

Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



Letter from the Minister

Spring 2021



Dear Friends,

Well, it has been some year.....here we are in the month of March and we are still working through the challenges and consequences of Covid-19. While the news is encouraging concerning the roll out of the vaccine program, and the impact on cases and death, there is still much that is uncertain about the future. If you think that come April, everything, including church life, will return to 'normal', then you are going to be sadly disappointed. We have many things to work through and work out before that happens. Even then, the *new normal* may well involve some substantial changes to what we have been used to.

The Kirk Session has discussed what a return to church life may look like from Easter. We will pick up from where we left off at Christmas time! Our pattern of small numbers gathering often during the week worked well, and certainly will be the basis for any future building up towards a full return to church life and worship. This will mean the church being open often for private prayer, small devotional gatherings and for some of the Fellowship Groups. During Holy Week we will be able to repeat the gatherings for Communion prior to Christmas. This will help us to re-engage with Worship and the Word within the Sanctuary. It will allow us in a meaningful way to mark Easter. And for some it may be the start of reintegrating yourself into the life of the congregation; a vital step that only **YOU** can take. Further information will be sent out and intimated from the pulpit when we have worked out the details.

The encouragement is that as a Fellowship we have survived these last months of winter, and all the impact of lockdown! Despite the gloom of these last few months, and the cold weather in late January and February, we can see the signs of Spring appearing. **THERE IS HOPE!** New Life springing out of the 'Death' of Winter. How apt this is for Easter. At the heart of Christianity, Death and Resurrection are intrinsically linked to each other. As Jesus told His disciples:

We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. On the third day, He will rise again. Luke 18: v 31- 33.

Encouragingly, Luke goes on to tell us that the disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying. They struggled to make sense of much of what was happening and the uncertainty that it led them into, just as we would have if we'd found ourselves in the same situation. And yet Jesus could journey to Jerusalem, knowing that this was His destiny. As he later said to the disciples:

Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father, save me from this hour?" No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name! John 12: v 27-28

As John reflected on this later in his life, he could write this comment on all that was happening during that first Holy Week.

Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave the world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. John 13: v 1



To the confused and fearful disciples after the crucifixion, the same, yet radically different Jesus, stands before them and says to them:

“Peace be with you... Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your mind? Look at my hands and feet. It is I myself!... This is what I told you while I was with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” Then He opened their minds so that they could understand the Scriptures....Luke 24 v 36-45

While those disciples no doubt still had their questions and struggled with the whole wonder of what had happened, all the Gospel records make it clear that they worshipped the Risen Lord.

As a congregation, we have not been able to corporately come together in the way we did since the beginning of last March. I know that for many of you, and for myself, this has been a 'cross' to bear. We eagerly look forward to a time when we will be able to do so again. But whatever lockdown limitations, levels and regulations may be in force this Easter, we can all come to the same Risen Christ with our struggles and our questions, and we can worship Him as the Lord of Life and the Lord of Glory. Let us all

Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners ...and for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

And as we do so, we will find that such reflection and consideration will mean that

...we will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12: v 2-3

Last Good Friday, April 2020, many of us came to the church and literally stood at the foot of the Cross as it was positioned outside the front door of the Sanctuary. We will be able to do the same this Good Friday, April 2021.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8

will continue to meet us in our hearts as we set Him apart as Lord of our Lives. (1 Peter 3:15)

Whatever these coming months bring, and the changes that will undoubtedly flow from them, we too can have the confidence and security to know that as He has led us over this past year, He will continue to walk with us into the future.

After the seeming death of Winter, and the struggles of this past year, New Life is springing forth.....Hallelujah, What a Saviour !!

With warm greeting from the Manse and my prayers for you to have a blessed Easter.

Your friend and minister

Wm B Russell



Easter Reflections

Easter is one of the most important celebrations in the Christian year as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. After his crucifixion, death and burial, three days later He arose from the grave and in doing so conquered death and redeemed us from sin. These two poems help us reflect on these events.

Three guys were tried for crimes against humanity. Two guys committed crimes. One guy didn't.

Three guys were given government trials. Two guys had fair trials. One guy didn't.

Three guys were whipped and beaten. Two guys had it coming. One guy didn't.

Three guys were given crosses to carry. Two guys earned their crosses. One guy didn't.

Three guys were mocked and spit at along the way. Two guys cursed and spit back. One guy didn't.

Three guys were nailed to crosses. Two guys deserved it. One guy didn't.

Three guys agonized over their abandonment. Two guys had reason to be abandoned. One guy didn't.

Three guys talked while hanging on their crosses. Two guys argued. One guy didn't.

Three guys knew death was coming. Two guys resisted. One guy didn't.

Three guys died on three crosses. Three days later. Two guys remained in their graves.

One guy didn't.

Author Unknown

The Answer is the Empty Tomb

My heart is full of worry
And my mind with anxious care
The answer is the empty tomb
His body is not there

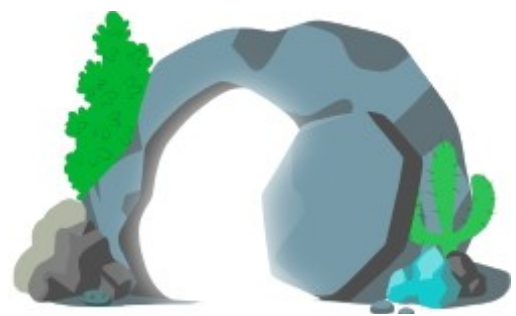
My soul is filled with fear and shame
My life is filled with dread
The answer is the empty tomb
Christ risen from the dead

The world is full of sorrows
All the cities full of woe
The answer is the empty tomb
The whole world needs to know

The youth are filled with unbelief
The schools are filled with doubt
The answer is the empty tomb
The Saviour made it out

No matter what you're facing
No matter how it feels
The answer is the empty tomb
A risen Lord that heals.

By Kevin Smead



I am His and He is mine

Fiona Paterson is one of our younger members in Park and was brought up in the church from an early age. She is getting married later this year to Robert, but here tells us what her faith means to her and how it has helped her cope with many difficult situations in her life.



Tell us about your childhood and education

I am 29 (nearly 30!) and grew up in the east end of Glasgow with my mum, dad, older brother, Martin, younger brother, James and gran. I went to Bannerman High School for six years, enjoying, in particular, music and drama classes. I would spend my spare time in a music room playing the drums or singing or, if I wasn't there, I would be on the stage in our drama workshop theatre. After High School, I had to take a year out from education as I had not achieved the exam results I needed to study Primary teaching. I was devastated as I had always aspired to work with children, particularly children who have Additional Support Needs (ASN). I got a job and started earning my own money for the first time. I returned to college and studied to get more qualifications. I acquired an HNC in Early Years and Childcare, and an HND in ASN. I then had to decide whether to continue in further education or to work.

I applied to university to study Speech and Language Pathology and studied at Queen Margaret University in Musselburgh for four years. I still lived at home, studied five days a week at university and worked at the weekends. I graduated university with a BSc in Speech and Hearing Sciences.

However, my time at university was filled with lots of challenges. I have a chronic health condition called endometriosis which impacts on daily life. It creates constant pain, fatigue and swelling in my body. I have had three lots of surgery to remove cysts, two of which were during my time at university. I also lost my Papa who I was very close to. He was a man of faith which was reflected in his life. My final year at university did not go the way I'd hoped. I was left broken-hearted, wondering what God's purpose in this had been, but even when I felt at my lowest, God still had me in His hands. He was guiding me and protecting me.

I was brought up in a Christian household with Christian parents. My Mum and Dad brought us up to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. Their example of putting faith into action has been my greatest inspiration for living a life devoted to the Lord. Now, with their example, I feel confident in getting married to Robert and living a life with God at the centre of our marriage.

How did you come to faith?

I was brought up in the faith and would say that I was a Christian from a young age. I have gone to church since I was a baby and was baptised by Bruce at our previous church. One Friday night when I was 13, I attended a Youth Fellowship group in Sandyhills Church. Listening to the speaker, I just knew that I believed and fully accepted God into my life. I heard the Lord saying to me, *You are mine*, and from that moment on, I have known that my faith is real, God is in control and has chosen me purposefully to be part of His kingdom.

Tell us about your work with Scripture Union Holiday Camps

I went to my first SU camp when I was eight years old and still have friends from then, 22 years later. I became a leader at camp when I turned 16. *SU camps are a wonderful opportunity to share the gospel with many different children and young people.* Some children have never heard about God and at camp you can see God working in their lives, stirring up questions and responses to God's calling. I have witnessed some children becoming Christians and it is such a wonderful experience. Some of the children I had in my groups have grown up and are now leaders themselves! Their experience at camp as children has meant that they have come to know God better and have decided to become a leader too, inspired by the camp leaders they had as a child. It is wonderful how God has given us all different skills and talents to work with children and young people.



Do you have a favourite verse of Scripture?

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29 v 11

This verse has always been a major part of my life. I had my own plans, which I thought were right, yet God has shown that He has other plans for me. But even when things didn't go the way in which I had hoped, God has always shown me that He has been there guiding me to where He wants me to be. The context of this passage shows a time of turmoil for God's people; God's people wanting an immediate response, although, sometimes what we need to do is stop, wait and allow God to direct us where He wants us to go. This has been made even clearer throughout this pandemic and shows that God's word is forever and is applicable to what is happening in the world today.

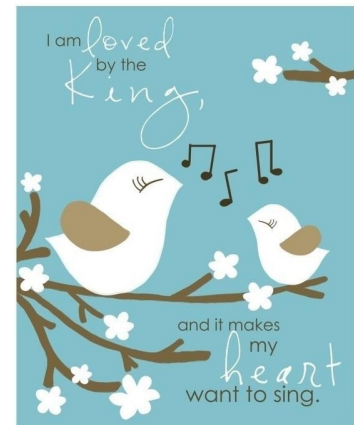
Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. 1 Peter 5 v 7

This is a great reminder to give everything over to God because He loves us so much. I keep this verse on a card in my purse so I have it as a reminder to myself and also as an opportunity to share with others.

We know you love to sing; tell us why and what your favourite worship song is?

I absolutely love to sing! I have been singing since I was little and have been involved in stage school, choirs, stage performances, school performances...Singing is a complete joy to me. I have sung many different songs and styles of songs over the years from classical to gospel, pop to musical theatre and I love the way singing makes me feel. It fills me with so many emotions but always makes me smile. I enjoy singing with the praise band in church and I cannot wait till we are allowed to sing worship songs again together. I have greatly missed singing during this pandemic. My favourite song is *In Christ Alone*. This song is so beautifully written but in particular verse 3 always stirs up strong emotions:

"And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ"



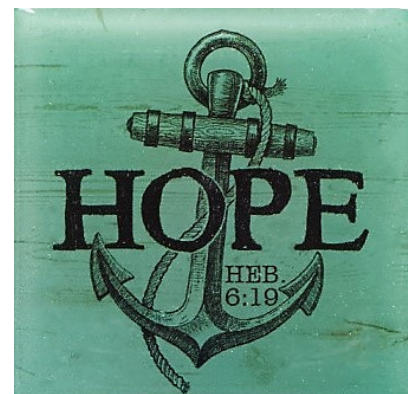
It is so wonderful that we have someone interceding for us; we know that when we say **YES** to Jesus, the curse of sin and its hold on us goes. If that is not a reason to sing and rejoice, then I don't know what is!

How have you coped with lockdown and your work?

I work in early years as a Child Development Officer in Knightswood, Glasgow. My colleagues and I have worked in the nursery throughout to provide spaces for vulnerable and key worker children. It has been tough; there have been tears, stress and sleepless nights. Reduced numbers have meant that I have had some time to spend with children who need Speech and Language intervention. I have provided therapy sessions for these children which has been a positive as during a normal day it can be difficult to find the time. I pray as I walk to work and my morning reading sets me up to face the day ahead. My days are not always perfect or straightforward, but I know that God is with me every step of the way. Lockdown has also given more opportunity to share my faith with colleagues who are keen to listen as it offers a sign of hope.

What does the future hold for you in 2021? How do you feel God is in it with you?

After a difficult 2020, being apart from Robert and friends, 2021 is set to be a very exciting year. Robert and I are getting married on the 4 December Planning our wedding during the pandemic has been challenging but we have been able to book most of the big things. We are both very excited for the journey ahead. God has been with us through the challenges we have faced, reassuring us both to trust solely in Him. I know life is never easy or plain sailing, but what I do know is that my comfort, security and hope comes from Christ. He understands our joys and sorrows and this has strengthened me during lockdown. I pass a sign on a local church next to my work that proclaims, *There is Hope*. Yes, there is always Hope in Jesus Christ! What a promise for those who have faith; we have the greatest Hope in the world.



Come let us sing for joy to the Lord!

These two songs were penned centuries apart and are written in very different styles. However, they have one thing in common; they speak about our daily walk with Christ and how He leads us and guides us through all of life's uncertainties. They remind us that we can trust in Him whatever the storm we find ourselves in.



All the way my Saviour leads me

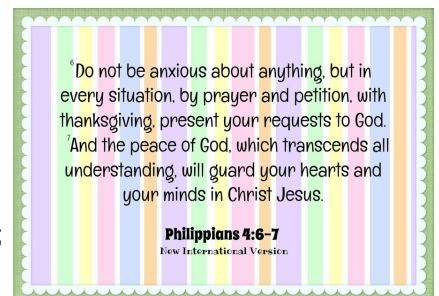
The lyrics to this hymn were written in 1875 by Fanny J Crosby and put to a tune by the Baptist minister, Dr Robert Lowry. The hymn was first published in *Brightest and Best* which was a collection of songs, choruses and benediction hymns for the Sunday School and meetings of prayer and praise. The song expresses the trust we should have in God to instruct and guide us along life's path.

It is said that the lyrics came to Fanny as a result of a prayer time. She was struggling financially and, as was her custom, she turned to God in prayer. A few minutes later a gentleman offered her five dollars which was the exact amount she needed for her rent. As she sat meditating on the goodness of God, the lyrics of this hymn came to her mind. Recalling the incident later she said:

"I have no way of accounting for this except to believe that God put it into the heart of this good man to bring the money."

1. All the way my Saviour leads me; what have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt his tender mercy, who through life has been my guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, here by faith in Him to dwell
For I know whate'er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well.

The first verse tells us that because Christ leads us, all our needs will be met; not only physical needs but the spiritual needs of heavenly peace and divinest comfort which are given to all who trust in Him.

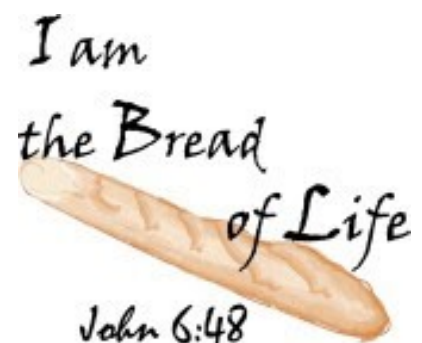


2. All the way my Saviour leads me, cheers each winding path I tread,
Gives me grace for every trial, feeds me with the living bread,
Though my weary steps may falter, and my soul athirst may be,
Gushing from the rock before me, Lo! A spring of joy I see.

The second verse talks of the trials we face in life but reassures us that Jesus gives us grace to endure these and the bread of life to sustain us. Sometimes we will feel weary and thirsty but like the Israelites of old we can look to God for a spring of joy gushing from the rock before us. (Exodus 17 v 6)

3. All the way my Saviour leads me, Oh, the fullness of His love,
Perfect rest to me is promised in my Father's house above,
When my spirit, clothed immortal, wings its flight to realms of day,
This my song through endless ages, Jesus led me all the way.

The third and final verse reassures us that we have the fullness of His love and that one day we will find eternal rest in heaven with Him. We will know with certainty that Jesus has been with us every step of the way.



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

Jesus I will walk with You

This song, written by Tom and Sam Brewster and sung by *Joyful Noise*, expresses our desire to walk with Jesus and reminds us that this privilege is only possible because He first chose to walk with us. *Joyful Noise* is a “fresh collaboration that has come together around a passion for Jesus, music and God’s family, the church”. Its aim is to equip congregations with biblical and expressive songs. *Jesus I will walk with you* is spirit-inspired and worshipful and brings a sense of God’s spirit and peace to us as we listen to it. Tom Brewster studied music and started putting music to Sam’s lyrics in 2008. Sam himself was a student of music and theology and is now minister at Trinity at Four in Henley. Tom loves to hear people relating and responding to God in His word through song.

The inspiration for this song is taken from Luke 24 v 15 when, after the events that happened in Jerusalem a few days previously, the discouraged and fearful disciples are walking along the Emmaus road.

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.”

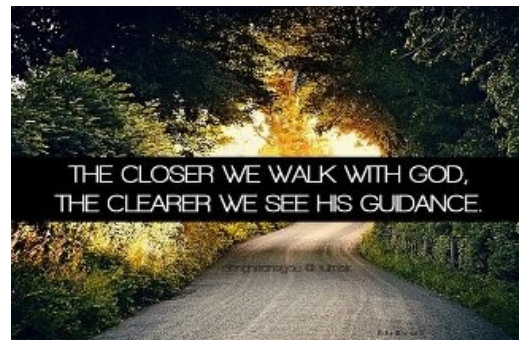
Note that Jesus came up and walked with *them*, not the other way round. The disciples were kept from recognising him at first but their hearts burned within them as He opened the Scriptures to them. It wasn’t until Jesus broke bread with them, that their eyes were opened and they realised who He was.



1. Jesus I will walk with you
Companion for the way
My constant friend and faithful guide
Beside me every day
Through times of winter harsh and bare
Through summer’s gentle breeze
I’ll walk with faith and hope and love
For Jesus walks with me

2. Jesus I will walk with you
Attentive to your voice
In every written word you speak
And make my heart rejoice
Though now I walk an unseen road
In prayer I know your peace
And walk with persevering faith
For Jesus walks with me

Verse 1 reminds us of the privilege we have that His spirit and presence are always with us and that He is a constant friend and guide. Although the first line in each verse starts with *Jesus I will walk with you*, it’s actually the last line that is more important, *For Jesus walks with me*. He has chosen to walk with His people and have a relationship with us. As He walks with us, He talks to us through his word (verse 2). We can be assured of His presence and care even when we walk an *unseen road*, like the one we are walking just now through this pandemic. We can rely on His faithfulness and know His peace as He hears and answers our prayers; our faith causes us to continue even though we don’t know where the journey will lead us.



3. Jesus I will walk with you
The way of victory
The stranglehold of sin is gone
Your blood has set me free
And though my sin is deep and dark
Your spirit’s power will be
My daily strength to walk with you
For Jesus walks with me

4. Jesus I will walk with you
Salvation’s ancient way
Where countless saints have walked before
And triumphed by your grace
Your faithfulness their victory song
Their joyful voice agrees
There is no better way to walk
For Jesus walks with me

In verse 3 we are reminded that He has dealt with our sin at the cross and given us His spirit to deal with ongoing sin in our lives. We are encouraged to continue our daily walk with Jesus, reminded of the fact that this is the way countless saints have taken before us (verse 4).

Jesus’ faithfulness is our victory song for all eternity.

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

The Road to Hanoi

Vietnam, located on the eastern Indochinese Peninsula, is a country with a long and chequered history. It is a beautiful country with the Mekong Delta in the south becoming a popular tourist area. The majority of the population do not follow any organised religion. It is to this land, and to Hanoi in the north, that God has called the Paterson family to serve Him.



It is great to have the opportunity to update the church family in Uddingston about our life and ministry. For those of you who don't know us, we are Martin, Jennifer, Sophia and Joshua. We grew up in Park Church and were members there before we moved on to serve at a church in Stonehouse, a small village in South Lanarkshire. Our family has also served as the representatives for the cross-cultural mission organisation OMF in Scotland since 2016 and we are part of the fellowship of Cumbernauld Free Church.



This year promises many changes for us as a family. **Firstly**, Jennifer is expecting our third child. The little one is due at the end of April and we are grateful to the Lord for the impending addition to our family. We are looking forward to getting to meet them, as are Sophia and Joshua. Sophia is convinced that it is a girl and has a sound logical process; "I already have a brother... so, it has to be a sister."

Secondly, we finish up our role as representatives for OMF in Scotland at the end of March. It has been a real privilege to serve the church in Scotland and in East Asia in this way. At present there are two candidates waiting to serve in East Asia later this year. **Jenni** is based at Harper church in Glasgow, and is getting ready to serve in student ministry in Japan.

Claire is based at Elgin Baptist church and has been working as a school teacher. She is waiting to serve in Thailand at an international school which provides education for the children of missionaries in the surrounding area.



Take a moment to give thanks to God for these young women and pray for them to know His provision, peace and presence as they set off in obedience to new areas of service.

OMF
OMF INTERNATIONAL
Heart for Asia. Hope for billions.



Thirdly, we have both been pursuing further studies which we have either completed or are nearing completion. Jennifer has completed her first year of Theological Studies at Highland Theological College and has really enjoyed getting to grips with God's word in more detail.

Martin has been working on a Masters in Theology by Research (no classes, just one extended piece of work). He has been looking at the imagery of the city across the bible with a particular focus on the book of Revelation, Chapters 17-18 and 21-22. This isn't without reason.

The urban centres of the world are growing rapidly. More and more people are living in these huge sprawls of skyscrapers and slums. If this is where more and more people are living in God's world, then it means, as God's people, that we must think through what it looks like for us to be faithful in living out the commission of God to make disciples among all peoples.



Martin is hoping to have this research completed by the end of May, so please pray for him to get some time to do this in the coming months.

This leads on helpfully to the **fourth** change which is set before us as a family. Since Martin's time training for ministry at Highland Theological College, we have been aware of the Lord moving us in the direction of serving cross-culturally in East Asia. Some of you will remember us serving short-term for six months in 2014, when we were based at a bible college in East Malaysia and with a church-planting team in Thailand. We are grateful to the Lord for the way He allowed us to serve during that time and it has proved to be formative in shaping us for the ministry we are looking to move into later this year.

Our family are planning to leave Scotland in the autumn to live and serve in the nation of Vietnam. If you are anything like us your first question is probably, *"why?"* And that is a good question.

"There are so many challenges around us in Scotland, and you are equipped for ministry and leading a church here, why are you not staying to do this?"

There are a number of ways we could answer this, but the primary reason is this; **obedience**. After many years of prayer and consideration, with the input of various brothers and sisters in Christ who know us and love us, it has become clear that this is what we are called to do. To refuse to move in this direction would be disobedience before the Lord.



Perhaps this leads on to another question. *"What will you be doing there?"* As we were exploring places to serve cross-culturally, we had three criteria we brought before the Lord and His people.

- First, we wanted to serve somewhere where very few people knew anything about the Lord
- Second, we believed the Lord was leading us to serve in a major city of the world
- Third, it became clear that the gifts we had would be suitable for ministry in theological education (getting alongside future church leaders)

In Northern Vietnam, only 0.05% of the population know anything about the Lord Jesus. Unlike parts of Europe where there has been a church historically, northern Vietnam has never known this. To put it another way, the gospel has never been rooted in Vietnamese culture. Hanoi, located in northern Vietnam, is the capital city. It is the seat of power of the communist government and is comparable in size to London.



This city is ever-expanding with many people moving in from towns and villages to secure better jobs and education prospects for themselves and their families. But tucked away in the centre of the city there is a Bible College. This college is looking for people who will come, live in Hanoi, learn the language and culture, learn about the Vietnamese church and partner with them in seeing various people trained and equipped to share the gospel of the Lord Jesus.



Our long-term vision and goals for being involved in this ministry are BIG! Please don't misinterpret this as our family thinking that we are superhuman... we are not. None of this happens without the sovereign goodness of God at work.



- We would love to see the next generation of Vietnamese church leaders and church planters raised up to continue what has already been started.
- We want to see Vietnamese theologians raised up by God to take over the roles which we will have in the college.
- And we long to see God raise up Vietnamese Christians who will be trained and equipped from the college to serve cross-culturally in other parts of East Asia where people don't know Jesus.

In the midst of all this our children will also experience a lot of change. This has been something which has caused us to question, "what are we doing?" The reassuring thing we are reminded of is this. God loves our children more than we ever can. And He has gifted these precious little ones to us to love and nurture knowing what He would lead us into as a family.

Practically speaking, it will look quite straightforward in one sense. We are hoping to send the children to an international school in Hanoi. Since it is the capital there are a number of options. The good thing is children don't start education till age six which means we can make decisions about a school when we arrive in the autumn.



Please pray for all three of our children; yes, to adjust as well as possible to the changes, but ultimately that they would grow to know and love Jesus and see His faithfulness to them throughout their lives.

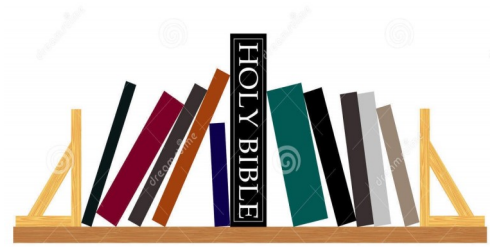
We are grateful to the Lord for the church family at Park. Thank you for taking the time to read through this and pray for our little family. May each of you know the grace and peace of Christ.

Martin, Jennifer, Sophia and Joshua



Books of the Old Testament

Our recent study of the book of Ezekiel prompted this series on the Books of the Old Testament. Most of us probably know the New Testament better than the Old. There are 39 Books and this series aims to give a synopsis of each in one or two sentences, with a scriptural quote. The first five we are going to look at come under the heading of **The Law**.



Genesis

God created the world in seven days; He created man and woman who rebelled against him causing “The Fall”. God initiated a plan of redemption for mankind and called out a people for Himself to be a light for the nations.

“God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness.” Genesis 1 v 4



Exodus

God rescued His people from slavery and gave Moses the Ten Commandments for us to live our lives by. God promised His people a land of their own.

So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Exodus 3 v 8



Leviticus

Describes ceremonial law. God instructed His people to live holy lives and to worship Him.

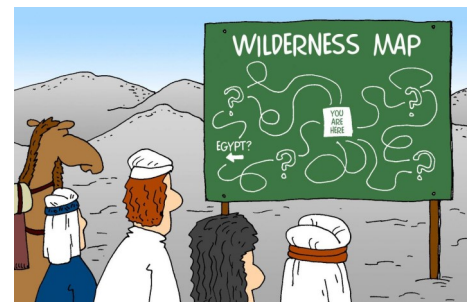
Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them, “Be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy”. Leviticus 19 v 2



Numbers

Describes a census of the people and Israel’s failure to trust God and subsequent wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you. Numbers 14 v 34



Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy means second law. Moses gives the new generation instructions on how to live their lives and renew their covenant with God. At the end of the book Moses dies.

Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the Lord, God of your ancestors, is giving you. Deuteronomy 4 v 1



Congregational Report to year end 31 December 2021

1. Constitution and Principal Activities of the United Free Church of Scotland

The United Free Church of Scotland, with all the Churches of the Reformation, acknowledges as its Supreme Standard, the Word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

The Church holds as its Subordinate Standard the Westminster Confession of Faith; by its Declaratory Acts it recognises liberty of judgement on points of doctrine which do not enter into the substance of the faith; and it claims the right, as duty may require, to interpret, add to, modify or change her subordinate standards, under the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with direct responsibility to her Lord.

The Church approves the emphasis of the Declaratory Acts on the love of God for all humanity, the free offer of salvation to all, the obligation of the Universal church to make known the Gospel throughout the world, and the renunciation of coercion, persecution and intolerance in matters of religion.

Accordingly, this Church accepts the obligations to witness to the truth of the Gospel and to serve men and women in the name of Christ with regard to their spiritual and material welfare, both at home and overseas.

2. Responsibilities of the Congregation

As a Congregation of the United Free Church of Scotland, the Congregation is under the jurisdiction and oversight of the superior courts of the Church i.e. the Presbytery of the West (in which this congregation resides) and the General Assembly of the United Free Church in all matters pertaining to its spiritual and temporal (including financial) affairs. It seeks to exercise these obligations within its fellowship and to the people in the community of which it is part.

3. Responsibilities and Appointment of Office Bearers

All matters affecting the spiritual wellbeing and order of the Congregation is exercised by the Kirk Session of the Congregation. The Kirk Session consists of the Minister and ruling elders. All temporal affairs, including finance, of the Congregation are administered by the Board of Managers. The Charity Trustees of the Congregation are named in Page 2. Office Bearers to the Board of Managers are elected by the Congregation at the Annual Business Meeting held in February. The Minister of this congregation is appointed by the Presbytery of the West. Elders are elected in accordance with the Practice and Procedure of the United Free Church of Scotland.

All offices of the Church are open to any member in full communion. Each Congregation appoints elders to the Presbytery and to be Commissioners to the General Assembly. Presbyterianism means governance of the Church by elders.

4. Activity and Achievements

The past year, for our world, our nation and the Church, has probably been one of the most challenging that we have known since the ending of the Second World War, 75 years ago. For Park Church, the impact of the dislocation that closure and restrictions have had will only be fully known once, and when, we are able to resume something more like "normal congregational life". Our very first "Lockdown" sermon delivered from the manse study was on verses from Isaiah 26. We heard God's calling to "...enter your rooms, shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the Lord's wrath has passed by..." Isaiah 26:20. Undoubtedly, the Lord's Judgments have been seen in the events of these past ten months and in many ways we are still living in lockdown. The hope of the vaccine is now amongst us, but the future remains uncertain. Thank God that in the midst of all of this, **"We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts"**. Isaiah 26:1

Regrettably, for some, Church life may well never be the same again. Others have found these months a particular burden. Perhaps we can identify with the words in Isaiah 26, v 16-17 when he writes, **"Lord, they came to you in their distress; when you disciplined them, they could barely whisper a prayer. As a pregnant woman about to give birth writhes and cries out in pain, so were we in your presence, Lord"**.

However, whilst it would be easy to list all the downsides of this past year, we would want to highlight what has been achieved and what activities we have been able to continue. Above everything else, our gathering

together, albeit on-line, on a Sunday morning around God's Word has continued. God's Word has continued to go forth through the blessings of live-streaming, Zoom and YouTube. Helen Ooi and Ian McQuarrie have provided a weekly email with a devotional thought and items for prayer. The UF Prayer Guide has been used by many and found to be highly relevant. During the times when the Church was open during the week, short devotionals were done. It has been particularly encouraging to see folk who would not normally have accessed one of the Fellowship Groups, find these opportunities faith-deepening. Our thanks go to Karen Stangoe who runs an online Park Kids, Sunday by Sunday, and this continues to be greatly appreciated by the children and parents of our own congregation, and of another church fellowship. In many ways, this pioneer work has been almost unique in Church provision for young people and she and her team are to be commended for this ministry. Whatever age we may be, and whatever may have happened, I hope that we can agree with the prophet that, "The path of the righteous is level; you, the Upright One, make the way of the righteous smooth. Yes, Lord, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desires of our heart." Isaiah 26 v 7-8

The government's regulations made it clear that church buildings could only open for *worship*. This has helped and perhaps even forced some parts of the wider Church to refocus on what is vital amongst God's people; namely, the worship of God and the meditating on His Word. It is sad to see some church buildings closed and unused for these last ten months and most congregational life mothballed. However, as these have been long established priorities within our own congregation, we were able to utilise the opportunity given to us to hold three of our Fellowship Groups within the Church Hall and to establish a new *Faith on Friday* group. Another two more were online Zoom groups. As a church, we celebrated Communion during a week of socially distanced and appropriate gatherings, prior to Christmas, and 81 folk were able to share in that. Current restrictions have placed some things back on to Zoom or postponed them until restrictions have been lifted. Over the six month period when we were able to be open for gathering in some form, many hundreds of people have come through the doors of the sanctuary, and whilst the vast majority of these people have been members of the fellowship, we have had others who have come in "off the street", seeking a place of quiet, reflection and pastoral or spiritual support. Due to the generous practical and monetary gifts of some, we have been able to provide practical support to some families outwith the life of the church who, like so many, have found the restrictions a particular burden. We thank God that despite the many curtailments to our normal activities, opportunities for spiritual and practical support have continued.

During the year, some long-standing and elderly members of the congregation have passed into their eternal rest. In the loss of Irene Cassels, we have lost a faithful worker and dear sister in the Lord. The impact of these losses will, once again, only be really seen once we can communally gather freely. Certainly, the usual round of activities in our Ladies' Association and Coffee Time have all been prevented from taking place. It is unlikely that things like that will simply be able to restart in the way they once did. In what format, and with what people involved, remains unknown. Time will no doubt reveal that. However, a network of phone calls and contacts has kept the connections between people going and, in some way, we will be able to enjoy gathering together again. We are indebted to our technical team, in particular Gregor and Graeme, who have enabled us to utilise online technology, and undoubtedly this area will be increasingly vital in our future ministry and mission.

The open doors of the church on a Sunday morning and at other times, and our online presence, have meant that within our own community and wider afield, the witness of our congregation has continued. Just as I am writing this report, Muiredge Primary has asked for the use of our Church Hall to provide vital material help to parents seeking to home school their children. This, and many conversations over local shop counters, have helped to maintain the profile of Park Church as at the heart of our community. The faithful prayers and ongoing financial support of many has ensured that as a congregation, we have come through this difficult time, able to face this coming year with all its uncertainties, with renewed confidence that the Lord Himself will guide us into whatever forms of ministry and mission He has for us. It has confirmed amongst many of us the truth of the promise given to His people in Isaiah 26 v 3-4, "You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord Himself is the Rock eternal."

5. Independent Examiner

In accordance with the terms of "the 2005 Act", Section 44(c), and as a charity falling under regulation 8 of "The Regulations", and required to carry out an audit under paragraph 1©, an Independent Examiner has been appointed in accordance with regulation 11 of "The Regulations" to carry out a competent examination of the Report and Accounts of the Congregation. The Independent Examiner's Report for the year to 31 December 2020 is on Page 6.

6. Approval of Congregation Report and Financial Statements

The Board of Managers and the Kirk Session, at their meeting on 16 February 2021, approved the Congregational Report and Financial Statements to be presented to the Congregation at the Annual Business Meeting, to be held when the authorities confirm it is safe to do so.



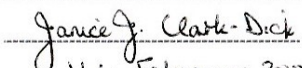

STATEMENT OF BALANCES ON CONGREGATIONAL FUNDS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

FUND	NATURE OF FUND	BALANCE 1/1/20	RECEIPTS 2020	PAYMENTS 2020	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	NET FUND TRANSFERS	NET CHANGE ON FUNDS	BALANCE 31/12/20	FUNDS HELD
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
GENERAL	UNRESTRICTED	62,831	91,702	-77,634	14,068	-8,550	5,518	68,348	Bank of Scotland plc
FABRIC	DESIGNATED	9,820	-	-	-	-	-	9,820	Bank of Scotland plc
MISSION	DESIGNATED	7,527	10,062	-18,475	-8,413	8,000	-413	7,113	Bank of Scotland plc
PARK FUNDS	RESTRICTED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Bank of Scotland plc
PROJECT	DESIGNATED	21,251	1,530	-	1,530	-	1,530	22,781	TSB Bank plc
CHILD & FAMILY	DESIGNATED	24,383	15,749	-16,562	-814	550	-264	24,119	Bank of Scotland plc
TOTAL		125,811	119,042	-112,672	6,370	-	6,370	132,181	

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
Park Funds	Restricted	Incorporates the Endowment dividend and is used towards youth work. Merged into Child & Family Fund in 2019.
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 2020 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 2020

UNRESTRICTED FUND

RECEIPTS	£	2020	Supplementary 2019 sheet	PAYMENTS	£	2020	Supplementary 2019 sheet
Offerings				Ministry			
Open	1,023		7,970	Stipend (incl. NI)	39,873		39,447
Free Will	69,509		65,647	Minister's expenses	3,072		3,072
Gift Aid Tax recovered	15,865		16,866	Manse telephone	588		781
		86,397	90,483	Target	10,522		10,306
				Presbytery dues	0	54,055	53,924
Donations				Property			
Others	4,130		3,252 Supp.1	Church			
		4,130	3,252	Council Tax	-	3,095	3,020
Other receipts				Insurance	2,543	325	2,717
Stedfast	260		317	Heating, Lighting	4,170	-	4,535 Supp.2
Other income	-		1	Repairs, maintenance	2,482	915	2,388 Supp.3 & 4
		260	318		9,195	4,335	13,530
							12,662
Ordinary receipts		90,787	94,053	Other Congregational Payments			
Extraordinary receipts				Stedfast	-		528
Retiral / Special Offering	915		1,883	Printing & Donation Envelopes	2,419		2,483 Supp.5
Missions	-		-	Cleaning	2,518		2,267
		915	1,883	Organ / Piano Maintenance	65		371
Total receipts		91,702	95,936	Miscellaneous	5,047		4,541 Supp.6
		91,702	95,936			10,049	10,190
Surplus / (deficit) for Year		14,068	16,951	Ordinary payments		77,634	76,776
Balance at 1 January		62,832	89,369	Extraordinary payments			
		76,899	106,320	Retiral / Special Offering	-		2,210 Supp.7
				Missions	-		0
						0	2,210
				Total payments		77,634	78,986
				Surplus in year		14,068	16,951
						91,702	95,936
				Transfer to other funds		8,550	43,488
				Balance at 31 December		68,349	62,832
						76,899	106,320

Hot Cross Buns

Easter wouldn't be the same without hot cross buns! The supermarkets are full of them, all sorts of different flavours nowadays—salted caramel, chocolate chip, orange flavour—but I like the traditional ones, especially toasted in the oven and dripping with butter!

Sadly, many people who buy and eat them in our nation do not know anything about the Christian significance of them. The cross on the top is symbolic of the crucifixion of Jesus on Good Friday and the spices are said to represent those used to embalm the body of Christ after his death.



There are many stories and beliefs concerning these buns. It is said the origins of the buns may go back as far as the 12th century when an Anglican monk baked the buns and marked them with a cross in honour of Good Friday. They eventually became a symbol of Easter weekend.

Towards the end of the 16th century, Queen Elizabeth I passed a law limiting the sale of sweet buns to funerals, Christmas and Good Friday. The English were very superstitious and believed that if you baked your own Hot Cross Buns on Good Friday, they wouldn't go mouldy during the following year. All you needed to do was to hang your bun from the rafters in your kitchen and it would remain fresh. This was to symbolise the body of Christ which did not show any signs of decay after his crucifixion, prior to his resurrection.

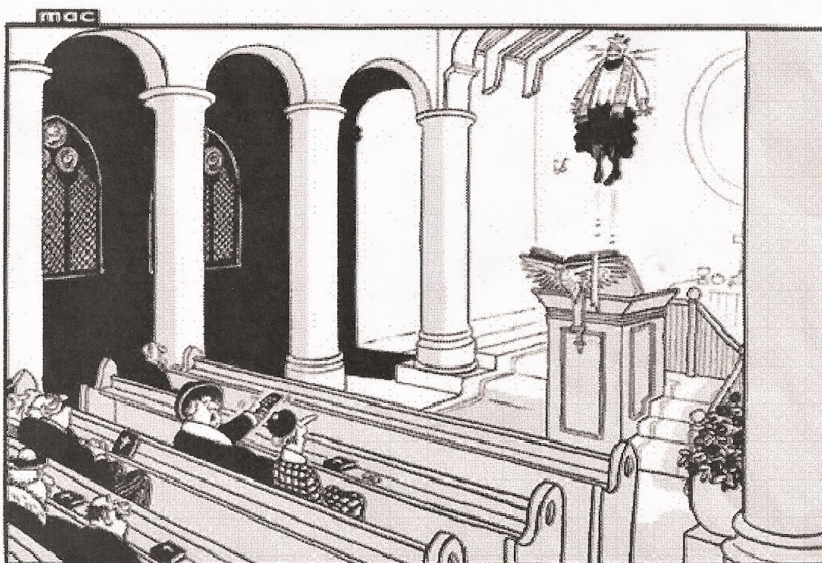
They also believed that if you kept a bun from the batch baked on Good Friday, it would act as a cure for even the most deadly of diseases if fed to a patient during the year! This old remedy could save the NHS a fortune!

Sailors also believed that taking a bun with them on a voyage at sea would prevent them from suffering a shipwreck.

So many stories and myths surround these humble buns but to me they will always signify Easter and the Good News that Jesus' death on that cross on Good Friday brought to mankind.



And Finally....



I had asked for contributions for the magazine and Scott Cassels kindly sent me this cartoon that he found when he was clearing out some old paperwork.

All tongue in cheek, of course!

"Actually the electric collar was bought for our dog, but it's useful for when Henry's sermons go on too long."



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This magazine is also available on the church website

