

Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



Letter from the Minister

Spring 2016



Dear Friends,

Ministers are always on the look out for another Church's magazine and if one becomes available, then taking it home to read. Recently I was in the Coffee Room of a congregation and there, on the well ordered book rail, was a copy of the Church magazine. Well produced, colourful and engagingly set out. It certainly would catch a passer-by's attention. Settling down over a coffee provided by the ladies of the congregation I read the *Letter from the Minister*.

From the very beginning of the letter it was written with the "I" perspective. As well as fourteen references to the first person singular, nearly half of the letter was given up to an impressive list of the Minister's achievements over many years of service. While there was reflection on the blessings received during that time, only once was the name of Christ mentioned and that in a reference to a visit where the Minister had met with "...brothers and sisters in Christ...". The Bible was never referred to.

It is good for the Minister—or whoever is writing a pastoral letter—to be personal. As well as creating an intimate tone to a letter, it also encourages the readers to note that he, like them, faces the same challenges in the life of faith. However, the One who calls us to go on the journey of Faith and sustains us through it all is **NOT** the Minister—however worthy he or she might be!

John the Baptist, as he heard about the beginning of Jesus' public ministry said this:

"Joy is mine, and is now complete. He must become greater, I must become less!" John 3:20

Peter, on his way to the temple to pray, met a lame beggar. Confronted with the tangible needs of that poor fellow, Peter said:

"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give to you. In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Acts 3:6

The disciple perhaps closest to Jesus could also write:

"...that which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim to you concerning the Word of Life...Jesus Christ the Righteous One." 1 John 1:1, 2:1

The Apostle Paul, having journeyed to Corinth as a minister of the gospel could write to the church that:

"I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified!" 1 Cor 2:2

Faced with house arrest and possible martyrdom, he could also write to the Philippians:

"...what does it matter. I eagerly hope and expect that in every way, whether by life or by death, Christ will be exalted in my body." Phil 1:18,20

Do we get the hint?! The task of any Minister, Pastor or indeed Christian is to:

“..let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matt 5:16

During Holy Week, we will be journeying around various fellowships within our community. This variety of locations will enable us to encounter the Easter story with different insights and expressions. Wherever we may be visiting, our prayer is that through it all, Jesus Christ may be proclaimed and made known, confident in the promise of Jesus when He said:

“I, when I am lifted up will draw all people to myself”. John 12:32

Over these next few weeks, let us take time to journey with Jesus through His word. Use the prayer guide of the United Free Church or some other Bible reading material, and allow the Spirit of God to reveal to you the things of God. We see Jesus facing the challenges of the road to Jerusalem, and in the Garden of Gethsemane pray:

Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me: yet not my will but yours be done.” And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. Luke 22:42,44



Confronted with such sacrificial love, a self-centred approach to the life of faith has no place. Rather, filled with the joy that John the Baptist knew, we can face our journey of faith with hope and confidence. As Paul tell us:

**“He who did not spare His own Son, but gave him up for us all—
how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things.” Romans 8:32**

With much love in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Wm B Russell

In the Garden of Gethsemane
**Before the dawn of Easter
There came Gethsemane...
Before the Resurrection
There were hours of agony...
For there can be no crown of stars
Without a cross to bear,
And there is no salvation
Without Faith and Love and Prayer,
And when we take our needs to God
Let us pray as did his Son
That dark night in Gethsemane—
“Thy will, not mine, be done.”**

Easter Poem by Helen Steiner Rice

Church Flowers

After two years of faithfully arranging the flowers for the Sunday service, Myra Lees decided to give up at the end of last year due to time commitments. We thank Myra for all her hard work providing beautiful arrangements every week and for being willing to succeed her illustrious predecessor, Liz Fraser.

A new team of volunteers has come together to continue this important ministry consisting of Colin McDowall, Janet Strawbridge, Carol Murray and Kath Burt. Each will take it in turn to buy and arrange the flowers each week for the sanctuary. Please pray for and support this group of self-confessed amateurs who have kindly agreed to step forward.

Those who support the flower ministry financially throughout the year should pass their donations to Colin before their due Sunday. For those on the calendar twice a year who want to pay one annual amount this is also possible!



Letter from America

Robert and Margaret Miller's grand-daughter recently got married in America and their daughter Susan sent this letter of thanks to the congregation.

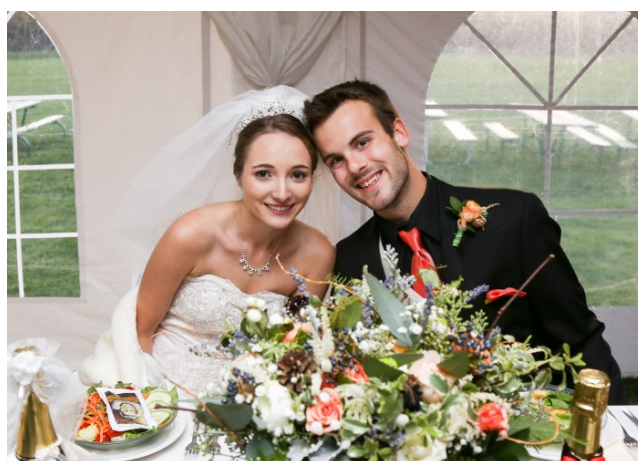
To Our Park Church Friends in Christ and Family

Susan and I wish to convey our heartfelt thanks toward all of you who chose to earnestly pray on our behalf regarding our daughter, Brianna, her recent wedding and her son Nathaniel. God answered our prayers! On October 17th 2015 Brianna and Jesse exchanged vows, sealed their relationship in God's name and stepped into blessing. The wedding was beautiful and truly a wonder, a display of what God can and will do for those who seek His will to be done.

We also want to especially thank those of you who also blessed the wedded couple with gifts and monies. When Robert and Margaret came bearing gifts from afar—literally—we and the kids were deeply touched and so amazed that even the kids had to say this was a God thing happening here. Truly, your expressions of love and generosity have moved our kids to realise that God is real, is lovingly observant and wants to have a role in their lives.

Thank you so very much! You are truly loved by us all here in rural Wisconsin, USA. God bless you all!

Allen and Susan Tete



Glasgow City Mission

Glasgow City Mission was set up in 1826 by a Glaswegian with a social and spiritual concern for his fellow citizens. David Nasmith had a vision for a pioneering method of Christian care where he would meet people's physical, emotional and spiritual needs. And that is what the mission continues to do today—it tackles poverty and homelessness by showing Christian care and in so doing transforms people's lives for today, tomorrow and eternity.



The Night Shelter

Some members of the congregation had the privilege of serving as volunteers at the Night Shelter during the month of January. This shelter provides basic emergency accommodation for the homeless so that they are not spending the nights huddled in doorways on Glasgow's cold streets. The doors are opened at 10pm and the queue is already winding down the street as the homeless, mostly men, rush to get a place for the night. The shelter can only take 40 people per night and is open this year from December through till the end of March. The men and women are vetted when they come in to make sure they are not carrying weapons or any illicit drugs and all their outdoor belongings are stored away in plastic bags in a locked room. They are shown to a bed—a sleeping bag on an air mattress—and given a clean towel. They are then offered tea and toast—this may be the first hot thing they have had all day and they are very appreciative of it. One night we had cheese to offer them and this was greeted with much enthusiasm - toasted cheese was clearly a favourite!

As well as offering basic food and shelter the trained staff at the Night Shelter also talk to the men to try and tackle the root cause of homelessness. Many of the men have complex needs including mental health problems, addictions etc and staff are able to point them in the direction of other agencies who will help them find suitable temporary accommodation, medical and legal help and even support them in finding employment. Some of the guys have been homeless for a long time and are regulars at the Shelter but for others it was their first time there due to specific circumstances—they had been evicted for not paying the rent, they had been thrown out by a girlfriend or wife or some other acute circumstance. Some of these people you would walk by in the street and would never believe they were homeless.

Sometimes too there is the opportunity to talk to these guys about God and our faith but mostly we are just able to show God's love to them through serving them in practical ways. Faith in action sometimes speaks louder than words and we thank God for the privilege of being able to show our compassion for the homeless and those stuck in poverty. Most of us came away from our one night there feeling humbled and shocked that such poverty and homelessness is so rife in 21st century Glasgow.

However, one member of our fellowship, **Mark Sharp**, is a regular volunteer at the main Mission and tells us here a little about how he got involved and what his volunteering work there entails.



Mark's Story

How did God bring you to volunteer at the Mission?

I was aware of the poverty, both socially and spiritually, that existed in Glasgow for many years. I had a deep concern for people's lives and knew from my own experience how God could take brokenness and turn it into something good. I realised that He could use ME to serve Him at the mission. As a child I had always wanted to serve in an organisation that would help others in the world. So even during my childhood God was preparing me to do this work in my adult life.



What sort of work do you do at the Mission?

I do all sorts of things to help out practically such as cleaning and replenishing cupboards. I am blessed to work with some great people as part of a small team and I thank God for them. I try to bring some stability and structure to the team. However, I see the most important part of my job as having a listening ear. I also serve the men and women during the night service which runs from 8.30-10.00pm. I see people being served "food for the stomach" but also more importantly food for the soul as they hear the Gospel being preached.

At the end of the week I am involved with getting together with people who are moving forward in their lives from many types of brokenness such as marriage break downs, unemployment, drug and drink addictions and mental health problems to name but a few. It is great to see these people being set free from their problems and being healed. They are able to spend time at the Mission using the computers, the gym, the music studio or playing games together. These people see something different at the Mission and they are sometimes moved to ask the question "Why?" They are maybe not used to being shown love, something that many people don't experience in a broken and fractured world. I have the privilege of sharing God's love with them, telling them how much God loves them and how He sent his only Son to die for them personally and how He wants them to spend eternity with Him. I sometimes also get the opportunity to pray with them if this is something they want.

How do you see God's hand at work in the Mission?

I see God helping the poor of the world right here in Glasgow. There are refugees from Africa, Syria, Sudan, Poland, Iraq, Russia as well as the local Glaswegians—the poor of the world but all needing God's love. I see Jesus meeting with these people and lives being transformed and people set free. I am thankful that, although only a small cog in a well oiled machine, God uses me in this place to do His work. And by doing this I myself am helped to grow in my own faith and to receive joyfully as I give.

How can we pray for the Mission?

Please pray for Glasgow City Mission as we see more and more people using the service. Pray for more people to come forward as volunteers to cope with the demand. Pray for wisdom and knowledge in how to look after the homeless and vulnerable members of our society and to tell them the Good News of Jesus. I thank God for all the people who work at the Mission, the staff and volunteers, for the people who pray and give donations to this valuable work. I would especially like to thank the congregation at Park for all the gifts at Harvest, Christmas and throughout the year through the Food Bin in the vestibule of the church. May God bless you all.

We thank Mark for all he does at the Mission both on a practical level and for helping share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all he meets there. If you would like to volunteer, fundraise or would just like to find out more about the work the Mission does you can go to their website at www.glasgowcitymission.com.

Fruitfulness on the Frontline

We all have a life on the frontline in the world that's significant to God. This series by Mark Greene enables us to see how God has been working in and through us and how we can make a difference wherever we are! Our Sunday evening sessions have been led most ably by Ian and Helen McQuarrie; Ian tells us a little about it below.



♪**Food, glorious food**♪ sang the cast of the musical Oliver. In the book **Fruitfulness on the Frontline** Mark Greene paraphrased those lyrics to “Fruit, glorious fruit” linking this with Jesus’ words in the Gospel of John:

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples (John15:8).

The implications of this verse are clear; by being fruitful we bring glory to God the Father and show ourselves to be disciples of Jesus. As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, part of His Body, hopefully that is something we want to do - to live fruitful lives. That is where **Fruitfulness on the Frontline** comes in. It is intended to help us see the possibilities on our frontline, how we can make a difference where we are, whether we be young people or retirees, parents or grandparents, in paid employment or otherwise. The DVD we watch and the discussion material we utilise help us to reflect on what God might have been doing already and to get us thinking about how we might be fruitful in future.

Basically we are working through a 6M framework for fruitfulness, asking, how we might:

- Model Godly Character
- Make Good Work
- Minister Grace and Love
- Mould Culture
- Be a Mouthpiece for Truth and Justice
- Be a Messenger of the Gospel

So if you want to give glory to God and show yourself to be a disciple of Jesus I would encourage you to come along!

The remaining meetings are:-

Sunday March 13th – Moulding Culture

Sunday April 17th.- Mouthpiece for Truth & Justice

Sunday May 15th – Messenger of the Gospel

Sunday June 12th June – The Journey On

“These 6Ms aren’t another set of holy “to do’s” to add to our already-too-long list of boxes to tick.

These are lenses to help us spot how God might already be working in us. And they are snapshots of what kingdom living might look like, snapshots to help us see what God might do in and through us.

They are there to spark our imagination and spur our prayers for ourselves and one another.” - Mark Greene

News from the Mission Field at Home and Abroad

An update from Allan Ooi working with Agapé in Birmingham

Agapé is a Christian charity dedicated to addressing the spiritual needs of the UK by helping people to see, hear, understand and be forever changed by the person and claims of Jesus Christ.



Student Life

Fireseeds is our annual conference in February where students from all over the UK come to learn and be challenged on how to reach their campus with the good news of the gospel. The weekend together comprises of practical teaching and training and an outreach event in the city, this year Birmingham. At this year's conference the theme was what it means for God to seek after us and how He seeks to engage the whole world with His love. We thank God for the impact it had on the students who attended and also pray for good follow-up for the students who heard the gospel during the afternoon of outreach.

Fireseeds was a great opportunity to meet people involved in other Student Life movements, spend time together and praise God. The weekend allowed us to see how God is working in so many different places and I'd definitely encourage anyone to go along. It's a fun filled weekend for everyone involved!

Emily, Student from Birmingham

Global Life

Praise God for 121 Farsi speakers who came to faith through Agapé's **First Acts** ministry last year. Pray for ongoing follow-up and wisdom in discipleship.

Family Life

Please pray for Family Life's **A Day Together** event in London on 19 March. Pray that couples would find it helpful in strengthening their marriages and that those who don't yet know Jesus would take steps towards him on that day.

Work Life

On 7 March, Agapé Work Life will host an event in London called **How de we share our stories?** Pray that many would attend and feel equipped and inspired to be able to share their testimony of God at work in their lives and with their colleagues.

Stand By Me—Update from Dembi Dollo

*Stand by Me is a Christian charity working in **Ethiopia** which is one of the poorest countries in the world. Last year a few of the young people from the UF Church went out to volunteer at the Abdi Academy in Dembi Dollo. We have recently received an update from the school.*

It has now been almost two years since we purchased the land and the school but it was only recently that the authorities granted us the title deeds and land rights. This means we can now build a fence around our 9 acres of land and improve the children's security. It also means that it will stop the goats and cows crossing the children's playing fields which spoils them and makes them unsafe.

Our wet/dry shelter, funded by the UF Church, is almost finished. It is a large structure that extends the length of the dining room and will accommodate 400 children with stone seating around the edges where the children can rest and relax.

Please visit our website at www.standby.me for more updates on what we are doing and some of the children's stories.



Ministry in Millerston

David and Jeanette Miller left our fellowship in January 2014 to follow God's call to go East—not to Japan this time, but to the north-east of Glasgow to the aptly named Millerston. Here we find out what has been happening in their lives over the last two years.



It is now two years since you left Park to go to Millerston UF Church—can you tell us what prompted that move?

It was one of those situations where human circumstances and God's action combine. For a couple of years before I began working at Millerston I had had a growing sense of God saying "Okay, David, you've spent a long time talking to others about mission, now it's time for you to go and do some yourself". So, when my job at ICC was made part-time in 2013 and then I was made redundant in 2014 as the college wound down towards closure, I did feel that God was very much in control of things – even if it did feel a bit like a baby bird being kicked out of its nest to force it to fly. And both Jeanette and I have really felt Millerston to be the right place for us. Indeed, you could say the church had my name on it.

Tell us a little bit about your new charge, your work there and within the denomination.

It's a small congregation of about 40 or so members with a few adherents. The church is situated just across from Hogganfield Loch, with three small-ish communities around it that we see as our "patch".

We're also trying to see ways in which we can engage with the folk who walk or run round the Loch. We're an older congregation, with no children coming regularly and very few younger folk (younger than us, I mean) so that concentrates the mind and our prayers. Our big challenge is trying to see how we can move from being a church which has an older feel to being one which has families and younger folk coming along as well – but the same could be said of many UF churches. And having said that, we don't want to play down the significance of older people. I'm always encouraged by the folk at the church as they share their stories of many years of knowing God, often through really hard experiences. And they have not only made Jeanette and me feel welcome, but they make welcome everybody who comes. That welcoming family feel is to my mind much more important than having a slick, professional style of service and lots of activities.

As well as my three days (-ish!) at Millerston, I also work a day with the denomination helping develop our "Reshaping for Mission" initiative, which I've written about in *Stedfast*, the UF magazine. This is an attempt across the denomination to try to encourage churches at whatever stage they feel they are at and however strong they think they are to take the challenge of mission seriously and see what opportunities for new life the Lord is giving them.

You previously worked as a vice principal at ICC in what was a very academic setting. What have been the challenges for you in taking on a more pastoral role?

Well, the congregation weren't very happy when I announced the exam at the end of my first sermon series. In all seriousness, I need to keep reminding myself that preaching a sermon is different to delivering a lecture – it has to be much more immediate and is about warming the heart as well as stretching the mind. At ICC there were a team of staff working together trying to encourage spiritual growth among the students, so I could focus on my specific area, which was mission. Here at the church there's much more of a sense of me having to be a jack-of-all-trades, in terms of having to handle Scripture, teach doctrine, encourage spiritual growth and prayer, lead worship, visit folk in hospital and ill at home, and more. But in that respect it feels like a much more rounded sort of ministry. And I'm still a beginner. I may have been in Christian ministry for over 30 years, but both the student work in Japan and the teaching at ICC were very different from what the church ministry here involves, so there's lots I still have to learn.

Your post at Millerston is part-time - for three days a week - so what other activities are you engaged in the rest of the week?

There's the Reshaping for Mission activity, which involves both writing material and helping to produce some resources for churches and also visiting some individual congregations to help them to begin thinking through how they might try to implement this in their own context.

Then on my other "day", I do a range of freelance teaching activities, all of which are broadly in the area of cross-cultural mission, which I enjoy as I still have a real interest in that. As I write this I'm in the midst of doing some teaching at Tilsley College in Motherwell, I'm doing some work with staff members of Friends International, and in the autumn I'll be teaching a course at HTC. And I and some of my former ICC colleagues are developing a sort of theological lay training network, which we hope will be launching very soon – you read it in **Park Pages** first, folks!

All our past activities and experiences, both good and bad, go to make up the rich tapestry of life that God is weaving for us. Looking back on your time with OMF in Japan and your time teaching at ICC can you see how God has been preparing you for your present ministry?

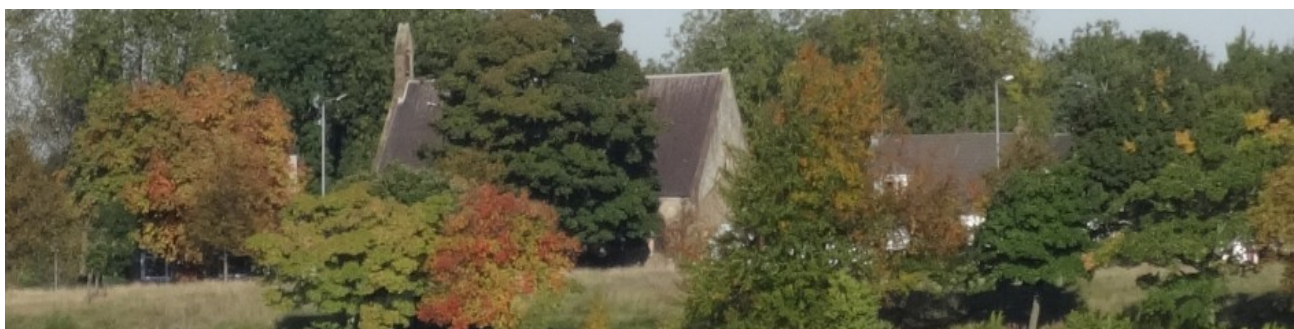
Good question, and I quite agree with the fact that God uses all that's gone before to shape us and fit us for what comes next. And there are probably lots of ways in which my experiences in Japan and in ICC have helped prepare me, and Jeanette, for our ministry in Millerston – and I do feel it's **our** ministry.

If I were to pick out some specific things, I think I'd say we saw in Japan, where most churches tend to be quite a bit smaller, ways in which a congregation can function well and engage in evangelism and outreach. Indeed, because of their small size many Japanese churches tend to make evangelism more of a priority. And a lot of my teaching at ICC looked at the challenges of communicating the Gospel across cultures, so as we face the challenge of sharing the Gospel in a particular part of post-Christian Scotland, where mission is pretty cross-cultural even if we're speaking the same language and have quite a bit in common, I suppose I feel a bit prepared for the challenges we face here. Not that that makes it easier here, nor am I claiming to be any sort of expert in how to do mission in Scotland. As I said, I'm still a beginner.

Where do you see God leading you over the next five years?

I hope nowhere. Jeanette and I feel really privileged to be at Millerston and to be part of God's work there, but we know that if we're going to see revitalisation there that's unlikely to happen quickly. We're all sowing seed in hard soil in Scotland at the moment. But we still have faith that new life will come, so our hope and prayer is that God will lead the church, including us, into growth. Please pray for us.

We continue to pray for David and Jeanette in their ministry at Millerston and further afield. We ask God's blessing on this little *Church on the Loch* and pray that many more will come to know Jesus through the faithful ministry here. To find out more about this fellowship go to [**www.millerstonchurch.org.uk**](http://www.millerstonchurch.org.uk).



Uddingston Pride Update

Crofthead Park

Things are really taking shape in the park despite the awful weather. Most of the equipment is on site and in place; the new fencing for the toddlers' play area and the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is looking particularly impressive. With just a little break in the weather the surfacing works can be completed and the park will be almost ready for use.

Those of you who have looked at the drawings, displayed in suitable locations around the village, will have noticed that in addition to the toddlers' area and the MUGA there are areas for older children and even an "outdoor gym" which will be suitable for all abilities and ages to take some gentle exercise in. The new Crofthead Park will be a park for **ALL** to use from the very young to the "not so young" - so no excuses, go along and make good use of your new park!

We are now planning an entrance feature and some form of opening ceremony. Watch out for details once everything is finalised. These are exciting times at the park and we can hardly wait to see it completed!

Beautiful Scotland 2016

We hope to have Uddingston looking at its very best this year so that we can impress the Beautiful Scotland judges when they come to the village in the summer. Plans are in progress to provide our streets with some colourful planting. All we need now is some decent weather!

Village Clean Up Events

Instead of a single main litter pick in late March we are planning to have a number of picks, hopefully at monthly intervals. The first of these is programmed for 3 March at 11am and we hope local people will support these. Further sessions will be advertised in shop windows around the village. We can't clean up the village by ourselves so we would appreciate the support of local residents so please come along and help!

Prayer Points

As Christians we are privileged to be able to pray to our Heavenly Father. As we look at the life of Jesus we see that he made prayer a top priority and often withdrew from the crowds to go to a quiet place where he could converse with his Father. If it was good enough for Jesus it should certainly be good enough for us and we should follow his example and be obedient to our Saviour's command to pray. So as we enter this Easter season let us make it a season of prayer, not just corporately but also in our private lives. We have much to pray for!



The Fair Trade Breakfast in Park Church 10th March at 10am.
(Sponsored by Scotmid)



Easter Code for Primary 7 Children
and **Easter Services** for S5 & 6 in Park
Pray that the children will respond to the Easter Story.



Holy Week Services
Pray for a sense of unity as we journey through Holy Week together
and an awakening of God's spirit within us.



The Bereaved and Sick
Please embrace those who are sick and hurting today and let
them feel the warmth of your love, Father.



Highland Theological College (HTC), Dingwall
Pray for the ongoing work of HTC as they train men and women
for Christian service, and for the new classrooms in Glasgow.



Dates for the Diary

Easter Services for Uddingston Churches Together

Palm Sunday	Old Parish Church of Scotland at 6.30pm
Wednesday 23rd March	St Andrews Episcopalian Church at 7.30pm
Thursday 24th March	Baptist Church at 7.30pm
Good Friday	Uddingston Park UF Church at 7.30pm
Easter Sunday Morning	Son Rise Easter Service at Clydeneuk at 7.30am
Easter Sunday Evening	Nazarene Church at 6.30pm



Come and join with us as we celebrate, wonder and worship at the events surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord!

The angel said, "I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said."

Offerings at all services will go towards Scripture Union Camp Sponsorship



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