, my guitar, and my keyboard with just a few extra accents and effects. I also layered several different recordings of my own singing at various points in the song - either in a harmony, or a high or low register, or a combination thereof, to add tone and interest and depth (it's actually very scary having your voice exposed in a recording, especially when you have to listen to it over and over again for hours!) The little dots/lines are MIDI parts played by virtual instruments, and the wavy parts are my voice or guitar. This song has around 25 different parts making it up; something more complex like "Reckless Love" might have in the region of 50 or 60 individual parts. This may sound impressive but part of the reason for this is to help me keep track of everything that's going on, so I might have one single instrument spread over several tracks so that I can more easily adjust, say, the volume of one part, or the EQ of another. It's also a reminder how difficult it can be to decide on what to keep and what to discard when you've got several parts you like but aren't sure if they fit together!

As well as recording songs myself I also sometimes mix tracks for the Praise Group. This is very rewarding as I don't have to worry about the instrumentation or arrangement, just how to fit together the various parts I'm sent over the internet by members of the group. It's also a chance to work with lots of live recordings and various different vocal tones and ranges. There's also the technical challenge of dealing with recordings which might have been made on a phone or a laptop computer and ensuring that the quality of performance shines through above any limitations in the recording equipment! In some ways I prefer this over creating a track myself, partly as it's not so draining or exhausting as creating something from scratch, but mostly because there's something really special about being the one to receive all these amazing components and then get the chance to arrange them all in a way which (hopefully) brings out their individual beauty but also creates a new beauty in the whole.

Music has always been a big part of our services in the church at West Kilbride, and there's something about music which helps us connect with God in a special and important way. This is one of the things I've missed the most about meeting together in person. For me, it's definitely a privilege to be able to continue not only making music, but working with other musicians and singers as well - and then seeing that music being put to use in streamed services or recordings! It's also been very rewarding to have the chance to both use and develop the production skills I had half-learned in the past. Although my ME/CFS has flared up again in the past few months and limited my ability to produce new music, it's something I really enjoy and am looking forward to doing much more of in the future.

Of course, none of this makes up for not being able to meet together and sing, but there have been different kinds of blessing in it – not least how incredible it's been for me as an amateur producer to hear the creativity and beauty others in the church have achieved in their own recordings and musical productions, with their own unique workflows, approaches, instruments, voices and platforms. Maybe when the pandemic crisis is over we'll even be able to put some of these new skills to use in our physical meetings in new and refreshed expressions of musical worship.

Chas Tosh

West Kilbride Village Larder

Village larders or pantries have grown up over recent years, to support people who find it difficult to buy enough food for each week or month. Members of the pantry/larder can visit a central location once a week and do some of their regular food shopping at a lower cost. Generally, members will pay a weekly subscription and then be able to choose food from the larder that will cost less than in the local shops.

The food available will have been either donated by shops or individuals, or bought at a reduced price from regular suppliers. There would normally be some food available for free from various sources eg food close to its sell by date, or donations from people's gardens. And sometimes there is a "swaps table" where people can bring in a food item they do not like or need and swap it for something else that they prefer.

Village larders/ pantries are not the same as food banks, as no referral is needed to use the larder. Members are able to make choices about which foods to take away and this gives people more dignity and control over their lives.

The need for a village larder in West Kilbride has become more apparent during the current pandemic, as people have needed support with feeding themselves and their families. Life has been more challenging than usual for everyone, but there are people also struggling with ill health, job insecurity, job losses, self isolation, and social distancing and a reduction in their support networks.

People involved with the West Kilbride Community Support Group have been working with North Ayrshire Council to set up a village larder in the Community Centre. The Portencross Room will be used which is brilliant because it also has a store room, toilet and separate entrance. NAC have provided shelving and a fridge and freezer, along with hand sanitizer units, a till and many other things that are needed. We are working on all the administration that has to be organised and hope to be open to the public very soon.

How can you help?

By volunteering eg stacking shelves, serving the public, cleaning, admin.....

Funding- regular or occasional donations

You can contact the larder/pantry (we still haven't decided what to call it yet!) to offer or ask for help by email wkcsgroup@gmail.com, or by phoning 07947223446

Widow's Mite

(A rhyming acrostic based on Luke 21:1-4)

Why do we remember her, this solitary figure?
Is it because we see her as part of something bigger?
Destitute and stooped, at the margins of society,
Overshadowed by powerbrokers' fake shows of piety,
Waiting on God, she unburdened her cares,
She had no need of fine robes or long prayers.

Many are the accolades the rich receive on earth –
In cash and possessions we calculate their worth.
The marginalised, the displaced, the humble, the least,
End up as honoured guests at Heaven's feast.

Harry Hunter

Blythswood Care Shoebox Appeal 2020



Every year the Shoebox Appeal seems to generate a 'new' normal. This year the new normal was so very, very different!

The outstanding facilities at Fullarton allowed the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic to be contained and applied in such a manner as to allow the Appeal to go ahead in a great measure of controlled safety. Blythswood Care is enormously grateful for the flexibility afforded.

Quite simply, a secure cordon was established and maintained around and within the boundaries of Fullarton Hall and the Schoolroom. All volunteers who wished to help had to pre-book hourly slots. On arrival at the entrance to the cordoned area, each volunteer had to register, submit to a heat sensor test, and then – and only then proceed into the cordoned area.

As in previous years, many folk arrived at the cordon desk with gifts for the shoeboxes but, this year, there were special routines for gifts too. A "quarantine" box was situated just outside the cordon into which all donations of shoeboxes and additional gifts were placed. These gifts were then stored safely for 72 hours before being brought into use within the Fullarton Hall or Schoolroom area.

The other significant change in routine was the greater use of 'our' industrial unit in Harbourside. By the end of the Appeal the unit had housed **607** filled cartons, each with an average of **10** filled shoeboxes!

This year was different in many ways – slightly fewer helpers (perhaps because unaccompanied youngsters were not allowed), no Scripture Union groups, less blethering due to the need for face coverings, and greater work output (no tea/coffee cups at each work place!)

Again, we were fortunate to be able to call on the ready and obliging help of St Andrew's and the Gospel Hall for the loan of tables.

Importantly, we were able to continue with our tradition of inviting a minister from one of the churches supporting the Ayrshire Shoebox effort to visit us and bless the gifts and their recipients. This year the 'new' minister in the linked charge of St John's Largs and Fairlie Parishes, Rev Dr Graham McWilliams, most willingly accepted and spent more than an hour going round the volunteers and making real contact with verve and wit. He has been involved with Blythswood Care for several years so well understood what we were about.

Immediately after the blessing of the boxes, those who were working in the Hall and Schoolroom were able to pause work, collect a shoebox, and gather on the pavement outside the old main entrance to Fullarton. We made a line of honour as the funeral cortege for Cathy McQueenie passed immediately after her funeral service. We mourned the loss of a much-loved founder member of the Shoeboxers.

Despite the expected lessening of numbers of completed shoeboxes this year, a surprising total of **6,359** shoeboxes were collected, inspected, completed with Christian literature, packed into cartons and stored in our warehouse in Irvine ready for final transportation. (Last year the number of boxes was just over 6,000!) A sum of almost **£7,800** was also donated to the charity to cover transportation and other costs.

The last of "our" filled cartons left Irvine on 27th November *en route* to Moldova

Our God is indeed a God of surprises – again and again!

World Day of Prayer 2021

The World day of prayer is a worldwide prayer movement with an annual service held usually on the first Friday in March. This year, the service has been written by women of Vanuatu and the theme they have chosen is *“Building on a Firm Foundation.”*

Vanuatu is in the South Pacific Ocean and comprises of 82 islands, 65 are inhabited. The 2015 World Risk Report, based on chances of experiencing earthquakes, storms, floods, drought and sea level rises, placed Vanuatu at number one of 173 countries with a 36% chance. Rising sea levels threaten to erode the land; and pollution from vehicle fumes, oil from boats and plastic waste badly affect the environment.

This year we are unable to host a local church service. However, as we will have the Order of Service booklets, it is hoped to deliver the booklets to everyone who would normally support the service so that you can have a time of reflection and follow the service on 5th March. The booklet will also have details of how to send a donation to the World Day of Prayer Scottish Committee who will be supporting Christian Societies which have projects in Vanuatu.

An easy access Zoom service with internet and telephone links.

The Scottish Committee invite you to join them in a live Zoom service at **2pm on Friday 5th March**. It is being hosted by Augustine United Church in Edinburgh with participants from across Scotland. The Zoom login information is:

Webinar ID: 895 9398 3883

Passcode: 901656

If you do not have internet access you can join using a landline 0131 4601196. You will be asked for the above webinar ID and passcode. There may be costs involved.

The service will also be posted on their website <http://www.wdpScotland.org.uk/> and on a Facebook page for later access.

10 Days of Prayer. Starting on Tuesday 23rd February the Scottish Committee are planning “*10 Days of Prayer*” which will be posted on the WDP Scotland Facebook Page every morning and on their website. They are inviting the national leaders of 10 denominations to share a Thought for the Day focusing on Vanuatu and one of the Scottish Committee will end with a prayer.

If you haven't received a copy of the service booklet by the beginning of March, and you would like one please contact me via Stephen on the church office number.

Next year, God willing, the service will have been written by Christian women of England, Wales and N. Ireland and the theme is ‘I know the plans I have for you’ and hopefully, we will be able to gather together again with our friends from St Brides.

Monthly Prayer Diary: February 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 st Lord God, we recognise our need of You in these days. Thank you that You do hear and answer prayer	2 nd Thank You for the gift of faith. Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen	3 rd What a privilege it is to be able to carry everything to God in prayer. The Lord is near to all who call on Him	4 th We give thanks and pray for our Minister James, Anna his wife and their sons John & Alasdair	5 th We give thanks for Bibles, books, and all that is available to help & guide us in our faithwalk.	6 th We give thanks for those whose lives have been an encouragement to us – those we know personally & those we have read about
7 th We pray for all who will preach the Word of God today and for those who will hear & listen	8 th We pray for our Governments and all who are in authority over us and for all the decisions they have to make	9 th Today is Safer Internet Day. We pray protection for children at risk of accessing disturbing material online.	10 th We pray for Drs, Nurses Ambulance Drivers, Care Home staff, all who have experienced so much suffering during the pandemic	11 th We give thanks for the scientists & researchers and all who are working behind the scenes to find effective treatments	12 th We pray for all who grieve, who know the pain of loss, who feel the desolation of life completely changed.	13 th We pray for all who work in our GP Surgery, Pharmacy, Local hospitals, Care Homes and hospices. We remember also our local Funeral Directors
14 th We remember Betsi in Malta, Mandy in Tarbolton Brian in Saltcoats Douglas in Fife and Nigel, new to Kirkgate	15 th We remember all who are working tirelessly to keep our essential services going at this time. We pray for our local businesses	16 th Shrove Tuesday. In the past seen as a day to use up food before Lent, we pray for all who are relying on Foodbanks at this time	17 th Lent. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him will have everlasting life	18 th We pray about the effects of the Pandemic around the world and for the fair distribution of the vaccines	19 th We remember the plight of refugees. May Your Presence be very real and may many find You for themselves	20 th We pray for the new administration in America. May they be led by You Lord to do the right thing. May they seek godly wisdom for all their decisions
21 st We pray for the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, for Church Leaders around the world	22 nd We give thanks, Bible Societies have been able to respond to a deep need for God's Word during the pandemic	23 rd World Day of Prayer Scotland Committee invite us to join in 10 days of prayer for Vanuatu	24 th We pray for Fiona Bruce MP, the Govt's special envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief	25 th We pray for all who have been attending our Alpha Course. May it be a safe place to explore faith	26 th We pray for all who are struggling with addiction and the effect it has on family life	27 th We continue to pray for Glasgow City Mission's Overnight Welcome Centre open until 31 st March
28 th Pray for all who have been unable to have access to church services						

Monthly Prayer Diary: March 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 st Let us pray for those whom we love... Let us pray for those whom we do not love...	2 nd We give thanks for James & his family and pray for every aspect of James' ministry	3 rd We pray for Carol our Session Clerk, Elders, and all who are attending to church matters behind the scenes	4 th We pray for all the Christians who live in WK. May we be known by our love	5 th The World Day of Prayer. We pray for Vanuatu in the South Pacific Ocean. 'Build on a Strong Foundation'	6 th We continue to pray for the effects of the Pandemic all around the world. Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayers
7 th We pray for young people in our church family & give thanks for all who are supporting their faithwalk	8 th We support Scripture Union in prayer & give thanks for their ongoing work with young people at this time	9 th We pray for family life at this time of difficulty & uncertainty with employment, school life, illness, loss of family support	10 th We pray for all who have been furloughed, or have lost their job. We pray for local businesses who have had to close	11 th For many, our Mental Health has been affected. Lord, take away the stigma. Help us to help one another	12 th Lord, we pray for all who lead and serve in our Gov'ts. Give them wisdom, guidance courage and humility	13 th Pray for the work of Compassion. Their Child Survival Interventions help to keep expectant Mums safe during their pregnancy
14 th Mothering Sunday. Lord, we rejoice with the joyfull. We ask for comfort for the sorrowfull	15 th Lord, You are close to the brokenhearted and all who grieve. We ask for Your comfort to calm every fear and bring them peace	16 th We pray for our GP Surgery, local hospitals, Care Homes and hospices	17 th We pray for all who are unwell, waiting for test or results, having treatment. All with long term pain	18 th We give thanks & pray for NHS staff, & all who keep our essential services running	19 th We pray for Charities & Aid Agencies to have the financial resources they need	20 th We pray for Persecuted Christians all around the world who endure so much because of their love for Christ
21 st We pray for all who have been called to leave home and loved ones to serve the Lord in other places	22 nd We pray for all who are living with disability and for the many families who lost their support during times of Lockdown	23 rd We pray for all the work being carried out to understand the effects of long – term Covid symptoms	24 th We pray for all who live in areas of war and famine, conflict, corruption, instability and terrorism, as well as Covid	25 th We pray for all who are caught up in Human Trafficking & for all who work to set the captives free	26 th May we pause and give thanks today for our beautiful world. Spring is on its way!!!	27 th We pray for World Leaders. We long that all would serve with humility, godly wisdom and integrity
28 th Strengthen our faith as we follow Your journey to the Cross and to the Resurrection	29 th Lord, what wonders await us as we journey with You deep in the valleys or up high on the mountain tops	30 th Lord, help us to keep looking forward however difficult the journey may seem	31 st We give thanks that You are the God of the breakthrough, even when we can't yet see it!			

Adventure Kids Update!



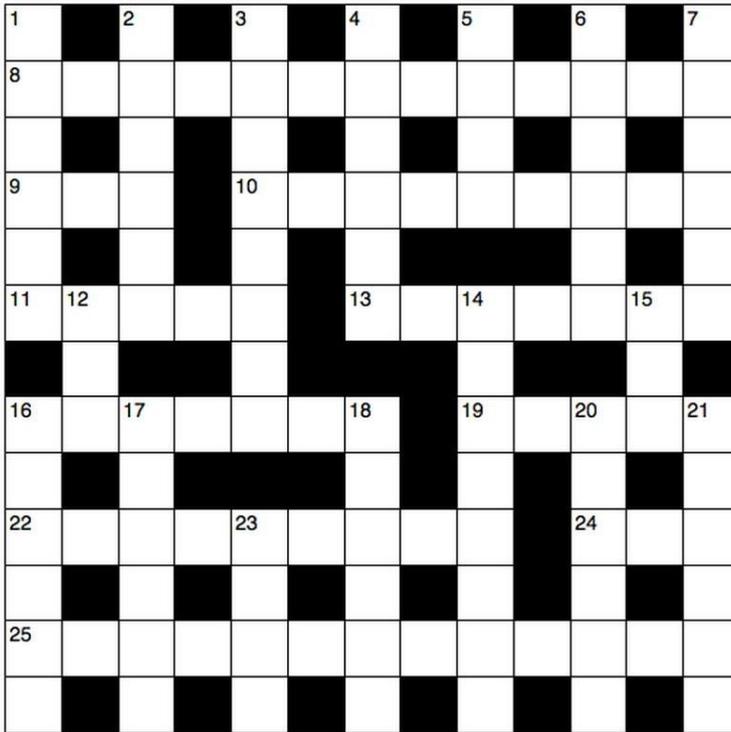
We decided to try monthly Adventure Kids Zoom meetings last September.

These are hopefully relaxed meetings for children and their parents, if not for the leaders who are still getting to grips with the technology! We view these sessions primarily as a way of keeping in touch with the youngsters.

Recently we've had older siblings join in and this seemed to go well. If your children are Primary School age and would like to take part please get in touch. These meetings take place at 9.45 am on the 2nd Sunday in the month. We also now have a What's App group.

In addition, towards the end of 2020 we restarted the videos for Seedlings & Adventure Kids. These are premiering monthly at 9.45am on the 4th Sunday of the month. For November's Adventure Kids 'The Parable of the Sower' we tried to grow crystals. The McNay family shared a photo with us of their experiment.





Crossword Clues and Answers

Across

- 8 Interrogated (Acts 12:19) (5-8)
 9 'Burn it in a wood fire on the — heap' (Leviticus 4:12) (3)
 10 Tobit, Judith, Baruch and the books of Esdras and the Maccabees are part of it (9)
 11 Science fiction (abbrev.) (3-2)
 13 Clay pit (anag.) (7)
 16 Went to (John 4:46) (7)
 19 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to — your bodies as living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (5)
 22 David's plea to God concerning those referred to in 14 Down: 'On

— — let them escape' (Psalm 56:7) (2,7)

24 Royal Automobile Club (1,1,1)

25 How the book of Ezekiel refers to God more than 200 times (Ezekiel 2:4) (9,4)

Down

- 1 Seas (Proverbs 8:24) (6)
 2 One of the sons of Eli the priest, killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) (6)
 3 Specialist in the study of the Muslim religion (8)
 4 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but — him as if he were your father' (1 Timothy 5:1) (6)
 5 One of Esau's grandsons (Genesis 36:11) (4)
 6 Taking a chance (colloq.) (2,4)
 7 God's instructions to the Israelites concerning grain offerings: ' — salt to — your offerings' (Leviticus 2:13) (3,3)
 12 Confederation of British Industry (1,1,1)
 14 'All day long they twist my words; they are always — to harm me' (Psalm 56:5) (8)
 15 The crowd's reaction to Jesus bringing back to life a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:16) (3)
 16 Disappear (Psalm 104:35) (6)
 17 How Jeremiah was likely to die if he wasn't rescued from the cistern where he was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:9) (6)
 18 What the prophets do to a wall, with whitewash (Ezekiel 13:10, RSV) (4,2)
 20 Made by a plough (Job 39:10) (6)
 21 Noah was relieved when the flood waters continued to — (Genesis 8:5) (6)
 23 Jesus gave the Twelve the power and authority to do this to diseases (Luke 9:1) (4)

Answers

<p>ACROSS: 8, Cross-examined; 9, Ash; 10, Apocrypha; 11, Sci-fi; 13, Typical; 16, Visited; 19, Offer; 22, No account; 24, RAC; 25, Sovereign Lord.</p> <p>DOWN: 1, Oceans; 2, Hophni; 3, Islamist; 4, Exhort; 5, Omar; 6, On spec; 7, Add all; 12, CBI; 14, Plotting; 15, Ave; 16, Vanish; 17, Starve; 18, Daub it; 20, Furrow; 21, Recede; 23, Cure.</p>

Wordsearch

A New King for Israel

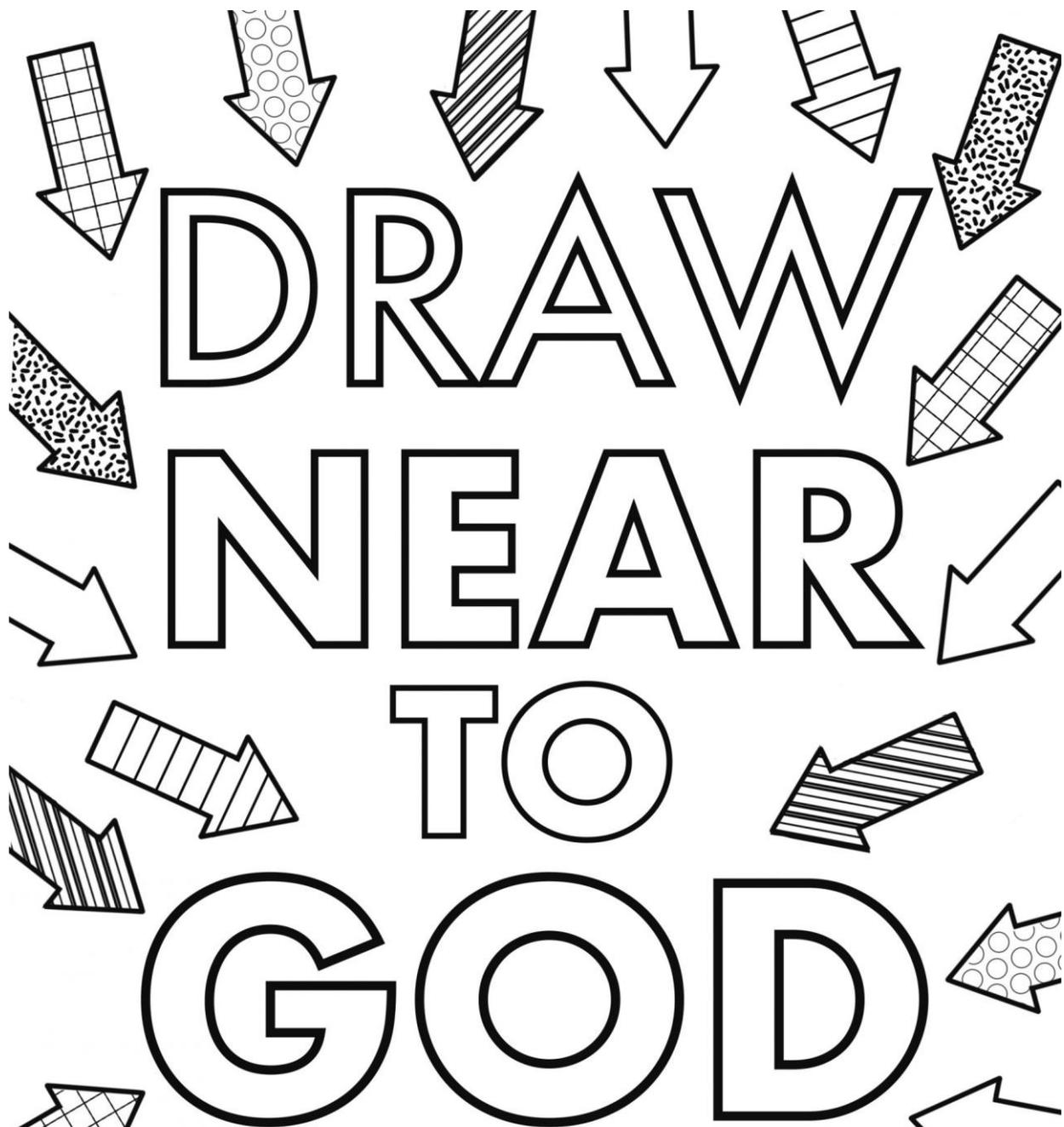
t	r	i	c	k	e	d	l	a	n	d	s	j
s	g	q	u	s	a	u	l	n	v	z	s	o
s	b	x	o	e	n	e	m	i	e	s	h	a
n	r	i	s	h	b	o	s	h	e	t	h	b
e	o	t	c	o	m	m	a	n	d	e	r	t
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n	c	s	l	j	i	r	s	r	r	n	d	r
j	f	i	g	h	t	i	n	g	m	n	g	y
k	h	a	r	m	i	e	s	k	i	n	g	q
p	r	o	m	i	s	e	d	a	v	i	d	j

fighting
David
Abner
king
land
tribes

brother
Philistines
meeting
Ishbosheth
sneaked
Israel

commander
Saul
secret
angry
promised
reward

northern
tricked
armies
Joab
southern
enemies



DRAW
NEAR
TO
GOD

and He will draw near to you

James 4:8

