

**Park Church Stirling
Newsletter issue Five :
Summer 2021**



***Park Church Stirling , a congregation of the
Church of Scotland
Worshipping in the Peter Memorial Building
Park Terrace, Stirling, FK8 2NA***

Contents of this edition include:	Page
Letter from the Interim Moderator	3
Update from the Session Clerk	4 & 5
2nd May Sermon : “Connections”	16-19
Ladies Group update	19
Jars of Joy report	7
Easter Messy Church News	6
Youth Committee Questionnaire	8
Cracked Pots	9
Summer Book Quiz	10
Answers to Summer Book Quiz	23
Make Time to Think	13
In Memoriam	30
Appreciations –Alex McFeat & Sonia MacCallum	26 & 27
Welcome to Stirling Street Pastors	20-22
Chocolate cookie recipe	28
Christian Aid news	26
Community Keeping in touch	14 &15
Letter from Nepal	24 & 25
Park Church Playgroup	29
Date for next newsletter submissions	30
Key Contacts	31
Invitation to worship	32

From the Interim Moderator

Ascensiontide 2021

Dear Friends,

The post-Easter season draws to a close with the Ascension – the remembrance of Jesus' departure from the world, leaving his disciples to continue the work that he had begun.

Each of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection affirm that he then returned to God, from whom he had first come. The revelation of God as a God of love who creates and sustains life in all its myriad forms is the proclamation of good news for all creation.

As Christians, we celebrate the new life offered to us in Christ: the resurrection of Jesus is the evidence of God's power to defeat even death itself, and to offer to each person the promise of life in fullness now, and life without end in the coming kingdom of God.

The Ascension did however leave the first disciples with a dilemma – what were they to do now? Who would lead them, and show them what God expects of them? We can imagine their dismay, and their confusion, their anxieties and doubts, when Jesus left them for a second time. Suddenly they find themselves given the responsibility for continuing the mission that Jesus began: the work of the kingdom, to reveal God's truth to all the world.

Go into the world, and make disciples of all nations, Jesus says at the end of Matthew's Gospel; but how are they, and we, to make disciples of Christ? Words are surely not enough. Our own abilities are surely not enough. Like those first disciples and apostles, we might be daunted by the thought of what is expected of us, but like them, we know that we are not left to complete the task alone.

Jesus promised his followers that he would send another helper, once he was no longer in the world. At Pentecost, we celebrate and give thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit, the one who completes God's three-fold nature, and who is given to us as the church to enable and enliven us in our sharing of God's mission in the world, bring good news to those in need, and testifying to the love of God in our actions, sharing the gifts that God has given.

The Holy Spirit is our advocate, our guide, our inspiration – and also the power of God to disturb and agitate, to stir us up when we risk becoming complacent, satisfied, and apathetic. The Spirit blows where it will, and none of us can direct its purpose: the Spirit can shake the foundations of the church, and can make all things new; for it is the creative and re-creative power of God that blows around us and through us.

It is perhaps then no coincidence that this year's General Assembly opens on the weekend of Pentecost, and that many changes are proposed to continue the reform of the Church, unsettling and challenging its members – us – to respond with faith and confidence in God's purpose to renew and reshape the body of Christ for the age in which we live.

May the Spirit come upon us, and renew us for service to God in love and grace, in Jesus' name, to all the world, and its many peoples.

with prayer and blessing

Alan

Interim Moderator

From the Session Clerk

It is lovely to see folk in the Church for the first time for many months but I am very aware of those still restricted and appreciate that the last year has been very difficult for everyone. We are very grateful to Rev Elinor Gordon, Rev Maggie Roderick and Rev Alan Miller for leading weekly worship, challenging and encouraging us every Sunday. Although spacing and mask requirements remain, we have been able to increase capacity at services to maximum of 120 persons with recent changes in government regulations. Please encourage and invite people to come in person.

Behind the scenes, Session has been busy preparing for our emergence from the pandemic and with God's Strength, our recovery and rebirth as a vibrant congregation sharing God's Love in practical ways with our neighbours and the community. Session have had two evenings discussing our vision and what we as a congregation and kirk session we want to do in the next couple of years. This is also important in advertising the vacancy and seeking a new minister.

The electoral roll has been reviewed and updated in preparation for Presbytery appointing a Vacancy Advisory Committee to support the congregation. A nomination committee representing the church will then be charged with looking for a new minister.

In May, we heard that Stirling Presbytery will be joining in a larger Presbytery stretching from Stirling to Angus. We have been encouraged to see how we might work more closely with neighbouring congregations including other Christian denominations. Arthur McDonald is stepping down as our Presbytery Elder after many years dedicated service and Ian Ritchie has been nominated as our representative for the next year.

Mission and Outreach work has been busy: Park Church continues to be closely linked with overseas partners in Paris and Nepal both of which affected by Covid. Generous grant money has funded regular bags from the Church to support over 50 members at home and in care homes. In May afternoon packed teas were delivered in the bags which were much appreciated (see pages 14 & 15). In this year of the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26) we are having discussions with Episcopal and Methodist Church eco-congregation colleagues to increase our awareness and activity. I am grateful to Sandra Muir for agreeing to take the lead on Eco-issues in Park Church. Eco is an adjective which means "not harming the environment". Helen Reid and Helen McDonald have co-ordinated on-line and envelope collections for Water Aid and Christian Aid which have been very well supported by members.

The Youth Committee have continued to work with our young folk staying in touch throughout the pandemic. They are canvassing their opinions on future activities and in June, there will a family service when our young people will be making major contributions. Please give them every encouragement.

Our Property Committee have overseen essential maintenance work and repairs in the Peter Memorial Building and arranging painting of the Anderson Hall and pruning of several trees. They have ordered a new hut to provide additional ground floor storage for the soon to be started Play Group. They have assessed the increased capacity under changing Covid rules for each room in the Church and have ordered a new Church Notice Board. They will be reviewing the “loop” audio system in the Sanctuary. We have accommodated Stirling Street Pastors and hope that other groups may be able to resume activities in future months, dependant on relaxation of restrictions. We continue to oversee the former APS Church building which has been marketed.

The Communications Team have live-streamed services and the website is being redesigned. The quarterly newsletter will again be posted to 350 folk to ensure everyone can keep in touch.

In terms of finance Kirk Session approved annual accounts for 2020 which combined the previously separate accounts from the former congregations. We are very grateful to Alan Skilling as Independent examiner, Ed Morton as former APS treasurer, Margaret Crombie as Park Church Treasurer and Brian Walker as Finance Convener for pulling everything together in extraordinary circumstances, but also to all our members who have continued to support the Church throughout the year.

I would like to express my gratitude for the commitment, enthusiasm and encouragement of so many people.

As restrictions ease, we are keen to get to know everyone in our new united congregation better and would value any offers of talents and help. Please contact me on 01786473087 if you have any suggestions, questions or concerns.

Kind Regards

Peter



Stirling Kirks Together



Easter Messy Church Bags

It has now been well over a year since we were able to hold a Messy Church session and we have really missed meeting up in person. We have tried to keep in touch with regular drop offs of bags and cards. Over the months we have delivered Rainbow bags, going back to school cards, Halloween bags, Christmas bags as well as New Year cards.

Easter was no exception and we filled 20 bags with a card, some craft and a small pack of chocolate bags from the Real Chocolate Company which also included a leaflet with the Easter Story and some follow up activities.

We are SO looking forward to getting back together again for Messy Church-Church in a different form.



JARS OF JOY

At Easter the older children in our Junior Church were given a challenge to make a 'Jar of Joy'. They were each given an empty labelled jar with some pieces of coloured paper inside and asked to put something happy on each piece. There were instruction sheets along with the jars with ideas e.g. jokes, joyful words, funny stories, pictures etc. that could be put on the papers. When the jars were ready the children were to give their jar to someone they thought would appreciate it. The idea was that a different paper could be taken out each day and that it would cheer up that person.



**Everyone (0-100+) is invited to an
All Age Service on Sunday 13th June at 11am
This will be led by the younger members of the
congregation with Rev Elinor Gordon**

**If possible please book your places for the service by
phoning the Administrator by Friday 11th June**

We have developed a questionnaire to be discussed with or issued to all the children and young people in our church. We thought you might like to see some of the questions we are asking, and although it is meant for our younger congregation, perhaps there are some areas that you feel are pertinent for you. If you would like to see what options we have given the children and/or feel you might want to participate yourself please look on the church website where you should find a link to the questionnaire under the heading of Young People. Please feel free to fill out any answers or comments and send them back anonymously to the church as we value all opinions. If you wish to participate, please be honest and treat them with your “visioning hat on” answering them through the eyes of a child.

The Youth Group Committee

Questionnaire for Young People

- **Why do you come to church?**
- **What do you enjoy about church?**
- **Would you like to sit with your family during the whole service?**
- **Do you think the church is welcoming to young people?**
- **Would you like a Junior Church Club to be held on another day, if possible, as well as on a Sunday, maybe in the early part of an evening?**
- **What changes (if any) to the regular Sunday service would make you feel more involved and included?**
- **Imagine you can see into the future. What does church on a Sunday look like?**
- **As a church we are going to be choosing a new minister. What would you be looking for in a new minister?**



FUTURE

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck when she went to collect water. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walks from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water. Of course the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments but the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do.

After the two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. 'I am ashamed of myself because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house.'

The old woman smiled, 'Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flowers seeds on your side of the path and every day while we walk back, you water them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house.'

Each of us has our own unique flaw but it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. We have to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them. So to all of you cracked pots, have a great day and remember to smell the flowers on your side of the path!



Summer Book Quiz

Clue:

1. "... (to say nothing of the dog)"
2. Belle Noire
3. Wife of Isaac and mother of Esau and Jacob
4. Holst's Mars and Venus
5. Has this aquatic vessel sunk?
6. Young Charles and the brown manufacturing plant.
7. Child slept?
8. Garden tool of the terrible.
9. The second book of 22
10. Relatives of mine and further beasts.
11. Alexander's riflemen.
12. Love and passion on the Yorkshire moors.
13. Splendid prospects.
14. Silver tongued goat.
15. Destination of the "Hispaniola"
16. Soft cloth of the country.
17. Unconfined confinement.
18. Attic.
19. Were they always in debt?
20. A long way from the January sales.
21. Mr McGregor's vegetable poacher.
22. The saintly friends.
23. MM1. A heavenly journey
24. To murder a jeering fowl.
25. This locomotive bears the name of the doubting disciple.
26. The clock.
27. The ancient and the ocean
28. Farewell Mr French Fries

(based on an earlier quiz devised by Margaret Cook)

A FAVOURITE HYMN.

YE SERVANTS OF GOD - (CH4 130).

This is one of the great Hymns of praise in CH4.

The words are by Charles Wesley, who wrote many Hymns, such as “Love Divine, all loves excelling” and “Come Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire”. Several of his Hymns were written as an encouragement to his fellow Methodists, who were being persecuted for their beliefs.

Sir Hubert Parry, who wrote the tune, was one of the most distinguished composers and Church musicians of his time, and was also Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music in London. He also composed the tune “Repton” for the words “Dear Lord and Father of mankind”, and the Tune “Jerusalem” for Blake’s poem “And did those feet in ancient time”.

There are four verses in “Ye Servants of God”; the final one beginning “Then let us adore, and give Him His right”, is sung in unison, and the Hymn ends with two triumphant Amens.

I look forward to the day when the Choir and congregation, accompanied by the organ, are allowed to sing this wonderful Hymn again.

Ross McGowan.

Organist.



Flower Group

I am pleased to be able to announce that it is proposed to resume weekly flowers within the Church now that Covid restrictions have been further lifted. We are aiming to begin this as from June and would like to thank everyone most sincerely for their help and support in the past. As previously, the flowers will then be distributed to members of our congregation after the service. They are always greatly appreciated and form an important part of our outreach work!

If you would like to donate flowers and haven't done so previously, or to help in any way with this, please do get in touch. We are always looking for additional people to help with arranging or to deliver. We keep arrangements simple (just vases, no floral foam involved !) and work in pairs. No experience is necessary - just a love of flowers!

I can be contacted on 01786 281190 if you would like to chat about this or would like further information.

Maureen McArthur



A Yorkshire farmer's wife dies and he rings the stonemason to sort out a suitable tombstone. He tells the man to inscribe it "Lord, she was Thine".

A short time afterwards the farmer goes to the graveyard to inspect the work. He is furious - he calls the stonemason straight away - "You idiot! You've missed the "e"! "Oh, so I have, very sorry sir, I'll add that in a jiffy".

So, a few days pass and at last the work is completed. Once more the farmer sets out to the graveyard. There, inscribed in stone for all the world to see, it says "E Lord, she was thin".

**Make time to think - it is the source of power.
Make time to play - it is the key to freedom and relaxation.
Make time to read - it is the gateway to knowledge.
Make time to worship - it washes the dust of earth from your eyes.
Make time to help and enjoy friends - no other happiness matches this.
Make time to love - if you don't it will fade away.
Make time to laugh and pray - these are two things that lighten life's load.
Make time to be alone with God - He is the Source of everything.**



Park Church Ladies Group

As we move forward with the easing of the current COVID 19 restrictions, the Ladies Group committee has put together a provisional programme of evening talks. We hope to start on Monday 27th of September running through on alternate Monday evenings until 6th December and then from 10th January until 21st March. There may have to be some changes to the room layout, seating and catering arrangements but you can be assured of the same warm welcome, friendship and fellowship for all. On the in-between Mondays we hope that we will also be able to restart the Ladies Badminton Group. The Ladies Group is open to all, not just members of the congregation and a very warm welcome is extended to anyone wishing to join us at any of our meetings.

Please convey my thanks to all concerned in appreciation of the surprise Afternoon Tea which was delivered to me on Saturday afternoon. The contents of the bag proved to be absolutely delicious— quite a feast in fact. The cake was sufficient for two more days of coffee and cake! The organisation of such a treat for so many was no mean feat and I wish to express my thanks to all those involved.

What a feast! The afternoon tea was a real treat, sandwiches, cakes and meringue all delicious. Along with prayers for May it was a lovely surprise. Please pass on my thanks and good wishes to the team.

I don't know who was responsible for the Afternoon Tea that was delivered on Friday last. It was a lovely surprise which I enjoyed very much. It was nice to be remembered. Please pass on my thanks to the person concerned.

I just want to say how much I appreciate getting the afternoon tea gift from the Church. You and the ladies who provided the contents have done a lovely job and I wish to give you all my thanks.

Thank you so much for the delicious afternoon tea. Not only was the food delicious, but it was all so beautifully packed and a delight to open each little box to find something else tasty inside.

I would like to pass on my thanks to the team involved.

Many thanks to the Foundation Scotland Covid Fund who paid for the teas

Mission & Outreach: Community Keeping In Touch

On Friday 7th May 2021 Fifty five people were gifted a packed tea prepared by Tilly's tearooms in Dunblane together with the prayer card for May .

The teas were taken out by a team of friendly socially distanced volunteers co-ordinated by Lyndsay Boyack & Johan Stirling who had time to chat with the recipients.



Our Virtual Tea Party to celebrate the Church's Birthday at Pentecost was enjoyed by all and is part of the regular monthly gift bag service outreach to older people in the community.

If you would like to be added to our list, please let me know and a friendly face will pop by in the first week of the month.

**Johan Stirling
01786 461571**

John 15:1-8 New International Version

The vine and the branches

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.
He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.
You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

Remain in me, as I also remain in you.
No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

'I am the vine; you are the branches.
If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

**If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.
If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.**

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my dis-

May 2nd 2021 Sermon: "Connections"

I still have connections with the University of Stirling after graduating from there in 1979 with a degree in psychology and sociology. My connections led me to participate in an event giving psychology students, an insight into some of the possible different careers after their degree.

I was introduced to Big Blue Button.....
What was this new thing? I'd never heard of it and knew nothing about it.

14 months ago, many may never have even heard of, let alone known anything about Zoom, Facetime, What's App, Messenger, Teams or similar platform. Regular users would find that unthinkable

Yet since the first lockdown last March, so many have not only heard of them, now they regularly use them to connect with friends or relatives they were not allowed to see in person.

They are all methods of connecting to people, keeping in touch, and Big Blue Button is simply another platform to use.

Many in our world today, and even in this country, have never heard about Jesus Christ

That may seem unthinkable. But for many, even if they have heard of Jesus they may not actually know anything about him.

How can this be, you may ask?

Well, maybe we simply don't tell people enough.
Maybe we don't demonstrate our own faith enough.

In John's gospel, Jesus described himself in metaphors seven times, using the words I am.

He variously said

I am

the bread of life" (John 6:35,48,51)

the light of the world"(John 8:12)

the gate of the sheep" (John 10:7,9)

the good shepherd"(John 10:11,14)

the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25)

the way, the truth, and the life"(John 14:6)

and finally, as we read today, I am the true vine"
(John 15:1,5)

Today's reading comes after the disciples had celebrated their Passover meal in the upper room and Jesus was on his way to be arrested, although the disciples didn't know that then. It may have been on the Mount of Olives where Jesus talked to his disciples about the vine.

As usual, there are many layers to this metaphor.

One is making it clear that we cannot do anything in our own strength . if we say we are Christians, then Christ must be central in our lives, for we cannot share his message alone.

Jesus Christ is the head of our church, the centre of our church and the whole reason for our church. So Jesus Christ is with us, supporting us, as the vine supports the branches.

Equally, if we do not have Christ at the centre of our lives, then we may as well not pretend we are Christians. If we are the branches that are broken off, we cannot be supported by the vine, and that is our choice.

Then, when we talk about bearing fruit, we are talking about mission. What does that actually mean?

Well I believe it means letting every person see that God's love is there for them; that Jesus Christ, God incarnate, came to this world, fully human as well as fully divine, to let us know how to live and love. He died for our sins and rose again. Why?

He rose again to fulfil the scriptures and to redeem humanity and give us the option of eternal life with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So in bearing fruit we are spreading that word.

In challenging as he did, Christ was saying the way you are living just now is not the right way. It all comes down to love and by having him at the centre of our own lives then we are called to love too.

That is how we show people what having Christ in our life is. He is the power that lets us shine his light and love into our lives and the lives of others.

Bishop Michael Curry was the preacher at the wedding of Megan Markle and Prince Harry. I doubt many of us have ever heard quite such an animated sermon.

He is a man who clearly has Jesus at the centre of his life and clearly understands about Jesus being the vine. Bishop Michael Curry bears fruit with his message of the power of love that must not be underestimated.

And his message at that wedding on the power of love was this:
“Imagine our homes and families when love is the way.
Imagine neighbourhoods and communities where love is the way.
Imagine governments and nations where love is the way.
Imagine business and commerce when love is the way.
Imagine this tired old world when love is the way.”

He went on to talk about unselfish, redemptive, sacrificial love
and said:

“When love is the way, then no child will go to bed hungry in this world ever again.
When love is the way, we will let justice roll down like a mighty stream and righteousness like an ever-flowing brook.
When love is the way, poverty will become history.
When love is the way, the Earth will be a sanctuary.
When love is the way, we will lay down our swords and shields, down by the riverside, to study war no more.
When love is the way, there's plenty good room, plenty good room, for all of god's children because -
When love is the way, we actually treat each other well, like we are actually family.
When love is the way, we know that God is the source of us all and we are brothers and sisters, children of God.

His sermon illustrates so well what Jesus meant by his metaphor, I am the vine you are the branches and we are held together by love.

We are called to share that news of the power of the love of Jesus Christ who lets us know God, the creator, by the power of the Holy Spirit breathed onto the disciples as he said Peace be with you and left with the disciples at Pentecost.

We are called to invite in those who do not yet know about that hope and peace and love that we have in Jesus Christ.

We are called to share with them and we can only do that if we, ourselves live in the power of love, with God at the centre of everything we do

And how do we do that in practice?

We ensure that our own lives are filled with the power of love and we share our time, our talents and our money with others, especially if they are not part of the church.

We connect with them and let them know about Christ through us and our actions.

We can write to our MP about the global disgrace about so many people in the world not yet being vaccinated, and ask him to take action.

We can continue to support foodbanks, knowing 230,000 children in Scotland live in Poverty.

We call ourselves a civilised country yet even before the pandemic, around a million people in Scotland were in poverty 230,000 of those were children

We can and must do so much more. We can ensure that we hold all of our politicians to account for this national disgrace, regardless of party.

We can look at how we share our skills in the community, from gardening to cooking, to help people know the economy and value of growing our own vegetables, and then eating them as part of a healthy diet.

As a church, we also need to look seriously at ourselves and question what we do – and why?

Then, and only then, can we consider a way forward for growth and prune things that are not needed, that have outlived their use, or are maybe being continued because they've always been done and may no longer have Christ at the centre.

Whatever we do, individually or collectively, we must remember that we are called to love, totally, in the power of Jesus Christ. For he is the vine we are the branches. We have the strongest root of all, Jesus Christ. When we have a strong root, we can grow – in mission and in love.

When we love powerfully, we will ensure that there is justice and food and peace in this world for all.

And that way, people will know the connection between us and Jesus Christ.

Rev Maggie Roderick

[Thanks to Maggie for adapting her powerful sermon for publication in this magazine](#)

I am the vine; you are the branches.
If you remain in me and I in you,
you will bear much fruit;
apart from me you can do nothing.





Park Church are pleased to welcome the Stirling Street pastors as new users of the Peter Memorial building.

Russell Boyd has kindly contributed this interesting article updating the congregation about their valuable outreach.

Stirling Street Pastors mission statement is “To show the love of Jesus in the city at night, by caring for, listening to and helping the people we meet.”

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:13-16

We operate on the streets of Stirling city centre and more recently on the University campus. Teams of 3 or 4 volunteers, all practicing Christians, go out between 10pm and 4am on Friday and Saturday nights. The people we meet are made up of pub and club goers, street people and security staff.

We used to operate from a base in Allan Park South Church, and we are grateful that we have been able to move this base to the current Park Church building and we started early evening patrols at the end of April working from this base.

Stirling Street Pastors addresses service provision gaps on the streets i.e. emotional support and spiritual need, which no other organisation addresses. Working with the Police, Ambulance, the Council CCTV service and security door staff the aim is to ensure the safety and peace of those using the city centre during the night while providing emotional, spiritual and physical support.

This year Stirling Street Pastors patrols have looked different as adaptations have been required for Coronavirus restrictions and as Stirling’s streets have been different due to closures of pubs, clubs and restaurants. Patrols were suspended from March 2020 to August 2020 and January 2021 to April 2021 when Scotland was in lockdown.

Smaller teams of 2 volunteers have gone out on daytime patrols of Stirling city centre and Stirling University campus. These patrols have been encouraging and we hope to continue them if we can recruit more volunteers to do daytime patrols. We also need to recruit more people for the evening patrols since our recruitment and training was put on hold during lockdown.

If you are interested in serving as a Street pastor then please get in touch.



To get an idea of the numbers of people we help and what we do, the information from 2020/21 gives an idea of what patrols will be like after Coronavirus:

31 Street Pastors from 18 different churches
96 patrols
Over 2000 individuals engaged with
306 flip flops given out
108 vulnerable
90 important conversations
105 spiritual conversations
20 people asked for prayer
995 bottles found

So what kind of needs do we see on these patrols? We often have to deal with people heavily intoxicated after a night out. We talk to people who are dealing with addiction problems. We also meet people struggling with their mental health and we are there to listen and provide friendly ears. We do always signpost people to the best care when appropriate as we know there are many problems that we can't fix. There are people who want to find out more about who we are and why we are there. And there are many people who just want to stop for a chat which we are always happy to do.



When the opportunity arises, we want to tell people about Jesus. Street Pastors do not go on the streets to preach, but if anyone wants to talk about religion and faith then we are delighted to do so! *“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” 1 Peter 3:15.*

Here are a few examples of encounters we have had recently:

They have been in and out of prison and struggle when inside and then released. They are caught in a cycle of drug taking and offending. They said that it was harrowing learning of the deaths of young friends who had been in prison with them. They asked us to pray for them as they think this is the only way their lives will change.

He used to beg on the streets of Stirling and said Street Pastors saved his life. He's now been clean over a year, has a flat, and two cats and he looked really well.

We had met these two girls two weeks ago and it was encouraging that they approached us and wanted to chat again. Again we talked about crochet and baking.

He immediately asked for prayer as he was struggling with losing his brother as well as a number of other members of his family. He has spent a lot of time in prison and was very sorry for all the mistakes he had made in his life. He said he knew the only way to sort out his life was to become closer to God.

He was very positive about our presence on campus and he reiterated the message that there were a lot of students and staff that needed support at the moment.

Three first year students had made friends with each other although they said it was hard to meet and socialise, one confessed to crying every night.

She was an addict, but found hope in Jesus and is now clean. She has a real desire to help others trapped in addiction to find that same hope in Jesus. She thanked Street Pastors for how they had helped her over all the years of caring for her.

Two lads in a van called us over. They wanted to ask about Jesus! We explained to them who He is and what He has done for them. Then we offered to pray for them and they asked us to pray for safety for them and their team working on roofs.

He talked about his PTSD symptoms since serving in Iraq, his guilt, his grief and his anger about lack of support. He grew up in a Roman Catholic Church and prayed as he went on patrol. We suggested contacting Combat Stress, but he had tried that.

He was begging and he said he was struggling with his physical health and would need to visit the doctor again. He was also trying to come off methadone.

He's investigating the Spiritualist Church, and he has encountered "God of the Universe" and Jesus. He wants to meet Jesus again. We prayed that he would meet the real Jesus.



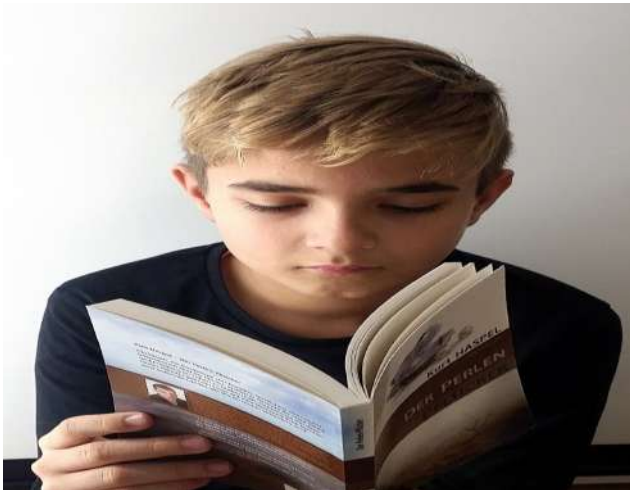
Stirling Street Pastors began, developed and is sustained through prayer. To encourage groups and individuals who pray for us, we produce a quarterly document, "Call2Pray" and you can subscribe to this on our website.

Please do get in touch with Russell Boyd at stirling@streetpastors.org.uk if you want to find out more, or if you want to support us prayerfully or financially. Or indeed, if you are thinking about serving the Lord by becoming a Street Pastor too!

"Walk in wisdom towards outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." Colossians 4:5-6

See streetpastors.org/locations/stirling/ for more information.

Summer Book Quiz Answers:



1. Three Men in a boat
2. Black Beauty
3. Rebecca
4. War and Peace
5. Watership Down
6. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
7. Kidnapped
8. Ivanhoe
9. Exodus
10. My family and other animals
11. The Three Musketeers
12. Wuthering Heights
13. Great Expectations
14. Billy Liar
15. Treasure Island
16. National Velvet
17. Born Free
18. Room at the Top
19. The Borrowers
20. Far from the Madding Crowd
21. Peter Rabbit
22. The Good Companions
23. 2001 A Space Odyssey
24. To Kill a Mockingbird
25. Thomas the Tank Engine.
26. The Time Machine.
27. The Old Man and the Sea
28. Farewell Mr Chips



Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

www.umn.org.np

Dear friends:

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Please uphold us in special prayer through the coming weeks of darkness here in Nepal. Pray especially:

For the people of Nepal as the country is swept by the new wave of COVID.

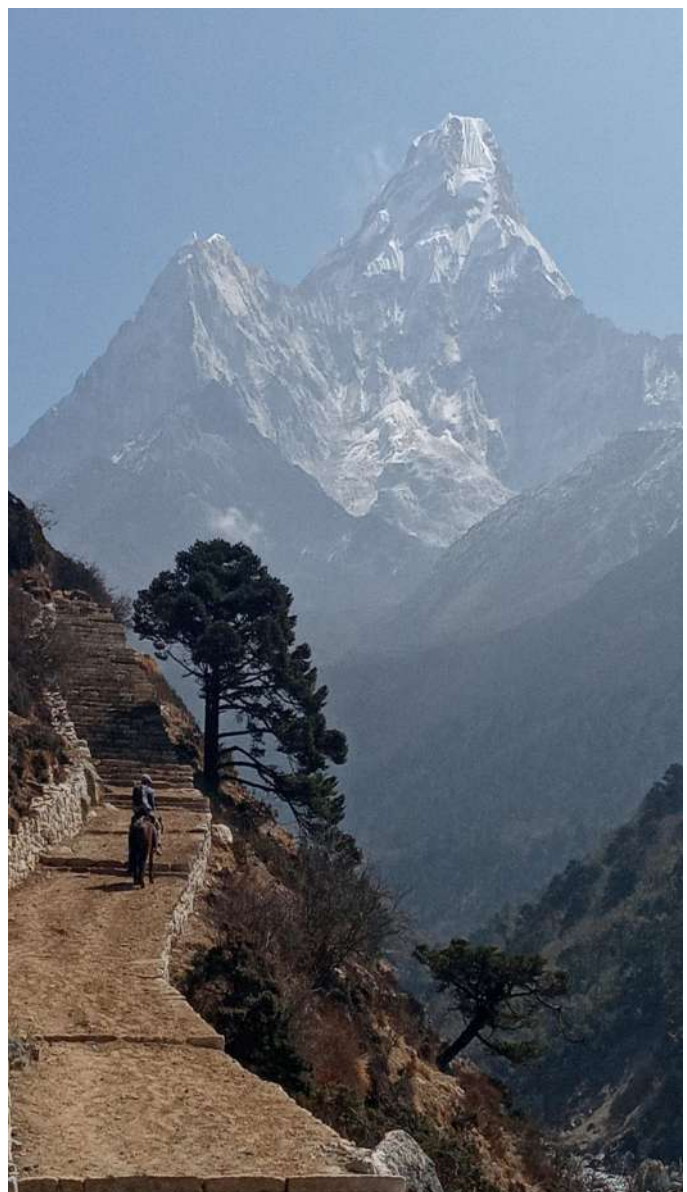
2. For UMN's government agreements to be approved at last.

3. [For timely work visas for the mission's expatriates, especially medical personnel.](#)

In our last update, around Christmas, we wrote that there was little hope of the spread of COVID-19 slowing down until vaccines arrived. I'm glad to say we were wrong, and our prayers for mercy were temporarily answered. For reasons still poorly understood, Nepal enjoyed a reprieve through the coldest months of the year. Case levels plunged despite the lack of effective public health measures. Nepal's death rate per capita remained low, 10 to 15 times less than many Western nations.

But as in India, this created a false sense of security -- a widespread feeling that the pandemic was already over. Many people hoped that unlike other regions, South Asia would escape a second wave. Not many vaccines were available, as Western countries have been slow to keep their promises and only limited supplies came from India and China. And now Nepal is facing the same kind of hair-raisingly steep increase in cases as India, just a few weeks behind it.

Kathmandu is locked down again, but the hospitals designated for COVID treatment are already full; the spillover into private hospitals has begun, and they too will likely be full



before the wave is past. This wave is affecting younger people who had previously thought themselves immune. As in India, we are beginning to see desperate messages from friends whose seriously-ill family members are seeking hospital beds, oxygen, plasma transfusions from COVID survivors. We can hope for a short wave -- nearby Bangladesh may be experiencing one -- but on any likely scenario the month of May is going to be very hard for Nepal.

So please pray. Pray for our neighbours, friends, and teammates at this shattering time. Pray for our mission hospitals that are bracing again for an overwhelming flow of patients in need of oxygen and urgent care. Many people in Kathmandu (including us and many UMN colleagues) have received a first dose of vaccine but are waiting for a second. Please pray that adequate supplies of vaccine can be found to complete all the second doses, and ultimately to vaccinate enough people to bring the pandemic properly under control.

We also **still** need prayer for the mission's bureaucratic approvals. UMN's agreement renewals were delayed by an unwelcome episode in Feb-Mar when some government officials questioned whether Christian agencies should be welcome in Nepal; they assumed we were all here to plant churches. I am glad to say that some high-level officials affirmed the importance of keeping UMN and other Christian agencies in Nepal and got the process moving again. But the bureaucratic wheels turn slowly at the best of times, and none of the five affected Christian agencies got our agreements renewed before the lockdown resumed last week.

Please pray that these delays finally end, and that our agreements are smoothly renewed at last. Our own Hafvenstein family visas are contingent on the General Agreement renewal, and we will soon have no choice but to temporarily leave Nepal if the agreement is not signed. (Though it will be interesting to see how that requirement intersects with travel bans; the Kathmandu airport has just closed for international flights to all countries save India).

We have also faced challenges around visa approvals for expatriate medical volunteers coming to staff UMN's larger hospital. This has been immeasurably frustrating -- if there has ever been a time when we would have hoped for rapid approvals, it is during a pandemic! But it seems that we may finally be on the verge of getting agreement on a smoother and simpler process for approving expatriate visas for the hospitals. Please pray that this moves ahead quickly. Pray for the officials in the health ministry, many of them understandably overwhelmed by the many challenges they face, that they would make decisions that are as wise and effective as possible.

On a personal note, please pray for grace for Caleb and Isaac as they have returned to online classes. Their school does a great job with implementation of virtual education, but it's still a challenge for them both, and much less satisfying for them than in-person classes (even the masked and distanced variety they'd been enjoying until a couple of weeks ago).

Thank you for your prayer and for standing with our family and our mission through the valley of the shadow.

Joel and Fiona
Caleb and Isaac
United Mission to Nepal



Update from May 2021

Helen MacDonald and I would like to express our thanks for the wonderful support the congregation has given Christian Aid this year. The drought in Kenya was a particular cause but although we depended on **Just Giving** we managed to raise £1,110 ! From the envelopes we have so far collected £1700 so this means that we have collected about the same as we normally do so this is excellent. Thanks everybody,

Helen Reid

Thank you to all the folk who volunteer their time and talents working so hard for us behind the scenes in 2021:

- **Beadles and door welcome teams**
- **The Property Committee who check our buildings to ensure they are wind and water-tight, clean, heated and well maintained in all seasons.**
- **The Gardeners and lawn cutting team**
- **The Finance team who ensure we balance our books , pay our bills and raise enough income to be able to support others**
- **The Elders, befrienders and folk who are visitors to the elderly and housebound**
- **Those who prepare and share materials and activities for the young people of the congregation all year round**
- **Those who give time and expertise to record services both live and by CD**
- **And those are not listed or who do not wish any mention!**

Mr Alex McFeat

Alex was a very diligent and caring Bank Manager for the Royal Bank of Scotland latterly in the King Street branch before retirement. He was a Deacon in St.Columba's Church and Treasurer for many years : keeping the finances in good order and enabling the congregation to plan and undertake a number of major projects whilst always paying the full contributions requested by the national church.

A keen golfer and curler, with a dry sense of humour Alex did not complain about his ill health towards the end of his life and continued to enjoy chats with his neighbours and lunches at Stirling Golf Club. He will be much missed by those who knew him.

Sarah Murdoch

Mrs Sonia MacCallum—an appreciation



Sonia is pictured left with her husband Archie

The table is covered with a selection of her lovely plant cuttings being sold to raise money for Christian Aid. She must have raised hundreds of pounds over the decades and also shared her knowledge about how to grow them. Nerines and Kaffir Lilies in our garden remind us of her.

Sonia supported the church Ladies Group, the Coffee Group, the Friendship lunches and every baking event with supplies of her delicious short-bread.

She was a warm and friendly lady who maintained friendships all over the country.

Sarah Murdoch

Archie, Sheila and John would like to extend their sincere thanks to members of Park Church for the many messages of sympathy they've received on their sad loss of Sonia. They have been overwhelmed by their support, love and prayers, which have provided much comfort to them at this desperately sad time.

They would also like to especially thank Peter, John, Marjorie and Eleanore for assisting on the day of Sonia's funeral; Ross for his organ playing; and Gordon for recording the service, which has enabled family and friends both near and far to listen to it.



Recipe for Chocolate Cookies

This is a quick and easy recipe which I often use if I have run out of biscuits. It makes 16-20

(dependent on size) delicious cookies and only takes about 20 minutes from start to finish.

Ingredients

100g soft butter

100g light muscovado sugar

1 tbsp golden syrup

150g SR flour

85 g chocolate chips/smarties

Method

Preheat oven to 180 degrees (160 for fan assisted)

Grease and line baking tray(s) with baking parchment.

Beat butter and sugar until well mixed and then beat in the syrup.

Work in half the flour, stir in the chocolate chips and then the remaining flour, working until the dough comes away from the sides of the bowl.

Form balls dependent on the size you wish and place them well apart on the baking tray(s)

Don't flatten them.

Bake for around 12 minutes until pale golden around the edges, cool on a wire shelf and then enjoy!

Joy Macfarlane



Park Church Play Group

When Covid-19 restrictions allow unregulated pre-school childcare to resume Park Church will be starting a new play group which will meet in the main church hall.

We already have some equipment but would like to have more. If any parent, grandparent or childminder has any good quality toys suitable for pre-school children that they no longer require, could they please consider donating them to our pre-school group?

Please note any items offered **must be clean, capable of being washed between sessions and in good condition.**

If you are able to help with this please **DO NOT** bring them to Park Church but contact [Moira Parry on 01786 463743](tel:01786463743) and we will arrange a suitable time to collect them. Thank you.



Can you suggest a name for the new Play Group?

If you have a suggestion can you please contact Moira Parry (telephone number above)



NEWSLETTERS FOR AUTUMN EDITION

Any content for the next newsletter must be handed into the Church office or sent by e-mail to the Editor by 5pm on the date noted below.

We reserve the right to edit or hold over copy if required.

Please send text as a **Windows** file and photos as **JPEG** format.

Handwritten text is accepted but should be in as early as possible please

Any submissions received **AFTER** 5pm on the copy deadline will be held over for the next issue.

AUTUMN EDITION (AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER 2021)

COPY DEADLINE: FRIDAY JULY 16TH

Newsletter editor:

Mrs Sarah Murdoch, Abercromby Place, Stirling FK8 2QP

Telephone: 01786-473087 E-mail : murdochsarah@btinternet.com

In loving memory

It is with sadness, but great thankfulness for lives well lived, that we have to share the news of deaths of the following members of Park Church:

Mrs Elizabeth (Betty) Clark, Annfield Care Home, Stirling

Mrs Agnes (Nan) Gordon, Grendon Court, Stirling

Mr Alex McFeat, Victoria Place, Stirling

Mrs Sonia MacCallum, Bellfield Road, Stirling

Mr William (Bill) Neely, Clifford Road, Stirling

Please remember their families and friends in your prayers



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Telephone: 01786 –465166

E-mail: amiller@churchofscotland.org.uk

Session Clerk: Dr Peter Murdoch
4 Abercromby Place, Stirling FK8 2QP

Telephone: 01786-473087

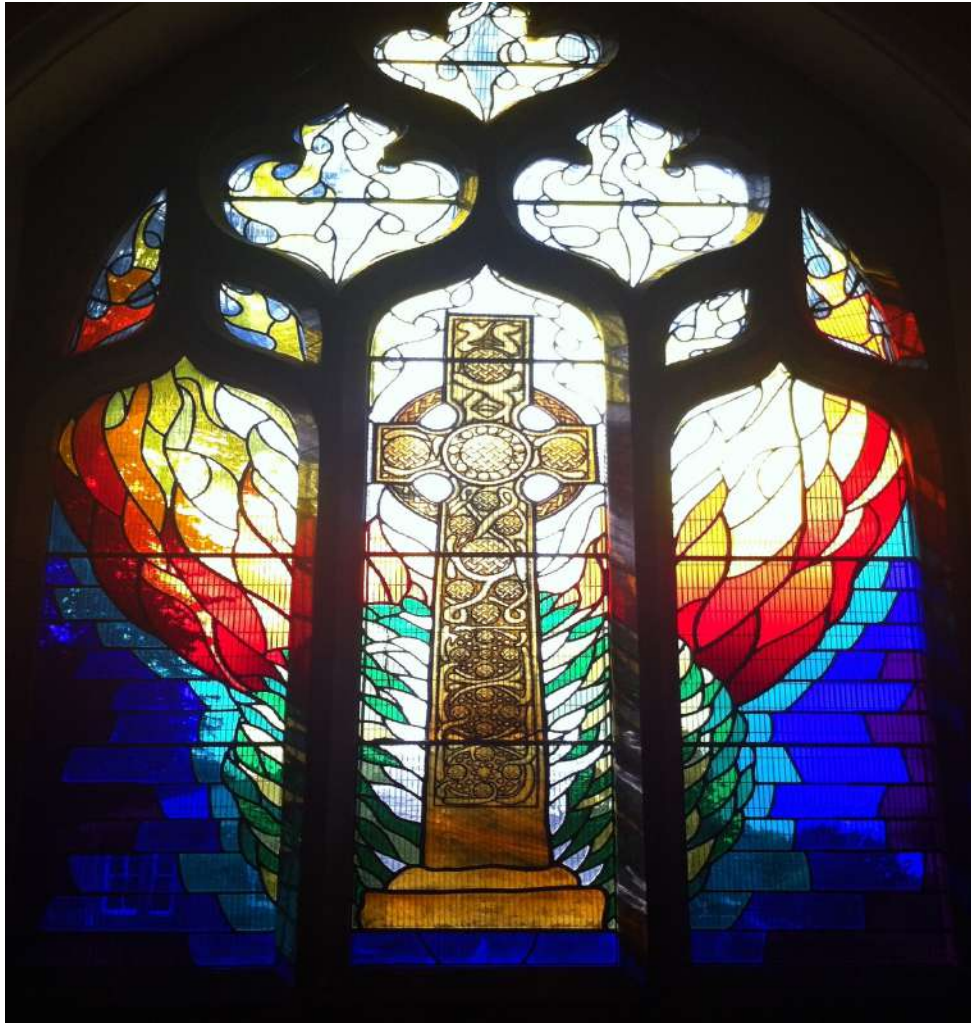
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E-mail: parkchurchstirling@gmail.com



Welcome to Park Church, Stirling, Park Terrace, Stirling FK8 2NA

All are welcome to attend worship: when services are permitted

The coronavirus situation means that worship in person depends on the level of restrictions in place and numbers permitted. This can change at short notice: we apologise for any inconvenience.

Please refer to the church website for up to date information.

Notices are also printed weekly in the Stirling Observer (Wednesday issue)

The Park Church, Stirling website is

www.parkchurchstirling.org

The website also provides links to other information and an on-line copy of this newsletter.

Park Church Office, Stirling, FK8 2NA

The virtual office is open Tuesday-Friday from 9.30 to 12.

Office telephone :01786-462400