



## Service Times and Worship Patterns – A Consultation

### 1. Purpose of Paper

To consult with the Kirk Sessions of Kilmonivaig and Fort William Kilmallie, the Parish Minister and the Ministry/Worship Team (i.e. musicians, welcome teams, duty elders, etc.) on the approach we take to regular and festival worship. It should be noted at the outset that this is **not** about the future use, or otherwise, of any of the locations or buildings.

It is the responsibility of the respective Kirk Sessions to decide the times, location and frequency of worship services.

The consultation will run in August 2025 with a new approach and pattern to start from mid-September 2025.

### 2. Introduction

We have the opportunity to explore new ways of worshipping together.

We aim to '*celebrate our traditions*' while '*working together for our future*'.

The past month has shown the joy of sharing worship together. However, the past year has made it clear that we need to re-model and re-focus some aspects of our Sunday worship.

### 3. Purpose of this document

Our ambition is to enjoy a helpful and peaceful environment of worship which:

- is sympathetic to the needs of our congregations and communities and to established patterns,
- is respectful and realistic of the capacity and energy of our Parish Minister and the Ministry/Worship Team,
- meets the needs of regular worshippers, and
- is accessible to younger generations and those on the fringes of our faith communities.

The challenges are:

- The mix of worship times – 10:00 (Caol), 10:00 (Duncansburgh), 11:30 (Kilmallie) and 12:00 (Kilmonivaig).
- Service times clash and overlap.
- The time between some services may be tight and this means ministers don't have the opportunity to get to know communities after worship. After service moments are opportunities to encourage people, to find out about those in need, and to offer ad hoc pastoral care. Timetables and travel pressures mean this ministry can be sparse or hurried.
- Rev David is entitled to 7 Sundays a year away from the linked congregations plus an additional Sunday if attending the General Assembly as a Commissioner. Other members of the Ministry/Worship Team have the right to time off when they want to.
- Four worship services in four different locations every Sunday are not sustainable. It erodes continuity, fellowship, pastoral care and energy; they have a financial cost through lost attendance or in buying ministry from elsewhere; and they are demanding for local volunteers.



- For the foreseeable future, any proposal needs to be based on one full-time Minister of Sacrament & Word.
- These pressures are greater during festival times such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter or key days such as Remembrance Sunday.

What do we need?

We need a regular pattern of worship that is sustainable, simple and consistent.

We need a worship schedule which can be fulfilled by one person with support for periods of leave.

We need to work within the energy and availability of ministers and all the volunteers.

We want a pattern that allows for pastoral care and support, and that promotes greater fellowship while avoiding competitiveness between locations.

We want to encourage the uptake of Presbytery training in Worship Leadership.

We need to make sure Rev. David and the Ministry/Worship Team are not exhausted by the demands of festivals.

#### **4. Connecting with Newcomers**

Where possible our gatherings need to be accessible and enjoyable to newcomers, particularly the younger generations. However, a challenge for newcomers is that we usually worship in a very traditional way. This may seem odd for newcomers especially those who may not have a church background.

Put simply, what we do, when we do it and how we communicate are very important for attracting and keeping newcomers.

#### **5. Duncansburgh Church, Fort William**

With no desire to provoke competitive comparison, the Duncansburgh Church is significantly different from our other locations. It is much more of a civic church, it serves our largest population, it has a comparatively large number on the congregational roll, it can host high impact events and acts of worship, it has regular Messy Church and has a larger pool of volunteers.

The contrast with our other locations is significant and is seen numerically, financially and organisationally. Considering those differences, it has the most potential to be a fully inclusive family church.

We propose that Duncansburgh Church retains at least one act of worship three Sundays in the month and that it will be the main location on key festival days, allowing it to continue building as a full family church alongside its civic role.



## 6. The Fifth Sunday

Where there are five Sundays in the month, there will be one service of worship alternating between the two locations of Duncansburgh Church and Kilmonivaig Parish Church. This occurs in November 2025, March, May, and August 2026.

## 7. Proposals

- There will be two services on each Sunday.
- At the Duncansburgh Church, a service will be held each Sunday on weeks 1, 2 and 3.
- At Kilmonivaig Parish Church, a service will be held each Sunday on weeks 1-4.
- Services at Caol Community Centre will be withdrawn.
- At Kilmallie Church, there will be two services per month: on the second Sunday of the month, the service will be facilitated using a recording from the Duncansburgh service; on the fourth Sunday of the month, the service will be delivered in person by the Ministry Team.
- On the fifth Sunday of the month, there will be one service of worship alternating between the two locations of Duncansburgh Church and Kilmonivaig Parish Church.
- The time of the service at Duncansburgh Church will be 10:00am and at all other locations it will be 12noon. This may alternate on an annual basis.
- Arrangements for festivals and civic events will be agreed at the joint Kirk Session meeting for the following calendar year. It is predicted that the current number of events will be reduced.

		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
<b>Long Term Proposal to Kirk Sessions</b>	Caol CC				
	Duncansburgh	X	X	X	
	Kilmallie		X – use of recording		X
	Kilmonivaig	X	X	X	X
<p>Where there are 5 Sundays in the month, there will be one service of worship alternating between the two locations of Duncansburgh and Kilmonivaig.</p> <p>This occurs in November 2025, March, May and August 2026.</p>					

It is intended that the above proposals take place from Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> September for a minimum period of six months and/or until a second full-time appointment is made to the Ministry Team.

It is also proposed that the Steering Group continues its role of monitoring worship patterns.

## 8. Responses

The respective Kirk Sessions will decide the times, location and frequency of worship services. However, you have an opportunity to make relevant, constructive comments to the steering group who will in turn submit proposals to the two Kirk Sessions.

If you want your voice to be heard, please submit your comments in writing:



by email to [fortwilliamkilmalliecofs@gmail.com](mailto:fortwilliamkilmalliecofs@gmail.com)

or alternatively, pass to a member of the steering group **no later than 12 noon on Friday, 15th August.**

**Steering Group members:** Margaret Antonios, Phamie Burns, Ian Fleming, John Fotheringham, Sheana Fraser (Chairperson), Alister McDonald, Marion Malcolm, Gordon Smith

*On behalf of the Steering Group*

*1st August, 2025*