

February/March 2026

Issue 173

The Link



**The magazine for West Calder and Polbeth Parish
Church of Scotland.**

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Dear friends

I hope that you've all had a lovely festive season, and that you are enjoying the new year so far! On behalf of myself and my

colleagues I would like to thank you for the kindness shown to us at Christmas time. We appreciate the lovely cards and kind wishes so much...



I always think that the cold and dark days of December are bearable because we have Christmas to look forward to. But with Christmas behind us now, and the cold and dark days still with us, winter can sometimes be a bit of a challenge. But I want to assure you that even though the Christmas lights have been taken down, the light of Christ never stops shining. The comfort his love brings never goes away – no matter what it feels like outside, or inside our hearts. In John 14 Jesus says: “I will be with you, always.” So please hold on to that, whether it is the sunlight you are longing for, or a brightness in your life...

The change in year also brought with it some changes for our churches. On the 1st of January 2026 our two churches became a united charge: West Calder and Polbeth Parish Church of Scotland. We will still refer to each building as we always have: West Kirk of Calder, and Polbeth Harwood Church. This is a very exciting time in the history of our church. We are privileged to be able to keep both our buildings, to do the things we love in the ways we always have, but to also work together closely – to spread the word of God to our communities in an effective way.

I know change can be unsettling, but if we hold on to the positives and focus on the good that will come from this union, I believe we will be able to move into the future as a strong unit. Let us ask God to bind us together with the glue of his love, like we sing in the famous hymn: “Bind us together Lord, with cords that cannot be broken...”

May God bless you all,

Nanda

Reflection – Matthew 4:1-4 (NRSV)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. Tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

For many people, the season of Lent is synonymous with one thing: temptation. Specifically, it's associated with overcoming it: giving up some bad habit, perhaps; denying ourselves some luxury; or turning over a new leaf. The rationale for this is the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, during which he was tempted to turn stones into bread, to bow before Satan, and to test God by hurling himself off the highest pinnacle of the temple.

But what does all this actually mean for us today? Too often it's understood as a stick with which we should beat ourselves; an example of stern self-discipline that we must somehow follow, and God help us if we fail to do so. If Jesus could do it, the implication seems to be, then so also should we.....

Yet is that really the point here? The temptation Jesus faced was to take the easy path rather than the hard, so fit in with the way of the world rather than the way of the cross. It's the fact that **he refused to give in** that gives us reason **to hope and rejoice** despite our faults. He took the road of costly self-sacrifice, the route that led to death, not because we deserve it but precisely because we don't, because he loves us as we are, warts and all. The period of Lent speaks of God who longs **not to condemn but to forgive, not to punish but to love.**

Rev Alison Quilter

Reflection – Luke 24:22-27 (NRSV)

22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.’ 25 Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah[a] should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

How often do plans work out as well as we hoped? There may be the odd occasion when they measure up to expectations, but, in our experience, our grand designs and dream rarely yield in practice what they promise in theory. More often than not, hopes have a habit of falling flat.

A similar sense of anti-climax, though infinitely more intense, was felt by the two disciples walking back along the Emmaus Road, their mood summed up in the plaintive

words preceding the passage above: *'We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.'* For a time, they had dared to imagine that promised day of the Lord had dawned, but their hopes had been dashed – another case, so it seemed, of reality not measuring up to expectations. When we read on, though, it's a different story; for suddenly this stranger began to interpret the Scriptures to them, declaring that the death of Jesus was not some ghastly mistake but part of God's redeeming purpose; that the Messiah was not dead but alive; that what the women had told them about the empty tomb was not some foolish story but the glorious wonderful truth!

So let us rejoice for here in miniature, is one of the great truths of the gospel: that Jesus does not simply fulfil our hopes but far exceeds them, offering joy and peace, hope and strength beyond anything words can begin to express. Amen.

Rev Alison Quilter

An Easter Prayer

Heavenly Father, on this blessed Easter morning, I lift my heart to You in gratitude.

Where shadows have lingered, let Your light break through. Where doubt has taken root, plant seeds of unshakable faith.

May the joy of the resurrection remind me that no night lasts forever, and that every ending is the beginning of something new in You.

Fill my spirit with courage to face the unknown, peace to rest in Your promises, and hope that shines brighter than fear.

Today, I choose to walk in the victory of life, trusting that Your love will carry me through every season.

Amen.

The Bridge



'16 to 25+ year olds'

'The Bridge' for young folk aged 16 to 25+ years old is held quarterly. A get together and a blether, share a meal or light snack and explore our faith and discuss things that matter to you as young folk in 21stC. If you are interested, please get in touch with me or Nanda and bring a friend along too!

We meet in Polbeth Harwood Church Café Area on a **Wednesday at 7pm**. Our next scheduled meeting will be on **Wednesday 25th March**.

The Bridge let's stay connected! Look forward to seeing you there!

Nanda, Sandra and Alison



The Quiet Service

The next quiet service in Polbeth Harwood will be held on **Wednesday 18th February at 3:30pm**, followed by **Wednesday 25th March 2026 at 3:30pm** in the 'quiet room'. All are welcome to this short service followed by tea, coffee, biscuits and a 'blether'. The short service of worship includes a couple of hymns, scripture reading, prayers and a short reflection. Entry via the Ramp Door of the Polbeth Church building.

Anyone who would like to come and needs assistance with transport should call Sandra Dixon on 07855861223.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Sandra and Alison

Celebration of Love Service

15 February

9:30 West Kirk

11:15 Polbeth Harwood



This special service is on the theme of Love.

Married in this Kirk – or elsewhere – this gives an opportunity to reflect on your years of love & commitment together.

Married - or single – this also gives an occasion to thank God not only for the love which lies at the heart of all our relationships but also acknowledge that God is the source of all our loving and that he wants to help us strengthen our love for one another whatever the connection.

The warmth of love is further celebrated with “Bubbly & Cake” in the hall after the service.

Café Church

On Sunday the 8th of March, at the West Kirk, we will have a Café style service in the church hall.



This will also be combined with our Annual Congregational Meeting. And we will do the same at Polbeth Harwood on Sunday the 22nd of March.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you all to these services, as this will be an opportunity to experience the true fellowship of believers, and also for us to do some practical planning for the year ahead.

Hope to see you there! Nanda

Letter of thanks with regards the gifts collected at the West Kirk Gift service . The gifts were for “children of imprisoned parents” in Saughton Prison in Edinburgh.

Dearest Friends,

I hope all of you had a lovely Christmas and New Year.

Thank you so much for your support for the fortieth Christmas gift collection.

Here are the numbers of how many children received gifts.

Two hundred and forty-seven children received Christmas presents. Over a hundred of these children received some of their Christmas presents at one of the six Christmas parties that took place in the visit room. Organised between the family contact officers and the Barnardo's at the visitors' centre.

Remaining gifts have been retained by the visitor's centre and will continue to be given out throughout the year so the number of children will increase.

We achieved our aim. Which is the same every year, that every child that passes through the doors of the prison visitors centre receives a Christmas gift.

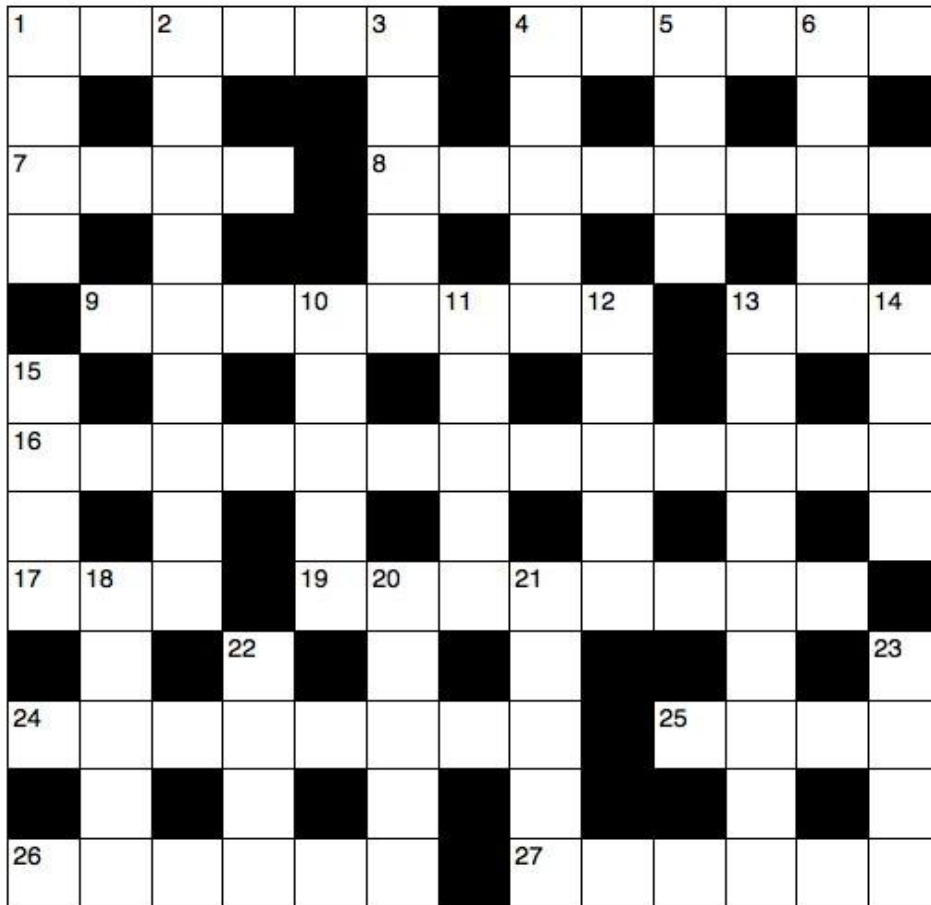
Here is a note from Patrizia from the visitors' centre.

"We gave extra presents to the families that were more in need as we did in previous years. Also, several families were unable to visit before Christmas, so we are still donating presents to children. Thank you so much to everyone who donated the gifts for the children. All children were over the moon for the presents received".

Thank you again for your support.

Best Wishes

Colin O'Flaherty



Across

- 1 'If you love those who love you, what — is that to you?' (Luke 6:32) (6)
- 4 'They threw the ship's — overboard' (Acts 27:19) (6)
- 7 The first murderer (Genesis 4:8) (4)
- 8 He was the head Levite in charge of the singing when the ark of God was brought back to

Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:22) (8)

9 Samson was noted for this (Judges 16:6) (8)

13 Solicit money or food from passers by (Acts 3:2) (3)

16 What William Booth's Christian Mission became in 1878 (9,4)

17 Alliance of Religions and Conservation (1,1,1)

19 'I will praise your name for ever and ever. — — I will praise you' (Psalm 145:1-2) (5,3)

24 Simon had (anag.) (8)

25 Desperate (Deuteronomy 28:48) (4)

26 Elisha witnessed the boy he was seeking to resuscitate do this seven times before opening his eyes (2 Kings 4:35) (6)

27 The belly and thighs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream were made of this (Daniel 2:32) (6)

Down

1 'Before the — crows, you will disown me three times' (Matthew 26:75) (4)

- 2 Relating to the books of the Bible between Acts and Revelation (9)
- 3 'They have — the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' (John 20:2) (5)
- 4 Belief (5)
- 5 'Take the following fine spices: ... 250 shekels of fragrant — ' (Exodus 30:23) (4)
- 6 'Do not — Jerusalem, but wait for the gift' (Acts 1:4) (5)
- 10 A seer (anag.) (5)
- 11 'Even there your hand will — me' (Psalm 139:10) (5)
- 12 The wild variety was part of John the Baptist's diet (Mark 1:6) (5)
- 13 A non-Greek speaker who was looked down on by civilized people (Colossians 3:11) (9)
- 14 Famous 1950s musical whose characters included members of
- 16 Across, — and Dolls (4)
- 15 The province from which Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:19) (4)
- 18 'He was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring — — his hand' (Ezekiel 40:3) (3,2)
- 20 'Today, if you hear his — , do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion' (Hebrews 3:15) (5)
- 21 The Jericho prostitute who hid two Israelite spies on the roof of her house (Hebrews 11:31) (5)
- 22 'And now these three remain: faith, — and love. But the greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13:13) (4)
- 23 'God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end' (Daniel 5:26) (4)

Answers for issue 172

ACROSS: 1, Tabernacle. 7, Absalom. 8, Incas. 10, Roes. 11, Captured. 13, Fright. 15, Cavell. 17, Cyclonic. 18, Herb. 21, Sonar. 22, Amazing. 23, Settlement.

DOWN: 1, Taste. 2, Bold. 3, Ramiah. 4, Abiathar. 5, Lucerne. 6, Sacrifices. 9, Saddlebags. 12, Theocrat. 14, Incense. 16, Pilate. 19, Exist. 20, Save.

WEST KIRK OF CALDER FUNDRAISING GROUP

Since the last issue of the Link the Fundraising group have held two very successful events, our pre-Christmas, Coffee Morning, which had Craft Stalls, Lucky Dips, Tombola, Bottle Stall and of course the always popular Home Baking Stall. In January we held a “Winter Warmer” when we served home-made soup and sandwiches over the lunchtime period. Both of these events were a great success and raised a significant amount of much needed funds for the church.

The support we receive from those who regularly attend these fund raising efforts, those who help set up and serve at the stalls or wait at the tables and those who contribute baking, craft work and raffle prizes is very much appreciated and a huge thank you is extended to everyone involved.

Our next event is a Quiz which will be held on Friday 6th March at 7pm in the West Kirk Hall. This is always a very fiercely contested event and much enjoyed by all those who participate.

If you would like to take part, please give Team Names (maximum 4 per team) to Margaret Hogg. Charge £10 per table or £2.50 per individual.

Tea , coffee & biscuits included in the price.

Thank you once again for your continued support.

ROLL, DRAW & HAVE FUN!



POLBETH HARWOOD CHURCH

FRIDAY 27th FEBRUARY

6.30pm for 7pm Start

FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY!



Adults £5 • Children £2.50

REFRESHMENTS INCLUDED!

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM SANDRA DIXON OR NANDA

WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

As from 1st January, you will be aware, our linked charge became one unified congregation under the name of West Calder & Polbeth Parish Church of Scotland.

Over the next few months, we will get used to the title, but this obviously requires some administrative name changes during this time.

One that has been raised is the name of this magazine. Should we continue to call it "The Link" when we are no longer a linkage?

What do you think?

We are keen to hear your views and will hold a wee competition so you have the opportunity to put forward a fresh title for our parish newsletter for our journey forward together.

Suggestions and views can be given to Liz Dyer or sent to elizdyer@hotmail.co.uk

before Tuesday 10th March so Kirk Session can review at their March meeting.

United Church Service



At Polbeth Church
on Sunday 15th March
at 11:15am to

Celebrate the Arrival of Spring

We are holding a joint United Service
in Polbeth Church to celebrate the
arrival of Spring on Sunday 15th March
at 11:15am.

Join us for worship and enjoy the
fellowship with our friends from the West
Kirk of Calder.

ALL WELCOME



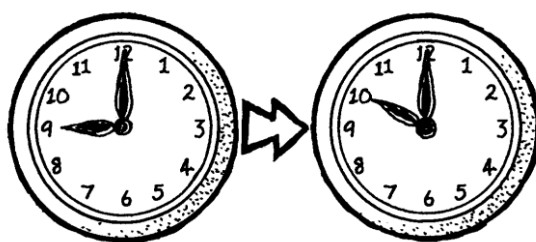


February 26

| | | | | |
|-----------|------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sunday | 1 st | Morning Worship Bible Class | West Calder Polbeth West Calder | 09.30 11.15 09.30 |
| Tuesday | 3 rd | Meet me @ The Manse | Manse | 14.00 – 15.00 |
| Sunday | 8 th | Morning Worship | West Calder Polbeth | 09.30 11.15 |
| Tuesday | 10 th | Meet me @ The Manse | Manse | 14.00 – 15.00 |
| Wednesday | 11 th | Wednesday Warblers | West Kirk hall | 11.30 |
| Thursday | 12 th | Beyond Kirk Walls services | Dickson Court Burngrange Home | 13.45 15.00 |
| Sunday | 15 th | Celebration of Love Service | West Calder Polbeth | 09.30 11.15 |
| Wednesday | 18 th | Quiet Service | Polbeth | 15.30 |
| Sunday | 22 nd | Morning Worship: Baptism | West Calder Polbeth | 09.30 11.15 |
| Tuesday | 24 th | Meet me @ The Manse | Manse | 14.00 – 15.00 |
| Friday | 27 th | Beetle Drive | Polbeth | 19.00 |

Special Note –

29th March: Palm Sunday





March 26

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|-----------|------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sunday | 1 st | Holy Communion Bible Class | West Calder Polbeth West Calder | 09.30 11.15 09.30 |
| Tuesday | 3 rd | Meet me @ The Manse | Manse | 14.00 – 15.00 |
| Friday | 6 th | World Day of Prayer Service Fun Quiz Night | Ratho Church West Calder | 14.00 19.00 |
| Sunday | 8 th | Café Church & Annual Meeting 25 Morning Worship | West Calder Polbeth | 09.30 11.15 |
| Wednesday | 11 th | Wednesday Warblers Session meeting | West Calder Polbeth | 11.30 19.15 |
| Thursday | 12 th | Beyond Kirk Walls services | Dickson Court Burngrange Home | 13.45 15.00 |
| Sunday | 15 th | United Arrival of Spring Service | Polbeth | 11.15 |
| Tuesday | 17 th | Meet me @ The Manse | Manse | 14.00 - 15.00 |
| Sunday | 22 nd | Morning Worship Café Church & Annual Meeting 25 | West Kirk Polbeth | 09.30 11.15 |
| Tuesday | 24 th | Meet me @ The Manse | Manse | 14.00 - 15.00 |
| Wednesday | 25 th | Quiet Service The Bridge | Polbeth Polbeth | 15.30 19.00 |
| Friday | 27 th | Youth Group | | 19.00 |
| Sunday | 29 th | United Palm Sunday service | Polbeth | 11.15 |

Parish Record

Deaths

Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life."

To all who have lost a loved one we extend our sincere sympathies and prayers.

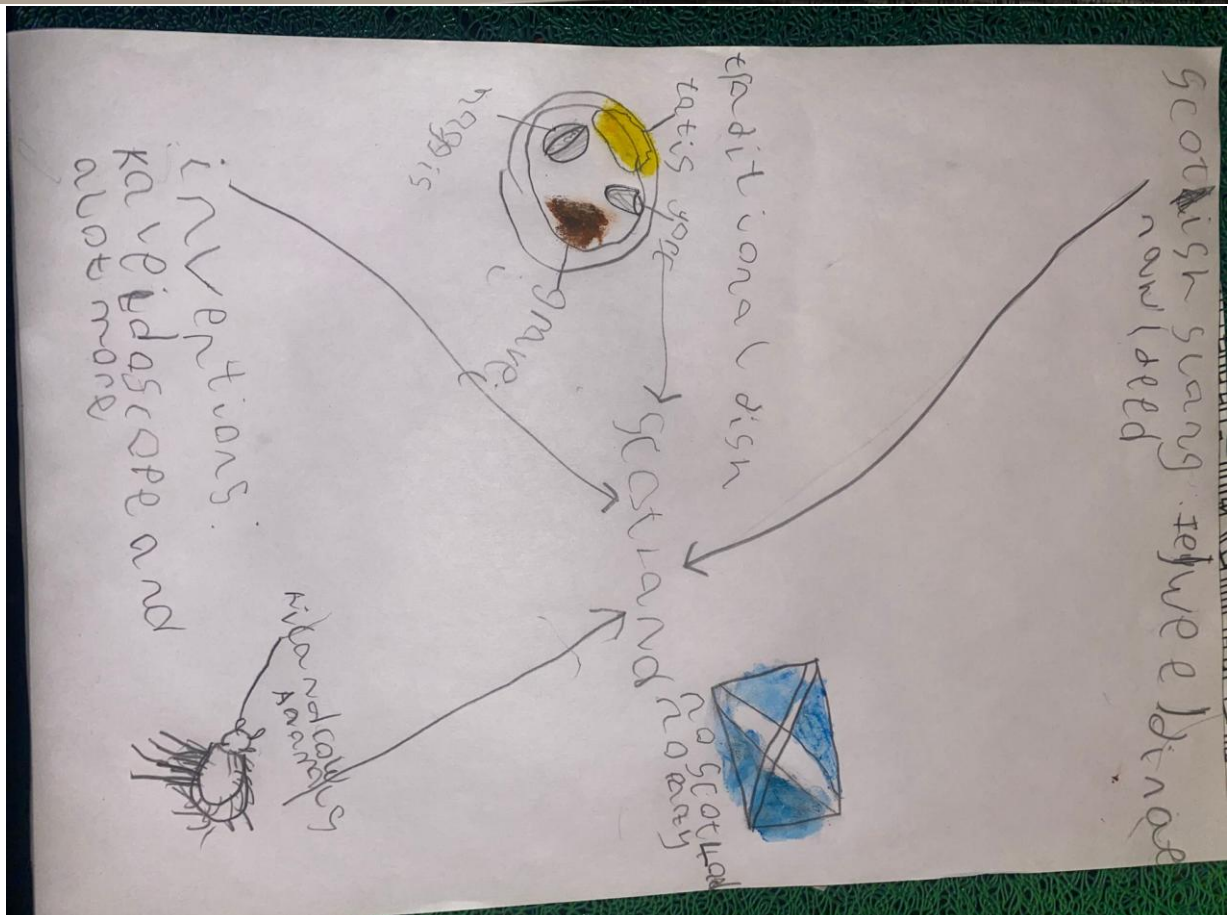
6th January – Peter Fleming, Rosehill Care Home, Eliburn, Livingston

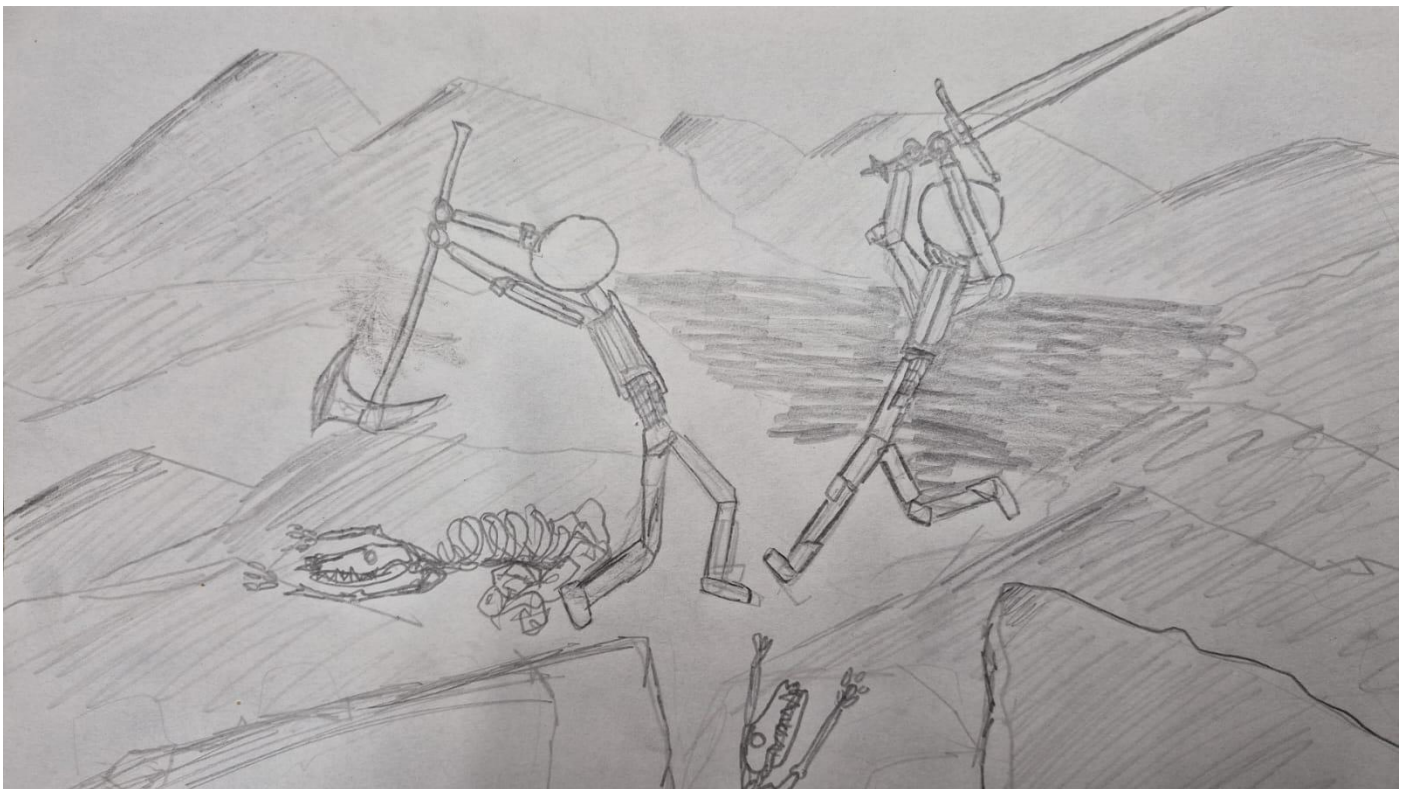
Loving God,
Remind us, in the storms of life,
when the clouds hang heavy
and the world seems dark,
that your light continues to shine
though all seems in turmoil.
Teach us, however distant you may seem,
still to trust you,
assured that your love will break through.
and its radiance enfold us once more.

Amen

Nick Fawcett

For our United Scottish Themed Service in January, we asked the children to draw pictures of things they think of when asked about Scotland. We hope you enjoy these!!





ISLA H



IONA



Why don't you colour your own Scottish Themed Picture?

