

Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



Pastoral Letter

Summer 2022

Dear Friends,

As this edition of Park Pages is issued, our country will be marking the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. Elsewhere in the magazine, a further tribute to our queen and her life of faith and service is being made. I am aware that within our own church, there will be different attitudes towards the Queen and to the institution of the monarchy. However, it is good for us all to take time to reflect on the significance of the phrase, *Jubilee*, which has been used to describe the Queen's 70 years as our Head of State.



In biblical times, the term *Jubilee* was given to signify the culmination of seven, seven-yearly rotations of care for the land. In the Book of Leviticus, clear instructions are given as to how the land was to be cared for and be a common resource for the people. For full details, please read Leviticus Chapter 25. After six years of sowing, pruning and gathering, the land lay fallow for one year. The unattended growth of the field was for the poor to glean and what

remained was for the livestock and wild animals. To calm fears among the Israelites about how they would be fed during that seventh year, the Lord assured them that the sixth year would provide enough for three years.

Throughout the Old Testament record, this institution was kept and when it wasn't, God's anger came upon the people (Jeremiah 34, v 14-22) where plague and war were to fall upon the nation because of their failure to keep this covenant. The culmination of these sabbatical years was reached on the 50th year. This was a *Jubilee*. In the Hebrew, the word yobel, meaning ram's horn, identifies the use of a ram's horn trumpet which was used to herald the year. All the above



regulations were enforced and in addition, property reverted to its original owners, debts were remitted and any Hebrews who had become slaves because of debt were released.

It was to be a time of thanksgiving and celebration for God's faithfulness and the fruits of the people's labour. Undergirding it all, is the whole understanding of creation as a gift from God and humanity's responsibility to be good stewards of that. As the creator rested on the seventh day and saw that what He had made was good (Genesis 2, v 1-2), so His creation, including humanity, is to take time to rest and reflect on the goodness that we have been blessed with.

All of this may seem somewhat removed from our daily lives now, and the present celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of The Queen's accession to the throne. However, if we take time to reflect on the above, I do hope that we will see its vital significance.

Firstly, in an age when the environment and global warming issues are very real, we can see the sad consequences of not allowing creation to rest and recuperate. Overworked and undervalued, the very earth and seas upon which the wellbeing of the whole world rests, are literally groaning and collapsing. Our interference—albeit at times well intentioned—in the God-given laws of nature have led to a world overpopulated and underfed with the resources of our planet not fairly distributed and countless millions effectively “slaves” to poverty. In our arrogance, we have taken upon ourselves the mantle of being like God...but have neither the authority, wisdom, justice or might to carry out that responsibility. As the prophet Jeremiah said to a people who had broken these creation covenants:



You have not obeyed me (the Lord); you have not proclaimed freedom to your own people. So I now proclaim “freedom” for you, declared the Lord—“freedom” to fall by the sword, plague and famine....

Jeremiah 35, v 17

Secondly, thankfulness for God's faithfulness in the past is vital if we are going to face the future with the right mindset and intent. The whole concept of **Sabbath, Jubilee and Festivals** was to be built into the lives of the Jewish people in order to enable them to take time to stop, remember, reflect and resolve to live positively into the future. Our failure to do that, within our own lives, the life of the Church and within wider society, is dangerous. It robs us of the right perspective on life and can lead either to the cares or concerns of the world around us overwhelming us—and sadly the spiralling suicide rates are one sign of that—or to an arrogance of spirit and an increase in selfishness and self-centredness—and sadly our fragmenting society and the breakdown of community is but one sign of that.

Thirdly, whatever our views may be on the monarchy as an institution of our state, our present queen has exemplified that God-centred mindfulness, thankfulness and people-centred service which a Jubilee was intended to create. Set apart by the anointing with oil and the invocation of the Holy Spirit and with the laying on of hands, the coronation was essentially a spiritual event and as a fellow sister in Christ and our Head of State, she deserves our respect and our thankfulness to God for His provision in her. We also need to pray for the other members of the Royal Family as some of them increasingly assume her duties, and whose lives have not always displayed the same godliness, spiritual awareness and faithfulness that The Queen has shown. We also need to pray for our political leaders, a number of whom have sadly shown the very opposite of the values and understanding the our Head of State has displayed. I would not like to have been the Prime Minister when he had to apologise to the queen for some of the events in Downing Street over these past two years!

The apostle Paul exhorts us:

I urge then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live quiet and peaceful lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good and pleases God our Saviour.

1 Timothy 2, v 1-3

The apostle Peter who, at a time of increasing pressure from the Roman authorities, wrote that we are to:

Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor.

1 Peter 2, v 17

Whatever our plans are for this Jubilee weekend, may a right note of thankfulness to God for all His faithful provision be at the heart of it. This in turn will shape how we live in the future. As the old hymn writer puts it:

For Christ is the first and the last;
His Spirit will guide us safe home;
We'll praise Him for all that is past
And trust Him for all that's to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. B. Bull".

With warm Christian greetings

Church News

Congratulations to **Ian and Helen McQuarrie** who will be celebrating their Golden Wedding anniversary on the 9 June. We rejoice with them and wish them well.

Ronald and Moya Hamilton would like to thank everyone for their cards, flowers, prayers and kind thoughts during this sad time.

Paul and Ashleigh Stewart thank the congregation for their love, prayers and tokens of care shown to them since the birth of their daughter, Ellie, They are all much appreciated.

Gregor and Sarah McDowall were so pleased that so many of the Church Family from Park were able to join them for their wedding on 19 March. It was a special day and a blessing to have so many of the congregation there to celebrate with them.

The sum of £2000 was gathered in during the special appeal that was made to meet the needs of the Ukrainian people. The Scottish Bible Society and Blythwood Care each received £1000 for their ministry among the many refugees.

Pastoral Care

If any member of the congregation would like to offer their time and care in visiting folk who are finding getting out and about to be an increasing challenge, please speak to Bruce or Wilma McLean, so that a team can offer a broad level of support for one another. Thank you.

What's on in June and July

<p>Sunday 5 June</p>	<p>Jubilee Praise Service Celebration of Communion 10.30am</p>	
<p>Sunday 12 June</p>	<p>Service led by church members, three of whom will speak of how faith impacts their working life 10.30am</p>	
<p>Sunday 19 June</p>	<p>Summer Sunday All-age service when gifts will be given to Park Kids 10.30am</p>	
<p>Sunday 26 June</p>	<p>Worship led by Rev Ian McQuarrie</p>	
<p>Sunday 3 July</p>	<p>A Pulpit Bible will be dedicated in memory of Irene Cassels 10.30am</p>	

The Minister will be away from Monday 6 June to Tuesday 14 June in Italy. During this time he will visit our missionary partners, Fabri and Elaine Toni in Verona. He will then be in Skye as guest preacher for the Communion Season Services in the Parish of Snizort from Wednesday 22 to Monday 27 June.

I think if you were to ask me to sum up how the year has *felt* in one word, I would probably have to say *unsettled* as every single aspect of the ministry has been complicated. There have been regulations to read up on and adhere to and an attitude of flexibility has been essential as it has felt like trying to run on ever shifting sand. However, if you were to ask me to sum up the year in one word, I would say *growth*. In each area of the children and family's ministry there has been growth, spiritually and also numerically. In an unsettled year, God's stability and steadfast love have been known and He has given us opportunities for them to be shown as well.

“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.”

Lamentations 3, v21-23



While this month represents a year since **Park Kids** returned to the building, it has been a year of many changes. One of the biggest changes was to the team as we said goodbye to two of our fantastic Park Kids’ leaders - Alison Murray and Fiona Paterson (now Hart!) who both stepped down from their roles in leading Park Kids after many, many years of serving the children. We still miss them both, but we know that it was their time to move on and we pray that they would know God with them in their new ventures.

We also thank God for His provision. In February this year, we said hello to four new Park Kids’ leaders who have come on board to support and serve the children in practical ways. Amazingly, in the midst of many changes, God has grown and strengthened Park Kids during this period. We have been able to bake, play, re-enact, build and run our way through Bible stories, ranging from the encounters of the Risen Lord Jesus last May, through to the life of Joseph currently.

For the older Park Kids children, this is their final year at Primary School and so they are also moving towards the end of their time in Park Kids. From August they will move into Park Teens, where they will meet on a Sunday morning for a Bible Study during the sermon.



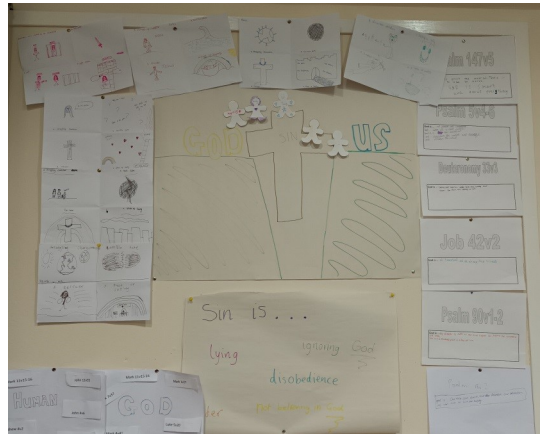
Please pray for God's provision once again as the different ages and stages of the children mean that we will need to make some changes to how a Sunday morning operates. We hope to offer three groups – Park Tots (crèche), Park Kids (Sunday School) and now Park Teens (Bible Class).



One of the highlights for me this year has been running a discipleship course for the 9–11-year-olds in our congregation. What began as a vision of model being part of a Bible study, grew into a beautiful, faith-defining opportunity.

For six weeks the children met and explored the fundamentals of our faith; they had opportunities to read and discuss the Bible, pray together and respond to God. As always when working with children, I too had many opportunities to grow as the children asked deep questions meaning I had to delve into theology in order to prepare myself to answer them. How precious is the mind of a child! We can all learn from their willingness to ask questions, recognising that this leads to a far deeper understanding of God.

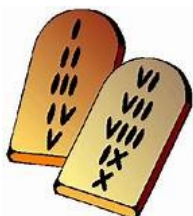
There were some encouraging moments. We had a natural moment of testimony when two of the children spontaneously shared their stories of becoming a Christian during a session where there was an opportunity to respond to Jesus' death on the cross.



The second was on the final night when the children prayed together for God's help to live for Jesus; for some this meant asking for help to be more open about their faith, for others it was asking for help to read the Bible, while for the rest it was asking for help to be more prayerful.



The children also enjoyed taking part in all-age services at Christmas with their annual nativity play and on Palm Sunday when they re-enacted Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a "donkey"!



The past year has been a challenging one for **Connect** as the young people faced a heavy workload and constant assessments at school as a knock-on effect from Covid lockdowns. This impacted the regularity of Connect as we tried to support and accommodate the stressful school situation for the young people.

Connect has been a hybrid mixture of online and in-person meetings this year, with the biggest encouragement being that we saw the young people growing in confidence in what they believe, engaging well in Bible studies and deeply exploring the Bible. One particular highlight was a series on **The Ten Commandments**, where we looked at each commandment, not simply as a *you must* or *you must not*, but rather, grappling with it in order to understand why God asks that particular commandment of His followers.

Looking ahead, as with Park Kids, Connect is also on the cusp of transition as we say goodbye to a group who have been faithful members from P7 through to S5. Come August, we are ready to welcome a new group of young people as we look to start afresh with new Primary 7s and First Year pupils. The plan is that those who have been at Connect for the last five years will stay on and be trained as young leaders, so that they will in turn be role models to the new group which is about to begin. What a privilege it is to be part of the process as this group of teenagers moves on in their faith towards leadership.



Please pray for these young people over the next month as they take part in leadership training. Pray that God would use this time to equip and encourage them in sharing their faith with others.



As I reflected at the beginning, God's love has been known, yet He has also blessed us with opportunities for His love to be shown to others, which brings us to MEGA. We were thrilled to move MEGA back to meeting in person in August, and have so far enjoyed six events with one more planned next month.

The move has involved a great deal of planning and flexibility but it has been worth it to see the children engage in many different forms of creativity. It has been great to have the opportunity to tell them stories to help them understand that Jesus is our hero who came to rescue people.

Amazingly we have consistently had 20 – 25 children each time, with a record number of 28 in March when we were able to further relax restrictions. In a year when we have not been able to advertise due to the controlled number of spaces available, we give God thanks that He has brought along about 13 new children through word of mouth, mainly from Park Kids children!



One question the lockdown left us with was:

How do we build upon the open relationship with parents that had formed during MEGA on Zoom?

We were aware that this was a strength and that it would be sad to lose it. Our answer to this came in the form of a Winter Wonderland.

This was a fully outdoor event on the Saturday before Christmas, with a range of family activities from toasting marshmallows on a firepit, to making a Christingle and hearing the message of Christmas. Sadly, we saw the impact of Covid cases beginning to soar once more in December, and so a number of families had to pull out due to illness.

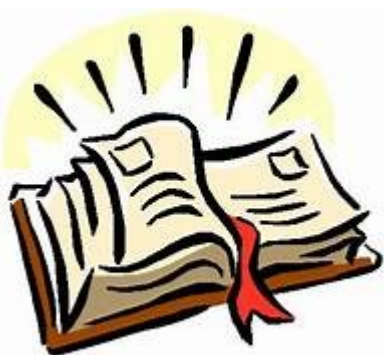
However, for those who were able to come, it was a great family afternoon, and an opportunity for us to develop relationships and share God's love. One parent who had been unable to attend asked if the event could run again in 2022 as they had been so looking forward to it.



Amazingly work with the schools has continued sporadically throughout the past year, although it was very much dependent on the ebb and flow of the virus. We were able re-write the school workshops for Muiredge Primary School so that they could be delivered as RME (Religious and Moral Education) lessons within the classrooms in a year when pupils were unable to attend the Church for the workshops.

Also, in the last few weeks the Scripture Union (SU) group at Muiredge has started up again with a whopping 42 children coming on the first week to see what it was about!

We are now a few weeks in, and numbers have settled to between 15 and 20 children each week, which is a bit more manageable in a small classroom.



Children are the church's most valuable resource.

85% of people who come to Jesus do so before the age of 18!



Praise God for all that He has done through discipleship this year and for the opportunities He has and is giving us to share His love with families at MEGA and children in the schools.

The Platinum Queen, a Woman of Faith

On 6 February 2022 Queen Elizabeth II became the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years on the throne. This event will be marked publicly by an extended Bank Holiday weekend from 2-5 June 2022.



There will be the usual celebrations, typical of British military pageantry, with a **Trooping the Colour** incorporating a **Royal Gun Salute** and an appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace by the Royal Family for a **Flypast** on Thursday 2 June. On the Friday, there will be a **Service of Thanksgiving** in St Paul's Cathedral when Great Paul, the largest church bell in the country, will be rung. In the evening there will be a **Platinum Party at the Palace** which will be aired live on BBC1. On the Sunday, people up and down the land will celebrate with **Big Jubilee Lunches**, either as street parties or private affairs in their back gardens with friends. There will also be **The Platinum Jubilee Pageant** which will be led by the Gold State Carriage. The Pageant will bring to life iconic moments from the Queen's reign as well as showcasing our changing society over the last 70 years. Certainly a weekend of celebrations fit for a queen!



Here in Park we will be celebrating on a smaller scale, with a service with items of praise from the last seven decades that reflect the changes in the Church during that time, and then a small tea outside, weather permitting!

The Queen was born in 1926 in Mayfair, and was expected to live a fairly normal, if privileged, life with her family. However, in 1936 King Edward VIII, her uncle, abdicated leaving her father as King George VI and herself as next in line to the throne. This position placed her under more intense public scrutiny and she had to study constitutional history and law to prepare her for her future role. She also learned French from her governesses as well as having lessons in art, music and riding. She was instructed in religion by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Her first public engagement came in 1942 on her 16th birthday when she inspected the soldiers of the Grenadier Guards.

She married Philip Mountbatten in Westminster Abbey on 20 November 1947. Philip was stationed to Malta as a serving officer in the Royal Navy from 1949-51 and here they were able to live a relatively normal life. The Queen is said to look back on these years as some of the happiest in her life.

However, while away on a royal trip to Kenya in 1952, Princess Elizabeth, as she was then, learned of the death of her father, King George VI. At the young age of 26 her life was totally changed; she was crowned Queen Elizabeth II at Westminster Abbey on 2 June 1953. The Queen holds the title "Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England".



At her coronation The Queen was anointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and took an oath to "maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England". In Scotland monarchs have sworn to maintain the Church of Scotland since the 16th century and the duty to "preserve the settlement of the true Protestant religion as established by the laws made in Scotland" was affirmed in the 1707 Act of Union between Scotland and England. The Queen made this pledge at the first Privy Council meeting of her reign in 1952. This relationship was symbolised by a Service of Dedication in St Giles Cathedral on 24 June, 1953, where the queen was blessed by the Dean of the Chapel Royal in Scotland and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

All this seems the stuff of dry religion but is The Queen a woman of faith? Queen Elizabeth has become more vocal about her faith as her faith journey has progressed through time. She puts God at the forefront of her life and has used her platform to speak His truth. Her faith has shaped her life both as a ruler but also as a wife and mother. She is a true follower of Christ.

However, even in her first Christmas broadcast in 1952, before she was crowned, she said this:

Pray for me...the God may give me wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making, and that I may faithfully serve Him and you, all the days of my life.

This prayer was to mark the sense of duty and sacrifice she would bring to her reign.

Almost a half century later, in her Christmas broadcast in 2000, she said:

For me the teachings of Christ, and my own personal accountability before God, provide a framework in which I try to lead my life.

The Queen composes her Christmas broadcasts herself so they are intensely personal and give us an insight into her character and her sense of service and duty. The Bible story the queen has referenced most in her speeches is the story of **The Good Samaritan**. In 1985 she said the story

reminds us of our duty to our neighbour. We should try to follow Christ's clear instruction at the end of that story: "Go and do thou likewise."



She referenced the story again in 1989 and most recently in 2020. She and Prince Philip were in lockdown in Windsor Castle due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We continue to be inspired by the kindness of strangers and draw comfort that—even on the darkest nights—there is hope in the new dawn. Jesus touched on this with the parable of The Good Samaritan. The man who is robbed and left at the roadside is saved by someone who did not share his religion or culture. This wonderful story of kindness is still as relevant today. Good Samaritans have emerged across society showing care and respect for all, regardless of gender, race or background, reminding us that each one of us is special and equal in the eyes of God.

Throughout her long reign, The Queen has demonstrated that Christ's example and teaching have had a huge impact on the way she leads her life. She has a servant-heart and is devoted to doing her duty and keeping the promises she made at her coronation. The theme of service ran through the coronation service and through her life she has been inspired by the sacrificial life of Jesus. In 2008 she said:

I hope that, like me, you will be comforted by the example of Jesus of Nazareth who, often in circumstances of great adversity, managed to live an outgoing, unselfish and sacrificial life....He makes it clear that genuine human happiness and satisfaction lie more in giving than receiving; more in serving than in being served.

In 2012 she concluded her Christmas broadcast with this prayer:

This is the time of year when we remember that God sent His only son "to serve, not to be served". He restored love and service to the centre of our lives in the person of Jesus Christ. It is my prayer this Christmas day that His example and teaching will continue to bring people together to give the best of themselves in the service of others. The carol, "In the Bleak Midwinter" ends by asking a question of all of us who know the Christmas story, of how God gave Himself to us in humble service:

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part...



The carol gives the answer, "Yet what I can I give Him—give my heart."

As well as attending services in her official capacity, The Queen also worships privately every Sunday and relies on the prayers of her people. In 1992 she spoke of how these prayers "sustained me through all these years". Her personal faith also prompts her to work for peace and reconciliation on a global scale but we also see the outworking of forgiveness in her own family.

Forgiveness lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It can heal broken families, it can restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God's love.

As we approach the Platinum Jubilee, whether we are a royalist or not, we come together to thank God for this Christian woman who has reigned as our queen for the last 70 years, putting duty above self, doing her best to emulate her Lord in her deeds and being a true defender of the Christian faith. May God bless her and keep her in her latter years.

Ukraine—A nation in peril

Elizabeth McDowall

All of us have been through a period of disruption. We only need to think back to March 2020 to remember how it felt to have a diary full of things we were looking forward to – not just family occasions like birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, but church family gatherings like the Sunday service, Park Kids, Holy Week. Remembering this time should help us empathise with our brothers and sisters in Ukraine right now.

They cannot make future plans. They have nothing to look forward to. Their whole world was thrown upside down in 2020, and more drastically, in February 2022. Whole families have been split apart. Entire cities have been ruined. A massive amount of people have been dispersed (according to the UN over 14 million Ukrainians have fled their homes, with over 6 million heading to other countries and 8 million being internally displaced). It is hard to get our heads around the scale of this. The entire population of Scotland, and a bit more, are in exile.

At Park Church, we have had a close relationship with Ukraine. Over the last ten years we have had visits to the church from [Grigori Stupak](#), Director of [Open Bible \(SU\) Ukraine](#) and his son [Tima](#). I was privileged to be able to make two trips with SU Scotland to Ukraine in 2018 and 2019. The United Free Church of Scotland supported the work of Open Bible financially in 2018 through the Easter Scheme. In January 2020 [Andrii and Dasha](#), who both worked for Open Bible, spoke at an evening service. [Oksana Khimich](#) (pictured middle) was in Scotland in March 2020. She was due to visit Park Kids and had a last-minute dash to the airport just as lockdown struck.

So how have these friends fared? Have we remembered them?

Grigori & Galina Stupak (photo, left):

As SU Director, Grigori made his way to the Open Bible campsite at Vorzel when war broke out. Vorzel is a village just north of Bucha, which we have all seen on the news. Vorzel village was bombed but miraculously, not only were Grigori and Galina spared, they were able to shelter displaced villagers and provide heat, water, and spiritual comfort. Grigori is a preacher and pastor, and his heart has been for the church as well as SU ministry. His days are spent travelling to various villages, leading Bible studies and distributing food. The villagers have recently returned to their homes. God has now led Grigori to turn Vorzel into a centre for helping the community, handing out food and Bibles and offering Bible study and prayer.



Oksana (photo, middle):

Oksana and her mum escaped the city when it was under attack but have now returned. They live on the 10th floor of a tower block and feel very vulnerable. Sirens go off every day (there have only been two days when this didn't happen). There is nowhere to go, so they sit tight. This is emotionally exhausting and frightening. Her mum's health is not good: she has just had an expensive operation (no free NHS!) and there are challenges with daily life.

Open Bible clubs are just not possible: schools are shut, there are few children, most families have left the city. Oksana gives thanks for her church family, and for a new opportunity. Oksana also works for SU International and will be training churches in children's ministry – not in Ukraine, but in Asian countries via Zoom! These are countries with restricted freedom for Christians and few resources.

Tima (photo, right) & Tamara:

After the first night of bombing, Tima told his family to pack only what they could carry, and they left the city. As a dad, he wanted to protect his children – Lev (12), Simon (10) and Stepan (6). The journey was horrendous: explosions, holdups, road blocks, fuel shortages and uncertainty where to go, where to stay, how to survive. God brought them through.

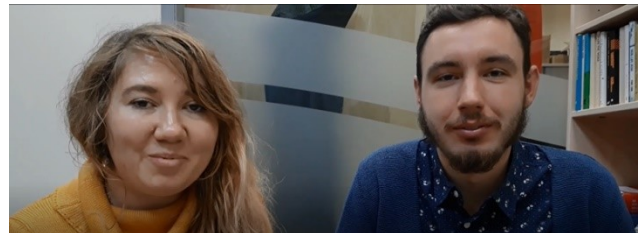
They are now safely in Scotland, living at SU Scotland's centre near Kinross. Tima is working at the centre. The boys are at school. It isn't easy for them as they are emotional, tired, and bear the scars of all they have seen and heard. The boys have almost no English, and school is challenging. They long to make friends, but can't understand what others are saying, and can't speak back!

But they are overwhelmingly thankful to God. They left with what was on their backs, and are so grateful for what the Lord's people have provided for them – not just here in Scotland, but on their long car journey to get here. I hear you asking, "Why was Tima allowed to leave? Did men not have to remain?" It was thanks to Stepan: fathers of three children were given permission to leave when others had to stay behind.



Dasha and Andrii:

Dasha (left) got married last year, but her husband is in the navy. She hasn't seen him in a while, and left Ukraine via a long journey to Moldova. From there she travelled by bus to Germany. She doesn't want to travel far from Ukraine so she can hopefully be reunited with her husband.



Andrii (right) is in his 20s and so has been drafted into the Territorial Defence. A faithful Christian, it must be hard for him to swap telling children and young people about Jesus to suddenly bearing arms. He is all over the country, driving on dangerous roads and facing who knows what.

These smiling faces are of people some at Park have met, or heard share about their work in Ukraine. There are others I met on my trip who are now dispersed, but faithfully serving God where He has taken them.



16-year-old **Sofia** who took part in the English Club I ran online with Oksana just a year ago is now in the USA, separated from her mum, dad and siblings. **Tanya**, the Open Bible administrator, is in Finland with her young son, separated from her husband who could not leave. **Yura**, a successful pharmacist and youth leader in his church, is now serving God by delivering food, medicine and prayer to folks in need.

And then there are **Andrii** and **Natasha**, **Sergeii** and **Yurii**. They opened their church to refugees and have just started a weekly club for children. The red line of invasion may be drawing ever nearer (their town is east of Kyiv) but they are taking every opportunity they can to welcome people in, to pray, and to share the good news of Jesus.

How would we fare in their shoes? I wonder. Thankfully, we have been spared. Our calling is to stand with them, to offer support, and above all, to pray. As Paul says:

“Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.”

Ephesians 6, v 18 (NLT)



Come let us sing for joy to the Lord!

Music can often speak to us in ways other things can't. It's a wonderful gift given to us by God. Sometimes when we are feeling down, and we are facing interminable struggles and hardships, music can lift us out of despair and help us to praise and worship God which in turn lifts our spirits. The writers of these songs are (or were) real people, experiencing the same feelings as us, moved to express their faith and feelings for God through the medium of song. Through their compositions we can derive both encouragement and blessing.



Abide with Me

This well-known hymn was written by Henry Francis Lyte in 1847 as he was dying from tuberculosis and is usually sung to the tune Eventide. Lyte was the pastor of a small church in Devon, a church whose congregation were made up of seafaring folk who, because of the ravages of the weather, were often exposed to untimely death. Lyte himself did not keep good health, suffering from a lung disorder. He was persuaded to travel to Italy to take advantage of the better climate there. At the age of 54, he preached his last sermon and then took a walk along the coastal paths before retiring to his study. It is said that he wrote this hymn that afternoon and once he had got settled into his hotel abroad, he posted the hymn to his wife. The hymn was sung first at his own funeral.

The hymn is a prayer to God asking for him to remain present with us throughout all of life, through trials and through death.

The opening verse is based on the scripture Luke 24 v 29 when the disciples say to Jesus on the road to Emmaus:

“Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.”

- 1. Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.**
- 2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see—
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.**
- 3. I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.**
- 4. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.**
- 5. Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.**

O death, where is thy sting?
O grave, where is thy victory?

1 Corinthians 15:55

The hymn depicts the sense of change and helplessness that a person must feel in the presence of death but at the same time reminds us of the trustful dependence we can have on Jesus, whatever our circumstances. Lyte died whispering the words, “Peace! Joy!” while pointing his hand heavenwards.

To listen to the hymn click [here](#).

The Night Song

We learned this song in church recently. Its simple melody and lyrics conceal some profound truths. It brings us to the realisation that we are sons and daughters of the living God, a God we can depend on and who is faithful to His promises. The straightforward structure makes it suitable for both adults and children to learn and it would work well too as a lullaby for soothing babies struggling to sleep.

The song was written in 2021 by CityAlight, a music ministry from St Paul's Castle Hill in Sydney, Australia. Their mission is to write "simple melodies with biblically rich lyrics." However, let CityAlight tell us about the song in their own words.

With the night comes many and varied challenges. Whether you are afraid of the darkness, distressed in the still silence, anxious with a mind that will not stop running in circles, doubting truths that lose their certainty in the waning of the light, or moving through a season of darkness, spiritual, relational, or symbolic, the night does not discriminate based on age or economic status. We will all face it in our own way.

But we need to remember what is true. To our God, even the darkness is light to Him. He will not slumber, nor sleep in His protection over us. And His loving rule and endless supremacy extend to every corner of existence, dark or light.

Rely on the God of goodness and light. He will keep you through your night, as a father watches over his children.

And so join us, young and old, in churches, in hospitals, in stadiums, or by the bedside, in singing The Night Song.

1. In the darkness God will keep me
He will stay and never sleep
In the darkness God is brighter
Though the night is long and deep

Chorus

*All this day your hand has held me
God of Heaven, by my side
Thank you, Father, for your goodness
You will hold me through the night*

2. In the shadows you are with me
And you know my every fear
In the shadows none can harm me
For the mighty King is here
3. So I find my rest in Jesus
He who came to rescue me
Jesus saved me from the darkness
I will rise to life with Him



As we bring our worship to God in this song, we are reminded of our dependency on Him. Whatever struggles or darkness we are experiencing in our lives, we know for sure that God is with us and that at the end of our lives, we will rise to meet Him in all His glory.

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

*I will lie down and sleep in
peace, for you alone, Lord
make me dwell in safety.*

Psalms 4 v 8

Gregor and Sarah's Wedding

There was a palpable air of excitement on Saturday 19 March as over 40 people boarded the bus outside Park Church that was to take us through to Edinburgh to attend the wedding of Gregor and Sarah.

Reminiscent of a Sunday School outing, albeit the participants were slightly older, we enjoyed the fellowship and company of fellow members of the congregation during the journey through to the capital. Covid restrictions were still unfortunately in place so we had to wear masks during the journey, but that didn't stop the chatter and laughter. Rev John Fairful kept us all in order in his inimitable way and with the arrival of a very glamorous lady in a big hat onto the bus—the Lady of the Manse—we were off!

Seats had been reserved for us in the balcony of the huge church that is St P's and G's in Edinburgh and we got a bird's eye view of all the guests arriving. It was wonderful to witness Gregor's marriage to Sarah as many of us have watched Gregor grow up from a mischievous wee boy when he first arrived in Park, to a young man of faith, although the mischief is still there! A beautiful afternoon tea had been laid on and after we had partaken of this, we returned to the bus and our journey home.

A BIG thank you to Gregor and Sarah and the Manse family for inviting us to share this special day and for laying on transport.



Two souls but with a single thought
Two hearts that beat as one
John Keats

Uddingston Pride Update

Donald Burt



Spring has sprung!

Although March was unseasonably warm (and then unfortunately April and May weren't!), things are now starting to bloom and early plants and flowers are now giving a lovely display.

A lot of work has gone into organising the flowers for the planters and the flower displays in the village. The displays along the Main Street and Station will be in place during the week commencing 30 May 2022.

To complement the flower baskets at the station, we have decided to make some changes to the "Glasgow" platform embankment, and are intending to plant more perennials and shrubs. This will be more sustainable, will hopefully stabilise the bank and will provide a habitat for bees, butterflies and other insects.



However, before the re-planting takes place, we intend to add a significant quantity of compost to the relatively poor quality soil. Just inside the station fence (across from Smith's restaurant) we planted a rhododendron that had been donated by a local resident a couple of years ago. As can be seen from the photograph below it is already providing a lovely display.

The plant beds at the Uddingston Gateway are also starting to provide a lot of colour to what is one of the main entrances to the village. These beds were only planted about 18 months ago but are already becoming well established.



Several litter picks were organised throughout the spring; depending on the area, it is sometimes better to tackle litter before the spring growth covers it over again!

We also had a meeting with South Lanarkshire Council and Uddingston Grammar School with regard to what initiatives can be used to help raise the profile of litter and how it can be reduced. The school supports these initiatives and organises pupil litter picks in the surrounding area. This work is on-going (unsurprisingly!). Graffiti is another on-going issue but the Council have assisted by removing the graffiti from the underpass near the school and we hope that, by keeping on top of it, this standard will be maintained.

In conclusion, we look forward to spirits being lifted with the village looking its summer best when the flower displays are in place.





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