# Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



# Spring 2019

# Letter from the Minister



Dear Friends.

I am writing this letter on the Monday morning after our Annual Business Meeting held on Sunday 24 February. Over the last few years, we have sought to integrate the *business* side of the church into our ongoing worship. Various formats have been tried and tested. However, I am sure I speak for all of us who were at church yesterday morning, in saying that the way our office bearers blended together the business of the meeting and our worship and thanksgiving to God, was excellent. Karen, Ian, Helen, Cameron and Graeme are all to be thanked for their hard work in leading the service. Janice Clark-Dick, our treasurer, is to be commended for her attentiveness to our ongoing financial management. All our office bearers commit themselves to managing our finances and property in a way which

is God-honouring and enhances the worship and witness of the congregation. And the generosity of you, as a congregation, in your offerings, has enabled us to pay our bills and make provision for the future. The whole gathering was done in a fitting and orderly way.

#### To God indeed be all the Glory!

When the apostle Paul wrote that in the conduct of worship

"Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." 1 Corinthians 14:40

he was writing in the context of the unusual, and at times chaotic, worshipping life of the church in Corinth. Whilst there was much claim about the Holy Spirit being at work in the church, Paul had to rebuke them for "...thinking like children..." 14:20 and to seriously aim "...to excel in those things that build up the church". 14:12. His desire for them, ".as in all the congregations of the Lord's people" 14:33, was that enquirers about the faith may, "...fall down and worship God, exclaiming, 'God is really among you!" 4:25 and that whatever is done, "everything must be done so that the church may be built up". 14:26.



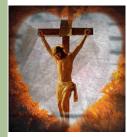
God's Word, with its prophetic edge and point, must be allowed to "...speak to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort". 14:3. Indeed, the apostle himself says that he "would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue". 14:19

While the particular setting of the church in Corinth may not be ours, the principles that Paul outlines are for **ALL** congregations of the Lord's people and for **ALL** times. It is these principles that have led to the following decision.

For 50 years, the majority of the protestant churches in Uddingston have united for worship over Holy Week. Indeed, it was one of my predecessors, the Rev John McNaughton, who pioneered these united Holy Week services. Times have moved on. The number of churches involved has reduced and the format has altered, but until last year, the same basic tradition had been followed. Even after we left the Church of Scotland in 2007, we continued to meet together at Easter, Christmas and occasionally also at other times. These united services have not always been well supported, and increasingly, not all of us were happy with all that took place at them. Two main issues have become noticeable.

Firstly, NOT all the ministers and leaders of the churches have a common understanding of **The Atonement.**; **that is, what God the Father was making possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.** As the hymn writer puts it,

Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place, condemned He stood, sealed my pardon with His blood, Hallelujah! what a Saviour!



I have known this for a long time but it became more apparent at last year's Maundy Thursday service when Ziggy, from **Jews for Jesus** shared with us the intimate connection between the Jewish Passover and the blood of the lamb, which saved the Jewish people from God's Angel of Death in the land of Egypt, and the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, which saves us, sinners, from the Judgement of God. These are basic truths and are at the heart of the gospel and bible teaching. Sadly, not all who share in these united services agree. These are not secondary issues to the faith but main, core values of Christianity. When other ministers preach that Judas Iscariot is in heaven, despite his betrayal of Jesus, and refusal to repent and put his faith in Him....well, perhaps you can see we have a problem.

Secondly, one of the congregations involved in our united services, does not share in the communion service of Maundy Thursday, opting to hold its own. It appears that they feel the other churches' conduct of Holy Communion is not "up to the mark" sacramentally! What does this say about One Church, One Lord, One Faith?!

All of this, and much, much more, has led our Kirk Session to withdraw from the united Holy Week services. This has not been an easy decision. I have sought to persevere with things far longer than many fellow ministers would have countenanced. In a community where the church still plays a role, it is good that people outside of the church can see Christians working together. However, such fundamental differences cannot be ignored. Other issues, such as our different practices concerning same-sex marriage, will also become obvious. It is not the intent of the Kirk Session to retreat into some sort of ecclesiastical ghetto. We will, at other times, continue to meet together. The Cinnamon Project involves other congregations. Be assured, I am in contact with colleagues to see what we can continue to do together. Whatever happens, please be assured that EASTER 2019 will still be marked at Park. Services on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day will continue to be celebrated.

#### Keep an eye on the weekly intimation leaflet for details!

On a more positive note, I have applied to the presbytery for Study Leave/Sabbatical from May-July 2019. Let me assure you, I will not be away for all of that time! I intend to visit a number of presbyterian congregations in Scotland and Northern Ireland that are "bucking the trend" of numerical decline. My hope is that, under God's leading, I might discern some insight and gather ideas that might be applicable to the life of the church in Park, but also in the wider United Free Church. Obviously this will involve me being away for a number of Sundays. However, I will ensure not to be away on a run of Sundays. I will also have visits and reading to do through the week, but again, this will not be a continuous block. In some ways it would be easier just to be 'off' for two months, but I would miss you all too much! I am thankful that Ian McQuarrrie and others have agreed to help out during this period. I also plan to visit Robert and Allan down south. Elizabeth and I will be attending the second



week of the Keswick Convention where Elizabeth will be manning the SU stall. We also plan to visit our missionary partners, Fabri and Elaine Toni, who are having a challenging time as church workers in Verona, Italy.



Please **PRAY** for me as I seek to organise all of this. While I would not want to make out that I am "run off my feet", I do find presbytery work, and looking after other congregations within the presbytery, very time - and perhaps even more noticeably - energy consuming. I need time to make the necessary arrangements for my study leave so that it will be a fruitful and worthwhile opportunity.

This has been a rather long letter. Hopefully, the information given has been helpful. However, I could not end a pastoral letter without expressing my own thanks, and the thanks of our family, to you, as a congregation, for your love and care over these last 20 years. Paul, in that same letter that I referred to previously, begins that section of his lengthy epistle, by exhorting the Corinthians to, "follow the way of love..." 14:1.

**WE** have experienced that, in so many ways, from you, our Church Family. As we mark this special year for us as a family, we rejoice that the Lord has placed us into a congregation like Park. Our prayer is that as we attend special events and celebrations, they will "edify the church.." 14:4 and bring glory to God!

with warm Christian greetings!

Un Bresull

### The Bible in 50 words

God made

Adam bit

Noah arked Abraham split Joseph ruled Jacob fooled

Bush talked
Moses balked
Pharaoh plagued
People walked
Sea divided

Tablets guided
Promise landed
Saul freaked
David peeked

Prophets warned Jesus born

God walked Love talked

Anger crucified Hope died

Love rose
Spirit flamed
Word spread
God remained

The Love of GOD!

Prayers go up, blessings come down.

(Courtesy of Bill Stirling, Revival FM)

For Families, see how many pictures you can match to the text!

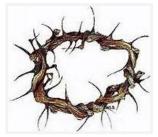














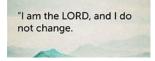














# Meet the Hutchens!

Douglas and Karen Hutchens are our newest members, joining our fellowship at the communion service in December 2018. They kindly agreed to be interviewed so that we can get to know them better, and have shared a little of their life story with us below.



#### How did you come to faith?

**Douglas:** Both Karen and I were brought up in the church and went to the Toddlers' Sunday School together from the age of three. After leaving Sunday School we both joined our youth fellowship and became Sunday School teachers for almost 30 years. We were at St Machan's Parish Church in Larkhall for about 49 years. I was an Elder at 27 and was the Deputy Session Clerk for a while. I also worked my way through the Boys' Brigade, from Shipmates to the Seniors.

One Sunday evening, when I was about 13 o4 14, there was a visiting group at Youth Fellowship and I gave my life to the Lord then.

I helped set up a range of prayer groups and also developed a mission, strategy and plan for the church.

**Karen:** I was a member of the Church Board for about seven years. I also committed myself to the Lord at a Youth Fellowship meeting when I was a teenager.

When we moved to our present home in Brocketsbrae, near Lesmahagow, we transferred to a new Free Church in Blackwood for a few years before joining Park.

#### Tell us a little bit about your backgrounds

**Douglas:** I was born in Lanark and brought up in Larkhall with my older brother, Robert, and my younger brother, Graham, in an area called Millheugh, which is a lovely remote area of the village on the banks of the River Avon. I went to a rural school and so was in a class of four for much of my early years.

When I was about seven, I was found to have Perthes disease which is a condition affecting blood supply to the hip joints. Unfortunately this was picked up too late for the standard treatment, therefore I had to spend much of my childhood in hospital and had experimental treatments and surgery. I frequently broke my callipers and wrecked my wheelchair through having a bit too much fun! Although I was limited in the sports I could play, I was a competitive swimmer and achieved various lifesaving awards.

I was a non-commissioned officer of the Royal Observer Corps from the age of 17 for about 15 years. This is a wing of the Royal Air Force, designed to monitor nuclear explosions and radiation fallout in the event of a nuclear war. It was one of the two times I had to sign the Official Secrets Act!

I previously had a career in management and service planning in the Scottish Health Service which entailed planning and developing new health services and hospitals. For better or worse, I have had some part in the current health services we have in Lanarkshire and for some aspects of the services across Scotland. One of my happiest roles was as hospital administrator at Bellshill Maternity Hospital, at the time our son Calum was born.

I had to retire on health grounds when I was 40. I now work, on a part-time basis, advising public sector organisations, charities and the Scottish Government, particularly on areas of health and care services. I serve on a number of organisations' boards and am also a member of the UK Tribunals. My work gives me a great perspective on peoples' lives and the difficulties and injustices people face in our society. There are such opportunities to share the Lord in our modern and troubled world.

**Karen:** I was born in Bellshill but brought up in Larkhall and was an only child. My dad was a carpenter and my mum a seamstress. When I was younger I was a highland dancer and won many medals, spending every weekend in competitions. I spent my Saturday evenings ice skating at the rink in Hamilton. I was also a Girl Guide which provided me with life skills which have never left me.

Douglas and I were married at St Machan's Parish Church on a snowy day on the 21 January 1984. I have never forgiven Douglas for missing out on a honeymoon due to the snow, as it stopped us leaving our home!

After leaving school I joined the Hamilton Advertiser where I worked for 12 years. I saw many changes in the newspaper industry during my time and was made redundant because of 'New Technology' at the same time as I became pregnant with our son Calum in 1992.

After Calum started school, I began working part-time as a medical secretary and then as a PA to a general manager in the Health Service. Now I try (unsuccessfully) to organise Douglas and help look after my mum, who is in the advanced stages of dementia.

#### What brought you to Park and made you decide on it as your spiritual home?

**Douglas & Karen:** We had been looking around for a church for a wee while and our friend, Brian, had given a talk about Chili Children, a Christian charity in Uganda, to the Ladies' Association at Park. He suggested we visit as people had been so welcoming and the Word was preached. We visited one Sunday before Christmas a year ago, and attended regularly from January 2018. Brian was right! Everyone has been so friendly and welcoming and Bruce has been so helpful and supportive. Most importantly, the Word is preached with real passion and worship is so uplifting, enhanced by wonderful singing. We now feel we are being fed spiritually in a loving fellowship – we really feel at home. It is well worth the 40 mile round trip to join in worship and fellowship at Park and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone.

#### Tell us a little about what you like to do in your spare time

**Douglas:** I have a great love of all things musical and enjoy unusual and interesting cars, but I do like cycling. As my ability to use two wheels has diminished, I have recently acquired a trike which has given me a new lease of life. It's great fun – and I don't fall off! We even have a doggy trailer for our dog, Jordi, who travels behind me, drawing some admiring and quizzical looks.

**Karen:** I have recently enrolled in Alliance Française where I enjoy developing my French linguistic skills, to help us appreciate our trips to France. I spend a lot of time with our wee, white Schnauzer dog, Jordi. I also enjoy cycling alongside Douglas.

We have one son, Calum, who is married to Rhona. They live in Inverness where Calum is training to be a rural GP and Rhona is an optometrist. Due to their work commitments and the distance, we don't see them as much as we would like.

#### Do you have a favourite verse of Scripture and why?

**Douglas and Karen:** It has to be 1 Corinthians v 13 for both of us. It is at the core of how we should lead our lives in Christ and when we got engaged we decided this would be the reading at our wedding. It lays out how we should conduct ourselves with others in such a clear way. The world could learn so much if it were to reflect on this verse of the Lord's word.

#### Favourite worship song/hymn and what it means to you.

**Douglas:** A dear, older friend in our first church, George, always became emotional whenever we sang *How Great Though Art* and recently, when singing it, the Lord's grace and salvation were acutely clear to me. I also have a great love for *Colours of Day*.

Karen: I have so many favourites, but if I had to choose one it'd be Shine, Jesus, Shine.

#### One for fun! If you could be any animal in the world, which one would it be?

Douglas: It would have to be our wee dog Jordi. Karen spends so much time with him that I am quite jealous!

**Karen:** I would be a swallow. They are so graceful and effortless and bring summer to the countryside where we now live, whilst reminding us of our great times in France, where they are so plentiful.

We extend a warm welcome to Douglas and Karen and hope they enjoy worshipping with us in Park for many years to come! We also welcome Douglas to the Board of Managers where his many skills and talents will be a great asset to our fellowship.

# Come let us sing for joy to the Lord!

As we continue our series we look at two hymns, one dating from the 6th century in poem form and one which was written in the 21st century. Certainly a wide time span but the central message remains the same; God is sovereign and we must put him first in our lives. Both songs conclude by looking towards heaven as our eternal home.



#### Be Thou My Vision

This is a hymn we are all familiar with and which many of us learned as children. It is thought that this traditional hymn from Ireland started its life as a poem written in Middle Irish back in the 6th century. The author was allegedly an Irish Christian poet by the name of Dallán Forgaill. The poem was translated into English in 1905 and then was put into verse form by Eleanor Hull in 1912.

The hymn is a reflection of Christian life in Ireland, in the years 400-800 AD, a country steeped in medieval Celtic Christianity. It is a prayer that Christ will be our vision. Verse 1 exhorts us to see the world through Christ's eyes, which will cause us to love as Christ loves, to focus more on giving than what we can get and cause us to care about the direction God wants our lives to take rather than worrying about other people's opinions. We should make it our prayer that Christ is "our vision, our best thought and our presence and light".

Be Thou my vision, oh Lord of my heart Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art Thou my best thought by day or by night Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light Be Thou my wisdom and Thou my true word, I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord, Thou my great Father, I Thy true son, Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one

Verse 3 is a prayer for protection. The symbolic use of the battle shield and sword are used to represent the power and protection of God and are drawn from Paul's letter to the Ephesians chapter 6, v 16-17. Military symbolism was common in early Irish poetry due to the clan warfare at the time and God was often seen as the "High King of Heaven" (v4). This heroic imagery traditionally represented God as the clan protector.



Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight, Be thou my dignity, thou my delight, Thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower, Raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power.

When the author penned the words of verse 4, he maybe had in mind the words of Luke 12 v 34, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". When we allow God to take first place in our lives, then He becomes our treasure. Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength". Our lives must reflect a single-hearted focus and devotion to Christ.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise. Thou mine inheritance, now and always, Thou and thou only, first in my heart, High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.

In the last verse the poet is looking forward to heaven and all the joy that will bring. Certainly an old hymn but one which still has relevance as we sing it today!

High King of Heaven, my victory won, May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun, Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, Still be my Vision, O ruler of all.



# To listen to the song click here

#### God the Uncreated One (King Forevermore)

This is a beautiful, modern hymn that speaks about our Creator, Almighty God, and takes us on a journey encompassing the nature of God, his word, his character, his designs, the power of the gospel and the ultimate kingship of Jesus. It spans the whole bible from Genesis to Revelation and is rich in both imagery and theological content.

This song was written in 2016 as a collaboration between Pete James and Araron Keyes but has become well known in church circles because it has been recorded by Getty Music. Pete James was in the middle of renovating his house, and during a break went to sit on the one chair he had in his living room. He was strumming at his guitar, quietly worshipping God. He wanted to write a song of response and, although the melody came easily, he asked Aaron Keyes to collaborate with him on the lyrics as he respected the latter's biblical knowledge.

Verse 1 presents us with a God who is majestic, the author of salvation but also reflects on the creation story from Genesis where we are told God created everything from the laws of space and time to the stars which he hung like chandeliers. What a beautiful image! This Creator is not distant from the world he has created but knows each one of us intimately and cares for us. Verse 2 moves from the abstract of creation to the day-to-day living we experience. God is our rock and our fortress and we can depend on Him, even in the midst of great storms and challenges in our lives. The idea of nations rising and falling is very topical for our age as we see great turmoil around us, both nationally and internationally. We should not be afraid, "He is faithful through it all". God does not change and is at work in our world.

- God the Uncreated one, the author of salvation 2. Who wrote the laws of space and time And fashioned worlds to his design The one whom angel hosts revere Hung the stars like chandeliers Numbered every grain of sand Knows the heart of every man He is King forever, He is King forever He is King forevermore
- 2. God our fortress and our strength
  The rock on which we can depend
  Matchless in his majesty
  His power and authority
  Unshaken by the schemes of man
  Never changing, Great I am
  Kingdoms rise and kingdoms fall
  He is faithful through it all
  Crown Him King forever, Crown Him King forever
  Crown Him King forevermore

Verse 3 takes us to the heart of the gospel — the incarnation, the crucifixion and ultimately Christ's resurrection. The uncreated one, the author of salvation, becomes formed and vulnerable as he comes to earth as a little baby. He is our "mighty God in mortal flesh" who came to save his people from their sins. Yet it is these very people that betray him and "the sinless man" is put to death on a cross. It is our sins that ultimately pierce him. Luckily for us this is not the end of the story as he is "rescued by the Father's hand" as God raises Jesus from the dead.

Verse 4 reveals the triumphant end of the gospel story with Jesus taking his rightful place in heaven where he is crowned, exalted and rightly receives the eternal honour due. This eternal King is a God of love who wants to lead his people to eternal life and a relationship with Him.

- 3. Mighty God in mortal flesh
  Forsaken by a traitor's kiss
  The curse of sin and centuries
  Did pierce the lowly Prince of Peace
  Lifted high, the sinless man
  Crucified, the spotless lamb
  Buried by the sons of man
  Rescued by the Father's hand
  To reign as King forever
  Reign as King forever
  Reign as King forever
- 4. King eternal, God of Grace
  We crown you with the highest praise
  Heaven shouts and saints adore
  You're Holy, Holy, Holy Lord!
  What joy in everlasting life
  All is love and faith is sight
  Justice rolls and praises rise
  At the name of Jesus Christ
  King of Kings forever
  King of Kings forever

This is a song with powerful lyrics, and a very singable melody, that is honouring to God. As the saints cry "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord", may that also be the praise that is on our lips as we worship our Sovereign God.

# To listen to the song <u>click here</u>



### **Three Good Men**

Our Kirk Session had decreased in number over the years for various reasons so in December, after a period of nominations, three new elders were admitted. Here Cameron, Ian and Graeme share with us how they came to faith and what it means to them to be part of the church leadership.



# Briefly share with us your spiritual journey so far and tell us how you came to a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Cameron: This takes me back to the early 70s. Despite being very "church minded" and involved in youth organisations, around my mid to late teens my interest in "religion" had waned and my attendance was falling off. It was all rather dry and boring, more like a morality tale. A new minister arrived and there was something very different about him. He spoke about Jesus in a way I hadn't heard before and started a youth fellowship. He invited a number of folk to come and speak. These folk were often not much older than me but also spoke of Jesus as someone they knew. I couldn't tell you the exact date I became a Christian, as it was a process over time as God spoke of His love and sacrifice for me. I found myself not simply wanting but needing a relationship with Jesus. I wanted to spend more time hearing about Him and being in the company of others who loved Him. It has not always been plain sailing; there have been very difficult and challenging times but God has always been faithful to me. He never promised me an easy life but He did promise to be with me through everything and that has been the case even when I thought He wasn't there.

**lan:** I came to faith in Christ in the autumn of 1969. A year or so earlier I had started going along to the local Church of Scotland Youth Fellowship in Cranhill. My intent was to play football; God's intent was to open my heart to the truth of the Gospel, through the witness of friends, including Helen.

After marrying in June 1972, Helen and I started worshipping at St Margaret's Church of Scotland, Tolcross. The minister had been praying for two Christian couples to come. We and another couple arrived within a few weeks of each other! Over the next 21 years, with our sons, Andrew, Scott and Ross, we began to learn what it was to be the church amidst the joys and sorrows of life, mutually sustaining each other through love and prayer. We look back on those years with great fondness and thankfulness to God, as a time of great blessing when lifelong Christian friendships were established.

From the mid 80s, we sensed God was calling us to something new. I had an interview with Tearfund but was unsuccessful. At the licensing service of a friend in Glasgow Cathedral, Helen had a strong sense of my standing where our friend stood. This started a process which culminated in a call to ministry being sustained; I gave up work and studied at Glasgow University for a BD. I did a probationary year at Sandyhills Church of Scotland before being called to Colinton Mains in Edinburgh.

I think it is fair to say that Colinton Mains really didn't know what they were getting! Some found it peculiar that I preached from the Old Testament. They differentiated between the angry God of the Old and the loving God of the New! Over the next 18.5 years God was good, things changed and by the time we left, the Kirk Session was solidly Christian and there was an increasing desire among many for the things of God.

With retirement came the sense of bereavement at no longer being part of a church family, but then the joy of finding a home at Park through Anne and Gerry Robb. I am now involved in preaching, youth activities and the wider work of the United Free Church of Scotland. I am also involved in the Missions Committee of Scripture Union and in visiting Christian Rehab Centres and churches in Russia. The former I have found energizing, the latter challenging in the way that it has caused me to reflect on Christian discipleship.

**Graeme:** I was brought up in a Christian family, so grew up going to church, Sunday School and various youth groups and camps. When I was 7, I made a commitment to become a follower of Jesus. However, I was probably about 16 when I began a more adult, focussed walk with Him. It was at this time that I began to understand more fully what being a follower actually meant; growing in my relationship with God, serving Him and living my life in a way that is honouring to Him.

#### Describe what being an elder of the church means to you.

Cameron: I remember as a child being rather frightened of elders. They always seemed to wear black suits and, with the exception of one or two, had a demeanour to match the suits. I am pleased to say these days are no more. I see my role as providing leadership to the church. Leadership can be seen as serving God. Both Timothy and Titus state the qualifications to be an elder. Before I can hope to provide leadership, I must be in a right relationship with God by spending time with Him. Only if I do this can I then serve the congregation. I would hope this would manifest itself in standing firm for the Gospel, proclaiming and living out its message, in providing wise God-given counsel individually and corporately, in dealing with people sensitively and compassionately, in meeting together in fellowship, bible study and prayer, being approachable, gracious, humble and understanding, but also where there is conflict with scripture, to correct this. I could not hope to do this in my own strength; I must rely completely on God for this.

An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1 6-9

**lan:** For me, being an elder means being part of a group tasked with the spiritual oversight of the congregation at Park. It is a position I feel of real privilege and great responsibility. It is imperative that I look to God for help and have a willingness to work corporately for the up building of God's people.

**Graeme:** I was touched to have been nominated to become an elder and it wasn't a decision I took lightly. I first felt I needed to process the role of an elder, and prayerfully consider if I was suited to it. I believe an elder's role is to support the ministry of the church, and work as part of a group to oversee the spiritual life of the church.

#### What spiritual gifts do you think you bring to the role?

Cameron: I find it difficult to answer this question. There are passages in Romans, 1 Corinthians and Ephesians that speak of spiritual gifts. Someone has worked out that there are at least 22 spiritual gifts. A spiritual gift is the God-given ability, received by individuals, to help the church carry out its mission. This gift may be a natural talent, for instance, a good singer may use his talent to encourage others in their walk with God. It is often others who see and appreciate our spiritual gifts. I would want to provide encouragement to others. I tend to be quite organised and would hope this can be used in the leadership and administration of the affairs of the church. With reliance on God, I hope to be able to provide knowledge and wisdom. Through the years various things have happened which have tested my faith, but by God bringing me through those situations, my faith has been strengthened and this is something that might be used.



**lan:** This is the type of question I hated being asked at interview! I genuinely find it difficult to be analytical in this regard. If pushed I would say I have the ability to *keep on keeping on* in the knowledge of God's love for me

**Graeme:** Being Scottish, this can feel like an uncomfortable question to answer, and yet the Bible tells us that God gives spiritual gifts to each of us so that we can serve Him and the church. I'm a very practical and organised person. I like to look for a solution in any given situation. This suggests my spiritual gift is one of service and administration.



# Looking ahead to the next five years, what do you see as the priorities for Park in its work of making Christ known?



Cameron: Since Park Church was built in 1863, its priority has remained the same; to proclaim the message of God's salvation. However, we now live in a culture where the "church" is no longer relevant. It is unlikely that people will come to us. If we look back at the early church it was outward looking and we must be the same. Initiatives like the Cinnamon Trust, the film afternoon, our links with the community though Park Kids, schools, mothers and toddlers, coffee service, to name but a few, need to be used to find a way in which we can be a blessing in our community. Hudson Taylor, founder of China Inland Mission, said, "we must become as Chinese as we can without becoming unchristian". To bless the community

we must be in it, be identified but not compromise our Christian life and witness. This is a challenging task. God has remained faithful to us over the past 155 years and He will be faithful over the next five years.

**lan:** At present, under a faithful Biblical ministry, Park is holding its own and has established good contacts with certain parts of the community. These have to be built on. We have to seek ways of reaching out that give tangible expression to the love of God and enable genuine relationships to be established. We need to create an environment where we can naturally speak of Jesus. For this to be done effectively, there has to be an awareness of how our culture has dramatically changed, the necessity of being equipped to engage with it and the crucial imperative of all being undergirded by prayer.

**Graeme:** There are two things that jump to my mind when asked this question. Firstly, we need to hold strong to the truth of the Bible. We are in a climate where **truth** is what an individual wants it to be. The Bible needs to continue to be the authority we hold to, and when that clashes with popular beliefs, we need to stand firm in the face of opposition. Secondly, we need to continue to be a blessing to our community. As a church, we are great at hosting events, and taking a role in community based initiatives, without simply trying to "fill seats on a Sunday". We need to continue the great work we are doing in this area, and look to develop it so that we can meet people where they are, instead of hoping that they come to us.

#### What is your favourite verse of Scripture and what does it mean to you?

Cameron: Another difficult question. However, Ephesians 2: 8-9 is a favourite.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works so that no one can boast."

This is a clear and ever present reminder that my salvation had nothing to do with me. My salvation was God's gift to me, Great Riches At Christ's Expense. I can boast of nothing but simply thank God for His gift to me.

lan: My favourite Bible verses are Habakkuk 3:17-18

"Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Saviour."

This was one of the first verses I read after coming to faith in Jesus. It was part of a daily reading in *Daily Light on the Daily Path*, a devotional book given to me by three girls in the Youth Fellowship who at the time couldn't quite believe I had come to faith but shared my joy that I had! Ever since then, these words have been precious to me, but also challenging, pushing me to ask the question: In such dire circumstances, all having been lost, would I rejoice in the LORD? Would I be joyful in God, my Saviour?

**Graeme:** "What is your favourite..." is the kind of question I always struggle to answer. I detend not to have a favourite anything, generally being quite easy going. However, one of the passages that is important to me is Matthew 5: 25-34. This passage talks about seeking God above all else, and trusting in His provision. Over the years, Karen and I have seen God's practical provision many times in our marriage and it is one of the reasons that *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* is one of my favourite hymns which we sang at our wedding and the dedication services of Emily and Lewis.

# Tales of Encouragement

Sometimes we can become discouraged when we don't see much fruit in our Christian lives. People we have shared the gospel with don't respond or are antagonistic and we think, "what's the point"? Well, the point is this, seeds we have sown years earlier can come to fruition years later by the grace and mercy of God.



Karen Hall recently told us such a story at the Wednesday evening Refresh meeting and has kindly agreed for me to retell it here.

When Karen was in her late 20s, she and some other friends were in Glasgow doing some witnessing and handing out tracts. They were in Cathedral Street, in the vicinity of The University of Strathclyde, when they met two overseas students. They struck up a conversation with them and told them about Jesus and the power of his saving grace. Karen had recently been given a new bible which she was very proud of. However, as she was talking to this student from Nigeria, she felt the Holy Spirit prompting her to give him her brand new bible. She wasn't very keen at first, after all the bible was brand new, but she obeyed and told the student she'd like him to have her bible. Her name and address were written in the front cover—she did this with all her bibles in case she left them behind somewhere!

Karen and her friends continued handing out tracts that evening and the two students went on their way. Karen prayed for the guy over the next few days but it wasn't until over **five** years later that she received a letter with a Nigerian postmark. It was from the student she had given her bible to. He wanted to thank Karen for giving him her bible! He had started to read it, and through reading and coming to an understanding of what it meant, had given his life to the Lord.

So from Karen's simple act of talking to a stranger, and sharing the gospel with him, this student who was far from home, heard the good news of Jesus and years later made a commitment to follow Him. We are not asked to convert people, only the Holy Spirit can do that, we are simply asked to share the good news of Jesus with all we meet. God does the rest!

Throughout Jesus' ministry on earth he performed many miraculous healings e.g. in Matthew 14 v 14 when the multitudes were following him, we read, "...He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick". But does he still heal today? Mags Kokes tells her story below.



Several weeks before Christmas 2018, I was suffering from severe breathing difficulties that were hindering my ability to even walk without causing me distress.

I was sent to Hairmyres Hospital in East Kilbride for a heart scan. A few weeks later I got the results from my own doctor who informed me my heart was enlarged. This caused me great concern as I am due to have corrective surgery that will enable me to digest solid foods.

At the beginning of January I shared my concerns with some of my fellow Christians at Park Church and also the Church of the Nazarene. I know these people to be real prayer warriors and was confident they would come before God's Mercy Seat with one mind and one spirit. They joined as one people in Jesus Christ to plead my cause.

A few weeks later, after another scan, I heard the nurse say, "I can't find the enlargement of your heart any more, it's not there, it's gone"!

I left the hospital that day in total awe of God's faithfulness in answering his people's prayers. I just couldn't wait to share my good news with the obedient people of God who had prayed for me.

Praise God!

# **Uddingston Pride Update**

#### **BEM for Liz Wilson**

2019 got off to a really exciting start with the news that our Chair, Liz Wilson, had been awarded a British Empire Medal for services to the Community of Uddingston. It's really pleasing to see national recognition for someone who is so deserving of such an accolade. She will be presented with her medal in the spring and she has been invited to attend the Royal Garden Party in the summer. The whole group is so delighted for her, and we hope she will continue to lead us for many years to come.

We had a most successful Christmas Village Open Day, and our thanks go to all the performers who came along and entertained us so well. Special thanks to the school choirs, the pipe band, the Salvation Army Band, and the young dancers who braved a fairly chilly day to bring us all a little Christmas cheer. Thanks too to all the shops who opened their doors specially for us; we hope they enjoyed the day as well.

It was great to have Santa with us again, and his elf, to chat to all the children.

Our sales table at the Cross, the raffle and the tombola were all very well supported, and the mulled wine and Christmas pies seemed to be particularly popular.





In January, we held a Big Band Concert in Park Church which was a huge success. The Michael Brawley Big Band are a talented group of musicians who play purely for charity. They entertained us with big band sounds, old and new; we especially enjoyed some of the old favourites from years gone by. We are most grateful to all those who so generously donated to our collection buckets at the door. We were pleased that our costs were well covered, enabling us to add to our funds for this year's displays around the village.



Our tree team have planted 120 native species trees beside the new drainage pond at Blantyre Farm Road. They were assisted by the Council's Community Payback Team. In time, these trees will hopefully become an attractive feature and a home for birds and other wildlife.

We were pleased to be able to donate bird boxes to the Boys' Brigade Junior Section, the Girls' Brigade, and Tannochside Primary School. We hope these boxes will provide safe homes to our feathered friends.

The railway station received an award through the National Rail Awards Scheme, as a well-deserved recognition of the efforts of our dedicated Station Team. Congratulations to them.





In collaboration with our friends from Scotmid, we are holding a Fairtrade Breakfast in the Old Parish Church Hall on Friday 15 March from 9.30am till 12 noon. Please come and join us at this event!



# **Dates for the Diary**

3 March Communion Sunday	10.30am Guest Speaker Christians Against Poverty 6.30pm Bield Housing Service	christians against poverty
Sunday 17 March	10.30am Visit of the Moderator of the General Assembly of UF Church	
Saturday 23 March	Daffodil Tea 2.30-4.30pm to celebrate minister's 20th anniversary at Park	
Sunday 24 March	10.30am 20th Anniversary Service to mark minister's induction to Park	20 <sup>th</sup>
Thursday 28 March	Visit of S5 and S6 Uddingston Grammar	
Sunday 30 March	10.30am Morning Service 6.30pm Service of Prayer and Praise for our Nation, Community and Church	
Sunday 14 April	10.30am Palm Sunday Encountering the King! 4.30pm All-age Church Family Film Followed by Fish and Chip Supper	Palm Sundar
Monday 15 April	Easter Code for P7 Muiredge	Easter Code
Wednesday 17— Sunday 21 April	Easter at Park Details will follow	EASTER CHANGES EVERYTHING 1. COMMITTABLE OF THE PROPERTY OF
Sunday 19 May	7pm Presbytery Rally at Kilmaurs UF Church	+



We also hope to have a coffee morning in May to support the UF Church Easter Appeal for the work of Dembi Dollo in Ethiopia. Alison Murray and Alison Urquhart previously visited this project with a UF team. The Youth Committee has decided to financially support this project this year.



**Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland** 

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This magazine is also available on the church website