

Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



Letter from the Minister

Spring 2025



Dear Friends,

As I have sat down to write this letter, President Trump has been inaugurated into the Presidency of the United States of America. His actions since assuming office have caused much talk and are in many ways controversial. What his second term in the Oval Office will mean for the United States and the world remains to be seen. Certainly, whether we like it or not, millions of Americans, including a large part of the Evangelical Church, found him and his policies sufficiently attractive to vote for him and see him re-elected as President. From a distance, many of us may shake our heads in bewilderment, but on the ground the desire to right apparent wrongs in society and **"Make America Great Again!"** motivated unprecedented numbers to vote for Trump.

In the western world, there are many within our societies that feel frustrated by various aspects of our contemporary world and the impact of them on their own lives. While we may not know people like that personally, the events of last summer in Britain, including the awful murders of the children in Southport, revealed a deep malaise in many ways within society. Extremism, cynicism and a weariness at many of our societies' norms and values, do not always manifest themselves in violent and drastic action, but can simmer away within people and be revealed in the most unlikely settings and circumstances.

Of course, many other people are simply apathetic. Caught up with their work, family life and the usual round of activities, they switch off the news, ignore current affairs and soak themselves in the soaps, music, social media and their hobbies. Perhaps, in truth, many of us fall into that category. Eat, drink and be merry, and tomorrow may never happen!

Ironically, as we journey through the season of Lent and look towards Easter, many of the same trends in our contemporary world were present in Jesus' day. Frustrations and apathy blended together around the person and ministry of Jesus. The crowd who followed Jesus and welcomed him so enthusiastically that first Palm Sunday, were all looking for a Deliverer and Transformer. For many of them, Jesus seemed to fit that bill as he journeyed through Israel. His teaching and the miracles seemed to suggest that here was someone who *could* and *would* break down the normal way of doing things and perhaps establish a theocracy which would make Israel great again!



Jesus wasn't a fool. Luke in his gospel tells us three times that:

Jesus knew what they were thinking, their thoughts... Luke 5 v 22, 6 v 8, 11 v 17

And the Apostle John tells us that:

Jesus knew what was in a man. John 2 v 25

Aware of this, Jesus asked the disciples those well-known questions:

Who do people say I am? ... But what about you? Who do you say I am? Matthew 16 v 13ff

The disciples knew what the talk on the street was:

Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Matthew 16 v 14

Recalling the great prophets of yesteryears, it seemed to point towards someone who would very evidently deal with the enemies that Israel faced and bring about liberation. However, Jesus then asked what the disciples thought about him. Peter answered:

You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Matthew 16 v 16

Yet that recognition meant that they would also have to recognise what this would mean for Jesus.

From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders...and that he must be killed and on the third day raised to life. Matthew 16 v 21

Peter's response:

Never, Lord! This must never happen. Matthew 16 v 22

was met with the firm response from Jesus:

Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns. Matthew 16 v 23

For Jesus, greatness was not to be found in human power and an earthly victory over human enemies. His greatness was to be found in humility, suffering and sacrifice. Indeed, Jesus is quite clear about this:

This is why the Son of Man has come, not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20 v 28

The implications for the disciples of Jesus, both in his day and today, is that we too are called to serve and not to be served. Again, Jesus is quite clear about this:

Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Matthew 16 v 24-26

For the Christian, greatness isn't found in fame and fortune. True greatness is to be seen in humble service of God and of his people and purposes! Indeed, the writer to the Hebrews speaks of those who were martyred for the faith as those that

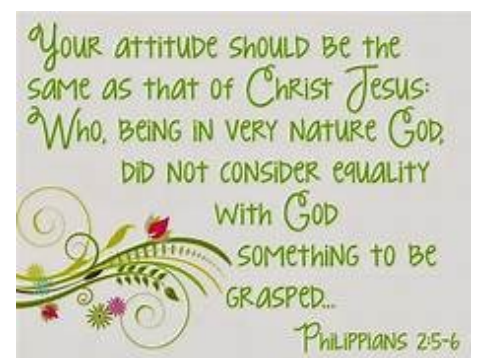
...the world was not worthy of them. Hebrews 11 v 38

One of the great themes of Paul in his writings is to exhort believers to

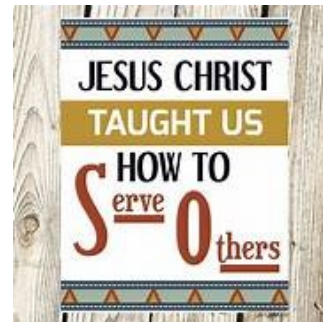
...live lives in a manner worthy of the gospel. Philippians 1 v 27

and

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing... Philippians 2 v 5-6



This is the example, mindset and attitude which should govern our understanding of power and prestige in our world today. Not that Christians in public office in the institutions of state or in private enterprise won't achieve and rightly earn high office and positions of power and influence, but how that power and influence is used is to be governed with the values of the kingdom of Jesus, not the kingdoms of this world.



We need to pray for our leaders and those who have influence over us. We need to pray for professing Christians in positions of responsibility, that by the Spirit of God, they would be enabled to model Christ in their lives and in the conduct of their affairs. Graham Kendrick's hymn of 40 years ago comes to mind.

So let us learn how to serve,
and in our lives enthrone Him,
each others' needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow Him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.

Perhaps if more of that servanthood attitude was seen in public life, there would be less cynicism and frustration within society. Respect, rather than resentment, would then flourish. Sadly, the Church does not always model Christ as well as it should. This season of Lent, and then Easter, allows us to reflect on how we could all do better!

With warm Christian Greetings

Mr B Russell

Easter at Park

We will celebrate Easter at the following services this year.

**13
April**

Palm Sunday
Here comes the King!
10.30am

**15 & 16
April**

**Devotionals on Tuesday
and Wednesday**
Journey to Calvary
10.30am and 7.30pm

**17
April**

Maundy Thursday
Share in the Meal and
Communion 6.30pm



**18
April**

Good Friday
Church will be open from 12-3pm
with short devotional at 2.30pm
**United Good Friday Service in
Grace Church, Bothwell**
7.00pm

**20
April**

Easter Sunday
The Lord is Risen!
10.30am

This is the Way, Walk in it

Isabel Martin is a well-kent face in Park Church. She runs the Sunday Morning Tea Service, helps with Park Kids and is also a Manager, welcoming people in on a Sunday morning. Here she tells us a little a bit about her upbringing and the volunteering work she now does in both Monklands Hospital and St Andrews Hospice in Airdrie.



Tell us a little about your childhood and education

Due to family circumstances, I was brought up by my aunt and grandmother and was educated at Whifflet Primary School and Rosehall High in Coatbridge. I went on to study commercial studies at Dundyvan College and my first job was with my aunt in a company supplying road construction materials and hire of machinery. I worked there for six years before moving to Lanarkshire Health Board as a clerical officer serving the Community Nursing staff. I enjoyed this work very much and stayed for 25 years before ill health forced me to retire. I saw this work as an answer to prayer from the Lord.

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

My first attendance at Whifflet United Free Church of Scotland was as a six-week-old baby! A conversation with the minister's wife when I was 14 made me realise there was much more to church-going than I thought. She told me that I could have a personal relationship with Jesus, that if I believed in him my sins were forgiven and I could spend eternity with him. As time went on, I become more involved in church activities, becoming leader of the Sunday School, followed by President of the Women's Association which led me on to becoming an elder and subsequently Session Clerk. I represented the church as Commissioner at the General Assembly. The Lord led me into deputation work and I never thought I would stand on a platform and share the gospel with so many.

Whifflet church closed in 2014 after 78 years of being a place of worship; I had been there for 63 of those years. Bruce had been the interim moderator for Whifflet, and I, with my husband, Steve, and friend, Irene, had attended several events at Park where we felt very much at home. We felt the Lord was leading us to Park. We appreciated Bruce's gospel teaching, which he puts his heart and soul into, and also the concern the church family has for one another. We can share personal concerns knowing they will stay confidential. At present I help with Park Kids, serve as a Manager and run the Sunday Tea Service. I appreciate my team for their willingness to help. It's a joy to come to Park each Sunday and I enjoy chatting to everyone.

Volunteer Work

Since coming to Park, I had less commitments and felt I could do something in the volunteering sector. Asking for God's guidance lead me to hospital volunteer work with the Chaplaincy Department in **Monklands Hospital**. I applied but my application was held up because of Covid. I did question if I was still to pursue this avenue, but confirmation came from the Lord through **Psalm 32, v 8**:

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

Before commencing the work, I had to undergo training in topics such as Adult and Child Support Protection, Safe Handling of Information, Occupational Health, Confidentiality and many more. After an interview with my chaplain, I was given a start date of 23 March 2023—Praise the Lord! I am responsible for visiting four wards every Thursday where I may encounter patients with dementia, those waiting for surgery or patients who are grieving the death of a loved one while in hospital.



I have also sat at the bedside of patients undergoing end-of-life care which can be challenging and emotional. I can also be called to sit beside a dying patient who has no family members to sit with them.

I am not allowed to practise my faith by reading scripture or praying unless the patient requests it. To get round this, I pray that the Lord will guide me to patients that want to talk about their faith. I find these visits so uplifting and the patients are so appreciative of the visit. I can only hope that I say the right words of comfort to brighten their day and let the Lord do the rest.

While working in the hospital, I visited **St Andrews Hospice** for lunch and discovered they had an Outpatient Department which people can attend during the week for company, complementary therapy, arts and crafts, exercises and relevant talks on safety and good health as well as quizzes. Endless cups of tea are on offer as well as a soup and sandwich lunch. As I have a Tuesday morning free, I felt I could also volunteer here and started on 2 April 2024. My desire to work here was again confirmed by scripture, **Isaiah 30 v 21, This is the way, walk in it.**



I serve tea and snacks to the twelve patients who attend; they do arts and crafts in the morning before going off for exercise. Sister Catherine administers communion just before lunch which I then serve. Many of the patients suffer from different types of cancer and they benefit from the complementary therapies on offer, talks on financial and legal help as well as the company of others. It is a lovely environment to work in and I can share my faith in one-to-one conversations in the café. I feel I am giving something back to my community.

Favourite Hymn/Worship Song

My favourite old hymn is **Out of my Bondage, Sorrow and Night** as it reflects on the person's old life before coming to Christ and then on the blessings we will receive as believers. I also like **We Have Come into His House** because Jesus is worthy of worship—He is our Creator, Saviour, Friend, Redeemer and Lord.

Favourite Scripture



These two verses of scripture, **Proverbs 3 v 5-6** and **Jeremiah 29 v 11**, were given to me by my aunt and I have used these verses in my walk with the Lord. If the Lord is leading me in all my ways, then I'm on the winning side because I am leaning on him for direction and His word is truth.

His plans for me have led me in a way I never thought possible, but I can't do any of this in my own strength and the future is in his hands.



What can we pray for you in your volunteering work?



That the Lord will give me the right words to say to each patient and what I say will be a help and a comfort to them.



Pray that with the Lord's guidance that I will be directed to patients who are willing to talk about their faith and that I will have the opportunity to share with them.



Pray that I can enjoy my time spent with patients in the hospital and hospice in my volunteering capacity and be of some benefit to all I meet within the plans God has for me.

All of this involvement is for the Glory of God!

Come let us sing for joy to the Lord!

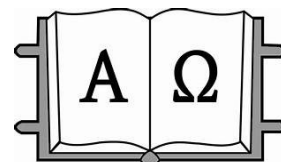
It is easy to despair when we look around at the brokenness of our world, on a personal, national and international level. Where is God in all of this? Both these songs deal with The Second Coming when all things will be made new and there will be no more tears or suffering. How we yearn for that glorious day!



Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

This must be one of the best-known hymns and is sung regularly at both weddings and funerals throughout the land. It was written in 1747 by **Charles Wesley** and was part of his *Hymns for Those that Seek and Find*. It quickly became popular in both Methodist circles as well as wider Christian worship. The hymn expresses a longing for God's transforming and sanctifying grace in our lives and is solidly based on scripture.

Verse 1 portrays Christ as an expression of divine love and we see the mercy and compassion of Jesus. Our prayer is that Jesus will enter our hearts and make us a new creation through salvation in Him. Verse 2 exhorts the Holy Spirit to fill our lives and help us experience the true rest we can only find in Jesus, the Alpha and the Omega. The third verse speaks of the Second Coming and our desire to never be separated from the love of God. We are reminded of these words from Revelation 21 v 3, **"...God's dwelling-place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them..."** Finally verse 4 speaks of the new creation, both on a personal level as our rebirth is brought to fruition, **"let us pure and spotless be"** and **"changed from glory into glory"** (2 Cor 3 v 18) but also we get a glimpse of heaven where all the redeemed will worship God **"lost in wonder, love and praise"**.



When we next sing this hymn, let us sing it as a prayer, asking God to dwell in us and enter our hearts.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling;
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love Thou art;
visit us with Thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.</p> | <p>3. Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all Thy grace receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
glory in Thy perfect love.</p> |
| <p>2. Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
into every troubled breast;
let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find Thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning,
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.</p> | <p>4. Finish then Thy new creation:
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see Thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in Thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before Thee,
lost in wonder, love and praise.</p> |

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

He is Making All Things Right

This song by **Skye Peterson, Ben Shive and Bryan Fowler** was first introduced in late 2024 at the Getty's Sing! Conference in Nashville and is certainly a foot-stomping, hand-clapping celebration of Christ's work to "make all things right". Its cheerful, up-tempo tune heralds the hope of what is to come and refreshes the spirit in what is often a hurting and broken world. It looks forward to a time when all will be restored, there will be a new creation and every tear will be wiped from our eyes with no more suffering. Despite what we see going on in our world, all the evil, the brokenness and divisiveness, we need to remind ourselves that Jesus is on His throne and is already at work. We put our trust in God to accomplish everything with **His perfect justice** and in **His perfect timing!**

He will wipe every tear
from their eyes. There
will be no more death or
mourning or crying or
pain, for the old order of
things has passed away.
Revelation 21 v 4

1. **Hail the rightful ruler
Christ who came to save
King of truth and justice
Lord of love and grace
He who bore the cross to
Bring his people peace
Broke the chains of sin and
Set the captive free**

**Chorus 1
He is making all things right x 2**

2. **Hail the humble shepherd
Bending low to serve
Bread for all our hunger
Water for our thirst
He who helps his neighbour
Loves the least of these
Welcomes in the stranger
Sets the captive free**

**Chorus 2, 3
He is making all things right
He is making all things right
In His goodness, in His time
He is making all things right**

3. **Hail the coming Saviour
Hope of every heart
Healer of the nations
Bright and morning star
He will win the battle
Set the world at peace
Finally and forever
Set the captive free**

Verse 1 acknowledges Jesus as our King and Saviour. He is concerned with truth and justice and is already working to restore all things, although we won't see the full extent of His work until the fullness of time. God is beyond our comprehension, we are unable to explain everything that He does but we have a desire to know Him. He is the antidote to our restless hearts, the only thing that can give us real peace in our souls.

He has made everything beautiful in time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. Ecclesiastes 3 v 11

Verse 2 is Christ as our neighbour. When Jesus was asked, "Who is my neighbour?", he replied anyone whose need we can see and meet (Luke 10). We are to love the least and serve everyone. Jesus is our role model—He bent down and washed our feet. This too is our calling as followers of Jesus, to serve as He served.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20 v 28

In verse 3 the juxtaposition between the humble shepherd of verse 2 and the rightful king on His throne is striking. Jesus is the hope of every heart and His coming one day will make all things right. The main themes of this song are hope and justice that one day the world will be healed of its brokenness. Jesus is already working things out on His throne but as we await the Second Coming, we are to be His hands and feet and do His work through His church which is the Bride of Christ. We await Christ's return when He will...**Finally and forever set the captive free!**



He who is seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Revelation 21 v 5

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star. Revelation 22 v 16

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

Easter Traditions across the World

Different countries mark Easter in different ways, but as Christians, Christ is at the centre of all our celebrations. Here we look at some of the various festivals, church services and traditions that make each country unique.

Malta

Easter is a time steeped in tradition and ritual. Processions take place across the island where the locals carry statues of Jesus and Mary as they pray or listen to music. Some of these processions include penitents dressed in white robes and hoods, bearing crosses and sometimes chains round their ankles. Easter Sunday is celebrated with mass and there are sometimes processions led by bands with a statue of the risen Christ hoisted high. The rest of the day is spent with family eating and exchanging sweet almond-filled pastries called figolli that are shaped like fish, birds or crosses.

Philippines

Filipino believers honour and observe Holy Week through fasting, attending church services and celebrating local traditions. Many take part in the Stations of the Cross which reenacts Jesus' arrest, trial, suffering and death. On Easter Sunday many attend the Salubong, a pre-dawn event where statues of the risen Christ and veiled Virgin Mary meet. The veil is removed by a young girl dressed as an angel; if it's hard to remove then this is a bad omen for the coming year. After the ceremony, fireworks light up the sky, the church bells ring and the country celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. Families gather together for a grand meal, often featuring lechon (roast pig) along with pancit (noodles). Some believers take their devotion to the extreme by being crucified themselves for a short time but this is not endorsed by church leaders.

Spain

During Semana Santa (Holy Week) there are many processions in the bigger towns and cities. People wear colourful outfits, play traditional music and carry religious statues along the streets. Each area has its own celebration with floats festooned with flowers, music, parades; each is unique in its own way and offers the spectator a fascinating religious and cultural experience. Malaga reenacts the freeing of a prisoner and Jesus (el rico) blessing the convict. Traditional food like Torrijas is served—it is the Spanish version of French toast! - and pestiños, honey-glazed pastries fried in olive oil.

Ethiopia

Easter is called Fasika and is observed one week later than in the west. Christians prepare with a 55-day fast when they only eat one vegetarian meal per day. On Easter Saturday the Paschal Vigil takes place where orthodox Christians will bow down and rise up until they are too tired to continue. This is so they feel the pain Jesus suffered, to humble themselves and ask Jesus' forgiveness. The vigil starts with sombre and sacred reflections before dancing and music break out in the early morning. At 12am a symbolic chicken is killed and at 3am everyone returns home to break the fast with doro bread, a honey and milk loaf. A sheep is killed on Easter Sunday to start the feasting. This is symbolic of the Old Testament story where Abraham's faith is tested when God asks him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. All denominations hold special services that bring their communities together and wish each other Melkam Fasika!



Semana Santa



Germany

One of the main Easter traditions in Germany is to paint hard-boiled eggs, Bunte Eier or Osterei, and hang them on trees in the lead up to Easter. Traditionally eggs were dyed red and were a symbol of the resurrection but now they are brightly coloured. Eggs are a symbol of new beginnings and springtime. Families also bake an Osterlamm (Easter lamb cake) which is thought to represent Jesus as the sacrificial lamb. Spring flowers, eggs and lambs symbolise the rebirth in nature after the darkness of winter just as Easter Sunday symbolises the victory of light over darkness in Jesus' resurrection. As part of the celebrations big fires, Osterfeuer, are built to celebrate this victory. Families gather round the fire, sing and toast marshmallows to welcome in the Spring.



Brazil

Brazil is a predominantly Catholic country and Páscoa is celebrated with both respectful commemoration of Jesus' death and resurrection as well as with a big party! The Páscoa celebrations begin with Holy Week rituals involving the blessing of palm branches interwoven into intricate patterns to represent various symbols of Christianity. There are processions through the streets where they carry statues of the Virgin Mary and the body of Jesus. Special masses are held and The Passion of Christ is acted out in many towns. On Good Friday, Sexta Paixão, most people will avoid eating meat and eat fish instead, usually bacalhau or salted cod. In Ouro Preto, a long street between two churches is decorated with a carpet of brightly coloured flowers, sand and sawdust, to create intricate patterns, a tradition that dates from 1773!



Celebrations begin long before Easter with the world-renowned Rio carnival which precedes Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the forty days of Lent. The mile-long parade is called Sambodromo and samba dance troupes entertain. Lent is observed throughout the country but then on Easter Day gala carnivals take place to commemorate the Resurrection of Jesus. Brazil knows how to party!



Bermuda

Bermudians celebrate Easter with colourful Spring events, food and worship. Before Easter the locals will spend time crafting traditional Bermuda kites which are made from wooden sticks, string and brightly coloured tissue paper. On Good Friday friends and family gather in parks or on the beach to fly their kites; this tradition is said to have begun when a Sunday School teacher tried to explain Christ's ascension to heaven to his pupils! On Easter Sunday many attend sunrise services and then spend the day enjoying a meal with family. Favourite treats are hot cross buns served with cod fish cakes!



Egypt

Although predominantly an Islamic country, Easter is celebrated by the Coptic Orthodox Christians. Easter begins 50 days of celebration which ends at Pentecost. During Holy Week prayers are held daily in churches. On Palm Sunday churches are decorated with white cloth and palm leaves whereas on Good Friday churches hang black cloths as a sign of Christ's death. People fast until sunset and children are kept indoors. On Easter Sunday the churches are again decorated in white to celebrate the resurrection. The national Egyptian festival, Sham El Nesiem, which celebrates the arrival of spring, follows Easter. People enjoy picnics of coloured hard-boiled eggs and salted fish in the local parks to welcome the Spring.



Congregational Report by the Minister

As we reflect on the past year, we can, once again, give thanks to Almighty God for His faithful care and provision for us as a company of His people. The generous liberality of God's people has allowed us, not only to meet the main costs of running the church, but to continue to support the post of a Family and Children's Worker and also meet the needs of the wider Church and world.

The ongoing work, under the oversight of **Jessica Beecroft**, ensures the continued links with the schools in our area. Through the events that deal with RMPS requirements, running **Scripture Union** groups and our periodic Saturday afternoon **MEGA** events, contact with children outwith our own congregation is maintained. Whilst we would love to see this become even more fruitful, we are thankful that the connection continues. **CONNECT**, on a Monday evening for young teenagers, is an ideal opportunity for the discipling of some of that age range and the introducing of others to the reality of Jesus Christ.



At the other end of the spectrum, our **Ladies' Association**, led well by Pat Robertson and her committee, provides a meeting place for women not only within our congregation but also the wider community. The varied program clearly points to Jesus Christ and the good attendance bears testimony to the importance of this gathering and the effective pastoral care which it undertakes. The local Presbyterial Council is only able to function because the membership of the committee is drawn from Park Church.

All our various Fellowship Groups have seen steady numbers and these gatherings, along with those who attend our midweek church-based Devotionals and our Zoom-based Saturday morning fortnightly Prayer Meeting, point to a congregation where a majority of its members engage in some other activity apart from Sunday morning worship. The ministry of God's Word is central to whenever we meet. The Minister, along with other ministers and members within the congregation, seek in various ways to see the company of believers built up and others enabled to meet with the eternal Word.



The work of Scripture Union in Ukraine and Hungary, as well as the work of SU in Lanarkshire, have all been supported, and gifts have been given to other missionary partners and other Christian agencies. We continue to have a special concern for believers persecuted for the faith elsewhere in the world and through prayers and gifts seek to support our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Once again at the beginning of December, we were able to host the **Village Christmas School Concert**. At Christmas itself, we saw a good number of visitors come amongst us at the various events; our prayer is that with fresh insight and leadership, we will be able to develop more creative ways of engaging with our community.

The leadership of the church has pressed on with thinking and now advertising for the post of **Ministry Assistant**. With the support of our denomination, we trust that the Lord will provide the right person to work alongside us; the generous gift of £50,000 given a few years ago will enable us to do that. Our continued engagement with the community group, **Grow Uddingston**, was recognised by its nominating the minister and his wife to attend the Princess of Wales Charity Concert held in Westminster Abbey at the beginning of December. It is certainly noticeable that in the community, we are recognised as being part of "the Village" and our prayer is that as we look to the future, our church motto, **To Know Christ and to Make Him Known** will continue to determine our life together.



Whilst recognising the challenges that we face, we remain confident that the God who has guided us in the past will continue to lead us forward into 2025 and beyond.

To Him be all the glory!



Accounts to end December 2024

UDDINGSTON : PARK UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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STATEMENT OF BALANCES ON CONGREGATIONAL FUNDS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

FUND	NATURE OF FUND	BALANCE 1/1/24 £	RECEIPTS 2024 £	PAYMENTS 2024 £	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) £	NET FUND TRANSFERS £	NET CHANGE ON FUNDS £	BALANCE 31/12/24 £	FUNDS HELD
GENERAL	UNRESTRICTED	35,202	121,840	-98,443	23,397	-6,300	17,097	52,299	Bank of Scotland plc
FABRIC	DESIGNATED	9,666	10,000	-1,044	8,956	-	8,956	18,622	Bank of Scotland plc
MISSION	DESIGNATED	8,229	-	-6,509	-6,509	6,300	-209	8,020	Bank of Scotland plc
MINISTRY	DESIGNATED	50,190	671	-	671	-	671	50,861	Bank of Scotland plc
PROJECT	DESIGNATED	16,229	900	-	900	-	900	17,129	TSB Bank plc
CHILD & FAMILY	DESIGNATED	7,739	14,365	-13,683	682	-	682	8,421	Bank of Scotland plc
TOTAL		127,255	147,776	-119,679	28,097	0	28,097	155,352	

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 2024 as set out on pages 7-10 by Office Bearers authorised to sign.

Minister and Preses	_____	W. Bruce McDowall
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 2024

UNRESTRICTED FUND

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RECEIPTS				PAYMENTS			
	£	2024	Supplementary 2023 sheet		£	2024	Supplementary 2023 sheet
Offerings				Ministry			
Open	4,840		6,517	Stipend (incl. NI)	43,745		42,087
Free Will	84,813		77,812	Minister's expenses	3,072		3,090
Gift Aid Tax recovered	20,354		17,697	Manse telephone	572		501
		110,006	102,026	Target	11,548		11,253
				Presbytery dues	-		357
						58,937	57,288
Donations				Property			
Others	8,470		55,499 Supp.1	Church		Manse	
		8,470	55,499	Council Tax	-	3,451	3,368
				Insurance	3,161	497	3,321
Other receipts				Heating, Lighting	8,486	-	9,133 Supp.2
Stedfast	20		15	Repairs, maintenance	3,720	5,482	40,587 Supp 3 & 4
Other income	671		190		15,366	9,430	24,797
		691	205				56,409
				Other Congregational Payments			
				Stedfast		528	792
Ordinary receipts		119,167	157,730	Printing & Donation Envelopes		2,533	2,246 Supp.5
Extraordinary receipts				Cleaning		2,699	2,750
Retiral / Special Offering	2,673		3,206	Internet		517	475
		2,673	3,206	Miscellaneous		5,682	3,086 Supp.6
						11,959	9,350
Total receipts		121,840	160,936	Ordinary payments		95,693	123,047
		121,840	160,936	Extraordinary payments			
				Retiral / Special Offering	2,750		4,850 Supp.7
						2,750	4,850
				Total payments		98,443	127,897
				Surplus in year		23,397	33,040
						121,840	160,936
Surplus / (deficit) for Year		23,397	33,040	Transfer to other funds		6,300	57,000
Balance at 1 January		35,203	59,163	Balance at 31 December		52,299	35,203
		58,599	92,203			58,599	92,203

Church News

Infant Baptism

On Sunday 19 January 2025 we celebrated the baptism of **Bonnie Robyn**, infant daughter of Paul and Ashleigh Stewart, along with members from their wider family. We hold the family in prayer and pray that both Ellie and Bonnie will grow up to know Jesus as their Saviour.



SU Lanarkshire

Karen Stangoe, who is Scripture Union's Worker for Lanarkshire, recently spoke about her work and shared some encouraging stories of how God is working among the young people of the area. Lanarkshire is the biggest area in Scotland as far as population is concerned and Karen covers both north and south at the moment. Karen shared the following prayer points with us:

- Pray that SU will be able to raise enough funds to employ a second worker this year to help Karen. **The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few. Matthew 9 v 35**
- Pray that the older young people will share their story of Jesus with the younger generation. Young people are on fire for Jesus and are showing a boldness in sharing the gospel. Karen shared how the young boys in our church have been bold in inviting their friends to SU camps and weekends away. Older teenagers who have attended CONNECT are now training to be Trainee Leaders at camp. **One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. Ps 145 v 4**
- Pray for local community hubs to be set up where local Christians will come together to pray for the young people in each area. The response sometimes seems to be disheartening with only three folk turning up. However, God has used these prayer gatherings and out of them SU Groups have been set up in schools. God can do greater things than whatever we can imagine! **For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. Matthew 18 v 20**

Karen produces a newsletter three times a year as well as a monthly prayer listing. If you would like to pray for this work, please speak to Karen.



Funeral of Pearl Munnings

The funeral for **Pearl** was held in Park on Monday 3 February. Pearl was a lifelong member of our church family. She taught in Sunday School in her younger days and recently was a faithful member of the Wednesday Refresh Group. Pearl suffered from ill health for many years but was always cheerful and trusted the Lord for all her needs. She passed away after a short illness on Friday 10 January, a few days before her 82nd birthday; she will be greatly missed. Many of Pearl's favourite hymns were sung including Morning has Broken, Abide with Me and Be Still for the Presence of the Lord.



March Communion Service

Our guest speaker at our Spring Communion Service on 2 March will be a member of our congregation, **Russell Brooks**, who will talk about his work with **Child Evangelism Fellowship**. We look forward to hearing his story.



Since 1937

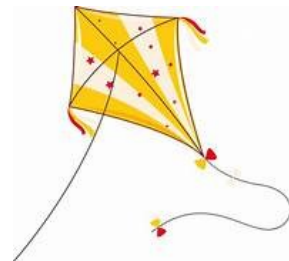
CEF
CHILD EVANGELISM
FELLOWSHIP®
Reaching children worldwide™

Easter Quiz

An easy Easter Quiz to test both your biblical and general knowledge. Answers are at the bottom of the page—no peeking!



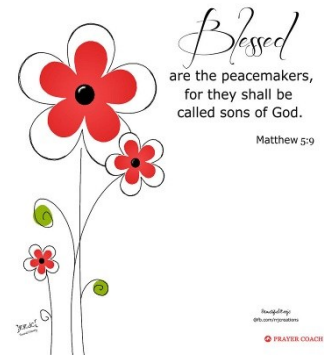
1. What was the Jewish feast being celebrated the week Christ was crucified?
2. Which disciple cut off the ear of the high priest's servant?
3. What was the inscription above the cross?
4. Can you give four of the seven statements Jesus made on the cross?
5. How long did darkness engulf the land when Jesus died?
6. A man named Simon was compelled to carry the cross. What were the names of his two sons?
7. Easter always falls between which two dates?
8. Which meat is traditionally eaten in the UK on Easter Sunday?
9. Which day of Holy Week commemorates The Last Supper?
10. What are the names of the two men who helped prepare Christ's body for burial?
11. Where and when was the UK's first Easter egg created?
12. Which country does Easter Island belong to?
13. Which country flies kites on Good Friday?
14. What do the marzipan balls on the Simnel cake represent?
15. What is the name of the jeweller who decorated Easter eggs for royalty?
16. What flower is considered a symbol of Easter?
17. Bournville is home to which chocolate factory?
18. Malkam Fasika means Happy Easter in which country?
19. What colour were the first Easter eggs dyed in?
20. What do the spices in hot cross buns represent?



Answers: 1. Passover 2. Peter 3. Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews 4. i) Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do. ii) Verily, I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in paradise. iii) Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! iv) Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? v) I thirst vi) It is finished vii) Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. 5. 3 hours (noon to 3pm) 6. Alexander and Rufus 7. March 22 and April 25 8. Lamb 9. Maundy Thursday 10. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus 11. Bristol in 1873 12. Chile 13. Bermuda 14. 11 Disciples (excluding Judas Iscariot) 15. Fabergé 16. White lily 17. Cadbury's 18. Ethiopia 19. red (to represent Jesus' blood) 20. The spices used to embalm Jesus' body after his death.

The Beatitudes in Today's World

In our recent studies of Matthew's Gospel we looked at the Beatitudes, a set of teachings delivered by Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount, which summarise the principles of Kingdom life. They are the heart and soul of Jesus' teachings and through them He describes the blessings of God's kingdom. He gives us a vision of a world redeemed by love, and the qualities of discipleship which will bring about our transformation.



There has been a huge rise in the use of social media as a way of communicating over the last 20 years. About 82% of the UK population has an online presence on at least one platform. Social media, of course, can often be used for good; it gives us connectivity, such as 24-hour news coverage, it helps us keep in touch with friends and relatives worldwide and gives us quick access to information and research. Churches can use it to spread the gospel to people they might not otherwise reach. However, there is also a downside; we hear reports of bullying and harassment, cyber attacks, social isolation and of course, fake news. Public debate has often become cynical, petty or even combative. Social media posts encourage quick, careless communication where hurtful words are written in anger and without due reflection. People hide behind fake profiles to air their views and no dissent is entertained.

The **Right Reverend Dr Steven Croft, the Bishop of Oxford**, has produced a version of the Beatitudes to address the growth of our online society (below). He says:

Our lives are irreversibly online, lived with ever decreasing levels of privacy and hyperstimulated to a relentless pace. Few of us have stopped to properly consider what it means to live well in this age, but as Christians, we have an essential part to play in the shape of online society.

The Beatitudes and Social Media

At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends eight beautiful qualities. But what do the Beatitudes mean for social media and life online?

- ◆ **Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
I will remember that my identity comes from being made and loved by God, not from my online profile.
- ◆ **Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.**
This world is full of grief and suffering. I will tread softly and post with gentleness and compassion.
- ◆ **Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.**
I will not boast or brag online, nor will I put others down.
- ◆ **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.**
There are many wrongs to be righted. I will not be afraid to name them and look for justice in the world.
- ◆ **Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.**
I will not judge others but be generous online. I will be conscious of my own failings.
- ◆ **Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.**
I will be truthful and honest, and I will not pretend to be what I am not.
- ◆ **Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.**
I will seek to reconcile those of different views with imagination and good humour.
- ◆ **Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
I will not add to the store of hate in the world, but I will try to be courageous in standing up for what is right and true.

Grow Uddingston

by Donald Burt



Winter Is Nearly Over (Hopefully!)

The previous Grow Uddingston article was written just prior to our annual Christmas Fayre, which was held at the beginning of December last year. It was a very successful afternoon with entertainment provided by musicians from Uddingston Grammar School, the band of The Salvation Army and dancing from The CM Dance Academy. Muiredge and St John's Primary School choirs performed in Park Church, there were many stalls selling various items and Santa made a very popular appearance!. Thank you to all individuals, organisations and businesses who helped make the Fayre a great success once again.

As part of the Christmas festivities, we hold an annual "Best Shop Window" Competition. The cup, donated by Belt Up, was won by T Tunnock with an excellent festive shop window display. Thanks to all the shops who took part.



Once the Christmas Fayre is over, the rest of the winter is naturally a quieter period for Grow Uddingston. However, now that we are in mid February, we are starting to see snowdrops, crocuses and even some daffodils showing through, which makes us think about commencing work in early March on the Main Street planters, at the railway station and at the Gateway.

The **Litter Picking Team** has continued to work through the winter, with organised weekly picks as well as impromptu individual picks. The Team maintains a running total of the number of bags of litter picked, and since they started in October 2021, they have picked a total of **3,714 bags** within our community. This is a phenomenal achievement and it makes you think what Uddingston would be like if this amount of litter was still lying around! On this subject, we will be participating in the Keep Scotland Beautiful **"Spring Clean"** litter initiative, on **Saturday 5 April**, so if you can spare an hour or so, please come along and help add to the number of bags picked!



And Finally...

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 14 v 27

OVERTHINKING
CAN KILL YOUR
PEACE. PRAY,
TRUST, AND
LEAVE IT IN
GOD'S HANDS.



LivingChristian.org



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