

# Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



## Letter from the Minister

Spring 2024



Dear Friends,

I want to begin my letter by expressing a deep word of **THANKS** on behalf of Elizabeth and myself for the many cards and tokens of care and love that we have received over these past weeks. Above all, it is your prayers that in the goodness of God that have supported and sustained us.

Whilst the purpose of the surgery was successful, unfortunate complications from the rearranging of things internally have meant that recovery has not been as quick as I originally thought. However, I am getting there and will increasingly be back *on duty* within the Church as we journey towards Easter.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Cassie and the girls in the passing of Ken. Elsewhere in the magazine, a tribute to Ken is given. For me, he was a true brother in Christ and his warm nature and love for the Lord will remain a lasting memory. His sudden death is a reminder to all of us of the truth that none of us know the day or the hour of our own departure from this earthly pilgrimage.

While clinicians may be able to give some idea of time in the case of a terminal illness, even they will be hesitant to put times and dates in the calendar. As believers, we would affirm that the only thing that is certain is that we are like:

***the grass which withers and the flowers which fall, but the word of our God endures forever.***

***Isaiah 40 v 8***



Jesus Christ knew His destiny as he journeyed towards Jerusalem. Three times He quite explicitly told his disciples:

***The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.***

***Luke 9 v 21***

We are told that Jesus clearly understood when the time came for the fulfilment of those statements to take place. As He came to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, he would say to those seeking to speak to him that:

***The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.***

***John 12 v 23-24***

The Apostle John could reflect on what this meant when he writes that:

***Jesus knew that the hour had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.***

***John 13 v 1.***



Of course, for the disciples, much of this remained a mystery at the time. It became clearer only after the resurrection when Jesus told them:

***"This is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then He opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures ... Luke 24 v 44 ff.***

That is comforting for us for it reminds us that there are many mysteries in the life of faith which may well remain cloaked from us until we meet Jesus face to face on Resurrection Day. On that Day, as the Apostle Paul tells us:

***....then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully even as I am fully known.***

***1 Corinthians 13 v 12.***

The story of Easter has, of course, deep theological significance. But dear friends, it also has pastoral power. As we all face the uncertainties of life, we need to put our times into the nail-pierced hands of the One who was **Crucified** and **Risen**. May I testify to this in my own experience.

As I was wheeled into the operating theatre, and the anaesthetic was given to put me to sleep, I was very much at peace. I was conscious that the Physician of my Soul was with me. I closed my eyes and seemingly in an instant I opened them again only to find that four hours had passed and the surgery was over. The nurse was standing over me to minister to my needs in the recovery ward.



For me that is a small pointer and indicator to that day when I, and all of us, will close our eyes in death only to open them again in the timeless passing of eternity. Then:

***...we shall see Christ as He is and we shall be like Him. 1 John 3 v 2***

All our questions and wonderings will find their answer and rest in Him who knowingly journeyed through all of that first Easter for us and all His people.

As we approach Easter once again, may that pastoral relevance minister to all of us so that in turn we may be able to testify to others of **this hope in Him** that we have received.

Jesus knew what He was about 2000 years ago. What took place wasn't an accident of history or another victory of evil over good. Jesus Christ set his face to Jerusalem to fulfil the purposes of His Father. He could pray:

***Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you... I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. John 17 v 1 & 4.***

Knowing this means that we can affirm the truth and reality of that in the words of the old hymn:

Wherever He may guide me,  
No want shall turn me back;  
My shepherd is beside me,  
And nothing can I lack.  
His wisdom ever waketh,  
His sight is never dim,  
He knows the way he taketh,  
And I will walk with Him.

Green pastures are before me,  
Which yet I have not seen;  
Bright skies will soon be o'er me  
Where the dark clouds have been.  
My hope I cannot measure,  
My path to life is free,  
My Saviour has my treasure,  
And He will walk with me.

**With much love in the Lord Jesus**



# Church News

## Christmas Hampers

We took part in the Viewcare Project's **Christmas Hampers** appeal in December. As a congregation we raised £1500 along with all the bags of food you see in the photograph (right). Many local churches and businesses in the community also took part. Viewpark Church wish to extend their thanks for our wonderful support.



The need in our community has increased dramatically over the past year, but this need was more than matched by the generosity of local people and as a result 442 adults, 467 children and 17 pets were able to enjoy a Christmas dinner and presents on Christmas Day. Many thanks to all who so generously donated their gifts and time; a special thanks to Robert and Margaret Miller for coordinating our contribution to this worthwhile cause.

**The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor. Proverbs 22 v9**

## 25th Anniversary of Bruce's Ministry at Park

Park Church will celebrate 25 years of Bruce's ministry with a special service on Sunday **3 March 2024**. The Rev John Fairful will be our guest preacher that day. We give thanks to God for Bruce's faithful ministry over the years. We have experienced God's love and teaching through this ministry and have witnessed Bruce's example of trusting God, no matter what the circumstances. Tea and cake will be served in the hall after the service.



## Easter at Park

We will celebrate Easter at the following services this year.

**24  
March**

**Palm Sunday**  
Welcome the King  
10.30am

**28  
March**

**Maundy Thursday**  
Share in the Meal  
7.30pm

**29  
March**

**Good Friday**  
Church will be open from 12-3pm with short devotional at 2.30pm

**Good Friday Service in Park**  
Guest Preacher Richard Gamble  
7.30pm



**31  
March**

**Easter Sunday**  
He is Risen!  
10.30am

*Easter  
Sunday*

# Building on a Firm Foundation

**Jessica Beecroft became our Children and Families' Worker in August 2023. Jessica has been part of our fellowship for many years but she felt God calling her into this important role of teaching the next generation about God's word and promises to them. With three boys of her own, she has proved herself to be a natural with the children.**



## Tell us a little about your childhood and education

I grew up in the Kylepark area of Uddingston. Being a local girl, I went to Muiredge Primary School and then Uddingston Grammar like many of the children in our congregation. It's quite funny when I visit the schools as some of the teachers that I had are still there. They don't always like being reminded that one of their former pupils is now 32 with a family of her own.

After high school I went to the University of Glasgow to study History and Philosophy. During my time there I also had the opportunity to study Classics and Theology. My studies were put on hold in my final year while I was pregnant with Joshua. It was only in March 2023 that I **FINALLY** completed my BA History (Hons) via the Open University, as it allowed me to study part-time while caring for the boys.

## When did you come to a living faith in Jesus and what brought you to Park?

I can't remember a time when I didn't know Jesus. Of course, there have been times in my life when I haven't been as close to Him as I should. I am so fortunate to have been brought up in a Christian home with parents who didn't just go to church on a Sunday, but really lived out their faith. It's hard not to believe when you witness faith like that in other people. As I got older I no longer wanted to be in the same church as my parents. I wanted to live out my faith for myself and not be a second-hand Christian. I went to a modern church with amazing worship and lots of people around my age which was great.

However, during that period I didn't really grow in my faith. It made me realise that something was missing, and that I needed to be in a church with solid biblical teaching to continue building on the strong foundation I had from the church I grew up in. During that time I visited a number of churches. When we first came to Park I honestly just expected to be passing through, as I think I had a different idea of church in my head. However, God made it clear that Park had what I needed from church. I am so glad I listened as since being here God has taught me so much. He has brought people alongside me who have supported me during the hard times and who I have been able to learn so much from.



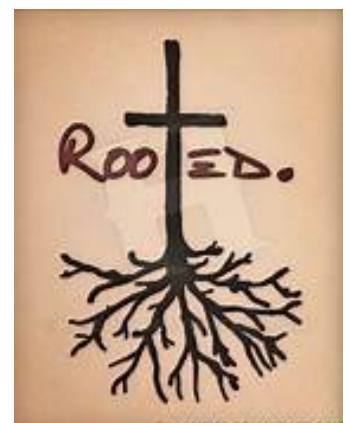
## You have three boys of your own so plenty experience looking after kids, but what is it that inspires you to work with children?

I just find children an absolute joy to be around. They are hilarious and unapologetically themselves. They are still learning and becoming who they will be and it's a privilege to get to be a small part of that journey. **Proverbs 22 v 6** tells us to:

**Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**



**That is my prayer for the children at Park; that they will be so rooted and grounded in God's word that they will walk with Him for their whole lives.**



## How are you settling into the job and what do you see as the priorities for the coming year?

So far I have really enjoyed it! My first priority, as mentioned on the previous page, is to encourage the children in our congregation to grow and stand firm in their faith. Some of them are already doing this by being bold enough to invite their friends along to events we are running such as **MEGA** and **Connect** which is great to see.

My second priority is building relationships with families in the local area. It would be so wonderful to see some of the children that we engage with, through MEGA, SU or other events, coming along to church with their families.



**Your prayers for wisdom in how we do that would be much appreciated!**

## Do you have a favourite scripture?

I love Psalm 121. It's the scripture God gave to my parents before I was born and almost feels like a personal promise. What a comfort to know that the God who made the universe is our ever-present help.

## Do you have a favourite worship song?

It's very difficult to choose, but my current favourite is **Firm Foundation** by **Cody Carnes**. This song really helped me to remember where my help comes from last year when things were difficult with my Dad being so ill with multiple myeloma. It still rings true now that he has passed away.



***I've still got joy in chaos***

***I've got peace that makes no sense***

***So I won't be going under***

***I'm not held by my own strength***

***'Cause I've built my life on Jesus***

***He's never let me down***

***He's faithful in every season***

***So why would He fail now?***



If you would like to listen to this song, click [here](#).

## One for fun, if you could be a superhero for the day, who would you be and why?

I think I would like to be Jean Grey from X-men as she has the ability to read people's minds. Sometimes my boys do things and I would really love to know what was going through their heads!

She can also manipulate the emotions of other people and get them to do what she wants. That would be very useful to get my children to tidy their rooms!



**We thank God for Jessica and her enthusiasm to nurture and teach the children at Park the things of God, and we pray for wisdom, energy and discernment for her in the future.**

# Come let us sing for joy to the Lord!

It is amazing to think we can call God, the creator of the universe, our friend. These two songs, though very different in their style of language, convey the same message: that Jesus is always there for us and He is our friend. Both songs draw on verses from John 15 v 13-15.



## Jesus! What a friend for Sinners

This is an old hymn written by John Wilbur Chapman who lived from 1859-1918. He was a pupil at a Quaker Day School and publicly made his declaration of faith at 17 years of age. He then joined the Richmond Presbyterian Church and received his seminary degree from Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati. He later became an evangelist and preached with D. L. Moody. This hymn was first published in 1910 and is often sung to the tune Hyfrydol, a much loved Welsh tune.

The first line of the hymn, **Jesus! What a friend of sinners**, is probably a reference from **Luke 7 v 34**: *The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, "Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!"* While the Pharisees' intention was to mock and accuse Jesus, the next story in Luke's gospel demonstrates how Jesus really is a "friend of sinners". A "sinful woman" anointed Jesus' feet and her sins were forgiven. Jesus said, "Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown". **Luke 7 v 47**

The song praises Jesus for the many roles he fills. He is our friend, our strength, our help, and our guide and pilot in the midst of life's storms. As a friend He loves us and His love makes us whole. His strength is often manifested in our weakness but we can be strong by hiding ourselves in Him. (Psalm 27 v 5). He is our help when we are overcome by sorrow and He alone can offer the comfort our souls need. Tempests and storms are used to represent the various trials and hardships we often face on our life's journey but Jesus is our pilot, guiding us to calmer waters. To receive all these blessings, we must receive Him and praise Him for all He has done for us.

1. **Jesus! What a friend for sinners**  
**Jesus! Lover of my soul,;**  
**Friends may fail me, foes assail me,**  
**He, my Saviour, makes me whole.**

### Chorus

**Hallelujah! What a Saviour!**  
**Hallelujah! What a friend!**  
**Saving, helping, keeping, loving,**  
**He is with me to the end.**

2. **Jesus! What a strength in weakness!**  
**Let me hide myself in Him;**  
**Tempted, tried and sometimes failing,**  
**He my strength, my vict'ry wins.**

3. **Jesus! What a help in sorrow!**  
**While the billows o'er me roll,**  
**Even when my heart is breaking,**  
**He, my comfort, helps my soul.**

4. **Jesus! What a guide and keeper!**  
**While the tempest still is high,**  
**Storms about me, night o'ertakes me,**  
**He, my pilot, hears my cry.**



5. **Jesus! I do now receive Him,**  
**More than all in Him I find.**  
**He hath granted me forgiveness**  
**I am His, and He is mine.**

To listen to the song click [here](#)

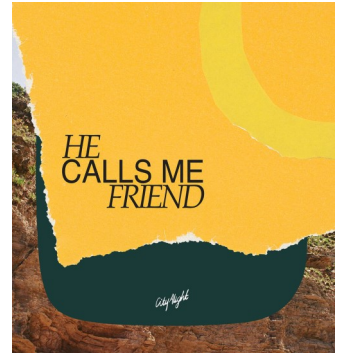
## He calls me Friend

This song by **CityAlight** was released in 2023 and celebrates and reflects on the fact that Jesus is our friend. CityAlight's mission is to write songs for the church with biblically rich lyrics and simple and singable melodies. This song definitely fits that bill.

To be called a friend of Jesus is such a privilege. The omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God, sitting high on His throne, chooses to call us friends. He is not a distant or aloof God but our friend who walks with us every day. This song reflects and celebrates that reality. Friendship is a two-way process and it's not always easy to be a true friend, even humanly speaking. To be Jesus' friend we need to communicate with Him, through prayer, reading His word and trusting in Him no matter the circumstances we are facing in life. Being a true friend requires intimacy and commitment.

**In John 15 v 13-15 we read:**

**Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.**



1. **I have a friend, a faithful friend  
And Jesus is His name  
He will not leave, He stands by me  
My shepherd He remains**

2. **I have a friend, a mighty friend  
And Jesus is His name  
I shall not fear, He holds me near  
His strength will keep me safe**

**Chorus**

**His name is True King, Lord of Creation  
Ruler without end  
I call Him Hope, Peace, Wonderful Saviour  
And what joy that Jesus calls me friend**

3. **I have a friend, the kindest friend  
And Jesus is His name  
He hears my cry by day or night  
And wipes my tears away**

**Chorus**

4. **I have a friend, a Saviour friend  
And Jesus is His name  
He fought for me on Calvary  
And trampled on the grave!**

**Chorus**

What I like about CityAlight songs is their everyday language which is easy to digest and understand, even for a non believer. Nobody can fail to grasp that Jesus is our friend if we believe in Him. The strong theology in the song lists Jesus' attributes—his kindness, his salvation, his sacrifice on the cross, his authority and power.

If we believe in Him we will experience Hope, Peace and Love and most of all Joy that we can call him our friend. The song describes who Jesus is in the punchy chorus but it also reminds us of who we are to Christ. Let us rejoice in that friendship and never take it for granted!

This is a song that glorifies God—He is the true King, Lord of Creation who rules eternally. He is our Hope, Peace, Wonderful Saviour—may this song cause our hearts to jump with praise and our souls to rise like eagles as we worship the eternal God who extends the hand of friendship to us.



**To listen to the song click [here](#)**

# Books of the New Testament

As we continue our series we look at some more of the Pauline letters. Paul didn't just write to congregations, he also wrote to some individuals like Timothy, Titus and Philemon. The Book of Hebrews emphasises the superiority of Christ in a believer's life and lastly the Book of James teaches us how to translate our faith into action.



## Colossians

This is another Pauline letter written to the church in Colossae. It explains who we are in Christ and how to walk with Him. This will affect our relationships with spouses, parents, family and friends. Christ is all we need and we are encouraged to grow in our faith and beware false teaching.

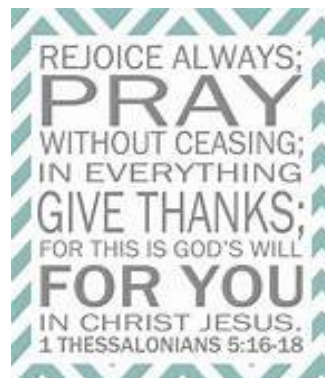
**Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col 3 v 12**



## 1 Thessalonians

Paul commends the church in Thessalonica for its steadfast faith. The believers are encouraged to live pure lives and maintain the hope that Jesus will return. He assures believers that have died with Christ that they will eventually rise and live with Jesus forever. He encourages them to "excel still more" in faith, hope and love.

**Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thess 5 v 16-18**



## 2 Thessalonians

The church in Thessalonica is enduring persecution and the believers wonder if the Day of the Lord has already come. Paul assures them this is not the case and that their hope in Jesus' future return should encourage them in their suffering and motivate them to live faithful lives.

**Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 2 Thessalonians 2 v 3**



## 1 Timothy

Paul writes to Timothy who is the pastor of a church in Ephesus. The qualities of a pastor are listed: he is to be spiritually sound, pray, care for his congregation, train up leaders and preach the truth. This book is a manual for church life and gives teaching on how to prevent false doctrine.

**For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 1 Timothy 6 v 7**



## 2 Timothy

Paul, at the end of his life, encourages Timothy to hold fast to the faith, persevere in dangerous times and preach the word. It is sometimes known as Paul's last will and testament, written on death row in Rome.

**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing. 2 Timothy 4 v 7-8**



## Titus

Titus, an overseer of churches on Crete, has the job of appointing elders and making sure these men are spiritually qualified. He is to be aware of false teachings, avoid distractions, model Christian life and enjoin all believers to practise good works. Sound teaching leads to godliness.

**For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. Titus 2 v 11-12**



## Philemon

Paul writes to Philemon, a believer in Colossae, urging him to show the love of Christ by welcoming a runaway slave who stole back into his household, not as a slave but as a beloved brother in Christ. The themes of forgiveness and reconciliation are uppermost in this book.

**Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever—no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. Philemon 1 v 15-16**



## Hebrews

Some Jewish members of the church are tempted to return to the Jewish law. The author encourages them not to look back but to move on to full spiritual maturity. The letter encourages believers to cling to Christ despite persecution because He is greater. This book asserts the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. In Chapter 11 we find the famous roll call of faith.

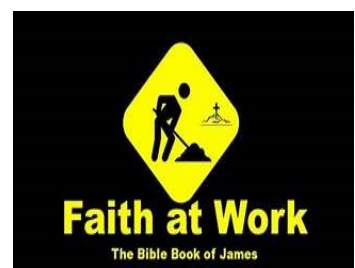
**Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Hebrews 11 v1**



## James

James shows what faith lived out looks like. Our faith should permeate all areas of our lives: it should affect our prayer life, our words, our dealings with others and our response to trials. A title for this book could be Faith in Action.

**Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1 v 22**



# None Like Him

Elizabeth McDowall

On Sunday 4 February, just as we settled down to listen to Rev Ian McQuarrie bring God's word to us in Psalm 13, I heard these words drifting through from the hall – maybe you did too?

Our God is greater, our God is stronger  
God, You are higher than any other  
Our God is Healer, awesome in power,  
Our God! Our God!

Park Kids and Teens were singing a well-known worship song called **Our God** by Chris Tomlin, a song that helpfully focuses on the nature of God. Our understanding of who God is shapes our view of ourselves, of others, of society, of the world. It is so vital that we have a correct understanding of who God is! And so encouraging to know that our youngsters are learning this from an early age.

If you would like to explore the nature of God and His character more fully, then there's a book I can thoroughly recommend! It is **None Like Him** by Jen Wilkin.

We aren't exactly short of a choice of Christian books, so why this one? The subtitle of the book is "**10 ways God is different from us (and why that's a good thing)**". In the preface Jen quotes Psalm 111 v 10:

**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.**

She argues that when we fear God rightly, we recognise Him for who He truly is: a God of no limits, and therefore, utterly unlike anyone or anything we know. This is the start of becoming wise.

Jen's aim is to unpack ten ways that God is distinctly different, taking a chapter each to look at the qualities He possesses which humans simply don't have. Unlike us, God is

- infinite
- incomprehensible
- self-existent
- self-sufficient
- eternal
- immutable
- omnipresent
- omniscient
- omnipotent
- sovereign



Jen writes in a very easy style. She uses good illustrations and applies her thinking to the modern world. For instance, she writes on page 111 (the chapter about Omniscience),

**The amount of data we generate is staggering. Every minute, email users send 204 million messages, Google receives over 4 million search queries, and Facebook users share 2.5 million pieces of content. We are bellying up to the buffet line as though our brains have room for (and use for) whatever we feed them... Our insatiable desire for information is a clear sign that we covet the divine omniscience.**

Like the quote above, each chapter is enlightening, challenging and makes you think. Jen's aim isn't to feed our minds, but to help us apply what we read. She ends her fairly short chapters with suggested Bible passages, discussion questions and a prayer.

**None like Him**, Crossway publishing, is available from the GLO Bookshop (or online Christian retailers).

**If you would like to place an order, I would be happy to get it for you!**



# Prayerful Reflections

Elizabeth McDowall

**Prayer was the subject of a recent sermon. Prayer is something I am passionate about in my role as SU Scotland's Prayer & Church Partnerships Coordinator!**

Our recent SU Day of Prayer focussed on Matthew 6 v 5-14. The speaker talked about the Fatherhood of God and we had space to reflect and pray. Out of this came the following poem, which I am sharing in the hope it might bring encouragement and stimulate your own conversation with God.

## The Father loves to hear your voice...

**My child, come and talk to me...  
I love you so much.  
*I am longing to hear your voice.***

**I love watching you.  
I love the things you do for me.  
I love seeing you in action,  
Using the gifts I give you.  
*But I am longing to hear your voice.***

**I see your heart, I know you so well.  
I watch you struggle in the night.  
I know your sitting and your rising,  
Your going out and your coming in.  
I hear your laughter and I smile,  
*But I long to hear your voice.***

**I am your Father.  
I gave the best thing I had to give  
you:  
My only Son.  
My love for you is strong, deep,  
and true.  
*I am longing to hear your voice.***



**I love when you spend time with me.  
I love our long conversations,  
Brief chats in the car,  
Arrow prayers for help,  
Your heart expressed in worship.  
*I love to hear your voice.***

**I love when you speak of me to others:  
Telling them that you love me,  
Telling them I'm your Father.  
I hear the passion in your words,  
I see the fire in your heart.  
*I love to hear your voice.***

**I love to hear your voice,  
So I say, 'simply pray'.  
I am here. I am listening.  
I am your audience of one.  
And I will bless and answer.**

**Why? Because I am your Father.  
I gave the best thing I had to give you:  
My only Son.  
My love for you is strong, deep and true.  
*I long to hear your voice.  
I love to hear your voice.***

Prayer produces results. Bruce and I have been so encouraged and strengthened by the prayers of God's people at Park. We know many of you have been upholding him in personal prayer. We have known the strength of God and the peace of God as a result. Thank you!

As well as personal prayer, at Park there are opportunities to pray together. This is so vital for a healthy church. Ronald Dunn's book ***Praying for Others*** finishes with the line,

**The Church must learn to live in a kneeling position, for there can be no praying for revival until there is a revival of praying.**

We are blessed to have lots of fellowship groups where we can pray for one another and wider concerns. For many years there has also been a Saturday morning prayer meeting on Zoom. Bruce reads a psalm. We then pray as the Spirit leads. There is no lengthy list. No "What shall we pray for?" We pray far and wide, covering the earth from Martin and Jennifer in Vietnam, to Former Soviet Republics, our community, other churches.

We pray for Park Church, its ministry, its future. We pray for individuals as God lays them on our hearts. I can honestly say this wee prayer gathering is a powerhouse, and one of the highlights of my diary. No praying aloud is demanded; not everyone prays. Those who attend always leave refreshed, encouraged and feeling we have been in the Lord's presence. Is God challenging ***you*** to grow in prayer? Then make time on Saturdays from 9-10am! You will be blessed.

**PRAYER**  
is the fastest thing on earth...  
it reaches God before you even say it.  
That's powerful.

## Congregational Report by the Minister

The past year was the first full year without the restrictions and concerns brought about by Covid-19. We were able to celebrate the Festivals of the Faith with creative use of our sanctuary, concerts and Café Church. The ability to do this allows greater freedom to interact with one another and provides an informal and friendly meeting point with visitors.

It also meant that we were able to host some community events without the concerns of the past few years. It was particularly gratifying to see our church full on Remembrance Sunday with the visit of Youth Organisations and family and friends. The encouraging follow-on from that was the return visit of a few of those present that day at some of our Christmas services.

A substantial investment in upgrading our audio-visual system has improved the quality of what we broadcast, as well as giving flexibility to what can be seen online. On average, some thirty-five people view the Sunday service online, and there are occasions when considerably more do so. Whilst this is not a huge number, it is a significant means of contact with others. As the *Try Praying* booklets continue to be taken, our prayer must be that some of those who take these books also then access our main service remotely.

trypraying.

Our Children and Families' Worker, Karen Stangoe, moved on to work with SU Lanarkshire and in June we appointed Jessica Beecroft, in a slightly reduced role, to succeed her. Jessica has built well upon the work that Karen and others have done in the past. In the various sections of Park Kids, and with our teenage discipleship group Connect on a Monday evening, our ministry amongst younger people continues. MEGA on a Saturday, and the Schools' Program we provide, as well as the two SU groups at the primary and secondary schools, continue to provide points of contact with people beyond our own church families.

The Kirk Session has spent time reflecting on some of the challenges that the Church of Christ faces in our contemporary culture. Part of our response to this has been to seek permission from the United Free Church to appoint a Ministry Assistant. The role of this Colleague in Ministry will be to help us discover and explore fresh ways to be "Church" as we enter the second quarter of this century; it will also help prepare the way for the present Minister to retire and a new chapter in the life of the church to begin. Permission has been secured and we prayerfully seek such a person over the coming months.

An encouragement has been the continued support for the church being open during the week for quiet reflection and a short devotional service. These gatherings, along with well-supported Fellowship Groups and an active and spiritually-minded Ladies' Association, mean that well over half of the worshipping congregation on a Sunday are participating in some other spiritual activity. There is always room for growth, especially in the area of corporate prayer, but they provide a good foundation for future development.

Our concern for the wider work of the Church continues with practical financial support being provided to our partners in Vietnam, Italy, Ukraine, as well as the persecuted Church. We have, and will continue to have, input from speakers from these different areas of ministry and, as some of our partners move on to new areas of service, we are open to fresh connections within the Global Church.

**As we look to the future, with the continued need to maintain our buildings which will require on-going and increasingly expensive repairs, we can none the less affirm God's continued faithfulness in so many ways; this encourages us to look with Godly confidence to the coming year. 'The Lord has thus far provided!' And we give Him the Glory for that.**



# Accounts to end December 2023

UDDINGSTON : PARK UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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## STATEMENT OF BALANCES ON CONGREGATIONAL FUNDS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

FUND	NATURE OF FUND	BALANCE 1/1/23 £	RECEIPTS 2023 £	PAYMENTS 2023 £	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) £	NET FUND TRANSFERS £	NET CHANGE ON FUNDS £	BALANCE 31/12/23 £	FUNDS HELD
GENERAL	UNRESTRICTED	59,163	160,936	-127,897	33,040	-57,000	-23,960	35,202	Bank of Scotland plc
FABRIC	DESIGNATED	9,516	150	-	150	-	150	9,666	Bank of Scotland plc
MISSION	DESIGNATED	7,965	6,000	-12,736	-6,736	7,000.00	264	8,229	Bank of Scotland plc
MINISTRY	DESIGNATED	-	190	-	190	50,000	50,190	50,190	Bank of Scotland plc
PROJECT	DESIGNATED	15,089	1,140	-	1,140	-	1,140	16,229	TSB Bank plc
CHILD & FAMILY	DESIGNATED	14,570	1,605	-8,436	-6,831	-	-6,831	7,739	Bank of Scotland plc
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>106,302</b>	<b>170,021</b>	<b>-149,069</b>	<b>20,953</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20,953</b>	<b>127,255</b>	

### Nature of Congregational funds :

General	Unrestricted	Ordinary receipts and payments of the congregation
Fabric	Designated	Repairs to external and internal fabric and / or furnishings of Church, halls and Manse
Mission	Designated	Designated for distribution to mission and charities in the UK and overseas
Ministry	Designated	Designated for supporting temporary position of ministry assistant
Project	Designated	Designated for major projects and repairs to Church buildings
Child & Family	Designated	Designated for supporting work with children and families within the Church and Community

Approval of Congregation Financial Statements for the Year ending 31 December 2023 as set out on pages 7-10 by Office Bearers authorised to sign.

Minister and Preses	-----	W. Bruce McDowell
Deputy Preses	-----	Helen Ooi
Treasurer	-----	Janice Clark-Dick
Date	-----	

## UDDINGSTON : PARK UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GENERAL FUND - RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2023

## UNRESTRICTED FUND

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RECEIPTS				PAYMENTS			
	£	2023	Supplementary 2022 sheet		£	2023	Supplementary 2022 sheet
<b>Offerings</b>				<b>Ministry</b>			
Open	6,517		3,832	Stipend (incl. NI)	42,087		41,152
Free Will	77,812		71,455	Minister's expenses	3,090		3,072
Gift Aid Tax recovered	17,697		16,629	Manse telephone	501		645
		102,026	91,916	Target	11,253		10,653
				Presbytery dues	357		0
<b>Donations</b>						57,288	55,522
Others	55,499		3,715 Supp.1	<b>Property</b>			
		55,499	3,715	Church			
<b>Other receipts</b>				Manse			
Stedfast	15		144	Council Tax	-		3,203
Other income	190		-	Insurance	2,852		3,226
		205	144	Heating, Lighting	9,133		7,683 Supp.2
				Repairs, maintenance	39,239	1,348	38,370 Supp.3 & 4
					51,224	5,185	52,482
<b>Ordinary receipts</b>		157,730	95,775	<b>Other Congregational Payments</b>			
<b>Extraordinary receipts</b>				Stedfast	792		264
Retiral / Special Offering	3,206		3,385	Printing & Donation Envelopes	2,246		2,387 Supp.5
		3,206	3,385	Cleaning	2,750		2,363
<b>Total receipts</b>		160,936	99,160	Internet	475		467
		160,936	99,160	Organ / Piano Maintenance	-		236
				Miscellaneous	3,086		3,566 Supp.6
						9,350	9,283
<b>Surplus / (deficit) for Year</b>		33,040	-21,817	<b>Ordinary payments</b>		123,047	117,287
<b>Balance at 1 January</b>		59,163	79,501	<b>Extraordinary payments</b>			
		92,203	57,684	Retiral / Special Offering	4,850		3,690 Supp.7
						4,850	3,690
				<b>Total payments</b>		127,897	120,977
				<b>Surplus in year</b>		33,040	-21,817
						160,936	99,160
				<b>Transfer to other funds</b>		57,000	(1,480)
				<b>Balance at 31 December</b>		35,203	59,163
						92,203	57,684

# In Loving Memory of Ken McClean

It was with great sadness that we learned of the sudden and untimely death of our dear friend and brother in Christ, Ken McClean, on the 5 February 2024. Ken was a long-standing member of Park, being both a former elder and current serving manager.

Ken's parents were from Donegal where his two elder sisters were born, but by the time of Ken's birth on 8 August 1960 they were living in Belfast. Ken completed his school years here and was a proud Irishman. He came over to the University of Glasgow in 1979 to study Veterinary Medicine. He was staying in Wolfson Halls by the Vet School where a certain young law undergraduate was also residing. At a beginning of term meeting, their eyes met across a crowded room....but Cassie was too shy to speak. A few weeks later at a dance, Ken tapped her on the shoulder to ask her to dance, and the rest as they say is history!



After graduation in 1984, Ken went back to Ireland to work for a couple of years while Cassie went to Fort William to do her law traineeship. This was to give the newly engaged couple time to save up to get married. They got married in Dunoon High Kirk in 1986 and were quickly blessed with three daughters, Katie, Margaret and Mairi. Ken's family meant the world to him and he was a doting husband and dad. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family at this sad time.

After their marriage, Ken worked for a while in Stirling before moving to Shearer McGregor's in Hamilton in 1988. He also did a stint at the PDSA before buying out the Shearer McGregor's Coatbridge and Holytown branch with his partner, Ian, in 1995. Ken remained in this practice for the rest of his life, building up the Ark Vet Clinic to be one of the most respected surgeries in the area. Ken was dedicated to his work and I'm sure many of us in the congregation can testify to his willingness to give out free advice if we were worried about our pet. His sense of fair-mindedness, diligence and his legendary Irish humour made him a popular vet and boss alike.

Ken loved to run. This started in his school days with cross country but he took up running in earnest in the late 1980s. He was a member of Shettleston Harriers and did his first marathon in Aberdeen in 1989. He also ran the London one, twice, Inverness, Belfast, Greenock. Running was a way of relieving the pressure of his working life and Ken was a familiar sight to many of us pounding the local streets.

Ken also loved music. The family joke that this started with an illustrious career playing the glockenspiel and tin whistle as a child, but Ken loved to play guitar and sing. He was always in a band. His early days at university saw him and his school friend form **The Liberators** and later he fronted **The Fabulous Ace Tones** with his best friend, Alan Finney. Ken used these gigs in pubs to talk about his faith to people he met if the opportunity arose.

Ken came to faith under Mr White's ministry and loved going to church. He loved the idea of people coming together and praising God. If you were ever blessed to sit in front of Ken, you would hear his beautiful harmonies and in our group, **Park Praise**, Janice was happy to let Ken do his own thing. We sang one of his favourite songs, **I cast my mind to Calvary**, as a tribute to Ken on 11 February but his other favourite was **Such Love**, a song which expresses God's love towards us. Ken was humble in his faith and loved God. I was blessed to be in the same Fellowship Group as Ken and his deep insights and observations on the passage we were studying were so helpful. He was a deep thinker and we will really miss him both for this and for his friendship to us all.

As a manager, Ken looked after the church grounds, keeping the grass mown and trees and bushes trimmed back. He put the bins out every week; jobs that didn't attract the limelight but it was Ken's way of serving God in his humble, quiet way. Ken was known and loved by all for his Godly wisdom, sage advice and great sense of humour.

It is apt, given Ken's love of running, that one of his favourite verses was from Hebrews 12 v 1 which states: **"... and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."**

**That is how Ken lived his life: always looking to Jesus and what His plans were for him. Ken's was a life well lived; a devoted husband, loving father, just boss, loyal friend but above all a man of faith who loved His Lord and Saviour.**

**Such love, springs from eternity;  
Such love, streaming through history;  
Such love, fountain of life to me;  
O Jesus, such love.**



# Planting Your Spring Garden

## OR THE GARDEN OF YOUR DAILY LIVING



### Plant Three Rows of Peas

1. Peace of Mind
2. Peace of Heart
3. Peace of Soul



### Plant Four Rows of Squash

1. Squash Gossip
2. Squash Indifference
3. Squash Grumbling
4. Squash Selfishness

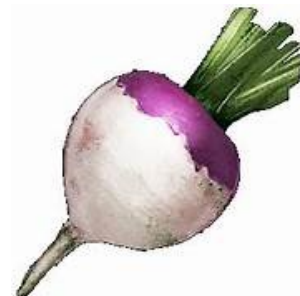


### Plant Four Rows of Lettuce

1. Lettuce be Faithful
2. Lettuce be Kind
3. Lettuce be Patient
4. Lettuce Really Love One Another

### No garden is complete without turnips

1. Turnip to Meetings
2. Turnip for Service
3. Turnip to help One Another



### To Conclude in our Garden we must have Thyme

1. Thyme for Each Other
2. Thyme for Family
3. Thyme for Friends



*Water freely with patience and cultivate with love.  
There is much fruit in your garden because you reap what you sow.*

*By John Forti*

**For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.**

**Isaiah 61 v 11**



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