

# Park Pages

the magazine of Uddingston: Park United Free Church of Scotland



## Letter from the Ministry Assistant

Spring 2026



Dear Friends,

I am privileged to write this my first pastoral letter as your Ministry Assistant. You have greatly encouraged me since I arrived last summer, in your prayer, your generosity, and your faithful attendance at regular services and special events in the church.

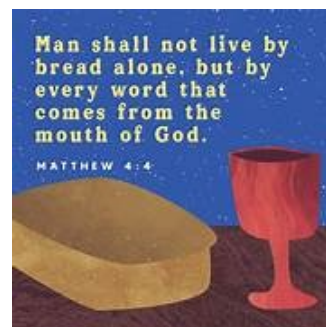
Since our last newsletter, we have welcomed many visitors, especially at Christmastime. Many of you came to the **Day of Prayer** in January. And we have begun **Hope Explored** at a local coffee shop. There is much to be thankful for!

We stand at the beginning of a new year, one which we know will bring great changes – and challenges. Our minister, Bruce, will retire; essential building works will begin; and members will, no doubt, come and go. How do we respond? In every circumstance, it is good to consider the life and example of our Saviour Jesus. As we anticipate a new ministry and new opportunities, Jesus' preparation for His own public ministry is instructive. How did *He* ready himself for this new – and final – phase of His earthly life?

**First**, He is baptised at the River Jordan and hears the words of the Father: *This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.* (Matt 3 v 17) In His baptism, He experiences afresh that fellowship and friendship with the Father that He had known as the divine Son from before the world began (John 1 v 1–2). God is calling us at this time, and at every time, to draw near to Him. *Come near to God and He will come near to you*, the apostle James says. If you have questions about Christianity or the Bible, ask! If you are not baptised, think about baptism! If you hold back from communion, consider how you may take part in good conscience. If Bible reading and prayer are a struggle, think about new ways to engage (perhaps through audio Bibles or through the denomination's Prayer Guide). In these ways, we draw near to God. And He makes the astonishing promise that He *will* draw near to us.

**Second**, Christ draws near to the Father during His temptation in the wilderness by the Devil (Matthew 4 v 1–11). It is an episode especially fitting as we enter the season of Lent. It is a great contest certainly, but one of unmatched opponents. On one side, there is Jesus, the Lord of glory; on the other is Satan, the serpent and deceiver. The outcome is sure. And yet, Jesus, who 'took on the form of a servant', defeats Satan not by legions of angels, but by the word of God.

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to Him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command His angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"



Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Amidst trial and temptation, and in preparation for his ministry, Jesus cleaves to the Scriptures. "He was hungry," as you and I would be after an extended fast. Yet, as he replies to Satan, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God," His primary sustenance is not the fine wine, the bread, and the olive oil – the staples of the favourable Mediterranean climate. Instead, he consumes the word of God. In so doing, He is prepared to resist Satan's temptations, his wiles and his deception. The Devil tempts Jesus with thoughts of sustenance (bread), safety (angelic protection) and success (the kingdoms of the world). But Christ is victorious. He trusts God and His word; He does not use His power and authority at Satan's behest.

We too must confront those thoughts – from within and from without – that would cause us to doubt, to worry, or even to despair. There is much in our lives, in the world, and in the church both locally and globally that may trouble us (even as there is much for which we may give thanks). The apostle Paul commands that "we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor 10 v 5). All our thinking must be shaped by the teaching and example of Jesus. We must think on "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable" (Phil 4 v 8). This is not the power of positive thinking; it is, as Paul tells us elsewhere, "the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12 v 2).

As we look to the future of our congregation, we will all have thoughts – hopes as well as fears, encouragements as well as doubts. For those fears and doubts, the great medicine chest of Scripture provides many remedies.



### **Do we have confidence that God will continue to use us to grow His Church in Uddingston?**

*I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16 v 18*

Continue to pray for Bruce in the final months of his ministry among us, giving thanks for his leadership over the past 27 years. Pray that as we seek to reach out to the community, our evangelistic efforts would bear lasting fruit.

### **Do we trust that God will provide new, faithful leadership?**

*While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Acts 13 v 2*

Pray that the whole church would discern the man whom God is calling to lead us in the future. Pray for the elders and managers, workers at Park Kids and Park Teens, and the Children and Families' Worker, in their various roles.

### **Do we believe that God will meet our material and spiritual needs?**

*And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Jesus Christ. Philippians 4 v 19*

Pray that God would provide funding for the work on the roof of the church hall, through donations and grants, remembering that "every good and perfect gift is from above". James 1 v 17.

What other verses come to mind? And what other situations in your life and in the life of the church require the word of God to be brought to bear? As we journey towards Easter and beyond, let us follow the example of Jesus, our pattern in everything. Let us pass through the wilderness and, having faced down temptation, let us go on to love and serve the Lord. Amen



***With Christian Greetings, Marcus***

## Dates for the Diary

Sunday 1 March	Communion Sunday Bibles for Bairns—Jen Robertson Scottish Bible Society	
Sunday 29 March	Spring Concert with Il Coro 7pm in the church	
Sunday 19 April	Visit of Speaker from Open Doors 10.30am	
Sunday 24 May	Pentecost Celebration 10.30am	

## Easter at Park

We will celebrate Easter at the following services this year.

**29  
March**

**Palm Sunday**  
Following the Footsteps  
of Jesus 10.30am

**31  
March/  
1 April**

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

**2  
April**

**Maundy Thursday**  
Fish and Chips and  
Communion in Hall  
6.30pm



**3  
April**

**Good Friday**  
Church will be open from 12-  
2.30pm for Reflection  
**United Good Friday Service in  
Grace Church, Bothwell**  
7.00pm  
Preacher: Marcus Bailey

**5  
April**

**Easter Sunday**  
Service of Praise!  
10.30am

# Go Tell it on the Mountains

Who hasn't gazed in wonder at the sheer majesty of God's creation, and in particular the grandeur of a mountain range? Mountains play a significant role in scripture and are often used as a metaphor for our spiritual journey. God uses mountains to reveal Himself to us, to instruct us, to make a covenant with His people as in The Ten Commandments and to test us as in the story of Abraham and Isaac. This article will examine a few significant mountaintop events in the Bible.



There are more than 500 references to mountains in the Bible! They are powerful symbols of divine presence and revelation and represent where heaven and earth meet. People often say they feel closer to God on a mountain—maybe it's the sense of solitude, with no distractions, where we can focus on God and also maybe we feel physically closer to our Creator! One of my father's favourite psalms which was sung at his funeral was Psalm 121.

**I to the hills will lift mine eyes  
From whence doth come mine aid.**

This is quite ironic as he came from Tيرة, which is one of the flattest places on earth! However, this psalm is often misinterpreted as encouraging the pilgrim to look at the wonders of creation, and although the mountains are awe-inspiring, this is not what the psalmist is affirming here. The next two lines tell us where we find our help and protection.

**My safety cometh from the Lord  
Who earth and heaven hath made.**

God is our protector, our ultimate source of help and strength. By looking up to Him, past the physical hills which He has created, we see the Creator Himself. Our confidence is in God! Mountains are often used as a metaphor for our spiritual life. As we ascend we become closer to God, moving from darkness to the light, and being transformed by an encounter with God.

## Old Testament

### Mountains of Ararat

Noah's Ark came to rest after the Great Flood (Genesis 8 v 4) on the mountains of **Ararat**. This is symbolic as it marks the end of the old world and a new beginning for humanity with the covenant God made with Noah, symbolised by the rainbow. This story is testament to Noah's trust in a good and faithful God. There is a shift from divine judgment to God's mercy and refuge after the storm. The mountain location represents safety away from the flood waters and the promise that God will protect us during life's storms.



### Mount Moriah

God told Abraham to take his son Isaac to the land of Moriah—a three-day journey—and offer him as a sacrifice on a mountain that God would reveal to him (Genesis 22 v 2). Just as Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, God produced a substitutionary ram in the bushes. Again, we don't know the exact mountain except that it was in the land of **Moriah**. This story is significant as it was a foreshadowing of things to come. God sent His one and only Son to die for our sin so that we may have eternal life with Him. Although Abraham did not understand why God was asking him to sacrifice his son, he trusted God and by faith offered Isaac up. Abraham called the place "The Lord will provide. And to this day it is said, 'on the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.'" (Genesis 22 v 14)



## Mount Sinai

When the Israelites see God appearing at **Mount Sinai**, all they see is the mountain in cloud and on fire. They are scared so they send Moses to ascend the mountain alone. Here he receives The Ten Commandments from God, on stone tablets (Exodus 20). This established the covenant between God and the Israelites. However, the Israelites got tired of Moses' prolonged absence and took matters into their own hands. They built a golden calf idol which they worshipped as their god. Moses was furious and threw the tablets to the ground. He went back up the mountain to plead on their behalf and the stones were rewritten. Moses spent 40 days and nights on the peak reminding us that 40 days often represents a period of testing and preparation in the Bible.



## Mount Carmel

Elijah challenged 450 prophets of Baal to a contest on **Mount Carmel** to prove which deity was the true God, the Lord or Baal (1 Kings 18). Each party was to place an animal sacrifice on their altar and then pray to their god to light a fire for the sacrifice. Baal's prophets cried and prayed for three hours but there was no answer. Elijah then prepared the Lord's altar, dug a trench around it, prepared for the sacrifice and then ordered that four large jars of water be poured over it. How could Elijah expect the Lord to set fire to an altar doused in water! However, God sent the fire and the sacrifice was consumed as well as the altar and all the water in the trenches. The people fell and proclaimed, "The Lord—He is God". This story highlights the futility of praying to an idol! We need to put our faith in the one true and living God who delights to hear our prayers and answers in His perfect timing.



## New Testament

Mountains are also significant in the Gospel stories and we know that Jesus often went up to the mountains by himself to pray. After his baptism, Jesus spent 40 days and nights in the wilderness where He was tempted by the Devil (Matthew 4). He was led to the **Mount of Temptation** where He was shown all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. "All this I will give you if you will bow down and worship me", said the Devil but Jesus rebuked him and sent him away.



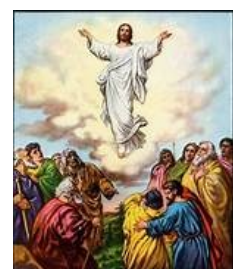
Jesus delivered his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) on the **Mount of Beatitudes** near the Sea of Galilee. This included "The Beatitudes" which offer a vision of what it means to follow Jesus.



Jesus took the disciples Peter, James and John up to the **Mount of Transfiguration** (usually thought to be Mt Tabor) where His appearance was transformed, his face shining like the sun and his clothes dazzling white; He appeared in glory with Moses and Elijah. God spoke from a cloud declaring, *This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him*. Again the proximity of heaven and earth is symbolised as this event reveals Jesus' divine glory to the disciples; the appearance of Moses (The Law) and Elijah (The Prophets) signifies that Jesus is the culmination and fulfilment of the Old Testament.



Finally, the **Mount of Olives** is where Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, wept over Jerusalem, taught his disciples and finally ascended to heaven. Zechariah indicates that this is where He will also return. The Mount of Olives represents an everlasting hope that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.



**I hope these few examples have demonstrated that mountains are powerful symbols of God's presence, revelation and majesty where He meets with His people to instruct, to test, to reveal His glory and to bridge the gap between the earthly and heavenly realms.**

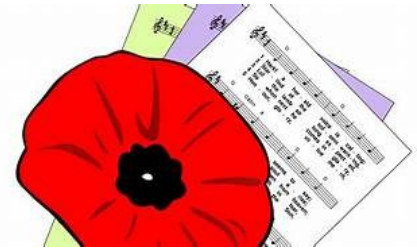
# Come let us sing for joy to the Lord!

The only constant in life is change—the seasons change, people grow old, governments come and go—but for the Christian we have the promise that God is the same yesterday, today and forever! That promise from Hebrews 13 v 8 assures us that no matter what is going on in our own lives, God is still the same. We can trust in His constant love and faithfulness towards us however unsettled and confusing the world seems. These two songs explore that theme.



## O God, Our Help in Ages Past

This hymn was written by Isaac Watts, one of the most prolific of English hymn writers and often called “The Father of English Hymnody”. This hymn, based on Psalm 90, expresses a strong note of assurance, promise and hope in the Lord. It was written in 1708 and was originally part of the *Psalms of David* published by Watts in 1719. It has become part of British tradition and is often sung at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday.



With the imminent death of the Protestant Queen Anne in 1714, the era of religious tolerance was under threat. Parliament passed the Schism Act which was designed to suppress dissent. This prompted Watts to write this hymn as a comfort for the panicked citizens reminding them that God takes the long view of Time—A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone— whereas human beings are caught up in the trials and troubles of the present day. Luckily Queen Anne died on the very day the Act was to come into force and George I repealed it before it became law.



As we remember God’s past faithfulness, we are reminded of His care for us in the present and in the eternal moments of our future with Him.

**A thousand years in your sight  
are like a day that has just gone  
by. Psalm 90 v 4**

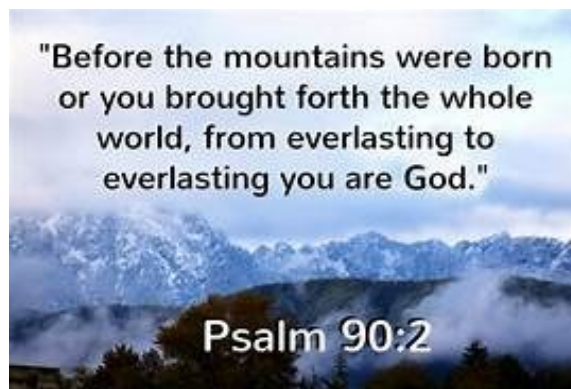
- 1. Our God, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast,  
And our eternal home.**
- 2. Under the shadow of your throne  
Your saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is your arm alone,  
And our defence is sure.**
- 3. Before the hills in order stood  
Or Earth received her frame,  
From everlasting You are God,  
To endless years the same.**
- 4. A thousand ages in your sight  
Are like an evening gone,  
Short as the watch that ends the night  
Before the rising sun.**
- 5. Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
Bears all its sons away;  
Then fly forgotten as a dream  
Dies at the op’ning day.**
- 6. O God, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come,  
Be thou our guard while troubles last  
And our eternal home.**

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

## You are Unchanging

This song by **Sovereign Grace** was written in 2024 and is a powerful declaration of God's unchanging nature, His faithfulness and sovereignty through all life's experiences. It is very singable with a simple melody. The lyrics highlight the eternal hope found in faith in Christ Jesus; He is our anchor in an ever-changing and confusing world and we hold onto the promise that He is the same yesterday, today and forever!

*As we battle our ever-changing emotions, circumstances, and perspectives, it's profoundly encouraging to know that God, by his very nature, cannot change. "The answer to the child's question 'Who made God?' is simply that God did not need to be made, for he was always there. He exists forever, and he is always the same. He does not grow older. His life does not wax or wane. He does not gain new powers nor lose those that he once had. He does not mature or develop. He does not get stronger, or weaker, or wiser as time goes by. 'He cannot change for the better,' wrote A. W. Pink, 'for he is already perfect; and being perfect, he cannot change for the worse.'" This song helps us rest in that eternal reality. Sovereign Grace*



1. **Before the skies were born  
Before the oceans roared  
Before the mountains reached for the burning stars  
Through all Your words and ways  
Through every promise made  
Through every means of grace that reveals your heart**

### Chorus

**You are unchanging, faithful, unfailing  
Now and forevermore  
God everlasting, sovereign and reigning  
Now and forevermore**

2. **In every season here  
In waves of joy and tears  
In all the ways our eyes only see in part  
With every trial we face  
With every test of faith  
With our eternal hope written in Your scars**

### Chorus

3. **When earth and heaven fade  
When sight has bloomed from faith  
When we are at home at last in our Saviour's arms  
Then all will be made right  
Then every tear will dry  
Then Your redeeming light will destroy the dark**

### Chorus

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



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

Revelation 21 v 4

# Church News

## Day of Prayer

We began the new year with a **Day of Prayer** on Wednesday 7 January. There were three sessions available.

- The morning session was from 10am-12 noon in the church. Copies of the Lord's prayer were left out to guide people in personal prayer.
- The afternoon session took place in the church hall from 2-4pm when we again used the Lord's prayer to pray in small groups guided by Bruce.
- The evening session took place in the church hall from 7-9pm and was led by Jessica for the work of the children and families in the congregation.



As we came together in intercessory prayer and reflection, for both global and specific local concerns, as well as for the ministries in our church, we felt God's presence among us. We prayed specifically for the future of our church as we face a vacancy with Bruce's retirement later this year. We thank Almighty God for hearing our prayers and we give Him all the glory.

## Solas

On Sunday 1 February Gavin Matthews from Solas came to speak to us on *Persuasively Communicating Christ into Today's Culture*. Solas is an organisation that seeks to "share the Good News of Jesus persuasively and to equip Christians for evangelism practically." Their head office is in Dundee and they have a website at [www.solas-cpc.org](http://www.solas-cpc.org) should you wish to contact them.

Gavin spoke from Acts 17 where we see the Apostle Paul in Athens debating with philosophers and confronting the idolatry on show around him. One of his most famous debates takes place on Mars Hill at the Areopagus. Paul's behaviour is a blueprint of how we should approach evangelism. He does not go in all guns blazing to try to disprove these philosophers' beliefs. Rather, he praises them that they are religious and tries to find a **common thread**. He has done his **research** and seeks to **engage** with them. He uses their own idols such as the altar to "the unknown God" to introduce the Creator who does not live in man-made temples and is not represented by gold or precious stone. He also says that God is near, "He is not hiding" and wants a relationship with them, unlike their idols who give nothing back when they bring their sacrifices to them.



How did they react? Some called him a babbler but one or two believed what he was saying about the resurrected Christ and some wanted to find out more.

What can **we** learn from this? We must be sensitive to people where they are at but this does not mean we don't confront unbelief. We never change the gospel, only the methods we use. As we hear talk of The Quiet Revival we must:

- Invite people to church or to Alpha/Christianity Explored/Hope Explored etc
- Talk about Jesus, not religion which turns people off. Talk about our own faith, what God has done for us, make it personal.
- Pray for our country like never before. We need to hold out our hands to people looking for the meaning to their lives so that we can lead them to Christ and so they will not be lead away from The Truth.

**Are we up for the challenge? We pray that God gives us the courage and faith to bring the Good News to the people of Uddingston before it's too late.**

## Hope Explored

Jessica Beecroft

Over the past couple of weeks, a small group has been gathering on Thursday evenings at Costa to take part in **Hope Explored**, a relaxed three-session course led by Marcus that looks at the life and message of Jesus. With coffee in hand and conversation flowing, the setting has provided a welcoming space to pause from the busyness of the week and consider some of life's bigger questions. While there hasn't yet been a large uptake from members of the public joining the course, meeting in a public setting has still been valuable - offering a visible presence in the community and opportunities for conversation and connection.



So, what is **Hope Explored**? The course centres on the claim that centuries before Jesus was born, a prophecy described him as the *Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace* (Isaiah 9 v 6). The Gospel of Luke - an account of Jesus' life - shows how these promises were fulfilled and why this is presented as **Good News** for everyone. Around the world, millions of people say they find hope and help in knowing Jesus Christ, and the course invites participants to explore these claims for themselves. Guided by Marcus, the sessions have involved reading passages together and sharing in open discussion about what they reveal and how they connect to life today.

The first session focused on the theme of **Hope**. Looking at passages from Luke 1 and Luke 8, the group considered the idea that Jesus brings hope because he is described as the Mighty God - someone with the power to meet humanity's deepest needs. The discussion explored how hope differs from wishful thinking, pointing instead to confidence grounded in who Jesus is and what He has done.



Session two turned to **Peace**, drawing on Luke 23 and the account of Jesus' crucifixion. Here, the emphasis was on Jesus as the Prince of Peace - the one who removes the barrier between humanity and God. Conversation centred on the meaning of peace beyond circumstances, considering reconciliation, forgiveness, and inner rest in the midst of life's pressures.



With one session still to come, **Hope Explored** has already sparked thoughtful dialogue and reflection. Whether attendees came curious, sceptical, or searching, Thursday evenings at Costa have offered an opportunity to explore faith in an open and friendly environment - and to consider a hope that does not disappoint.



**As the course concludes, please pray that what has been shared and discussed might make a lasting difference in the lives of those who have attended. Please also pray for further opportunities, and for wisdom in planning future outreach events or courses, that we may continue to engage thoughtfully and faithfully with our community.**

## Funeral Service of Irene Laird

The funeral service for Irene took place on Wednesday 4 February. Irene was released from her suffering after a few months of illness on 19 January and is now safely home in the arms of Jesus. Irene's choice of hymns for her funeral service—10,000 Reasons, Cornerstone and There is a Redeemer—reflected her deep faith and trust in her Lord. She was a lady of a gentle and gracious spirit. However, her quiet, unassuming demeanour hid a lady with a wide range of talents. She loved painting and crafting, languages and travel, especially to Italy, was a Brownie leader and loved to sing in a choir. We were surprised to hear from her friend, Isabel, who delivered a beautiful eulogy, that she also liked motorbikes! Irene used her secretarial talents by serving as Clerk to the Board at Whifflet UF Church and for Presbytery work. Many of her friends and family from Airdrie and Coatbridge and beyond attended the service to say goodbye to this gentle woman of faith.



## Congregational Report by the Minister



*To Know Christ and to make Him Known* has been the motto of our congregation for many years now and as we look back over the past year, it continues to be the underlying theme to all that we seek to be and do as a congregation. We can rejoice in the faithfulness of the Living God as we have worshipped and served Him together.

As always, we are indebted to our elders and office bearers for their attentiveness to their duties. In particular we thank **Janice Clark-Dick** and our former member, **Graeme Stangoe**, for their work in overseeing the financial affairs of the congregation. We thank **Bill Hillan** for his work with the Gift Aid scheme which ensures a substantial input to our financial wellbeing. We thank **Paul Stewart** for his willingness to take over from Graeme in overseeing the vital maintenance of the financial records of the congregation. Our Session Clerk, **Bill Vint**, and our Deputy Preses, **Helen Ooi**, oversee so much and ensure the smooth running of the church's affairs.

We thank those who have attended to a number of important fabric issues and as we face major renovations to the Hall roof, we are confident that with the proper professional advisers, and good builders, this essential work will be completed to ensure that this integral part of our buildings will be fit for purpose into the future.

Our Children and Families' Worker, **Jessica Beecroft**, continues, along with her team, to not only oversee the running of Park Kids, but also our schools' work including the running of the SU groups as well as our MEGA events on a Saturday. CONNECT, our work with teenagers, continues on a Monday evening and with the support of **Elizabeth McDowall** and **Marcus Bailey** the task of Christian discipleship at this critical stage of life, continues. We are fortunate to have such an able leader and teacher as Jessica leading this important work and we thank her. We also thank all who assist in this ministry.

Our Ministry Team was added to with the coming amongst us of **Marcus Bailey** in July. His sincere faith, warm nature, gifted communication skills and willingness to put his hand to anything, has been an added blessing. In giving Marcus this opportunity to gain experience, we ourselves have been blessed. Our prayer is that both Jessica and Marcus will be able to continue with us as we enter a period of vacancy. We also thank the **Rev Ian McQuarrie**, the **Rev Graham McAuliffe** and the **Rev Russell Brooks** who have supported the ministry within the congregation.

Our ongoing involvement with community organisations continues and as I write this report, we are looking forward to hosting an evening where **Grow Uddingston** will celebrate 25 years of caring for our village; they will receive an award from His Majesty the King (through the Lord Lieutenant of Lanarkshire) for their service. Both in the springtime and at Christmas we are able to host events for them and we trust that this ongoing relationship will continue. A recognition of our place in the community is seen in the use of our Hall by our local MP for a Community Consultation afternoon back in the early summer and a request from the Community Council to host a Hustings for the forthcoming Scottish Parliamentary Elections.

Stimulated, in part, by the visit of Gavin Matthews from Solas in January 2025, we have begun to seek to venture into new forms of evangelism in the community with the running of a short course entitled **Hope Explored**. This is only a small beginning of what will be an exciting adventure of discovery in ways to engage with others with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Like all active congregations, so much of the warmth of fellowship is due to the care and compassion shown to one another. Our **Ladies' Association** continues to grow in strength and the good and wise leadership of the committee is seen, not only in the excellent program of speakers and events, but also in the depth of Fellowship that exists. The various **Fellowship Groups** provide a further way to both deepen faith and develop bonds of fellowship with one another. Our short **Devotional and Prayer Services** on a Tuesday morning and Wednesday evening are greatly appreciated by those who attend. It is good that our church is open on these weekdays and occasionally people do come in for a place of quiet and spiritual comfort.

Challenges face us a congregation as we enter into this time of Ministerial Vacancy. However, all of us are ministers of God's grace, not only within our church, but in our daily lives with family, neighbours and friends.

**May Park Church continue to be that place where people find their souls being restored, spiritual life being encountered, and the Knowledge of the Shepherd King, the Lord Jesus Christ, deepened.**



# Accounts to end December 2025

UDDINGSTON : PARK UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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## STATEMENT OF BALANCES ON CONGREGATIONAL FUNDS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

FUND	NATURE OF FUND	BALANCE 1/1/25 £	RECEIPTS 2025 £	PAYMENTS 2025 £	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) £	NET FUND TRANSFERS £	NET CHANGE ON FUNDS £	BALANCE 31/12/25 £	FUNDS HELD
GENERAL	UNRESTRICTED	52,299	141,873	-107,582	34,291	-	34,291	86,590	Bank of Scotland plc
FABRIC	DESIGNATED	18,622	-	-	-	-	-	18,622	Bank of Scotland plc
MISSION	DESIGNATED	8,020	-	-7,176	-7,176	-	-7,176	844	Bank of Scotland plc
MINISTRY	DESIGNATED	50,861	555	-10,113	-9,557	-	-9,557	41,304	Bank of Scotland plc
PROJECT	DESIGNATED	17,129	1,125	-	1,125	-	1,125	18,254	TSB Bank plc
CHILD & FAMILY	DESIGNATED	8,421	20,053	-15,789	4,263	-	4,263	12,684	Bank of Scotland plc
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>155,352</b>	<b>163,606</b>	<b>-140,660</b>	<b>22,945</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>22,945</b>	<b>178,298</b>	

### Nature of Congregational funds :

General	Unrestricted	Ordinary receipts and payments of the congregation
Fabric	Designated	Repairs to external and internal fabric and / or furnishings of Church, halls and Manse
Mission	Designated	Designated for distribution to mission and charities in the UK and overseas
Ministry	Designated	Designated for supporting temporary position of ministry assistant
Project	Designated	Designated for major projects and repairs to Church buildings
Child & Family	Designated	Designated for supporting work with children and families within the Church and Community

Approval of Congregation Financial Statements for the Year ending 31 December 2025 as set out on pages 7-10 by Office Bearers authorised to sign.

Minister and Preses	_____	W. Bruce McDowall
Deputy Preses	_____	Helen Ooi
Treasurer	_____	Janice Clark-Dick
Date	_____	

UDDINGSTON : PARK UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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## GENERAL FUND - RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025

## UNRESTRICTED FUND

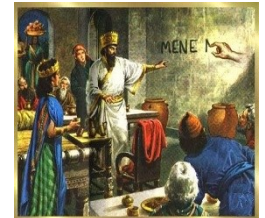
RECEIPTS	£	2025 £	Supplementary 2024 sheet £	PAYMENTS	£	2025 £	Supplementary 2024 sheet £
<b>Offerings</b>				<b>Ministry</b>			
Open	7,111		4,840	Stipend (incl. NI)	45,822		43,745
Free Will	106,070		84,813	Minister's expenses	3,072		3,072
Gift Aid Tax recovered	22,298		20,354	Manse telephone	660		572
		135,478	110,006	Target	12,148		11,548
				Presbytery dues	420		0
						62,122	58,937
<b>Donations</b>				<b>Property</b>			
Others	3,283		8,470 Supp.1	Church			
		3,283	8,470	Council Tax	-	3,676	3,451
				Insurance	3,448	550	3,658
<b>Other receipts</b>				Heating, Lighting	7,802	-	8,486 Supp.2
Stedfast	-		20	Repairs, maintenance	15,836	1,863	9,202 Supp.3 & 4
Other income	555		671		27,086	6,089	33,175
		555	691				24,797
				<b>Other Congregational Payments</b>			
				Stedfast		528	528
				Printing & Donation Envelopes	2,265		2,533 Supp.5
				Cleaning	2,752		2,699
				Internet	398		517
				Miscellaneous	4,176		5,682 Supp.6
						10,120	11,959
<b>Ordinary receipts</b>		139,316	119,167	<b>Ordinary payments</b>		105,417	95,693
<b>Extraordinary receipts</b>				<b>Extraordinary payments</b>			
Retiral / Special Offering	2,556		2,673	Retiral / Special Offering	2,165		2,750 Supp.7
		2,556	2,673			2,165	2,750
<b>Total receipts</b>		141,873	121,840	<b>Total payments</b>		107,582	98,443
		141,873	121,840	<b>Surplus in year</b>		34,291	23,397
						141,873	121,840
<b>Surplus / (deficit) for Year</b>		34,291	23,397	Transfer to other funds		0	6,300
<b>Balance at 1 January</b>		52,300	35,203	<b>Balance at 31 December</b>		86,591	52,300
		86,591	58,600			86,591	58,600

# More than just Words

Many common idioms we use in everyday speech originate in the Bible, especially if we use the KJV. We use expressions like The Prodigal Son, a Sign of the Times and Living to a Ripe Old Age every day but do we know where they originate? Here are a few idioms we use with their Biblical roots.

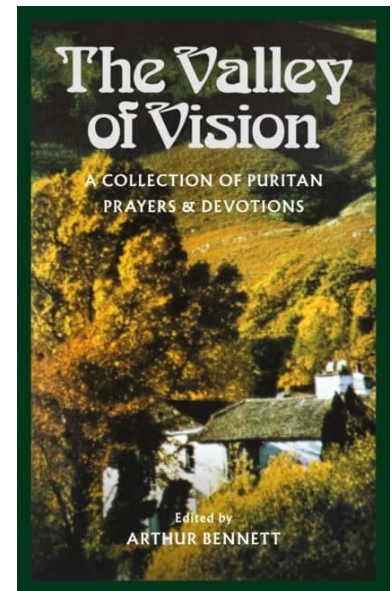


Idiom	Source from Scripture
The writing is on the wall	<i>Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking. Daniel 5 v 5-6</i>
A fly in the ointment	<i>As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honour. Ecclesiastes 10 v 1</i>
A leopard cannot change its spots	<i>Can an Ethiopian change his skin or a leopard its spots? Jeremiah 13 v 23</i>
Go the extra mile	<i>If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Matthew 5 v 41</i>
The land of Nod	<i>So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Genesis 4 v 16</i>
A little birdie told me	<i>...because a bird in the sky may carry your words, and a bird on the wing may report what you say. Ecclesiastes 10 v 20</i>
Putting words in someone's mouth	<i>"Then go to the king and speak these words to him." And Joab put the words in her mouth. 2 Samuel 14 v 3</i>
The blind leading the blind	<i>He replied, "every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit." Matthew 15 v13-14</i>
Pride comes before a fall	<i>Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16 v 18</i>
Apple of my eye	<i>In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye. Deuteronomy 32 v 10</i>



# The Valley of Vision

The prayer below is taken from a book called *The Valley of Vision* which is a collection of Puritan prayers edited by Arthur Bennett who was a tutor in Biblical Theology and Christian Doctrine at All Nations Christian College. The Puritans were known for their simple lifestyle rooted in prayer and meditation and although the language may seem old-fashioned to us, it has a profundity that will speak to our souls. This prayer prompts us to meditate on both God's, and our own, character, and reminds us of our need for Him and His perfect sufficiency.



## God All-Sufficient

### O LORD OF GRACE,

the world is before me this day, and I am weak and fearful, but I look to thee for strength.

If I venture forth alone I stumble and fall,

but on the Beloved's arms I am firm as the eternal hills;

If left to the treachery of my heart I shall shame thy name,

but if enlightened, guided, upheld by thy Spirit, I shall bring thee glory.

Be Thou my arm to support,

my strength to stand, my light to see,

my feet to run, my shield to protect,

my sword to repel, my sun to warm.

To enrich me will not diminish thy fulness;

All thy lovingkindness is in thy Son.

I bring him to thee in the arms of faith, I urge his saving name as the one who died for me.

I plead his blood to pay my debts of wrong.

Accept his worthiness for my unworthiness, his sinlessness for my transgressions,

his purity for my uncleanness, his sincerity for my guile,

his truth for my deceits, his meekness for my pride,

his constancy for my backslidings, his love for my enmity,

his fulness for my emptiness, his faithfulness for my treachery,

his obedience for my lawlessness, his glory for my shame,

his devotedness for my waywardness, his holy life for my unchaste ways,

his righteousness for my dead works, his death for my life.



*Thanks to Elizabeth McDowall for sharing this prayer with us.*

# The Storms of Life

There are many references to storms in the Bible. Maybe the most famous one is in Matthew 8 v 26 where Jesus calmed the storm by rebuking the wind and waves. The disciples were terrified and thought they were going to drown but Jesus restored calm thus demonstrating His power and authority over creation and His identity as the Son of God. As well as physical storms we also experience metaphorical storms; times when our faith is tested, or when we rebel or think we can do things on our own. God uses these situations to teach us, correct us and to strengthen our faith and trust in Him. Storms don't last forever, but even in the midst of them we must remember Jesus is there walking side by side with us.



## Awakened by the Storm

Easter Sunday morning, I was awakened by thunder, lightning and winds that sounded like a hurricane. My little elderly dog "Monty" was trembling and whining at the end of the bed when a large crack of thunder sent him running into my arms for protection. I tried to soothe him but he refused to sit still. No amount of petting, scratching behind his ears or talking softly to him was working. Then, the City Warning Sirens went off, a Tornado had been spotted by the National Weather Service so we quickly got into the hallway to wait for what might come next. I should mention that we have a natural spring that runs through a large stone culvert along the side of our home. Normally, the spring is only a few inches deep of running water, but now it was flowing over the banks and onto our front yard.



It is funny how when you are faced with a terrible situation you stop and think about what is really important and this storm made me realize something very important. Even though I like to believe that I depend on God to get me through each and every day,

- do I really trust God beyond what I can see or what I know?
- do I really know just how much God is in control?
- and more importantly am I willing to understand that trusting God does not always mean I will understand His ways?

As the storm continued to rage God now had my full attention. The sound of the thunder, rain and wind was overwhelming and frightening; but, it was temporary! I knew the storm would end, I could see "around the corner". It did not matter how loud or fierce the storm was and even if our house had been flooded by the water from the spring, would still end; something a little elderly dog could never understand. I think sometimes we have to be awakened by thunder and lightning to really know who God is;

**...for His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are His ways our ways (Isaiah 55: v 8-9).**

As long as we focus on God and lean on Him, we won't need to "see around the corner", because God will lead us. Once the storm passed Monty curled up on my lap and fell fast asleep, content once more. As I gently rubbed his head, one scripture kept going through my mind;

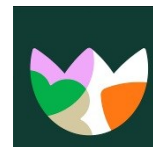
**Let's hold firmly to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10 v 23)**

There has never been a time in our lives when God has not been faithful. Only times when we pre-determined what outcome we wanted without consideration of His plans for us. Our faith in God comes when we allow His full reign in our hearts.

What a joy and relief I felt when the storm ended and the water receded, but greater was my joy at knowing that God was in control of the storm, all along.

# Grow Uddingston

by Donald Burt



## An Evening of Celebration



The previous article for Park Pages was written just before our Christmas Fayre took place, which seems a long time ago now. The day went very well and was very well attended, with the rain not appearing until towards the end.

However, I would like to use the rest of this article to summarise our very special **Evening of Celebration** that took place in **Park Church** on Sunday 15 February. There were several reasons for the celebration. Firstly, Rev. Bruce McDowall very kindly offered to have a special service for **Grow Uddingston**. He had organised one during the early days of the Group (at that time Uddingston Pride) and offered again as it was the Group's 25th Anniversary year in 2025. When Bruce made the very kind offer, we had just been informed that we were to receive the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) but were sworn to secrecy as it had not been officially announced by "The Palace"!! So once we were allowed to share the news, we were very grateful to Bruce when he agreed to include the presentation of the KAVS award as part of the service.



Over 120 people attended the Evening of Celebration which included not only the themes of **Creation, Renewal** and **Continuing Maintenance and Improvement** - themes very close to Grow Uddingston's heart - but also included a presentation by Walter Silcock, one of our founder members, concentrating on the early days of the group.

This was followed by a video of a lovely poem, written and performed by pupils from St John the Baptist and Muiredge Primary Schools and introduced by Yvonne McKegney, one of the Principal Teachers at Muiredge.

**Lady Susan Haughey, Lord Lieutenant of Lanarkshire**, then presented the KAVS Certificate, signed by King Charles, and a Crystal Momento to **Anona Fraser**, Chairperson of Grow Uddingston. The KAVS award is the highest award available to voluntary groups and is in recognition of the work over many years of all volunteers, both past and present, in improving the local community of Uddingston for all.

However, we knew that we could not allow this evening of celebration to pass without recognising the long and continuous help and support that Grow Uddingston has received from **Rev Bruce McDowall** over the 25 years of the group. Bruce has supported us in so many ways, both personally and in providing the church facilities for our use, including Arts & Crafts Fairs, Plant Sales and Christmas Fayres to name but a few. We were honoured that Lady Haughey presented Bruce with a token of our esteem and gratitude; our grateful thanks go to Bruce and to the congregation of Park Church.

**So, all in all, a lovely Evening of Celebration!**



**Grow Uddingston 25th Anniversary Service**





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This magazine is also available on the church website

