

# Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



## Letter from the Minister

Dear Friends,

For a good part of the autumn, I thought I would have to begin this pastoral letter by *confessing* to being a *false prophet* by wrongly foretelling that there would be a General Election within our country soon! While not many of the readers of this magazine may be glad that we are having an election on Thursday 12 December, I do *confess* that I am....in that our Prime Minister has *saved me* from having to eat my own words (as the prophet Jeremiah did....see Jeremiah Chapter 15); my pastoral letter from autumn 2019 now has credibility with my claims there would be an election!

Tongue in cheek as the previous paragraph has been, the divisiveness and contentiousness of an election is all too serious. Please do pray that as we seek to hold a Hustings meeting in Park on Wednesday 4 December, with strong and often diametrically opposite views being expressed, there will be a spirit of peace and hope in our midst. After all, December is the month of *Peace and Goodwill!*

The history of the Church of Jesus Christ has not been without its own sad story of schisms, divisions, dissension and strife. The story of the Reformation in Europe, or indeed the history of the church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland, show that “party” spirit played out. Indeed it has always been the case. Paul, writing to the church in Corinth, speaks of

“...getting this report on your divisiveness, competing with and criticising each other. I’m reluctant to believe it, but there it is. The best that can be said for it is that the testing process will bring truth into the open and confirm it.”

### 1 Corinthians 11 v 18,19 (The Message)

Various parties have and do exist within the Church, and as my efforts at sharing some insights from my study leave sought to show, we at Park are part of one of those parties. As a member of a Reformed and Presbyterian tradition, we have our own theological and ecclesiastical understandings which mark us out as distinctively different from the Catholic, Liberal and Pentecostal traditions of the church. Just how real these differences are, was brought home to me as I met with someone who has joined us from a congregationalist background. How we govern ourselves, the role of the minister, how decisions are made....all of these things are part of our distinctive traditions which are different from other faithful, worshipping communities.

I am aware that while some found my presentation with the china mugs on Sunday 8 September a helpful, and indeed inspiring, insight into the wider church scene, and our place within it, others amongst us didn’t get a handle on it at all! Similarly, my efforts to present what could be regarded as a fairly “moderate” insight into the biblical arguments for a Reformed perspective of the faith, were embraced by some, while others were left somewhat cold by it.

Winter 2019



This is NOT a criticism of anyone; it is simply meant as a helpful insight into how diverse a congregation of 100 people can be! Imagine what it is like within larger congregations!

That same diversity is celebrated within the glorified church of Christ in the book of Revelation.

“...a great multitude that no one can count, from every nation, tribe, people and language standing before the throne and the Lamb.”  
**Revelation Ch 7 v 9**

Whilst the spirit of *community* that once wielded our society together is breaking down, thankfully that which unites the church community that is Park, is founded on more lasting things. The Apostles' Creed (see page 3) is an ancient Statement of Faith that all true believers should affirm. Our common commitment to the bible as the Word of God—the outward manifestation of this is our standing as the bible is brought down from the pulpit after the service on a Sunday morning— is at the heart of all that we seek to be and do. The apostle Paul's affirmation that we are “...all one in Christ Jesus” and that the church is built on the teachings of the “...apostles and the prophets...” follows on from the prayer of Christ Jesus that his own followers “...may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” **John Ch 17 v 21**

Sadly, this is not always enough to keep everyone on board. Personal issues and crises can cause people to “...stop meeting together as is the habit of some...” **Hebrews Ch 10 v 25** Differences of understanding, that should and could be creative, become a source of division and dissent. Personal perspectives that are part of the variety of what makes us believers, become hobby horses that define who we are. Personalities clash, and the unifying cry of worship, “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” **Rev Ch 7 v 10**, becomes drowned out by the cry of self-opinion and pride. When very real vulnerabilities, and perhaps even failures, become known to others within a fellowship, it is humanly natural to throw up defences and retreat from people. All of this, and so much more, can cause people to leave a fellowship and go elsewhere. Perhaps, even worse, some cease to corporately meet with others at all!



Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.  
**Revelation Ch 10 v 7**

Any true “...shepherd of God's flock which is under your care and over which you watch...” **1 Peter Ch 5 v 2**, will be able to identify with the words of Paul when he wrote about “...the daily pressures and anxieties of the churches. When someone gets to the end of his rope, I feel the desperation in my bones. When someone is duped into sin, an angry fire burns in my gut.” **2 Corinthians Ch 11 v 29 (The Message)**

And yet the story of Christmas contains a message of **Hope!** The setting around that *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* is so relevant today. A wider society, riven by all sorts of divisions and political machinations (the little town of Bethlehem and Israel as a whole). A wide degree of indifference and ignorance about the “things of God” which included the vast majority of the folk crowded into Bethlehem for the census. A “Church” where leaders hid behind the extremes of theological liberalism (The Saducees) and of fundamentalism (The Pharisees). Those in power, who were actually in truth powerless before forces beyond their control (King Herod). A holding to a form of religion, but denying its power (the Chief Priests and teachers of the Law who advised Herod). There were those who were on the very edge of what was regarded as respectable society (the shepherds). And there was great suspicion shown to those who came from outwith the common community, however educated and able they were (The Wise Men). Ordinary working people, struggling to come to terms with very extraordinary events (Joseph) and facing almost overwhelming life-changing events (Mary).

And yet, round that manger, where that infant redeemer lay, those divisions and differences, doubts and despairs were replaced by worship! The rough enthusiasm of the shepherds, the understated devotion of the wise men, the awe and wonder of Joseph and the motherly love of Mary for her Lord, were a powerful testimony to the unifying impact of Jesus Christ on those who come to Him. All of this took place in the midst of a society and a ruling class that was rushing headlong into self-destruction.

As we hear again the Christmas story, as we bear witness to the Christ child in our worship and in our invitations to others to join us, all of that draws us closer to the God who has done this amazing thing. Like the shepherds, we too should be

“...glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen which were just as had been told.”

**Luke Ch 2 v20**

Whatever the outcome of our General Election, and whatever the ebb and flow of the story of the earthly church may be, the Child in the Manger

“...the Lamb, standing at the centre of the throne..” **Revelation Ch 5 v 6**

is alone worthy to be the object of our worship and the centre of our lives. He

“...was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!”

**Rev Ch5 v 12**

Before Him, all our differences, personally significant or petty, disappear.

May the Prince of Peace grant us His peace over these uncertain times and through this festive season.

Warmly yours



### **Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and buried;

He descended into hell;  
the third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven,  
and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.

From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic\* Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

Amen

\*catholic means universal

# Great is thy Faithfulness

We are delighted that Graham McAuliffe and his wife, Lynn, have come to worship with us at Park. We were blessed by Graham's ministry in the summer and now he has kindly agreed to give us an insight into his life as a young boy growing up in East Kilbride, what led him to faith and how that faith has impacted his life.



## Tell us about your early life and education

I was born and brought up in East Kilbride where the family home was shared with an older and younger brother, and also my dog, Shep! It was a very ordinary, but happy, upbringing. My dad worked as a turner and my mum had various jobs as well as the task of bringing up three boys. After completing my secondary education at Claremont High school (now Calderglen), I studied English Literature and Scottish History at Glasgow University. English and History were my type of subjects at school; anything scientific or technical was a bit of a mystery, and this continues today with my glaring incompetence with anything relating to DIY!

## Tell us about your journey to faith

My journey to faith was again in many ways a very ordinary one, no blinding Damascus Road experience. I was brought up in my home church of East Mains Baptist Church where I learned about Christ through Sunday School, Boys' Brigade, Youth Fellowship and involvement in lots of other church activities.

However, by my mid-teens I was very aware that I didn't really believe in Christ and went through a stage of wondering what this was all about. It was whilst attending a young people's weekend away, when a number of friends were making commitments of faith, that I first truly felt challenged about my relationship with God and the need to accept Christ into my life as Saviour and Lord. However, I didn't, and for some reason resisted this call. This led to a year of struggle within my own heart. I had a sense now that Christ was calling me to follow Him, yet I was still resisting—not a happy place to be!

About a year later, the bus that took me to my weekend job at Dodge City (Pre B & Q) in Carmyle, failed to turn up (one of God's *coincidences*?), which meant I went to church that night for a baptismal service. I heard in my heart Christ unmistakably calling me to give my life to Him and follow Him. This time I could do nothing else and finally gave in. No flashing lights or ringing bells but simply a great sense of peace. Looking back today to those years in East Mains, I am now at the age where my thoughts are filled with nostalgia. I am grateful and thankful to God for Sunday School teachers, Youth Fellowship, Youth Club and BB leaders who, through the example of their lives, faith and service to Christ in the church, were a continual challenge and encouragement to me in my early years of faith.

## What led to your appointment as pastor at Uddingston Baptist Church?

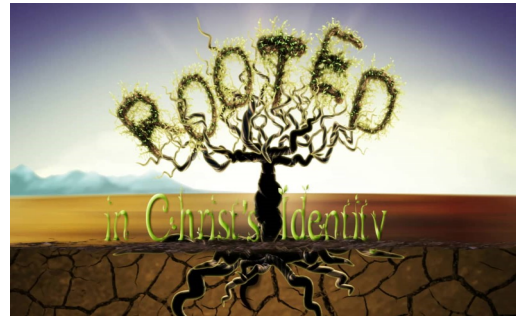
As the time to leave university approached, I had begun to sense that God might be calling me into full-time ministry. I applied to *Spurgeon's College* in London (a well-known Baptist Training College), but circumstances meant it wasn't to be at that time. Over the next ten years I had a number of jobs. Through someone in the church, I found a job as a buyer for Honeywell Control Systems, purchasing mechanical engineering components. Not the best job for someone who didn't know which way to hold engineering drawings!

I then spent several enjoyable years selling ceramic tiles, in both the retail and architectural market. I worked for H and R Johnson Tiles (Cristal Tiles); some of you may still have their famous 'chicken' tiles in your kitchen or bathroom! Throughout these years, however, there remained in the background that sense of God's Spirit calling me into ministry. This feeling grew and strengthened as I got involved in various leadership roles within the church, first as a Deacon (Manager) and then as an Elder. Opportunities to preach were increasing, not only in my own congregation but in the wider local Christian community, and this led to a recognition within my own heart, and also affirmation from my wife Lynn and the church, that I apply for training for Baptist ministry.

I have to express my gratitude to Lynn for her support at that time for she had married, not only the 'haunless man', but also possibly the 'perpetual student'. It was a big step to give up an income, with a growing family, and commit to study, and her support was invaluable. I duly applied to the Scottish Baptist College and spent another four years studying before being called to the pastorate of Uddingston Baptist Church.

## Do you miss being a pastor today?

Being a pastor is something I have missed, as it was very much at the heart of my identity over the last 20 years. However, something Catherine (from UFM) said last week resonated with my own thinking; our identity, my identity, is not to be found in a title or a position or ministry, but in our relationship with Christ. Ultimately, no matter what service I am involved in, I am first and foremost a forgiven and accepted child of God, someone who is 'in Christ', and that is something that will never change!



## Challenges of being a Bi-vocational Pastor and Careers Adviser

For the last ten years of my ministry, I was also working full-time as a Careers Adviser with *Skills Development Scotland*, spending most days in local schools, supporting young people with their career decisions. I really enjoy this work and interacting with teenagers has certainly kept me on my toes! Whilst balancing demands of church and work could be tricky at times, it has been stimulating for my faith. I have had the opportunity to talk about my faith with non Christians in a way that is probably not possible as full-time pastor. It also gave me a better insight into the stresses and strains of normal working life and the, at times, unreasonable demands pastors can make on their congregation.

(NB: churches can also make unreasonable demands on their minister!)

## What is your favourite piece of Scripture and hymn and their significance for you?

One of my favourite bible verses comes from **Lamentations, Chapter 3, v 22-23.**

***The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end***

***They are new every morning, Great is thy faithfulness***

These words tie in with one of my favourite hymns:

***Great is Thy Faithfulness.***

Not only was this one of our wedding hymns, but the words express that in **summer and winter, and springtime and harvest**, i.e. in all the changing seasons of life, in all that I have faced and will face in the future, God and his love for me never changes; it remains steadfast and fixed in Christ.

***There is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not...***

There is also this wonderful promise of his fresh, daily mercy and grace being all sufficient for the good, bad and ugly of life. I can look back with thanks, and forward in hope, and say,

***Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.***



## Which bible character do you most identify with and why?

I suppose the disciple Peter is easiest for me, as for many, to identify with. He is that human mixture of faith and failure, insight and misunderstanding, desire to be faithful, yet at times faithless, bold and fearful, one who discovered that with Jesus there is always forgiveness, a fresh beginning, a new start. And like Peter when tempted to turn away, I remember his cry:

**Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. John Ch 6 v 68**

**We thank Graham for sharing his life story (so far!) and look forward to him bringing us the Word again in the future!**

# Sunday Evening—A Time to Reflect

Sunday evening services are smaller and more informal than the morning service but they are a great opportunity to join together to reflect on what God is doing in our lives and how we can best live out our lives as Christians. There follows a small selection of things we have been doing this term to whet your appetite.



## Following Jesus in every area of life

For the last few years we have devoted the third Sunday evening of every month to a DVD series and group work session. This year we have been using a series called *Living Christianity* which studies God's calling for his people in the world. There are five studies in total. If you haven't managed along to any yet, you can still join us on a Sunday evening as each study can be enjoyed on a stand-alone basis.

1. **Concern for Society**
2. **Christians and the World**
3. **Christians and Work**
4. **Life, Gender, Marriage and Family**
5. **Christians as Citizens**

These studies help us understand the implications of living as a Christian in today's world and will equip us to live out our faith in all areas of our lives.

Each session comprises of a short video, bible study and discussion and some time for prayer. Do come along and give it a try! We look forward to seeing **YOU** there!

To find out more about the course visit [www.livingchristianity.org.uk](http://www.livingchristianity.org.uk)

## Eternal Perspective

On Sunday 3 November, we were privileged to listen to a talk by Rev Dominic Smart who was the former minister of Gilcomston Church of Scotland in Aberdeen. In May 2018, he was diagnosed with stage 4 kidney cancer with secondaries in his lymph nodes. He was completely asymptomatic, only noticing a small lump in his neck one morning while shaving. His wife insisted he visited the GP and blood tests were done. The devastating diagnosis was delivered a few days later. It came completely out of the blue and was a life-changing experience. He has chosen to share his journey to let others know how he has dealt with it in the hope that his experience may be a blessing and encouragement to others in similar circumstances.

The primary tumour in the kidney had probably been growing for about two years without there being any outward signs of illness. The kidney was removed and therapy commenced in October 2018. As his wife is a nurse, they were able to ask the oncologist lots of questions and get a clear picture of what they were facing. After three months of therapy, a further scan in January 2019 showed that the lymph system had held steady but there were now multiple tumours in his lung. The situation was now much more serious and the prognosis was bleak. Dominic was due to take his daughter's wedding in April 2019 but the doctors warned that he might not make it till then. However, praise God he did; he walked his daughter down the aisle, conducted the marriage ceremony and even delivered the Father of the Bride speech. God is good!

How has this illness affected his ministry and walk with God? He claims his preaching is now more direct, honest and vulnerable. He has a feeling of shared humanity with the congregation and is much more sensitive to the struggles of others. His heart is stirred to pray and his prayers have become more real and from the heart. He says he has had some robust conversations with God as a result, but knows that nothing he says will surprise God as our heavenly Father knows us better than we know ourselves. Although he has days when he feels down, because of the side effects of the therapy, or just the situation in general, he says four things have kept him going.

- Knowing that God loves him and that he doesn't have to do anything else to *make* God love him
- Knowing he's understood completely by God, even when he doesn't understand things himself
- Knowing he is held and that God has him in his hands and will not let him go
- Knowing that he's going to a better place in heaven with Christ

When asked what scripture verses keep him going, he replied [Philippians 1 v 20](#) gives him a sense of purpose in all of this.

[I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or death.](#)

And [Deuteronomy 33 v 27](#) reminds him that, no matter how low he sinks, God's everlasting arms are **underneath** him, whether he feels them or not.

[The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.](#)

God is certainly using Dominic even in his illness; we were really blessed to hear his testimony and encouraged by his living faith in what are very difficult and trying circumstances. We ask God's blessing on him and his family as they continue this journey together.

## The Suffering Church

It is all too easy for us to sit in our comfortable homes and forget that things are not so easy for our brothers and sisters in Christ in many other parts of the world. Organisations such as Open Doors, which works in over 60 countries worldwide, supply bibles, train pastors and church leaders, provide practical support and emergency relief and support Christians who are suffering for their faith. They also raise awareness of persecuted Christians by providing videos and prayer pointers for us to follow.



This was brought home to us at one of our recent Sunday evening services when we watched a few videos about different situations in countries like Sri Lanka, Syria and Vietnam. The stories had a common thread of instances of pastors being threatened physically, churches being burned down and threats being made to believers. However, what was remarkable was how these pastors and believers stood firm, trusting in the Lord and desiring to continue the work. How would we react in such situations?

We saw great stories of people whose hearts had been touched by God to offer language, art and music classes to displaced children in Syria. These children have lost their childhood and innocence as their young lives have been scarred with the ravages of war. The change in these children from when they first arrived at class to how they were a few weeks later was phenomenal and their smiles and laughter were a tonic to the soul.

After we had watched each video clip, we prayed for the country, the people and the situations. We don't know these people personally but we are brothers and sisters in Christ and our prayers will help sustain them.

## UF Prayer Guide

This prayer guide has proved to be a very relevant and inspirational source of ministry on many occasions. It is written about 18 months in advance of us using it but it is amazing how many times the message has been pertinent to what has been happening in our lives that very week. Coincidence? More like a God-incidence!

If you are not familiar with the format of the prayer guide, there are basically seven bible readings for each day of the week. Our service includes a few of these readings, followed by a short message from Bruce on each, interspersed with hymns or songs in between. These passages help us reflect on how the bible applies to our everyday lives and are practical in application. The evening ends with a short time of prayer which sets us up for the week ahead.

[Please come and join us at some or all of these Sunday evening services. We'd love to see you there!](#)

## Come let us sing for joy to the Lord!

Advent is fast approaching and carol season is almost upon us. The first song is a carol many of us will have been singing since childhood. The second song is a little different; inspired by the Book of Revelation, which contains some of the most dramatic scenes in Scripture, it tells of the anguish in heaven when no one can open the scroll. Then Jesus appears, the Lion and the Lamb, and reveals His glory. Is He Worthy? He Is!



### O Little Town of Bethlehem

This carol was written by Phillips Brooks, who was minister of Holy Trinity church in Philadelphia. As part of a sabbatical, he travelled to the Holy Land in 1865 and on Christmas Eve he rode from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, which was just a small village at that time. By nightfall he reached a field where it is said the shepherds heard the angels announcing Jesus' birth. He then attended the service at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, said to be built on the place where Jesus was born. The beauty and simplicity of the service stayed with him, and three years later, when he wanted to write a new Christmas song for the children in his Sunday School, he thought back to his visit.

*I remember especially on Christmas Eve, when I was standing in the old church in Bethlehem, close to the spot where Jesus was born, when the whole church was ringing hour after hour with the splendid hymns of praise to God, how again and again it seemed as if I could hear voices I knew well, telling each other of the "wonderful night" of the Saviour's birth.*

The first verse captures the sights and sounds Brooks heard that night.

O Little Town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight



Brooks asked his organist, Lewis Redner, to compose a simple melody to go along with the words. Redner just couldn't find the right tune and went to bed on the night before the Christmas Eve service, when the new song was to be played, feeling fretful and defeated. As he slept he heard music; he quickly got up and wrote down the melody and when he presented it to Brooks the following morning, he said, "I think it was a gift from heaven!"

We do not sing the carol to the original tune written by Redner; Vaughan Williams introduced the carol in England in 1906 to the tune, Forest Green, but the words remain the same. Although the carol was originally written for children, it has captivated the imagination of people of all ages.

The song tells of the prophecy from Micah 5 v 2:

*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will rule over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.*

How silently, how silently  
The wondrous gift is given  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His heaven  
No ear may hear His coming  
But in this world of sin  
Where meek souls will receive Him still  
The dear Christ enters in

The carol not only depicts the Christmas scene that Brooks witnessed, but also describes the coming of Christ into the human heart, if we are willing to receive Him. We thank God that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and we pray that He will also dwell in *our* hearts as we accept "the wondrous gift" offered to us.

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



## Is He worthy?

You may not know this song but I am certain once you listen to it, you will not fail to be moved! It is one of the most anointed and beautiful worship songs I've ever heard! The contemplative lyrics, which are entirely scriptural, instil a sense of worship, awe and adoration. It was written in 2018 by Andrew Peterson and Ben Shive.

Inspired by liturgy, the song is written in the form of a call and response. Although faced with the brokenness of the world, we know that, at the end of time, it will all be made new; Jesus' light will conquer the darkness.

<sup>1</sup> Do you feel the world is broken? (We do)  
Do you feel the shadows deepen? (We do)  
But do you know that all the dark won't stop the  
light from getting through? (We do)  
Do you wish that you could see it all made new?

<sup>2</sup> Is all creation groaning? (It is)  
Is a new creation coming? (It is)  
Is the glory of the Lord to be the light within our  
midst? (It is)  
Is it good that we remind ourselves of this? (It is)

The chorus depicts the lyrical imagery of John's vision in Revelation when he sees God seated on the throne with the scroll sealed with seven seals. There is despair as no one is found who can open the seal which is taken to be God's act of redemption to bring about the completion of His plan for His people. No man or angel could be found, only the Son of God himself. He is not only **able** but He is **worthy** to approach the throne and open the scroll.

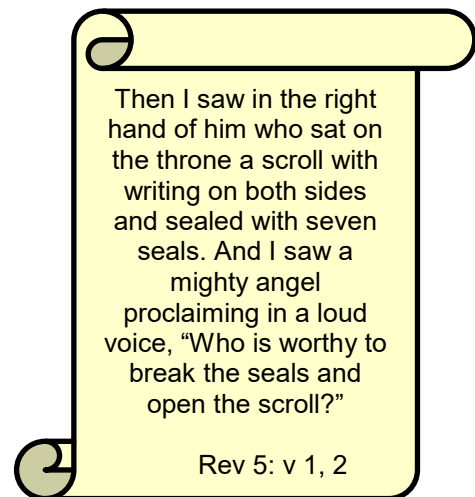
Is anyone worthy?  
Is anyone whole?  
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the  
scroll?  
The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave  
He is David's root and the Lamb who died to  
ransom the slave

From every people and tribe  
Every nation and tongue  
He has made us a kingdom  
And priests to God to reign with the Son

Is He worthy? Is He worthy?  
Of all blessing and honour and glory?

Is He worthy of this? He is, He is

And they sang a new song, saying:  
You are worthy to take the scroll  
And to open its seals,  
Because you were slain,  
And with your blood you purchased for God  
Persons from every tribe and language and  
People and nation  
You have made them to be a kingdom and priests  
to serve our God,  
And they will reign on the earth.  
Rev 5: v 9-10



<sup>3</sup> Does the Father truly love us? (He does)  
Does the Spirit move among us? (He does)  
And does Jesus our Messiah  
hold forever those He loves? (He does)  
Does our God intend to dwell with us again? (He does)

The last verse makes reference to the Second Coming and the new heaven and new earth. This is truly a song that proclaims Jesus as worthy of all blessing and honour and glory. No more words are needed.

**Amen!**

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

# Church News

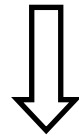
## Shoebox Appeal

### Good News, Great Joy!

The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to show God's love in a tangible way to children in need across the world, and together with the church worldwide to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

**Thank you** to everyone who made up and donated a shoebox. A total of over 90 boxes are making their way to needy children. These boxes really make a difference to the life of a child and bless them with joy, hope and love.

Last year most of the boxes from Park ended up in Ukraine, a country with which Park has strong connections. It will be interesting to see where they go this year.



### Coffee Morning



The Ladies' Association held a very successful coffee morning on Saturday 9 November which raised a magnificent total of £950. The tables were laden with a huge selection of delicious home baking and there was a stall selling baking, jewellery and craft items. As well as many "well-kent" faces, there were also lots of non church members there which was encouraging to see. Thanks to all who contributed and served on the day.

The money raised from ticket sales and the craft stall will be distributed to lots of worthy causes including Valerie Sim, who is the regional Scripture Union Worker for Lanarkshire, Women's Home and Overseas Committee Winter Project, the Special Gift Project 2019 of Christian Missions Charitable Trust (CMCT) which operates in Chennai, India as well as our own church and other charities the Ladies' Association supports.



It has been a privilege for us to join in celebrating the marriage ceremonies this autumn of **Graeme Boyd** and **Rosamond Wall** on the 11 October and **Paul Stewart** and **Ashleigh Cowan** on the 29 November 2019. We send both couples our **Congratulations** and **Blessings** for a long and happy life together.



## Advent

Sometimes as we grow older we lose that feeling of magic that Christmas has for a child, and we feel a bit jaded and weary. Christmas seems to be just a long “to do” list of things that have to be completed before the big day; we get frazzled and tired and the spirit of “goodwill to all men” is sadly lacking!

However, the season of Advent, defined as the four Sundays leading up to Christmas, should be a time of expectant waiting and preparation, both for the celebration of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem but also for the return of Jesus at the Second Coming.

So how do we recapture that feeling of awe and wonder as we enter this Advent season? Maybe we need to **make** time to study the Christmas story in our bibles with new eyes and imagine how it must have been for each of the characters in it. The story actually does not start in Nazareth but back in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. From that time on, God’s people were on a journey, often making mistakes and falling short of God’s standard. The ancient prophets proclaimed that God would send his servant to save them (Isaiah 9) but it wasn’t until hundreds of years later, a long time of **waiting** and trusting, that this promise from God was fulfilled and Jesus, the long awaited Messiah, was born in Bethlehem. So let’s press “pause” on our busy lives this advent season and wait upon God himself who came down to earth to dwell among us.



## The Legend of the Poinsettia

This time of year flower shops and supermarkets are full of a beautiful plant with red leaves—the poinsettia. Most of us have one in our homes over the Christmas period but do we know why they are so popular at Christmas time?

Legend has it that two children, called Maria and Pablo, lived in a tiny village in Mexico. They were quite poor so they really looked forward to the Christmas celebrations at their village church. The

church displayed a beautiful manger to honour the birth of Christ which drew huge crowds of admirers.



Villagers walked miles to come and see this manger and brought lovely, expensive gifts to offer to Jesus. Maria and Pablo watched the villagers placing their expensive gifts on the hay around the manger. They felt very sad as they had no money to buy anything themselves.

One Christmas Eve, as Maria and Pablo walked to the service, they saw a light shining in the darkness and the shadowy outline of an angel appeared to them. Just as the shepherds so long ago on that hillside were “sore afraid”, so Maria and Pablo drew back in fear. However, the angel comforted them and told them to pick some of the short green weeds that were growing on the roadside. The angel instructed them to bring the plants to the church and place them near the manger as their gift to the Baby Jesus. Just as quickly as it had appeared, the angel was gone, leaving Maria and Pablo staring up into the sky in confusion. However, excitedly they did what the angel had said, and filled their arms with large bunches of the green weeds and hurried towards the church.

When the children entered the church with their gift of green weeds, the other villagers turned to stare at them. Their stares turned to laughter as they saw the children put the green weeds round the manger as a gift to Baby Jesus. “Why are those children putting weeds by the manger?”, they asked each other. Maria and Pablo began to feel embarrassed and ashamed but they remained by the manger, placing the plants on the soft hay, just as the angel had said.

Suddenly the tops of the plants began to turn a beautiful shade of red and the villagers fell silent in wonder. As they watched the weeds bloom, Maria and Pablo no longer felt ashamed. They couldn’t afford an expensive gift but had given these humble weeds **in love** which made it the most beautiful gift of all. From that day on, these bright red flowers were known as the Flores de Noche Buena, or Flowers of the Holy Night, for they bloomed during the Christmas season.

Whether this story is true or not is immaterial; it’s the message that is important. Jesus is not interested in fancy and expensive gifts; His only desire is that we give ourselves to Him. May that also be **our** desire this Christmas season as we celebrate the gift of the Saviour King.

# Uddingston Pride Update



We've enjoyed another busy and successful year, winning Gold at the **Keep Scotland Beautiful** Awards. Since then we have not been resting on our laurels. We have planted bulbs in the large, black containers on Main Street so that we will hopefully have a cheery display in the Springtime.



The **Macmillan coffee morning** that we joint hosted with local MP, Angela Crawley, was well attended and raised the sum of £300. Thanks to all those who prepared and served the teas and baking, and to all of you who came along to support the charity.

We held a **Quiz Night** in the Masonic Hall in October which was also very well attended. Our thanks go to Jim Vasey who had prepared a variety of very challenging questions. The badminton group were the worthy winners. The evening was very enjoyable and the Group funds received a welcome boost.



Our **Christmas Open Day** will be held on Sunday 1 December and preparations are well underway. The bands are booked, school choirs are rehearsing, dancers are busy practising their routines and Santa has been contacted and given detailed directions on how to get to Uddingston Main Street! We are expecting the day to be as successful as ever and are hoping for fair weather. Don't miss this great event, the highlight of wintertime in Uddingston.

**Sandy Robertson**

## Advent Fun for the Kids

If you are looking for something fun to do with the kids during Advent, which will help teach them the true meaning of Christmas, why not make a **Christingle** together? It's very easy — all you need is an orange, a piece of red ribbon, four cocktail sticks, some sweets such as jelly tots and a candle.

- The orange** represents the world.
- The red ribbon** indicates God's love wrapped around the world and the blood Christ shed on the cross.
- The dried fruits and sweets** are symbols of God's creations. For many people, they also represent the four seasons.
- The lit candle** symbolises Jesus, the light of the world, who brings hope to people living in darkness.



The word Christingle probably derives from the German word, *Christkindl*, meaning little Christ child. This tradition originated from a Moravian Church in Germany in 1747. The minister gave each child a lighted candle with a red ribbon around it. This represented Jesus being the light of the world. The custom grew and is now practised in many parts of the world in the run up to Christmas. An orange has been added to represent the world, as well as sweets to signify symbols of God's creation.

# Advent and Christmas at Park

<p><b>Sunday 1 December</b></p> 	<p><b>10.30am</b> Holy Communion &amp; Advent Anthems</p> <p><b>Village Christmas</b> 1.30pm Primary School Concert Tea Room will be open in Church Hall 1-4pm</p>	 
<p><b>Monday 2 December</b> Christmas Unwrapped</p>	<p><b>P6 School Visit</b></p>	
<p><b>Wednesday 4 December</b></p>	<p><b>7.30pm</b> General Election Hustings Meeting</p>	
<p><b>Sunday 8 December</b></p>	<p><b>10.30am</b> Advent Anthems 2 <b>6.30pm</b> Service of Nine Lessons and Carols—St Andrew's Church</p>	<p>Second Sunday of <b>ADVENT</b></p> 
<p><b>Wednesday 11 December</b></p>	<p><b>Christmas Lunch at GLO Centre for members of Afternoon Refresh</b></p>	
<p><b>Friday 13 December</b></p>	<p><b>2.30pm</b> Christmas Cracker, St Mungo's Museum</p>	
<p> <b>glasgow city mission</b> CHRISTIAN CARE SINCE 1826</p> <p><b>Sunday 15 December</b></p>	<p><b>10.30am</b> Advent Anthems 3 Gift Service for GCM <b>6.30pm</b> Advent Supper</p>	 <p>Third Sunday of <b>ADVENT</b></p>
<p><b>Sunday 22 December</b></p>	<p><b>10.30am</b> Nativity Play by Park Kids <b>6.30pm</b> Bield Housing Carol Service</p>	<p>Fourth Sunday of <b>ADVENT</b></p> 
<p><b>Christmas Eve</b></p>	<p><b>6.30pm</b> Crib Service <b>7-8.30pm</b> Carol singing around the community <b>11.30pm</b> Watchnight Service</p>	
<p><b>Christmas Day</b></p>	<p><b>10.30am</b> All age celebration!</p>	
<p><b>Sunday 29 December</b></p>	<p><b>10.30am</b> Carols, Cake and Coffee!</p>	
<p><b>Sunday 5 January 2020</b></p>	<p><b>10.30am</b> Facing the Future <b>6.30pm</b> Fish and Chip Tea and Film</p>	



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