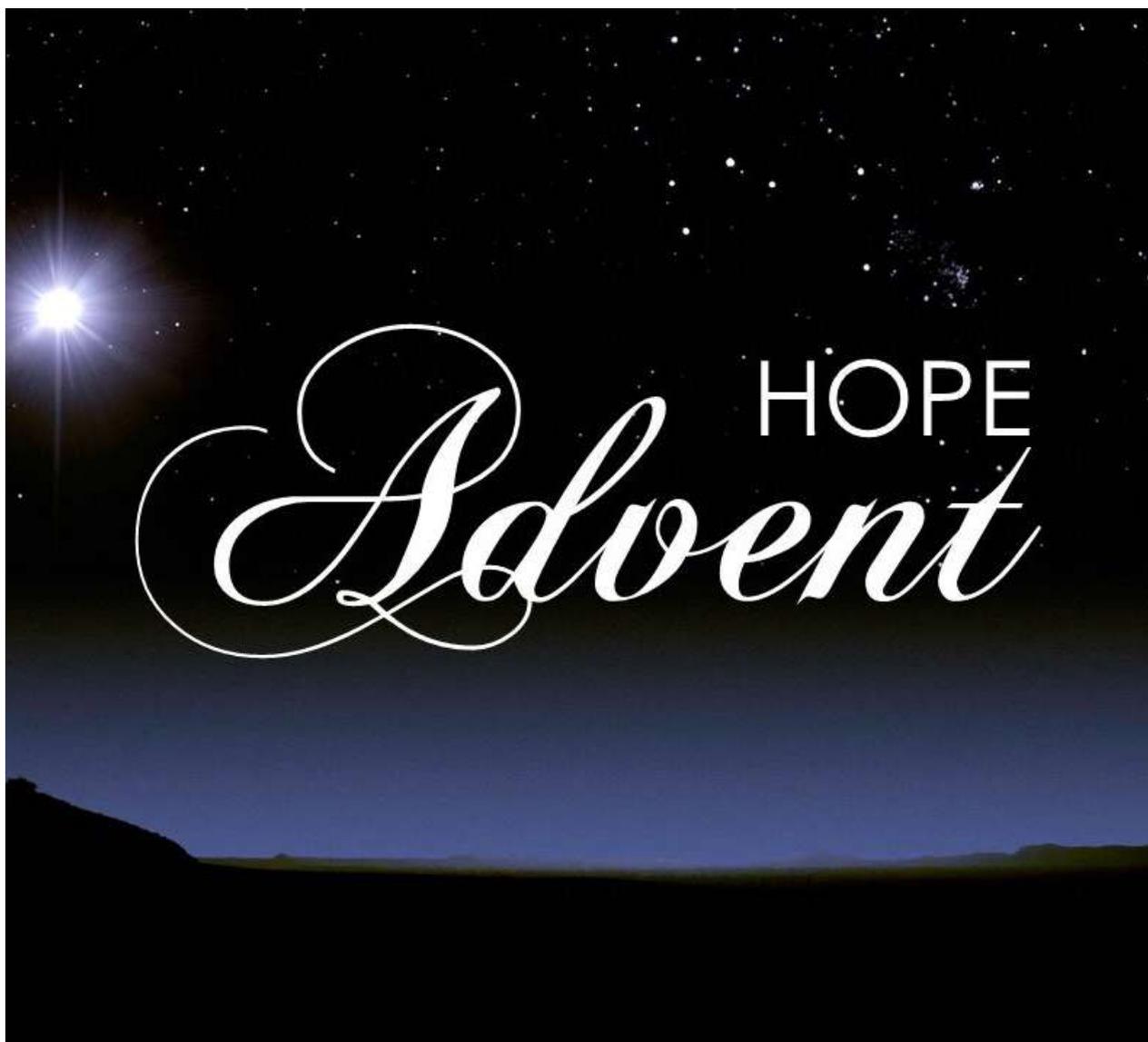


Park Church Stirling
Newsletter
Winter 2022



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

From the Minister

Dear Friends

It is only the start of November and I've already bitten into some Lebkuchen Christmas biscuits. Christmas has always been my favourite season of the year. It excites me in various ways though I also realise the main love for this season is that it always leaves me in awe; awe of the glitter and bling, the awe of seeing people happy and excited, and most of all the awe of God revealing himself to humanity, to us, to you, and to me – ordinary people, loved in an extraordinary fashion.



There is an element of awe in all the various episodes surrounding Christmas in the Bible: Joseph and Mary not expecting what was coming their way; Elizabeth and Zechariah with the message from the angel saying: “For your prayer has been heard”; Simeon and Anna who saw the long-expected Messiah; the Shepherds hearing the message of a saviour born for them, the Magi who sought to find more than a star in the sky, but the light of the world – all in awe. The awe of the Living God taking the effort to touch the lives of ordinary people.

Though I also realise that Christmas may not be the best time for many other people. It might not hold such good memories; it may be a time of strain and hardship for many. And as Christmas has become more exhausting and commercialised, my hope is that people may find that keeping the preparatory season of Advent could be helpful to stay focused and recover something of the awe, mystery, and excitement that Christmas itself ought to have.

As we literally approach the darkest time of the year in the northern hemisphere at least, Advent offers a gleam of light. And hope.

But Advent itself can be puzzling. ‘Advent’ means ‘coming’ or ‘arrival’. The hymns and readings often used during this season seem to be about two quite different things: about waiting for the ‘first coming’, the birth of Jesus, and about waiting for his ‘second coming’ to put everything right in the end. How did these things get muddled up? How can we make wise, prayerful sense out of it all?

In Jesus, God brought heaven and earth together; in his second coming, that joining together will be complete. That is the Advent hope. So the church's year overlaps with itself. In Advent, we think our way back to the ancient people of God, to the call of Abraham and his family as the start of God's rescue operation for a world in ruins and a human race in chaos. We follow the story of Israel's hope, a hope that refused to die no matter what terrible things happened; a hope that the first Christians believed had become human in the baby Jesus.

With that 'first Advent', it was clear that God's rescue operation for humans and the world had been decisively begun but not yet completed. Jesus really did launch God's kingdom 'on earth as in heaven' in his public career, his death and his resurrection. But it was clear, because of the sort of thing this kingdom was, that it would then need to make its way through the humble, self-giving service of Jesus' followers, until the time when Jesus returned to finish the work, to put all things right, to banish evil and death for ever, and to bring heaven and earth completely together.

The 'second Advent', then, overlaps with the first. We celebrate Jesus' first coming, and use that sense of fulfilment to fuel our hope for his second coming and to strengthen us to work for signs of that kingdom in our own day. We live between the first Advent and the second. That is one way of saying what it means to be a follower of Jesus, to see and discover the presence of God-with-us. This provides the element(s) of awe when God 'surprises' us by meeting us just where we are. For this reason, regardless of the time of year, it's always Christmas in my heart.



The Minister's letter continued:

May this Advent and Christmas deepen your experience of the love of God for you, and for those around you.

As the South African poet, Lina Spies pleads in a poem to rediscover the meaning of Christmas (freely translated):

***“I want to cling to the manger
so that I can grasp the cross like this:
royal tribute – frankincense, myrrh, gold -
ultimate conversation, crown of thorns, curse wood,
life”***

With good wishes for Advent, Christmas, and the New Year!

The grace and peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you,

Reverend Attie van Wyk

Nancy Turnbull was unable ,due to illness, to be admitted to Session as an Elder in October (having been previously ordained elsewhere) and was welcomed on November 6th during Morning Worship.



Thanks

For every good meal you have shared,
for every kind word you have received,
for every good book on your shelves,
for every good idea in your heads,
for every good message on your phone
may our good Lord be thanked.

For the gardens that rest,
for the nights of good company,
for the music of Advent,
for inspiring speech and positive writing,
for clothes that fit,
for the wisdom of age and the smiles of children,
may our wise and bountiful Lord be thanked.

For people who have taught and nurtured us,
for thoughts which have helped and restored us,
for friends who have listened to us and stayed alongside,
for the work of Your Spirit in our lives and in the lives of others,
may our gracious God be thanked and praised,
now and always,
Amen

With acknowledgement to the Church of Scotland's worship website where this prayer was published



From the Session Clerk

From the Report to Annual Congregational Meeting in September

This is the first annual congregational meeting for over 3 years since before the first Covid lockdown and the union of the former St Columba's and Allan Park South congregations on 1st April 2020, but I will concentrate on the last year and some of the opportunities and challenges of the next year.

After trying to support and encourage folk in various ways through lockdown, Park Church has restarted many previous initiatives such as Friendship lunches and thrice yearly initiatives for 3 local primary schools and looked to new opportunities such the Sparks play group for pre-school children led by Moira Parry which is hugely appreciated by the two dozen children and their families or carers attending regularly, the live streaming of services, the development of a new website and social media and new series of bible studies. Around 350 people use the church halls and premises on weekdays.

Almost all the increasing range of activities are supported by large numbers of volunteers who give invaluable service and expertise to various committees such as finance, property, youth, mission and outreach and visioning, and to welcome teams, the choir, the Bible readers, the ministry of flowers, the streaming and recording people, grass cutting and garden teams, coffee, "Ladies group" and other rotas.

I am personally especially grateful to the Depute clerk, Marjory McGowan, our organist, Ross McGowan, and new administrator, Sheena Tait, as well as to her predecessor Duncan Crombie.

The Church is its people and Park Church welcomes all contributions and would sincerely welcome more volunteers to refresh and strengthen its committees and all aspects of its work. Please contact Attie or myself if you are interested in contributing in any way.

Bank accounts and assets were merged despite significant difficulties in getting the names and details of accounts changed. Our ordinary income has been maintained due to the generosity of regular donors and in 2021 we had a small surplus of income over expenditure of £ 534 compared with a deficit of over £12,000 the previous year. The sale of the former APS church building enabled Park Church to buy a new energy efficient manse with the balance being available for future major fabric expenditure, whilst income from rental of the former APS manse will be used to support outreach activities. There is no room for complacency with our Ministries & Mission contribution for 2023 being £79,500 and may increase as will other costs. Thanks are due to our former treasurer Margaret Crombie as well as the former APS treasurer Ed Morton for their invaluable contributions over many years as well as to Catherine Jones for taking over the role this year and for the ongoing expertise of Brian Walker and colleagues on the finance committee.

Whilst we are grateful for the commitment of Rev Alan Miller as our interim Moderator for 22 months until this January, our greatest blessing in the last year has been the calling of our Minister Attie Van Wyk, who has encouraged and inspired us with his teaching and spiritual leadership, vision and pastoral care.

The Presbytery Mission Plan envisages Park Church working in a formal parish grouping with St Ninians Old, Holy Rude and Viewfield with a view to a future union as well as closer cooperation with other Stirling churches. The ministers already meet regularly and we will build on existing shared joint working.

A short term Park Church visioning group has been working with the minister to explore ways of being a welcoming attractive and missional church to a wide range of people of all ages and to be more accessible to all, reaching out to the community and missional partners.

Park Church is in good heart and has lots more to do to with God's grace to further his Kingdom in Stirling.

Thanks to you all for your faithful and patient support, prayers and encouragement.

With my best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

Peter Murdoch

The Park Church Memorial Tree

part of the late Queen Elizabeth's "Green Canopy for her Platinum Jubilee"

This was planted during the service at the side entrance under the Library Window on October 30th by Harriet and Forbes who are young members of the church. It is a miniature acer which should give lovely colour in the autumn.



Christmas Services 2022

Sunday December 4th December

Advent 2 and Celebration of Holy Communion at 11am

Sunday December 11th December

Advent 3, Christmas Lessons and Carols at 11am + collection of gifts

Sunday December 18th

Advent 4 All Age Service at 11am

Saturday December 24th **Christmas Eve**

Family Carol Service at **6.30pm** (Coffee, tea & biscuits in the Main Hall following the service)

Watchnight Service at **11.30pm** (Coffee, tea & shortbread in the Main Hall from 11pm)

Sunday December 25th

Christmas Day at **10.30am**

A short family service with no refreshments afterwards

Sunday January 1st 2023 **New Year's Day** at **11.00am** (Coffee, tea & biscuits in the Main Hall following the service)



Park Church Memorial Garden

(In memory of John McDowall and Charlie Croall)

The former memorial garden of Park Church has now been completely cleared, redesigned and replanted! We are extremely grateful for the sponsorship we received in order to make this project possible and our sincere thanks go to a member of our congregation. Her involvement in the choice of plants and shrubs was also greatly valued.

Original paths and steps have been retained and upgraded with the basic lay-out remaining essentially the same. The two large beech trees and one smaller tree are central to the design with each planting area having a specific theme or features of seasonal interest. An area of winter/spring interest has been created, consisting of vibrant flowering shrubs of red, yellow and orange and numerous spring bulbs of differing varieties. It is hoped that the berries of the pyracantha will prove attractive to birds and the addition of bird boxes may make the garden more so.

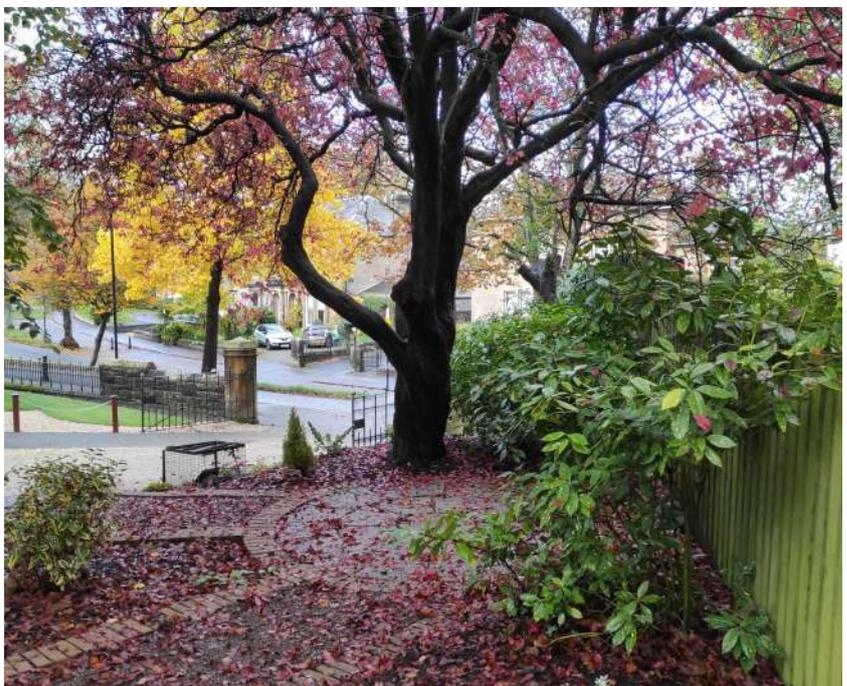
The dense tree canopy proved more challenging in finding planting appropriate for dry shade and nutrient -deprived soil. Again we have opted for colour and texture in the form of flowering shrubs, evergreens, golden yew, a scented saracocca flowering at Christmas, cyclamen, tiarella, and brunnera to mention but a few, in a range of co-ordinating colours.

The area at the entrance was originally of a more rockery- type structure which we have retained and filled with small shrubs and perennials, predominantly of blues, mauves, purples and whites, flowering in summer and autumn. This area includes heathers, lavenders, hardy geraniums, Japanese anemones, sedum, ceanothus and vinca, the focus here being the attraction of pollinators and the creation of a sensory area. The old stone wall behind is very much a feature which we plan to highlight in the spring with the addition of a purple clematis, scrambling over an old tree trunk!

We invite you to come and have a walk around the paths as our planting grows and matures We are also very keen to involve others in the sustainability and maintenance of our project so if you would like to lend a hand, do please contact us.

**In the meantime we hope you
“enjoy”!**

Maureen McArthur





Maureen McArthur giving out bulbs to the Sparks Pre-school Playgroup children to plant on 4th November.2022.





Sparks Pre-school Playgroup children planted bulbs in the Memorial Garden with help on Friday 4th November.



Park Church Art Club is up and running!

We meet every Thursday 2-4pm at the Hall and enjoy a bit of a challenge tackling still life compositions in pastel/pencil/pens/acrylics. I'm hoping to have a portrait session later on, but we will gauge public opinion! A few members are absolute beginners, others are not, but it's a very relaxed atmosphere and everyone enjoys having an hour or so of absolute concentration. We all have our problems and worries and it's an excellent way to forget everything for a short while.

I say 'an hour' but, of course, we have plenty of banter and chat- and stop for tea/coffee. It's an ad hoc situation, so you just pay your £2 and join for the session. Everyone brings a pad to draw on and the media they like to use and I provide different materials too, so that you can have a go playing with different stuff.

We finish for this year on 1st December, but hope to be back in January, so keep your eyes peeled for dates of future sessions. All are very welcome to join, no experience necessary - and this group is for everyone, not just church members!

Kate Langley



A remarkable achievement lauded by the Moderator of the General Assembly Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian Greenshields

On the 23rd October 2022 Mr Ross McGowan was presented with a specially designed certificate celebrating 70 years service as a church organist -56 of which have been behind the same organ in Park Church He was also was given MacRobert Theatre tokens as a small gift to mark this landmark.

The Session Clerk , Peter Murdoch quoted from the Moderator's letter to Ross which said:

“I have learned that you have served as a Church of Scotland organist for a remarkable 70 years! The commitment and dedication which you demonstrate in your role are truly inspirational.

It is evident how much the congregation at Park Church, Stirling have appreciated your musical accompaniment over the years. Thank you for enriching the worship of an innumerable amount of church services as you have shared your talents during the past seven decades “

Pictured are Rev Attie Van Wyk and Mr Ross McGowan, with the specially designed certificate from Park Church.



Also in the photograph are three Elders who were presented with Church of Scotland Long Service Certificates.

Helen MacDonald, Sarah Murdoch and Lyndsay Boyack have each served for more than 30 years in the previous St.Columba's congregation in Stirling and since the Union in 2020, in Park Church, Stirling.

Lyndsay told us how proud her mother and father had been to sit in the gallery and see her ordained.

Margaret Crombie and Ian Ritchie were unable to be present on the 23rd October.

Margaret received her long Service Certificates at Session on 2nd November and Ian will receive his later at a convenient date.

The Ladies' Group

The Ladies' Group meet on alternate Monday evenings at 7.30pm in the Church Hall.

We are a warm and welcoming Group and we would be delighted to see you there. The group is open to all, not just members of the congregation.

January 9th "Walks around Old Stirling" -David Black

January 23rd "CHAS" (Children's Hospices Across Scotland) -Rita Craig

February 6th "History of Mauchlineware" -Norman Sampson

February 20th "Girls School in Kenya" – Jayne Lamond

March 6th "Trip to Oberammergau"- Helen Reid

March 20th "Exercise to Music"- Tricia Chillas

March 27th Closing Meal

**Coffee Morning and
Daffodil Tea
Saturday 11th March
10am-12noon**





Harvest Collection 2022

Park Church Donations given in the envelopes amounted to £1,215

Giftaid added approximately £280

Total £1,495

The very well supported Joint Churches Coffee Morning held in Park Church on Saturday September 22nd raised over £830

Many thanks to all who donated, supported and helped with this enjoyable event!

Helen MacDonald & Helen Reid



Early evening weekday services in Park Church

In October and November a short evening service was held starting at 6pm in the Main Hall on a Thursday with soup and filled rolls to enable people to have a bite to eat on their way home from work or study and enjoy fellowship.

Led by Rev Attie Van Wyk these were enjoyed by those who attended and are part of our review of worship in the congregation.

All Age Services, Messy Church and services in Annfield Care Home are other examples of the outreach to the community which we hope to build on in the coming year!



Stirling Doors Open Day in the afternoon of September 25th 2022

We welcomed organisations and hall users to the building to share with visitors the activities being hosted in Park Church– and would wish to thank them and those who helped with guided tours , for sharing their time and expertise



Above: Street Pastors, Below right Art Club

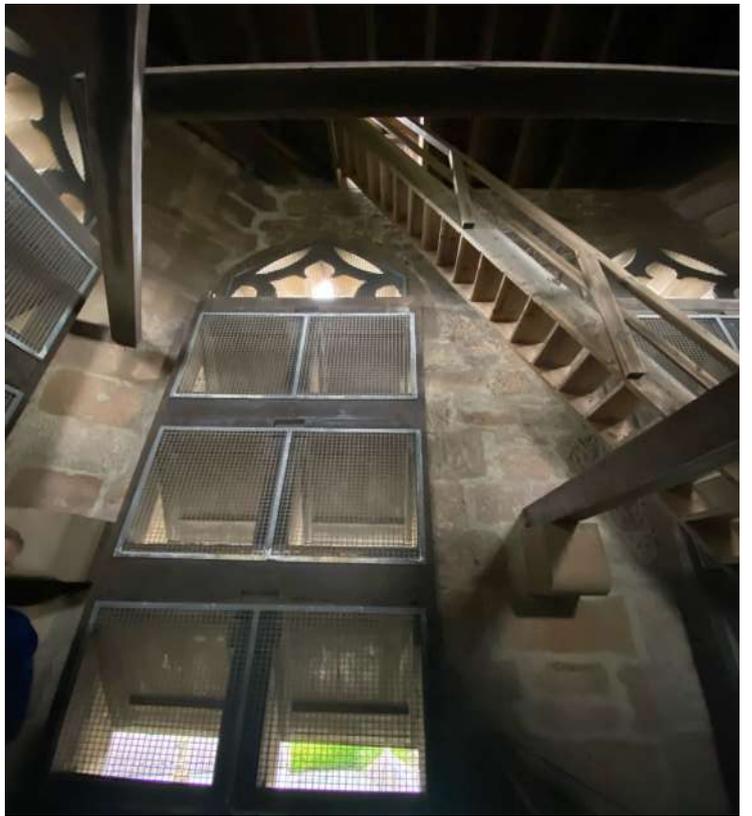
Below left scouts, cubs and beavers

Left Stirling Guilds Together

Above left : Torbrex Community Choir

See pages 18 & 19 for views in and from the Tower







Photos from the Peter Memorial building Tower and inside the staircase up to the roof. By Kind permission of Seonad Hopkins

Park Church worships in the building which was gifted by Mrs Ellen Peter in 1902 and celebrates 120 years of worship and service in 2022.

Visits to the Tower on Doors Open day in September



Stirling Kirks Together

Invite you to come to our joint church Bible Study evenings held in Park Church starting at 7pm

No prior preparation or specialist knowledge required!

Come as you are and share a time of discussion and reflection on current themes and issues.

We will be led by the three ministers: Rev Alan Miller, Rev Gary McIntyre and Rev Attie Van Wyk.

Following on from our successful evening Advent Bible study series we plan to host a second programme for Lent 2023.

Provisional dates for your diary are:

February 23rd 2023

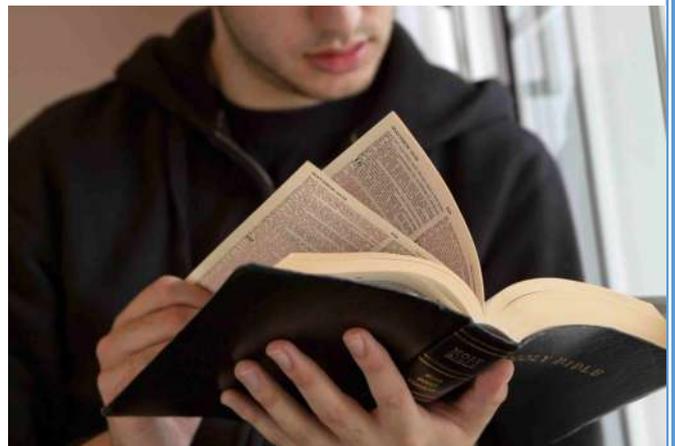
Thursday March 2nd

March 9th

March 16th

March 23rd

March 30th



Park Church Cosy Café : a warm hub and a warm welcome

Over the winter we are going to host a monthly social afternoon with tea, coffee and biscuits

On Wednesdays :

November 16th, December 21st 2022

January 18th and February 15th

1.30 to 3.30pm in the Main Hall

Board games

Music

Time to chat



Please invite those who you know might enjoy a blether and company and come along?

For information and to offer help or car lifts please contact the office on 01786-462400 or Sarah Murdoch (murdochsarah@btinternet.com)

A couple of 'winter warmers' from Germany.

At this time of year especially, there are a couple of my favourite soups readily available in almost every German restaurant. "Goulash Suppe" and "Kurbiscremesuppe" (Pumpkin soup)

Goulash suppe

You'll need a large soup pot for both recipes.

Ingredients to make 4/5 servings:-

1kg flat iron steak (available from the butcher at The Smiddy if you have trouble)
2 tbsp plain flour (for dusting)
Vegetable oil
Salt & pepper
1 large onion diced
2 large carrots diced
1 stick celery diced
1 red pepper, seeded and diced
3 large cloves garlic, crushed
3 heaped tbsp good paprika
2 tbsp crushed Caraway seeds
4 tbsp tomato puree
2 bay leaves
1 litre beef stock (I use a Knorr stock pot)
4 small potatoes diced
Sea salt
Black pepper
Sour cream and flat leaf parsley to garnish

Method:-

Trim the meat and cut into "bit size" chunks. Mix in the flour, salt and pepper and toss until all the chunks are coated with flour – I find this easiest in a poly bag.

Heat a tablespoonful of oil in a large pan and brown the meat in batches. (Don't be tempted to crowd the pan or the meat will steam not brown.)

Heat a little oil in a large "soup pot" Add the vegetables and cook gently until they soften.

Add the beef, paprika, caraway seeds, tomato puree and bay leaves then pour in the beef stock.

Stir well, cover the pan and simmer for at least 1½ hours.

Add the potatoes and simmer for a further ½ hour.

Serve in bowls with a swirl of sour cream, parsley and a chunk of bread.

Enjoy.

Kurbiscremesuppe (Or Pumpkin soup)

This is fairly readily available in UK restaurants these days, but the Germans make a “luxury” version with a couple of “secret” ingredients.

Ingredients to make 4/5 servings:-

1 medium sugar pumpkin (the round orange kind)

Sea salt

30 gm Butter

1 Clove garlic crushed

1 small onion diced

Pepper

50ml dry white wine

500ml chicken stock

500ml double cream

Method:-

Preheat your oven to 400 deg. Wash the pumpkin, and cut it into large slices leaving the skin on. Scrape out the seeds and place on a baking tray skin side down. Sprinkle with sea salt and roast for about 25 mins

Melt the butter in a large soup pot

Add the garlic, onion, sea salt and pepper and stir together

Add the white wine and continue cooking until half the moisture evaporates

Scrape out the pumpkin flesh into the pan and discard the skin

Add the chicken stock until the level is just below the surface of the pumpkin flesh.

Stir the mixture and cook on a medium heat for 15-20 minutes

Add the double cream and puree with a hand blender

Serve immediately

Thanks to Duncan Crombie for these tasty recipes



Flower Ministry

As we approach the end of another year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank most sincerely all those who have donated flowers to our Sunday services throughout this time. I would also like to thank those who have given of their time to arrange the flowers and to those who have delivered so willingly each week to members of our congregation.

The flowers form an important part of our outreach work and are greatly appreciated by those who receive them, forming a link between the Church and those who may no longer be able to join us on a Sunday or who are going through difficult times. The fact they are being remembered is very meaningful to them and a catch up with those who are delivering of real significance.

If you would like to play a part in any aspect of this work, whether as a sponsor, an arranger or helping to deliver, please do get in touch! You will be most welcome!

Maureen McArthur
Flower Convener





New Street Pastors for Stirling and Falkirk were commissioned at their Annual Service held in Park Church on September 22nd. The Stirling Baillie and Falkirk Provost attended.

Rev Attie Van Wyk led worship.

Refreshments were served in the Main Hall afterwards to allow all the congregation to celebrate and congratulate the candidates.



The Stirling Kirks Together

All- Age Friendship Lunches will continue to be held every month through the winter on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

Wednesday 11th January

Wednesday 8th February

Wednesday 8th March

Wednesday 12th April

From 12noon-1.30pm

Venue: Park Church Main Hall, Park Terrace



Conversation

Soup & Rolls, Tea, Coffee and Home Baking

All welcome (Optional £2.50 donation)

For further information contact Johan Stirling on 01786 461571

Scottish Bible Society

Our Quiz night and sponsored walk raised £1800 for the Scottish Bible Society.

Some photos from our recent sponsored walk



An evening service of praise was held on Sunday 23rd October in St Serfs Church, Tullibody.

Willie Troup, Park Church representative

Torbrex Community Choir

The popular Christmas Concert will be on 3rd December in the church:
doors open 7pm and concert starts at 7.30pm.

Profits to "Playplus" children's charity in Stirling

Save the date: the Spring Concert will be held in the church on Saturday April 1st 2023

Stirling War Memorial.

When the Great War ended in 1918, towns and villages, churches and organisations, decided to erect war memorials to the fallen. These were to provide a focus for remembrance and commemoration; the vast majority of the casualties lie in foreign countries and few families could visit the graves or see the monuments to the missing.

In 1919 Stirling Burgh Council began the process of selecting a suitable design, finding a location and raising funds to finance a civic memorial. The location was to be at the Corn Exchange, close to the Municipal Building which had opened in March 1918. (The foundation stone had been laid by King George V on 11th July 1914 but there was no ceremony for the opening because of the war.)

Various designs were submitted, including one for a triumphal arch spanning Corn Exchange Road. The chosen design was a sandstone obelisk of Scottish character in the Baronial style, set in a landscaped area surrounded by a boundary wall; the designer was a local architect, George R Davidson. Funds raised by public subscription amounted to £2,300 – the equivalent of £114,00 in today's money.

On the authority of the Town Clerk the Stirling Observer of 1st March 1921 printed a set of criteria for names to be included on the war memorial:

Those born in Stirling

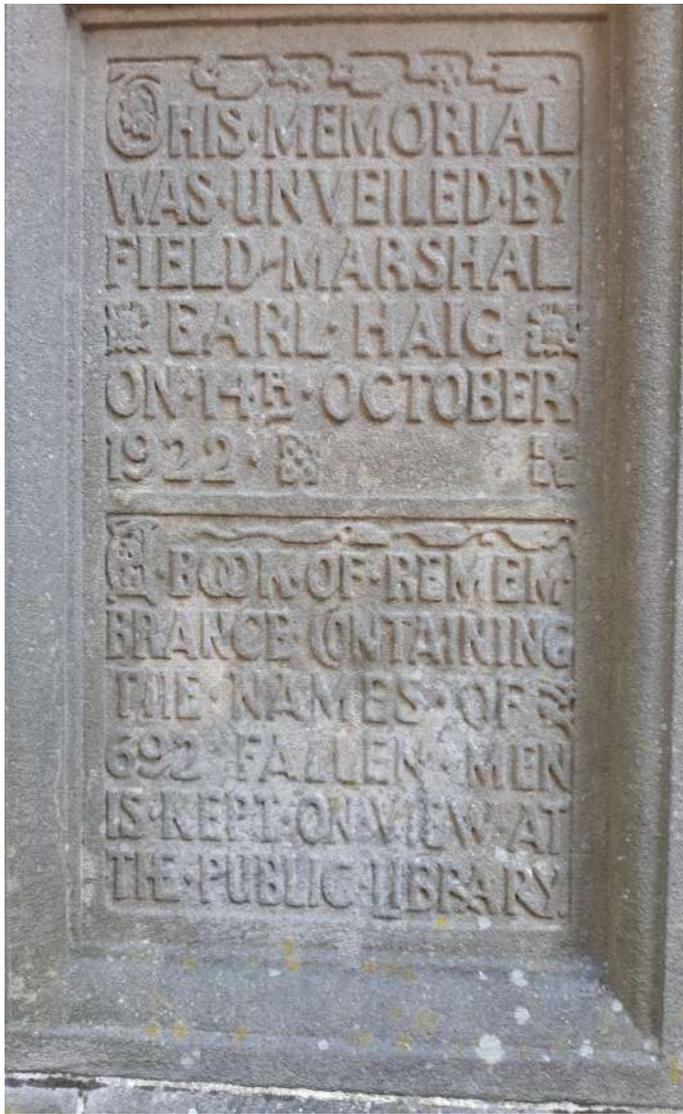
Those who were resident or working in Stirling when they joined up

Those whose homes were in Stirling when they died

The War Memorial was unveiled on 14th October 1922 by Field Marshall Earl Haig. At the time of the unveiling, there were no name plaques on the memorial. There is a carved stone panel stating 692 names are inscribed in the Book of Remembrance in the public library. On 21st June 1923, the bronze name plaques were unveiled by Mrs McCulloch, wife of Provost McCulloch.

On 14th October 1949 the name plaques for the casualties of the Second World War were unveiled by Lieutenant General Sir Gordon H A MacMillan KCB, KCVO, CBE, DSO, MC





The Book of Remembrance is displayed in a carved oak cabinet in Central Library; it is situated on the landing near the reference library and the pages are turned regularly. There is a page for each letter of the alphabet and there is evidence to show that names have been added later – different handwriting/ink colour. The bronze panels on the memorial have 711 names for WW1 whereas there are 720 names in the Book of Remembrance for WW1. The names of 223 casualties are recorded for WW2.



The monument is in the care of Stirling Council; it is Listed Category B. Stirling City Heritage Trust secured funding of £40,000 to restore and clean the memorial in 2015. Services of Remembrance are held there every November with representatives from the armed forces, youth organisations and local churches in attendance. Wreaths are also laid by the Provost of Stirling and the Lord Lieutenant of Stirling and Falkirk.

- Sources:
- Stirling Observer
 - Dundee Courier
 - Stirling Local History Society
 - Scottish War Memorial Project
 - Stirling City Heritage Trust
 - Imperial War Museum
 - [Contributed by Sandra Muir](#)

Editor's note: apologies to Sandra Muir that this most interesting and informative article arrived too late for publication in the Autumn.

The Passion Play in Oberammergau – part one - the holiday

The trip which was originally intended to take place in 2020, but was delayed twice due to the Covid pandemic, started in the beautiful village of Arzl in the mountains of Tyrol, Austria. Our hotel was surrounded by mountains and overlooked a valley. We stayed here because Oberammergau, in Bavaria, is too small to accommodate more than 400 visitors.

Several excursions were organised before and after our attendance at the Passion Play. On the first day we visited a renowned Nativity crib exhibition in Wenns which was housed in a very old cottage. The nativity scenes depicted ranged from snowy scenes with the characters attired in Austrian costumes to tropical settings with palm trees and camels. Later we ascended by cable car to the Riffelsee where we had lunch and a walk round a glacial lake.



Above Helen Reid, Marie Muir and Moira Parry

A highlight was a visit to the hilly village called Jerzens where we were lucky enough to see the traditional festival of bringing the cows down from the mountains after summer grazing in the lush high pastures. Most people were attired in their national dress-lederhosen for men and dirndls for women. The event commenced with music and dancing. Then the procession of started with various Tyrolean farming families leading their cows which were adorned with enormous head dresses and bells. They were met by applause then a silence. We were surprised until suddenly there came the sound of hooves as the cows came thundering down on their own – unrestricted. They just brushed past us!

We also visited the Cistercian Monastery of Stamms-decorated in the Baroque style with the “Tree of Life” on its altar. The final day we took the Hochgeist cable car up the mountain and then a two-man chairlift to enjoy the magnificent views over Germany and Austria. Every day of the holiday finished with a delicious cake - sometimes eaten on the sunny terrace of our hotel and followed by a swim!

The Passion Play in Oberammergau –part two -the Passion Play

The group were fortunate to have seats in the third row close to the huge stage. The audience was under cover although the stage was in the open air and the atmosphere before the play started was full of anticipation.



Left: Moira Parry, Gill Nunn (Stirling Street Pastor) and Helen Reid

It was rather overwhelming at the opening when the large choir came on and the first tableau was revealed: the singing and the music were exceptional. Throughout the play, at intervals, more tableaux were revealed which related to the Old Testament stories and prophecies and which were linked to the storyline of Holy Week.

The opening scene was wonderful to see and hear the crowd cheering Jesus as he entered into Jerusalem on a donkey while the children played and sang. Other scenes that were memorable included Jesus chasing the money changers out of the temple with doves flying out of one of the upturned baskets-and the Last Supper, when you could have heard a pin drop.

Needless to say, the crucifixion scene was the most moving and harrowing. It was as if we were at the real event. When Jesus' cross was raised up in front of us it was hard to keep emotions under control. The two thieves bodies were taken down from their crosses with no dignity but when Jesus' body was taken down it was done so slowly and movingly and with great reverence.

The closing scene when it was revealed that Jesus was alive was full of joy. Most of the cast and the choir sang, repeating the word "Hallelujah" again and again. It was very easy to get caught up in the happiness they portrayed.

Although the play was in German, we were given a book with the script translated. Sometimes we looked at the book but mostly we watched the spectacle of the play.

The actors, singers and musicians who took part were amateurs, all born in the village or who had at least one parent born in the village. They call it their "little play". It would be wrong to say that they are proud of it-that sounds too pretentious. What they are proud of is the fact that they are carrying on the vow their ancestors made in 1633 and that they are still able to do it.

Editor's note: Pilgrimage Tours are usually accompanied by a Minister and include times of reflection and worship as well as the Passion Play.

According to legend: an outbreak of [bubonic plague](#) devastated [Bavaria](#) during the [Thirty Years' War](#) (1618–1648). [Bad Kohlgrub](#) was so depopulated that only two married couples remained alive. The village of [Oberammergau](#) remained plague-free until 25 September 1633, when a man named Kaspar Schisler returned home after working in the nearby village of [Eschenlohe](#). Over the next 33 days, 81 villagers would die, half of Oberammergau's population. On 28 October 1633, the villagers vowed that if God spared them from the plague, they would perform a play every 10 years depicting the life and death of [Jesus](#). Nobody died of plague in Oberammergau after that vow, and the villagers kept their word to God by performing the passion play for the first time in 1634.

The legend is a distorted account of the actual plague. There was an outbreak of plague in Oberammergau, but it took place from September 1632 to March 1633, when there were a total of 84 deaths from all causes. Deaths followed an [epidemic curve](#) instead of ending suddenly. There was one death in September 1632, rising to 20 deaths in March 1633, and ending with one death in July 1633. There is also no record of a man named Kaspar Schisler. Only two couples got married in Bad Kohlgrub in 1634, instead of only two couples surviving the plague. There were 39 marriages in Bad Kohlgrub in 1635, so hundreds of villagers must have survived.

The errors may have been introduced by the retelling of an oral history that was not written down until 1733. The original work has been lost, and only fragments of the oral history survive as quotations in other works. The legend is told in the play *The Plague of 1633* ([German: Die Pestnot Anno 1633](#)), which used to be performed the year before the Passion Play. It was retold as recently as the 1999 vow ceremony, which marked the beginning of rehearsals for the 2000 play. The town of Oberammergau now claims that Kaspar Schisler came home for a church festival in 1632 instead of 1633. **Source: Wikipedia**

Church Roll –Welcome

Baptisms: On 28 August 2022: Ella Barbara Alison Cran, South Queensferry

New Members By Special Resolution of the Kirk Session:

James Irvine

Catriona Wilson

By Certificate of Transfer

A Middleton from Dumfries St Michael's South

Fiona Cutler from Cambusbarron, Bruce Memorial

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 people:

Jean Elliot, Dunblane

Wilma Leckridge, Annfield Care Home

Mamie Wright, Waverley Crescent



Congratulations

We send our congratulations to an old friend of the congregation, Rev Professor Alison Jack, who was formally introduced as the new Principal of New College, Edinburgh on 2nd November in the Assembly Hall.

Alison was Locum Minister in the former St.Columba's in 2010 and has kindly provided pulpit supply on occasions since. How good it is to know that she is guiding our future ministers

Peter Murdoch, Session Clerk

This newsletter covers December to the end of February and several of the main church seasons :

Advent (3 December - 24 December 2022)

Advent is the four-week period before Christmas. There are four Sundays in Advent. The word "Advent" means "coming" or "arrival" and in this case points towards the birth of Jesus celebrated at Christmas. One special service involving children is called Christingle and can be held during Advent, Christmas, or Epiphany.

Christmas (25 December 2021 - 5 January 2023)

The season of Christmas begins on the 25 December and traditionally lasts twelve days, ending on 5 January. Christmas is the time when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Epiphany (6 January 2023)

The Epiphany, or revelation, of the baby Jesus as the Son of God come into the world, is traditionally celebrated on the 6 January.

Lent (22 February - 9 April 2023)

Lent is the 40-day period before Easter, beginning with Ash Wednesday. During Lent Christians may fast, or give up some of their usual routine, to give time to personal examination and to reflect on their relationship with God.

As we think on the gift of love given to this world through the birth of the Christ child, as we hope and pray, as we remember – the good and the bad and all those bits in between – we are blessed with the presence of God's Spirit. Blessed by God With Us. Blessed, because no matter the circumstance, God goes with us, behind and before, around and within

God With Us, in the midst of life, God's ear to hear our prayers, God's eye to look before us to a hopeful future, God's hand to guard and to guide, God's presence in each and every circumstance. God of all our yesterdays, todays and tomorrow

God of all our yesterdays, todays and tomorrows, made real in our gathering and our distancing, bring hope, bring peace, bring joy, bring love, bring light, bring healing.



A letter from the Editor

You may be surprised that this newsletter features only Park Church News and has reverted to the style used prior to the “Fishers of People” copies of the summer and autumn 2022.

At short notice the ministers of St. Ninians Old Parish and Holy Rude/Viewfield wrote to say that they wished to have their own newsletter for the winter edition featuring their many activities and services at Christmas. We wish them well and hope that a joint newsletter with news from the four congregations is able to resume at some point in 2023.

Thank you to all those in Park Church and the community who shared a good variety of interesting contributions for this edition.

The church does not stand still and even though it is winter and there are many difficulties around us we have much to be grateful for. Please support the events advertised in this issue and services and outreach to both young and old, in need of Christ’s message of love and hope in a dark world.

I am happy to accept your stories, news, articles, photographs, recipes, quizzes and jokes for the spring newsletter as soon as possible. As soon as one edition is printed we need to start on the next one!

Please feel free to contact me if you want to discuss a potential article.

Thank you and wishing a blessed & peaceful Christmas to our readers

Sarah



NEW CONTRIBUTORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED

Any content for the next newsletter must be handed into the Park Church office or sent by e-mail to the Editor before 5pm on Friday 10th February 2023

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.

SPRING EDITION (March, April, May 2023)

COPY DEADLINE: FRIDAY 10th February 2023

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A Blessing for 2023

May God bless you with a restless discomfort ... about easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may seek truth boldly and love deeply within your heart.

May God bless you with holy anger ... at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may tirelessly work for justice, freedom, and peace among all people.

May God bless you with the gift of tears ... to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, or the loss of all that they cherish, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy.

May God bless you with enough foolishness ... to believe that you really can make a difference in this world, so that we are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

With acknowledgement to the Church of Scotland's worship website in which this prayer was featured.