

Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



Letter from the Minister



Spring 2023



Dear Friends,

The other Sunday, I was speaking with a member of the congregation outside the door of the church after our worship service. She made reference to the Apostle John and how, on the Lord's Day, he heard God's voice and had a vision of Jesus Christ. Generously, she spoke of how our times together on a Sunday morning were bringing her fresh and deeper encounters of the Lord and His Word. I thanked her for her comments.

While we can have varied experiences of the Lord when we gather together for worship, nonetheless, there was real insight and truth in those comments. The Apostle John was in a strange and alien place when he lived as a prisoner on the island of Patmos. Firstly, he describes himself as:

"...your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus." Revelation 1 v 9

It is right that we remind ourselves that when we meet for worship, we aren't doing that in isolation from other Christians. Joined by the Holy Spirit as part of the one Body of Christ, we are connected with our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout our world. Many of them are living in situations of suffering and having to exercise patient endurance as they face various times of trial and difficulty. It is good to know that they and we are part of that One Kingdom of God. We are never a solitary worshipper! We are linked with all of God's people throughout the world and throughout history. As the Apostle Paul tells us:

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body." 1 Corinthians 12 v 12-13

That is a precious unity that needs to be cherished and practically expressed.

Secondly, John describes himself as being:

"...on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." Revelation 1 v 9b

Far from his home in Galilee, and probably forcibly moved from his working base in Ephesus, Turkey, John was in a strange and alien environment. Having myself visited Patmos, it is good to remember that it wasn't the attractive holiday destination of today. It was a prison colony, with hard labour the rule of the day for prisoners. Even if John was himself exempt from some of the worst excesses of that (and we don't know if this was the case or not), he certainly would have witnessed many things in his life where people had suffered for their faith. Yet, he affirms that ultimately it wasn't the Romans who had put him on Patmos; it was because of God's Word and the direction of Jesus Christ. Jesus makes it clear that to follow Him is to go the way of suffering and of the cross.

"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, and whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it." Mark 8 v 34-35



That fellowship in discipleship is very important and binds all of God's people together within His kingdom. Let's remember and celebrate that fact. And yet....that is a challenging thought! The acceptance of the sovereignty of God in our difficult situations is not always easy! Let's be clear. John was suffering *because* of his faith and the testimony of Jesus. It was not because of his own folly and actions. Where faithfulness to the Lord causes us to face difficulties from family and friends, work colleagues and neighbours, then we too, like John, can know that this is an honoured place. The words of Jesus:

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness...”
Matthew 5 v 10-12

Thirdly, John was

“In the spirit of the Lord's Day...” Revelation 1 v 10

A good reminder that what we engage in as we gather for worship is a *spiritual* activity. Without the presence of the Holy Spirit, what we would be doing would in so many ways be a meaningless exercise and a waste of time. Supremely, if we are going to hear the voice of the Lord speaking to us as He did to John, the Holy Spirit is central to this. As John records in his gospel:

“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit...will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you.”
John 14 v 26

Lastly, it was a vision of Jesus Christ that he saw on the Lord's Day.
He saw:

“...someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet... with a golden sash around his chest....his face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.” Revelation 1 v 13-16

John was so filled with awe that we are told that he fell down before the One who said:

“I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever!”

Revelation 1 v 17-18



While we are not apostles like John, nor living in Patmos, surely a sign of a *good* time of worship together is that we hear the voice of Jesus and catch a glimpse of His glory and majesty. That in turn causes us to humble ourselves before God in worship. That may not be the case every Sunday when we gather together, but it should happen more often than perhaps it does.

In particular, as we enter into the season of Easter, and reflect on the One who was dead but now is alive for ever and ever, our *vision* of Jesus should surely deepen. In hearing God's word, as we follow the journey to Jerusalem, the cross and the empty tomb, may our prayer be that we will all encounter Him in a fresh and renewing way.

In these days, with so much that can cause us to be distracted and concerned, let us know, at least in part, something of what John experienced on that Lord's Day in Patmos. We don't need to travel to that island, or be in a form of house arrest.

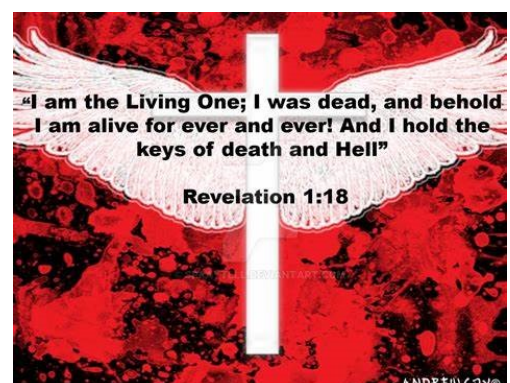
Thankfully, the Lord has promised that:

“...where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”
Matthew 18 v 20

Let that be our longing and prayer over this Easter season.

Prayerfully yours

Bruce



Church News



New Children's and Youth Worker

We welcome **Andrew Robertson**, from Burnside, who has joined us on a short-term contract until June 2023 in the first instance. The hand of God was clearly in this appointment as our need, and Andrew's availability, coincided perfectly. Karen was his youth worker as he was growing up so there is continuity there as well! Andrew has worked abroad and came to speak to us just before he went to Bolivia a few years ago. Unfortunately, his time there was disrupted by the covid pandemic, but he did valuable work with families in prisons during that period. Andrew has also done a lot of placements with Camp America so has lots of experience. He has been a big hit with the boys already as he loves playing football! Andrew will also spend some of his time meeting leaders from different denominations to get a wider grasp of the church at large, and will also be mentored by the minister as he seeks God's will for his future.

Music Festival Concert

The well-known Scottish folk singer, **Alastair McDonald**, was guest artist at a concert in the church on Thursday 16 February. He regaled us with classics like The Massacre of Glencoe as well as more light-hearted songs like Sam the Skull (the Glasgow cat)! Alastair effortlessly proclaims the gospel in his chat between songs, or even between verses, and is a very skilled communicator of the gospel in a non-confrontational way. Many from the community attended and the **Men at the Manse** team served tea at the end. We are very grateful to Alastair for coming as he was battling a chest infection as well as mourning the recent death of his wife.



An appeal was held for the **Turkey/Syria earthquake** which, along with money donated on the following Sunday, raised a total of **£600**. This will be sent to **Christian Aid** to provide aid for the survivors.

160th Anniversary of Park Church

Park Church will mark its 160th anniversary at a special service on **12 March 2023**. Rev John Fairful will be our guest preacher that day. A light sandwich lunch and celebratory cake will be provided for the congregation after the service, so please mark the date in your diary. Communion will be celebrated at this important milestone service instead of the usual first Sunday in March.



Congratulations

Congratulations to **James Paterson** and **Rachel Tait** who are getting married in Darnley United Free Church of Scotland on **Thursday 13 April 2023**.

Getting married is a public demonstration of love and lifelong commitment between two people but for Christians it is much more. Marriage is a powerful symbol of the relationship between Christ and His Church. In the Book of Revelation, the Church is described as being dressed for Christ like a bride for her bridegroom. At its best, marriage gives us a glimpse of the faithful, enduring love which God has towards His people.

The bride and bridegroom make promises to each other and will exchange rings as a symbol of these promises. However, they are also making a promise to God that they will commit to each other for life, in good times and bad.

May God bless James and Rachel as they embark on their new life together.



Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.

Romans 12 v 10

Moving On

Karen Stangoe stepped down from her post as Children and Families' worker in December. She had been in post for the past seven years and in that time the children's ministry had grown and borne much fruit. Karen looks back over this period and towards the future in her new post with SU Scotland.



Can I firstly say a huge **THANK YOU** to you all for the encouraging – and moving! – send-off you gave me in December as I stepped down from my post as Children and Families' Worker. My emotions were running deep when Ian delivered his presentation to me and I found myself unable to thank you all from the front as I would have liked; however, I think it might have tipped me over the edge that morning! Thank you for the beautiful parting gifts, words of encouragement and for the godly send off – it is something I will treasure. As a family we have been so warmly welcomed and supported during my seven years in post for which we are truly grateful. I'm reminded of Paul's words to the Philippians (Chapter 1 v 3):



“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.”

You were with us in Park for just over seven years as our Children and Families' Worker; what were the highlights of your time here?

My time as Children and Families' worker is full of happy memories – from playing with Park Tots, pretending we were disciples in the boat seeing Jesus provide a miraculous catch of fish, to running the Park Kids' discipleship course; and having Connect in my back garden during Covid ... and everything in between! It's been an honour to teach and support the children and young people for seven years, seeing them grow in age and in faith.

For a laugh, here are some extra, light-hearted highlights:

Funny highlight: Lewis (2) and Joshua (3) hijacking the Crib Service in 2016 by playing the piano and organ and catching the unsuspecting parents off guard!

Embarrassing highlight: My inability to play **any** sport well was a laughing point at Connect over MANY years!

Silly highlight: Working with the Park Kids, MEGA and Holiday Club teams and their willingness to leave dignity at the door and embrace being big kids!

The pandemic created its own challenges with lockdown and not being able to meet in person. What positives did you take from this period?

With the benefit of hindsight, I can see many positive things from this difficult period. Mainly, that for the children, at a time when their world, and indeed much of the wider world, seemed to shut down, their access to Park Kids, MEGA and Connect remained. It is a living testimony that God alone is steadfast and true. I really pray that this will be a deep truth rooted in their hearts as they grow in faith and into adulthood.

Another positive from this period of time was the number of families from the community we were able to engage with more openly as they joined in with MEGA online, took part in an online family Christmas Quiz, and have subsequently come along in person to Christmas events over the past two years.

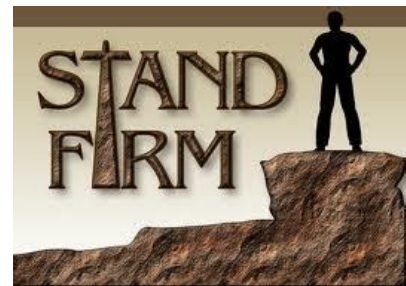
You involved the families in your ministry with the children; how important is the role of the family in a child's faith development?

Personally, I don't believe Church-based children's ministry should ever stand alone, but rather should always be done in connection with family ministry. The Bible is clear on the responsibility of the family in passing on the Word of God to the next generation from Old Testament passages like Deuteronomy 6, right through to the New Testament and the example Timothy gives of his mother and grandmother who first taught him about Jesus. Therefore, I believe that children and families' ministry should seek to support families, and provide opportunities for families to come together in prayer and Bible reading – using sources like the Jesse Tree and the Holy Week activities packs that Park Kids have used over the years.

I believe involvement with family is key both in discipleship and in evangelism because children are dependent on their parents and strongly influenced by their home environment.

What has God been teaching you over the last seven years?

Over the last seven years, God has taught me a lot about Christian leadership, particularly in terms of teaching the Bible to others. He placed on my heart the importance of discipleship – for all ages – with the phrase “standing on a firm foundation” never being far from my mind. As I look back, I can see that He has reminded me of this again and again – a sure sign that it was something I am to take note of and recognise His leading!



What led to your decision to move on to new pastures?

Leaving a ministry you love, and have immersed your life in, is never going to be easy, but sometimes it is the right thing to do. I believe the time was right for me to move on for a variety of different reasons which God made clear to me and Graeme.

Tell us a little about your new post and your hopes for the future.

My new role is the Lanarkshire Schools Ministry Coordinator for SU Scotland. As an organisation SU's vision is to see every child and young person in Scotland have the opportunity to explore the bible and respond to the significance of Jesus.

My role is to teach Religious and Moral Education (RME) in primary schools, using a resource called Bible Alive, which uses storytelling and sign language to teach the whole bible over a series of seven lessons. It's a really powerful resource, which ties in with the school curriculum and allows children to hear and understand the gospel. I am also going to be trying to recruit new volunteers and establish new SU groups in the area, while supporting existing volunteers.



I am in my final year of studying counselling so I'm kept busy with assignments and placement at a counselling centre. I look forward to qualifying in the next year and becoming a counsellor.

What can we pray for you?



Please pray for wisdom and discernment in my new role, that I would seek God's guidance in which areas of North Lanarkshire He wants to develop first.



Please pray too for God to raise up new volunteers to lead and help out with SU groups. SU groups are an amazing place for kids to hear about Jesus and have an opportunity to respond to Him. They are also a great witness within schools, but we need more people in order to give more schools the opportunity to have a group.

Come let us sing for joy to the Lord!

The purpose of hymns is to tell the good news of Jesus and to direct our attention heavenwards. Many are based on scripture passages such as the two we are looking at here. They incorporate both the Old and New Testaments, taking inspiration from Psalm 72 and the Book of Revelation.



Jesus shall reign where're the sun

This hymn was written in 1719 by one of the most famous hymn writers in our country's history, Dr Isaac Watts (1674-1748). He is sometimes called "the father of English hymnody". There is a memorial tablet to him in Westminster Abbey, where he is seen writing at a table with pen in hand, and an angel whispering words of inspiration into his ear.

This is considered to be the first missionary hymn. It has been used all over the world and has lasted the test of time as it is still sung today. It was originally titled, "Christ's Kingdom among the Gentiles" and is basically a translation of the second half of Psalm 72. One of its most famous renditions was in one of the South Sea Islands in 1862 when the islanders converted from cannibalism to Christianity. King George, the ruler of the islands, had also been converted and he decided to proclaim a Christian constitution for his government, setting apart a certain day for the final ceremony. Over 5,000 natives of the islands of Tonga, Fiji and Samoa were present and all united their voices in singing this hymn. As they sang, they felt the power of God's word, through song, transforming them. What a scene and sound that must have been!

In Psalm 72 Solomon prays that the heirs of his father David will rule with wisdom, justice and righteousness, protecting the poor and needy, and bringing blessings to the people. Jesus is the fulfilment of this prayer. He is the righteous king from the line of David who brings blessing to all who submit to His reign.

Every verse of the hymn emphasises the indisputable truth that Jesus *shall* reign. His kingdom *will* stretch from shore to shore (Psalm 72 v 8) for as long as the sun and moon endure (Psalm 72 v 5). His kingdom will include people and realms of every tongue (Revelation 7 v 9); people from every nation, tribe and tongue will gather round His throne to praise and honour Him. Empires rise and fall, but the reign of the Lord will endure forever!

1. Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does its successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.
2. To Him shall endless prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown His head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
With every morning sacrifice.
3. People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song,
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.
4. Blessings abound where'er He reigns:
The pris'ners leap to loose their chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all who suffer want are blest.
5. Let every creature rise and bring
The highest honours to our King,
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud amen.

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



After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes ...

Revelation 7 v 9

The Lord Almighty Reigns

This song by **Keith and Kristyn Getty** was released in September 2022. Keith Getty wrote:

“The Lord Almighty Reigns” is the most exciting new hymn I’ve been part of in the last 20 years!

High praise from one of modern day’s most successful and prolific hymn writers! Let’s hear from Kristyn Getty:

The song invites us to imagine the heavenly feast when we will all gather around the throne of Christ in praise. There is an eternity of worship to come that will flow from us like the air we breathe. That great freedom will come when it all works and we don’t think about ourselves as much and we walk fully with the Lord in the cool of the day, delighting in the Saviour who has made it so.

Today this is not a whistling in the dark optimism but a singing in the sun hope. Though we may sing now with broken chords and hesitant breath, one day, that final song told to us in Revelation 19 will ring out endlessly and will herald our real and complete life with Him and all who have trusted in Him.

Hallelujah!
For the Lord our God
The Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and exult
and give Him the glory,
for the marriage
of the Lamb has come,
and His Bride has
made herself ready.

Revelation 19 v 6-7

1. There's an endless song waiting to be sung
With the voice of every tribe, the sound of every tongue
When the bride of Christ on that day of days
Brings with joy unto the land a multitude of praise

Pre Chorus

Like the roar of mighty seas and rolls of thunder
Hear His people sing

Chorus

Hallelujah, hallelujah
For the Lord Almighty reigns
Hallelujah, hallelujah
For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns

Bridge

Certain of that day, Christ we will proclaim
Oh, that more would share the pride, salvation in His
name

Pre-Chorus

Then greater will the anthem ring
The mighty chorus rising to the King

Final Chorus

Hallelujah (Hallelujah), hallelujah
For the Lord (For the Lord) Almighty reigns (Lord
Almighty, hey)
Hallelujah (Hallelujah), hallelujah (Oh-oh-oh)
For the Lord our God (Our God) the Almighty reigns
(Reigns)
Hallelujah, hallelujah
For the Lord Almighty reigns (Hallelujah)
Hallelujah, hallelujah
For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns

2. We will join the feast, rest from battles won
Tell with great rejoicing
All the wonders God has done

Pre Chorus

Like the roar of mighty seas and rolls of
thunder
All the church will sing

Chorus

Hallelujah, hallelujah
For the Lord Almighty reigns
Hallelujah, hallelujah
For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns

"And on His robe and on His thigh He
has a name written, "KING OF
KINGS, AND LORD OF
LORDS.""
(Revelation 19:16)

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

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

This piece of legislation, introduced by the Scottish Government, but subsequently blocked by the UK Government, has caused much controversy in recent political times. Its future is now uncertain with the sudden resignation of the First Minister. However, a blog, written on 24 December 2022, from a Christian perspective, was brought to the recent Kirk Session meeting and it was felt excerpts from it should be reproduced here. It is written by Rev David Robertson, former minister of St Peter's Free Church of Scotland in Dundee, and now a writer and blogger.

Everything that's wrong with Scotland's new gender recognition law

December 21 is normally the shortest and darkest day each year in Scotland. This year, it coincided with one of the darkest moments in Scottish history. After three days of bitter debate, the Gender Recognition Reform Bill was passed in the Scottish Parliament on Thursday by 86 votes to 39—with nine of the ruling SNP party voting against.

The Bill, which was supported by the Scottish Greens, Labour and the Liberal Democrats, allows transgender males and females to change their legal sex by simply signing a statutory declaration.

Why is this important?

1. It is state sponsored lying

The Bill allows you to change your birth certificate so that it lies about your sex. If you are born male and later decide you want to be a woman, then you can change your birth certificate to say that you were born a woman. This is biological nonsense and a straightforward lie. But it is a lie that the government promotes—to such an extent that you can be prosecuted for speaking the truth!

2. It is a state sponsored attack on women's rights

Feminist, and author, J K Rowling said before the vote that the Bill was “the single biggest assault on the rights of Scottish women and girls in my lifetime”. The writer Nina Welsh summed it up well: “Tomorrow, Sturgeon will preside over one of the most regressive, dangerous and frankly absurd pieces of legislation the modern world has ever seen. Last week, her government successfully managed to get the word “woman” redefined from an adult human female to anyone who has a piece of paper that says they are one.”

Two weeks ago, the judge, Lady Haldane, ruled that a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) changes someone's legal sex for the purposes of the 2010 Equality Act. Now that the Scottish Parliament have made it easy to get a GRC, this means that men who self-declare as women cannot, under the Equality Act, be excluded from women's spaces or sports.

This contradicts claims by the proposer of the Bill, Shona Robison, that this would not affect women's spaces. In effect the Scottish Parliament has now redefined women as a mixed sex category and there is nothing that women can do about it.

To understand the depths to which so many politicians have become obsessed by this ideology, consider this astonishing fact: on Tuesday evening there was an amendment put forward which sought to deny sex offenders a GRC. This was defeated by 64 votes to 59. In other words, the Scottish Parliament votes for rapists to be allowed into women's prisons. Michelle Thomson, an SNP MSP who bravely spoke of her own experience of being raped as a 14 year old, put forward another amendment which would have merely paused the process of sex offenders getting a GRC. But such is the lunacy, that this too was rejected.

Think of another consequence. As the journalist Kevin McKenna writing in The Herald warned, “No female victim of rape or serious sexual assault in Scotland can be reasonably confident that their request for a biological female to conduct an intimate medical examination will be granted. Instead, they risk being warned about having a hateful attitude.”

.....

3. It is state sponsored child abuse

Vulnerable children are being experimented on by clinics who provide gender realignment and other services. The Bill passed in Scotland has reduced the age of consent from 18 to 16. Despite the closing down of the Tavistock Clinic in England and despite the warnings of people like Abigail Shrier—whose book **Irreversible Damage** provides clear evidence of the manipulation, indoctrination and harm to teenage girls—the MSPs remained committed to their ideology.

In this Brave New Scotland, to suggest that a teenage girl who is struggling with gender identity disorder should seek psychiatric help is a hate crime; to chop off her breasts is an act of love.

Children are being taught they can choose their own gender. They are being indoctrinated into the Queer theory of the trans cult and there is nothing parents can do about it. Indeed, Scotland has now moved to a situation where parents are not to be informed if their child wants to change gender. “This is our little secret” has always been the motto of the abuser. Now it is the motto of Scottish education.

Some of the more extremist politicians in the Parliament spoke of ‘dangerous’ parents who might not affirm their child’s transitioning. Again, in today’s Scotland to refuse to do so could result in you being convicted of abuse and hate crime. This will be even more so when the politicians pass anti-conversion therapy legislation.

.....

How did the Churches respond?

While churches like the Free Church, the Catholics and others made clear their opposition to the Bill in the submission stage, there were others like the Church of Scotland who shamefully supported it. But even those who are opposed have been silent over the past week. I looked at the Baptist Union website, the Free Church, the Catholics and others and there is not a word. One of the most significant anti-Christian, anti-family, anti-poor, anti-children and anti-human acts ever passed by a parliament has gone through without a word from the representatives of the vast majority of the Churches. In this regard the feminists have put the Church to shame. They are more prophetic and courageous than we are.

Where do we go from here?

Patrick Harvie, leader of the Scottish Greens, chillingly warned that this was just the beginning. The trans activists won’t stop here. They will seek more and more power and control. We have to stand against this evil. I think of the many I personally know who have been so affected and harmed by this ideology. Trans people need help, love and prayer. They don’t need our condemnation, nor our affirmation; they need our compassion. But those who are using this ideology for their own particular ends deserve all the condemnation of Christ (Mark 9 v 42).

One thing we can all do, if we are UK citizens is sign [Maya Forstater’s petition](#), “Update the Equality Act to make clear the characteristic “sex” is biological sex”.

But we need so much more than that.

This week I have been listening to a Scottish preacher, the Baptist minister Alistair Begg, who in an extraordinarily brave, compassionate and profound three-part series on Romans 1 explained what is going on. It’s a good job for Alistair that he is now based in the US because his sermons would run the risk of prosecution in his native land.

He showed that what is happening demonstrates the destructive power of idolatry and evil. Thinking ourselves to be wise, we have become fools. We have rejected the truth of God for a lie, and so we end up believing the lie that you can change your sex by changing a bit of paper.

The answer for the Church is surely in repentance, prayer and prophetic proclamation. We must speak up in defence of children, the vulnerable and for women’s rights, even if that costs us some government relationships. What’s the point of having the light if you refuse to let it shine?

The full blog can be read at www.thewee flea.com



Celebrating 160 Years of Park Church



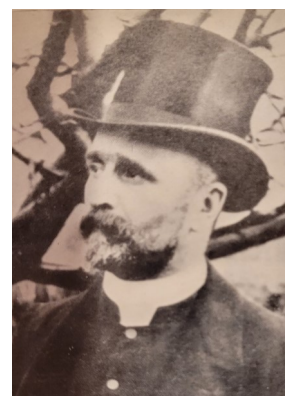
What is today known as Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland was founded in 1863 when a local preacher, Dr William Anderson, recognised the need for a church in the village. Today it remains a place where God's people meet to praise and worship Him, but also where we seek to reach out to our community. We have been given a position of prominence in the village and we are called to shine Christ's light into our community. As we celebrate our past, our prayer for the future is that we would continue to be known as a fellowship that knows Christ and makes Him known.

It is hard to believe looking around Uddingston today, with its plethora of churches from all denominations, that there was no church in the village of Uddingston in 1863. An application was made to the Glasgow Presbytery of the **United Presbyterian Church** to erect a new church in 1861 by Dr Anderson. This was approved and the work of securing the sum of £1000 began on 10 March 1862. The land was gifted by a local landowner, Mr Poynter of Clydeneuk. The following day most of the main contractors' estimates were accepted and one month later a quarter of the stonemason's work was complete. While initially it was thought impossible to have a steeple, this was included for an extra £44. The total cost was eventually about £1600.

We read in the church records that the first plans for the church building had to be discarded as they were not thought to be worthy of the eminence of the position of the plot, and a more architecturally pleasing building would have to be built which, as well as being a "gem in architecture", would also "shine as a Star in the Witness-bearing for Truth". At this stage it was known as Uddingston United Presbyterian Church but after the Union of the United Presbyterian Church with the Free Church in 1900, it became known as Uddingston Park United Free Church, taking its name from the field it was built on, "The Lady Park".

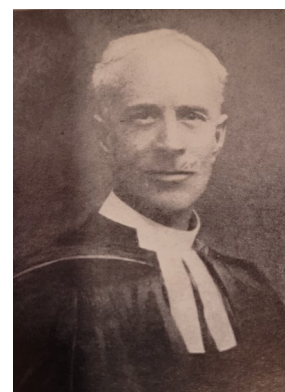
The first day of public worship was Sunday 8 March 1863. There were three services that day, conducted by Dr Anderson, Rev Dr J Robson and Rev H Calderwood. The galleries in the church were not completed till 1872 and a Constitution to regulate its business was adopted in 1871. Although the church was open for worship, we did not get our first minister until two years later when **Rev John McLuckie** from Lanark was inducted. The story goes that he used to call in a loud voice from the pulpit, "John, where are my spectacles?" John, the church officer, would reply, "They're on your heid!"

Uddingston as a village was changing when the **Rev James Gardiner**, from Cowdenbeath, took up the charge in 1879. There were many new collieries opening up in the village and adjacent districts and soon Uddingston changed from a quiet, sleepy village to a mining industrial area. The influx of these new residents added to his workload but he did not falter. He attended funerals, weddings and baptisms. Most baptisms were carried out in the home rather than the church and it seems Rev Gardiner was "the life and soul of the party" at these family gatherings. He was a friendly man, instantly recognisable in the village by his frock coat and tall clerical hat, walking stick under his arm. He resigned for health reasons at the end of 1915.



During this period Aitkenhead Mission station was set up in 1883 to cater for the growing population of 2000 Protestant inhabitants "up the hill". A Mission Hall was built, partially funded by the congregation at Park. It functioned under the auspices of Park until it became an independent charge in 1905. In 1909 Park Church gifted the premises to Aitkenhead UF Church which in turn united with Thornwood and Bothwellpark in 1933 to become what is now known as Viewpark Parish Church.

The village was in the throes of the First World War when **Rev George Blair** arrived, a difficult time when many families had lost loved ones. However, Mr Blair endeared himself to the villagers as he was a kindly man and a very persuasive preacher. He would apply scripture to everyday occurrences and see the hand of God in everything, no matter how trivial. However, he was called by Ryehill Church in Dundee where he remained until his retirement in 1946. Our loss was Dundee's gain.



A few months later the **Rev James Murray** arrived in Uddingston. He had served as a Chaplain with the Cameron Highlanders and had been awarded the Croix de Guerre with Silver Star. He made many pastoral visits, always announcing his intention to do so from the pulpit! He loved walking and photography and was in great demand as a speaker to give lectures on his travels. He passed away in Stonehouse hospital on 11 March 1957, while still in post.

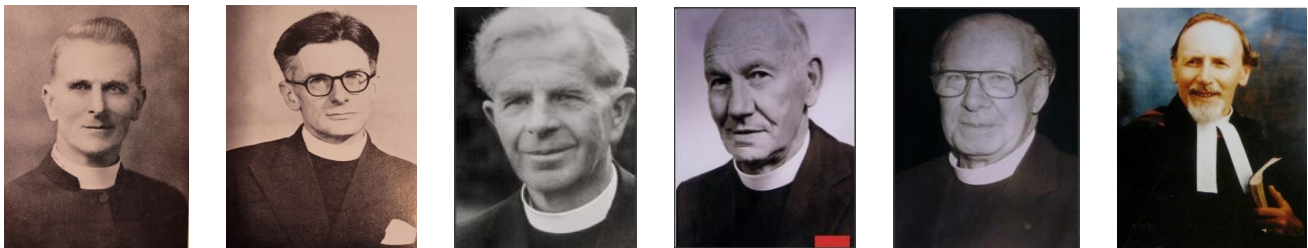
A vacancy committee was formed on Mr Murray's death, and the search began for a new minister. A unanimous call went out to **Rev John McNaughton**, who at that time was minister of St Bride's Parish Church in Partick, and he accepted. He was a man of strong character, with a mind of his own. Television had by now made its mark on society and he did not hesitate to refer in his sermons to things he had seen on it, as he tried to make his sermons and talks relevant to young and old alike. He left Park in 1968 to take up his charge at Hyndland Parish Church in Glasgow.

He was followed by the **Rev John Symington** from Govan Old Parish Church during 1969, on a restricted charge. He was a well-known figure within the Iona Community. He had a gift for children's ministry but he left in 1973 due to ill health.

Dr J W Malcolm, who was originally from Edinburgh, became our minister in 1974. During his tenure, the Church of Scotland began the process of reducing its charges to one in Uddingston. A potential union between Park and Chalmers Church was explored. Park withdrew from the discussions and Chalmers united with Trinity to form what is now known as Uddingston Old. Dr Malcolm did not agree with our decision and announced from the pulpit one Sunday that he was stepping down in 1981.

Presbytery sent us a retired minister, **Rev Hector Steele**, to act as interim moderator because it refused to give us permission to call another minister. Mr Steele remained with us for six years.

We were finally permitted to call a minister, with restrictions, in 1987. It was a terminable appointment which could have been ended at any time by the Church of Scotland. **Rev Earlsley White** was from the Isle of Man and had spent many years at Orchard Road Church in Singapore. Many of today's congregation came to faith under Mr White's faithful teaching of God's word.



Our present minister, **Rev Wm Bruce McDowall**, was called to Park in 1999. He is an excellent preacher as well as being a diligent pastoral visitor. He is well known in the village, believing that it is important that he is visible, not just to his congregation, but to everyone in the community and this was certainly appreciated during the pandemic when the church remained open. In 2005 history repeated itself when the Church of Scotland tried to make Park unite with Uddingston Old. Bruce felt very strongly that Park should remain separate, as a witness to Christ, and resisted this decision.

Bruce took the very brave decision to demit from the Church of Scotland, even at the risk of losing his home, and Park re-joined her original denomination of the United Free Church of Scotland. This was a difficult time but with Bruce at the helm and his steady hand on the tiller, he guided us through some very turbulent and choppy waters till at last we reached the safe haven of the UF!



At the same time, we began a work of major renovation to the sanctuary as we were badly affected by dry rot, damage to the roof and stone work. The work was extensive but was supported financially and practically by the congregation. The final total cost was over £300,000 but we now have a welcoming and flexible place of worship, which God has used greatly in our endeavour to reach out to our community with the good news of the gospel.

We have survived many challenging times throughout our history, including the recent covid pandemic, but we are sure God's hand will continue to bless Park in the future and He will continue to raise up Godly men to grace the pulpit, just as He has done for the last 160 years. Here's to a bright future! Soli Deo Gloria!

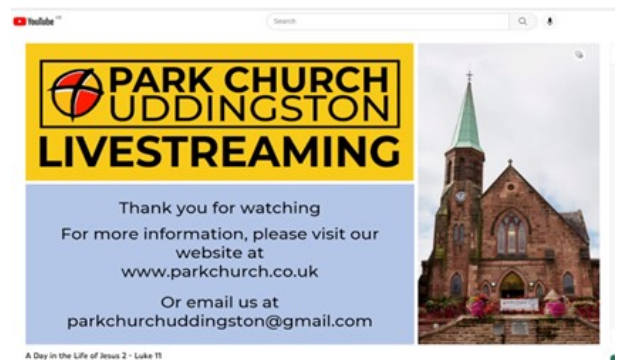
Congregational Report by the Minister

The past year has been a period of readjustment after the stresses and strains of the Covid pandemic. As a congregation, we took a clear, but also carefully assessed, approach to the challenges that confronted us. Not everyone agreed, but for the majority of the Fellowship, it has meant that we were able to pick up on most of the Fellowship groups and other activities as we entered into the new year.

To say that it has been easy for any congregation, of the size and age range that we are, to maintain momentum over these last few years is unrealistic. However, some new friends have come to join us and the encouragement of that, along with the faithful support of many others, has enabled us to pick up on some of our outreach activities.

We ran three successful outreach concerts for the community during the year and many local visitors and friends were able to attend. **MEGA**, our Saturday children's event, was able to resume more fully and a special event took place at Christmas when parents of the children were invited to join in. Our link with **Grow Uddingston** (formerly Uddingston Pride) was strengthened, after a covid-induced break, by hosting a well-supported School Concert and Café during the Village Christmas at the beginning of December. During that month, we welcomed back Primary 6 from Muiredge Primary School to the church for **Christmas Unwrapped**. The **Midweek Devotionals** have allowed people to access some spiritual input during the week, which they might not have been able to do in the past. The occasional 'drop in' visitor has connected us with people who are often going through various pastoral challenges.

Our Sunday morning worship has continued to be live-streamed and broadcast on **YouTube**. This is of help to those who are at home, for whatever reason, on a Sunday morning, but it is also being accessed by a number of people outwith our own Church Family. Some encouraging emails have shown that, although we are not talking about vast numbers, there are those who are benefitting from this ministry. Around 100 **Try Praying** booklets have been taken from the box attached to the church gates, and our prayer is that at least some of these will be used to draw people to a living faith in Jesus Christ. Our conviction is that some of those who listen online are drawn from that category of people.



Strategically, the Kirk Session has resolved to begin the process of looking for a **Ministry Assistant** that would, we pray, be effectively a colleague and successor to the present minister in the church. This will take time to work through. Due process with the denomination will take place before the search for such a person can begin, but the generous gift from a deceased member will allow us to fund such a post should the right person be identified. Sadly, our **Family and Children's Worker** moved onto a new post with Scripture Union at the end of the year. She will be missed, although it is to her credit that so many of her helpers have risen to the challenge of keeping the children's ministry going. We are in the process of discerning the way ahead for this ministry.

As always, prayer is vital for all these endeavours and, whether that be at the various Fellowship Groups, at our weekday Devotionals, our Open to God Prayer time, held fortnightly on Zoom on a Saturday morning, or in our own homes in our own time, we know only too well that **unless the Lord builds the house, those who build, labour in vain**. We look to the Lord as we face the opportunities, but also uncertainties, of this coming year.



Unless the Lord builds the house,
the builders labour in vain. Unless
the Lord watches over the city,
the guards stand watch in vain.

Psalm 127 v 1

Accounts to end December 2022

UDDINGSTON : PARK UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Page 7

STATEMENT OF BALANCES ON CONGREGATIONAL FUNDS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

FUND	NATURE OF FUND	BALANCE 1/1/22 £	RECEIPTS 2022 £	PAYMENTS 2022 £	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) £	NET FUND TRANSFERS £	NET CHANGE ON FUNDS £	BALANCE 31/12/22 £	FUNDS HELD
GENERAL	UNRESTRICTED	79,500	99,160	-120,977	-21,817	1,480	-20,337	59,163	Bank of Scotland plc
FABRIC	DESIGNATED	9,026	5,000	-4,510	490	-	490	9,516	Bank of Scotland plc
MISSION	DESIGNATED	8,359	5,038	-13,932	-8,895	8,500.00	-395	7,965	Bank of Scotland plc
PROJECT	DESIGNATED	23,944	1,125	-	1,125	-9,980	-8,855	15,089	TSB Bank plc
CHILD & FAMILY	DESIGNATED	26,691	4,397	-16,518	-12,121	-	-12,121	14,570	Bank of Scotland plc
TOTAL		147,520	114,719	-155,937	-41,218	-	-41,218	106,302	

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
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 2022 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 2022

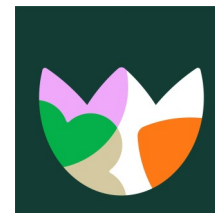
UNRESTRICTED FUND

Page 8

RECEIPTS	£	2022	2021 sheet	PAYMENTS	£	2022	2021 sheet
Offerings				Ministry			
Open	3,832		1,789	Stipend (incl. NI)	41,152		40,496
Free Will	71,455		75,617	Minister's expenses	3,072		4,110
Gift Aid Tax recovered	16,629		18,222	Manse telephone	645		555
		91,916	95,627	Target	10,653		9,489
				Presbytery dues	-	55,522	54,977
Donations				Property			
Others	3,715		2,391 Supp.1	Church			
		3,715	2,391	Council Tax	-	3,203	3,119
				Insurance	2,816	410	3,044
Other receipts				Heating, Lighting	7,683	-	3,456 Supp.2
Stedfast	144		-	Repairs, maintenance	32,528	5,842	4,589 Supp.3 & 4
Other income	-	144	0		43,027	9,455	52,482
				Other Congregational Payments			
				Stedfast	264		1,056
Ordinary receipts		95,775	98,018	Printing & Donation Envelopes	2,387		2,489 Supp.5
Extraordinary receipts				Cleaning	2,363		2,101
Retiral / Special Offering	3,385		1,932	Internet	467		461
		3,385	1,932	Organ / Piano Maintenance	236		180
				Miscellaneous	3,566		3,174 Supp.6
Total receipts		99,160	99,950			9,283	9,460
		99,160	99,950	Ordinary payments		117,287	78,647
				Extraordinary payments			
Surplus / (deficit) for Year		-21,817	19,152	Retiral / Special Offering	3,690		2,151 Supp.7
Balance at 1 January		79,501	68,349			3,690	2,151
		57,684	87,501	Total payments		120,977	80,798
				Surplus in year		-21,817	19,152
						99,160	99,950
				Transfer to other funds		-1,480	8,000
				Balance at 31 December		59,164	79,501
						57,684	87,501

Grow Uddingston

Donald Burt



Winter is almost over and Spring is nearly here!

The meteorological winter finishes at the end of this month and already there are signs of spring around our community. Daffodil plants are starting to show through, with snowdrops and crocuses providing some much needed colour. This includes the crocuses along the banking at the railway station. Our activities will also be starting in earnest again next month and we look forward to a busy (and colourful) year.



However, that is not to say that we have been "in hibernation" over the winter!

Our **Christmas Fayre** was again very successful in raising money for our funds and our thanks go to all of the people, bands, organisations and businesses who helped make the Fayre such a success. It was great to see so many people from the local community come out and enjoy the festivities.



Our thanks also go to the local churches who helped in several ways, and especially to **Park Church** which not only hosted the school choirs, but also provided Tea and Coffee which also raised money for our funds.

In conjunction with the Christmas Fayre, we also launched our new name -- **Grow Uddingston**. This change has been very well received and hopefully the change of name will make what we do clearer and will encourage more people to join us. Our aim is:



growing our reach, our impact and our community, with our commitment to making Uddingston a beautiful place to live and work in as strong as ever!

Our new email address is growuddingston@gmail.com

Uddingston Gateway

The cleaning, renovation and re-pointing of the sandstone structure has recently been completed. This work was funded by grants from The Landtrust, Patersons of Greenoakhill and North Lanarkshire Council. The work was done by Cornerstone Traditional Masonry and everyone is most impressed with the visual improvement this has made to the entrance to Uddingston from the west.



It has also stabilised the structure for many years to come. Over the next few months we will be renovating and improving the front and rear flowerbeds, which hopefully will make the visual appearance of this local landmark even better!

Our **Litter Picker Group** has also been continuing its sterling work. Since it started in October 2021, **931 bags of litter** have been collected, and even in just the last two months, **248 bags** of litter from 14 different locations have been picked up. **Keep Scotland Beautiful** is running a **Spring Clean**



Scotland campaign from 17 March-17 April. We will be organising (no pun intended), a **drop-in litter picking** event on **Thursday 30 March, 4-6.30 pm**.



We hope that people who don't normally get involved will be able to come along for part of this time (after work, for example). If you would like to help, or are looking for more information, please email me or speak to any of the **Grow Uddingston** team. If as many people as possible can lend a hand, we can keep our community looking beautiful!

Dates for the Diary

<p>Sunday 12 March</p>	<p>160th Anniversary Service Guest Preacher Rev John Fairful Sandwich lunch after the service</p>	
<p>Monday 20 March</p>	<p>Easter Code P7 Pupils from Muiredge Primary</p>	
<p>Palm Sunday 2 April</p>	<p>Welcome the King 10.30am</p>	
<p>Wednesday 5 April</p>	<p>Consider the Cost 7.30pm</p>	
<p>Maundy Thursday</p>	<p>Share in the Meal 7.30pm</p>	
<p>Good Friday</p>	<p>Consider Him Church will be open from 12-3pm with short devotional at 2.30pm</p> <p>United Good Friday Service in Grace Church, Bothwell Christ—Our Passover Lamb 7.30pm</p>	
<p>Easter Sunday</p>	<p>Celebrate the Resurrection! 10.30am</p>	
<p>Sunday 28 May</p>	<p>Pentecost All-age Café Church 10.30am</p>	



Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland
89 Main Street
Uddingston
G71 7EW

www.parkchurch.co.uk
01698 817256

This magazine is also available on the church website

