

Park Church Stirling
Newsletter
Winter 2023-24



For unto us a child is born
Come and worship the new born king

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,

Being conscious that this newsletter will see us through winter and Christmas time, I would like to take the opportunity to wish you a wonderful and blessed Christmas! Thank you for the past year where we worshiped together, grew together, and shared fellowship on various levels as friends and as a congregation.

With Christmas drawing near, I suspect that in many of our households, boxes of decorations will soon be rooted out of cupboards. The same is true for the manse, I love Christmas; in fact, you don't need to invite me twice to sing Christmas carols any time of the year. Among my Christmas decorations, nativity scenes are maybe those which I enjoy the most. Some carefully wrapped in scrunched-up tissue paper and others stacked in large boxes. During Christmas you are bound to find various nativity scenes of various sizes in and around the manse. Last year my neighbours nearly got the police out when they saw – what they thought to be squatters – on the front porch of the manse; it turned out to be just another life-size depiction of 'the family from Nazareth, in Bethlehem of old' at the manse door of Park Church, Stirling.



Photos: The smallest to the largest nativity scenes in and around the manse.

Nativity scenes from various materials and different countries have found their way to me – there are some from Germany, Austria, Israel, Hungary, South Africa, Sweden, China, and the UK. Each of these and countless other nativity scenes displayed on every continent can trace their ancestry back to a famous celebration of Christmas at Greccio, and the holy imagination of St Francis of Assisi.

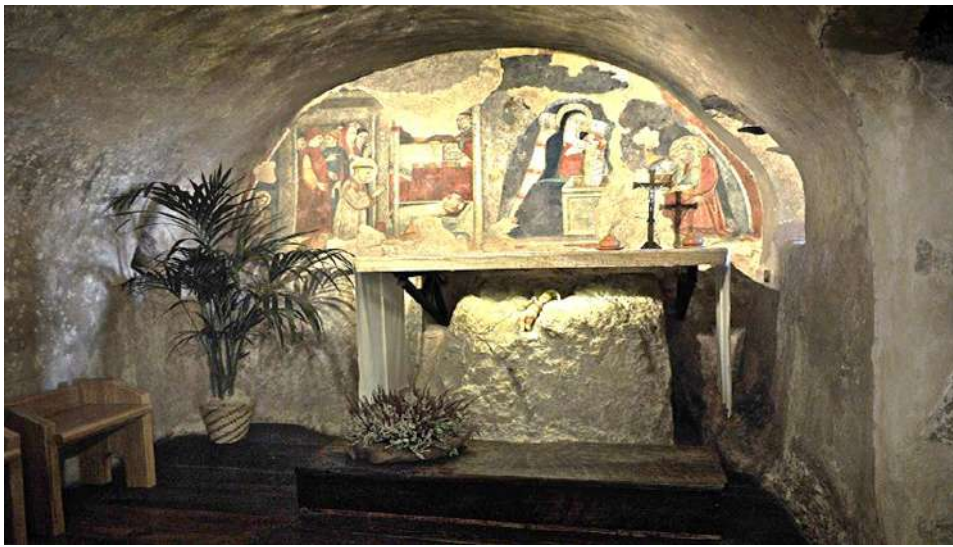


Photo: The cave near Greccio where St Francis of Assisi depicted the first-ever nativity scene in the year 1223.

This was the place which, in his imagination, would become Bethlehem for him. The birth of Jesus was a source of great wonderment to this humble friar of Assisi. Francis never lost the overwhelming sense of joy at God coming to share the life of creation, coming into our lives, homes, and families. It was in the year 1223 that a cave near Greccio became the place in which Francis resolved to recreate the manger he had seen on a visit to Bethlehem many years before. Francis would find a baby, gather hay upon which to lay him, along with an ox and an ass to stand beside the manger. At the appointed time the people of the town arrived carrying torches and candles. One of the friars began celebrating mass, while Francis gave the sermon. His biographer, recalls that Francis stood before the manger, overwhelmed with love and filled with wonderful happiness. For Francis, the simple celebration was meant to recall the hardships Jesus suffered even as an infant, a Saviour who chose to become poor for our sake. This was not some sentimental yearning but a profound reflection on the generosity and poverty of the self-emptying God we know in Jesus Christ. The self-giving began long before any of our mangers in homes and churches were crafted, before Francis knelt in the hills of Umbria, even long before the first Christmas itself. It began in the imagination and heart of God.

Human imagination is a great thing: it sees what is and dreams about what could be. It leads us to reach out and draws us forward. It is what lies behind and gives impetus to the great developments of science, engineering; it inspires the painter, sculpture, dancer, composer, the baker, draftsman, writer and carver of wood.

The sorrow of modern-day times is the scarcity, the absence of imagination and the failure to think creatively about novel approaches to connect, extend forgiveness, or serve the interests of everyone. It is a tragedy that people rush to war rather than to more creative solutions.

Advent and Christmas for us as Christians remind us to be captivated again by the divine imagination. Captivated as we retell the creative plan of God, whispered to the ancient prophets who foretold his arrival. Captivated as we recall the imaginative 'yes' of Mary in accepting the divine invitation. Captivated by the divine imagination as we prepare to celebrate once again the coming of God to a small Middle Eastern hill town. Captivated by a courageous plan, brought to birth in the imaginative heart of God. This is not some sentimental notion but the profound generosity and poverty of the self-emptying God we know in Jesus Christ.

As we anticipate our celebrations of his first coming and watch with longing for his coming again, may the Spirit of God ignite in us a holy imagination. An imagination that sees what is and what could be. That imagines what we might be called to be, for and with God. A holy imagination that prepares us to receive the good news with wonder. 'Come, Lord Jesus, Emmanuel, God-with-us.'

With warm wishes to you during this winter season, and with God's love to celebrate a wonderful Christmas that extends beyond only a few months of the year,

Rev. Attie van Wyk

From the Session Clerk

This issue of the newsletter looks forward to Christmas Services and various events this winter-colder and shorter days but a time of renewed hope and light. The Kirk Session has much to be thankful for : we have been delighted to welcome several new members and returning friends in the last few months. This is a great encouragement to us all. We hope that all coming to Park Church feels truly welcomed and at home in the church family. Most of the supportive work in the congregation is dependent on our many volunteers and invaluable work by various committees and groups: a summary of these and key contacts is included after this report.

I am especially grateful for the support of the two depute clerks: Marjorie McGowan was re-confirmed in this role in 2020 and Johan Stirling was appointed by the Session in November 2023.



Left

Mrs Marjorie McGowan



Right

Mrs Johan Stirling

Summary of Session Business in November 2023

The finance team have upgraded systems to help budgeting and the ongoing challenge to support and budget for outreach to the community and improvements as well as routine expenditure (which includes approximately £85,000 per annum Growing for Growth contributions to the national church).

Our property colleagues maintain the Church facilities and manse in first rate condition. Many visitors from other churches remark on how well ours are kept and is a constant challenge with so many users of the premises.

The Youth committee are preparing for the December schools events which involve half day sessions on the true meaning of Christmas called “**Bubblegum & Fluff**” for 130 children from 4 local primary schools. They are also planning inter-generational services and supporting SPARKS ,our weekly pre-school play group.

The Mission and Outreach group look to promote and encourage a range of activities, such as monthly Friendship lunches which are attracting record numbers and ongoing correspondence with our friends and former mission partners in Nepal : Joel & Fiona Hafverstein.

If anyone has suggestions or questions or wishes to be more involved please do not hesitate to approach the minister, myself or others listed as contacts and members of the committees and teams.

In many of these activities we work closely with our friends in St Ninians Old Parish church, Viewfield Erskine and Holy Rude. Park Church contributes to the shared Advent and Lenten Bible Studies. Recently we hosted a most enjoyable and interesting informal joint session meeting over a coffee and cake in October . Rev Philip Hacking, the local prison chaplain spoke about his work and the challenges. The sessions will be looking to see how we might work together more effectively to share God's Love in the City Centre.

Park Church continues to be blessed by the teaching, pastoral care and encouragement of Attie, our minister, and together we look forward to the New Year with faith and confidence.

This comes with every good wish for a peaceful Christmas and every blessing for the New Year

Peter Murdoch



Annual review of Office-bearers and Kirk Session committee membership

Minister and Moderator- Rev Attie Van Wyk

Session Clerk- Peter Murdoch

Depute Session Clerks- Marjorie McGowan and Johan Stirling

Treasurer Catherine Jones

Organist- Ross McGowan

Safeguarding Coordinators- Sheena Tweedle and Johan Stirling

Presbytery Elder- Ian Ritchie

Newsletter Editor- Sarah Murdoch

Roll keeper- Peter Murdoch with help of Sheena Tait

Church Administrator – Sheena Tait

Communion Convenor- Eleanore Hunter

Data Protection Lead- Hugh Buchanan

Prayer Group- lead – Moira Parry

Kirk Session standing committees which report routinely to Kirk Session (with members)

Finance – Brian Walker (Convenor) Catherine Jones, William Troup, John Magrath, Derek Young

Property- Jim Gray (Convenor) Gordon Kerr, John Magrath, Rae Scott, Wendy McLean, Sarah Murdoch, Arthur McDonald

Youth- Joy MacFarlane (Convenor), Lyndsay Boyack, Moira Parry, Rae Scott, Marie Muir, Eleanore Hunter, Fiona Cutler

Mission and Outreach- Hugh Buchanan (Convenor), Johan Stirling, Sarah Murdoch, Janet Brown, Kate Langley, Lyndsay Boyack (link with Youth committee.)

New members whether elders or not, can be co-opted to any of these committees at any time- The Minister and one of the clerks are also ex-officio members of each.

Other groups (and their leads) which may report as necessary include-

Worship- Rev Attie Van Wyk

Communion- Convenor- Eleanore Hunter

Coffee Club and Coffee after morning worship-lead- Marjorie McGowan

Other Hospitality- lead-Sarah Murdoch

Extended Welcome- Rev Attie Van Wyk and Nancy Turnbull

Paris Twinning- convenor Rev Attie Van Wyk

Flower Committee- Maureen McArthur

Garden- Janey Denton

Grass cutting- David Burns

Art Club- Kate Langley

Mens Badminton- Ronnie McPhee

Ladies Group- Rae Scott

Grumpy Old Men-Duncan Crombie

Any members who would wish to contribute to any of these teams or committees should speak to the appropriate lead/ convenor or the Minister.

NEWS FROM PARIS AT OUR TWINNED CONGREGATION PENTEMONT-LUXEMBOURG



On 17th October Rev Attie Van Wyk attended morning service in the Pentmont building and met the two ministers Christian Baccuet and Sophie Ollier . In the evening at Sophie's formal Induction in the Luxembourg building Attie was invited to join the blessing/laying on of hands while Sophie knelt before the congregation.

Park Church has received a formal invitation to visit the twinned congregation in Paris: if you are interested can you please speak to Attie or Sarah Murdoch to see if we can agree a date or dates to travel?



Joel & Fiona Hafvenstein Newsletter number 25 from Nepal November 2023

Some of you will have seen news of [the earthquake last week in western Nepal](#). Thanks to everyone who wrote to check if we were OK! Here in Kathmandu it was only a late-night lurching sway in the ground -- the boys slept right through it -- but in the villages of Jajarkot and Rukum it hit much harder. Over 150 people died, over 250 were injured, and an estimated 3000-4000 houses were badly damaged, right on the cusp of winter.



While UMN doesn't operate in the worst-hit areas, the Nepali Christian organisation HDCS does, through its Chaurjahari Hospital and community relief projects. Around 100 of the injured were treated in HDCS's hospital in the days immediately following the quake. They've now appealed for help in getting emergency supplies of food, blankets and other shelter items, drinking water, and post-trauma counselors to the affected areas.



We don't usually ask for financial help through this newsletter, but we hope you'll consider giving to HDCS's quake relief effort. For UK taxpayers, [the UK charity THEN](#) will pass on all donations received to HDCS, and donations there are eligible for GiftAid. If you're interested in giving directly, it's possible to send to HDCS's Standard Chartered bank account in Nepal; please let us know and we can discuss the best way to make a transfer.

So our top prayer priority this month is for **the people of western Nepal who are bereaved or homeless due to the earthquake.**

We'd also be grateful for your prayers for our family over the coming month. We're divided between Fiona in the UK and Joel, Caleb, and Isaac in Nepal -- the longest stretch that we've ever had with Mummy away from the boys.

The boys are doing great so far, and look forward to a bit of hiking during the upcoming Tihar holidays. Please pray that we all continue to be in good spirits through this time far apart.



In another answer to prayer, all of our visas came through in time -- there was no need for any of us to leave the country even temporarily at the end of our annual tourist visa allowance. So we're praising God for that as well.

We've also continued to meet with, mentor, pray with, and support various Nepali leaders on an informal but regular basis. Before heading to the UK, Fi had connected with a couple of women leaders for ongoing prayer relationships. Please pray for wisdom for us in how we relate to and build up these friends and colleagues, who have so much responsibility for Christian ministries in Nepal.

Thanks again for keeping company with us on this journey. It means a lot.

Joel and Fiona

Caleb and Isaac

The Charity Coffee Morning held jointly with St.Ninians Old Parish friends on 1st August 2023 for Street Pastors and Start Up Stirling Foodbank raised the amazing sum of £900 .

This was split between the two local community outreach initiatives which are hosted and supported by the congregations.



Julie Christie, Communities and Fundraising Manager for Start Up wrote to thank the church for the donation and said that the service have provided the equivalent of 124,080 meals in the last year-helping 3,682 individuals. 2023 has seen the highest referral rate of the last ten years and they anticipate more over the winter.

The Kirk Session discussed how to continue to support people living in hardship in Stirling whilst appreciating that most folk already generously donate at supermarkets or the Thistle Centre. If you find it easier to bring one item with you to church we will have small collection boxes for items at the front of the church over the winter months. Two pink plastic stackers are available for any you may be able to add to your weekly shop. There is a poster in the hall detailing items always needed.

Thank you


Christmas Concert in the church

Saturday 2nd December

Torbrex Community Choir Charity Concert at 7.30pm

In aid of Eilidh Brown centre



 **THE STRATHCARRON SINGERS**

Raising Funds for Strathcarron Hospice since 2004
www.strathcarronsingers.org

a **MATTHEW BROWN**
MUSICAL DIRECTOR
Presents

CHRISTMAS RIDDLE
written by David Brown

with **THE EDWIN DROOD PLAYERS**
and featuring **CHRISTMAS BRASS BANDS ***

GRANGEMOUTH TOWN HALL
FK3 8AN
Sunday December 3 at 2.30pm
* BROXBURN & LIVINGSTON BRASS BAND

PARK CHURCH STIRLING
FK8 2NA
Sunday December 10 at 2.30pm
* CLACKS DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT BRASS BAND

IN AID OF STRATHCARRON HOSPICE
FREE ADMISSION

Our thanks to Park Life Magazine Scotland for their generous support

Strathcarron Singers are presenting their Christmas Concert in Park Church on Sunday 10th December at 2.30 pm. Those of you who have attended previous concerts will know that we are sometimes accompanied by the Edwin Drood Players who add a different aspect to the presentation. They will again be part of our concert which this year is intriguingly entitled "A Christmas Riddle". We will also be accompanied on this occasion by one of our local brass bands which is a welcome addition.

Joy MacFarlane

Advent & Christmas services:

December 3rd **Advent 1**

Communion 11am

December 10th **Advent 2**

Lessons & Carols 11am & Gift Service

Christmas gifts for children (babies to teenager) in disadvantaged families will be collected for distribution by Women's Aid

December 17th **Advent 3**

All Age Service 11am in Park Church

See details on next page

Evening Joint Carol Service

with Holy Rude/Viewfield & St.Ninians Old Parish Church at Holy Rude

December 20th 2pm **Service in Annfield Care home**

December 24th **Christmas Eve**

Morning Worship 11am (followed by tea/coffee & biscuits in the hall)

Family service 6.30pm (followed by mince pies in
the Main Hall)

Watchnight service 11.30pm (tea & coffee in the Hall from 11pm)

December 25th **Christmas Day**

Short Family Morning service at 10am
(no refreshments after service)



Christmas Eve Services

Park Church will be offering hospitality after the services at 11 am, 6.30pm and before the Watchnight service from 11pm. Tea, coffee and refreshments will be served in the hall to visitors, members and friends.

We expect large numbers and will need extra folk to carry tea pots and ensure everyone is offered a mince pie or biscuit and that children are given juice or water.

If you are able to help at any of these services please speak to Marjorie McGowan or phone her on 01786-461258



All Age Service

When? Sunday 17th December at 11am

Where? in Park Church

ALL welcome!

Please wear your Christmas jumper!



The Stirling Kirks Together

**All- Age Friendship Lunches will continue every
2nd Wednesday of the month over
the winter**

On Wednesday 13th December 2023

**Let us celebrate with Christmas
Carols after our lunch.**

2024

Wednesday 10th January

Wednesday 14th February

Wednesday 13th March

From 12noon-1.30pm

Venue: Park Church Main Hall, Park Terrace



Conversation

Soup & Rolls, Tea, Coffee and Home Baking

Suggested donation £3.00



At the November Session the Kirk Session discussed how to reduce waste and encourage recycling by all users of the premises. It was agreed that the congregation will request that users take home plastic waste / paper containers, batteries and food waste which can be recycled.

Church waste bins are only for non-recyclable items which go to landfill.

Clean used milk bottle tops which are collected for charity may be placed in the recycling bin in the library and there is a new box for recycling stamps at the front door. Profits from the sale of stamps go to the Church of Scotland HIV project.

Please help us to look after our resources wisely and care for our wonderful planet by bringing a compostable bag for your food waste and a carrier bag to take back any empty/used plastic bottles, metal cans and glass containers. Thank you for doing your bit!

Creator God,
We acknowledge that as your handiwork,
we stand alongside all that you have made.
Trees and rivers, mountains and valleys,
soaring birds and scuttling creatures,
all are held within your care.
May we grow in our love and appreciation
for the fabulous variety around us;
and may our awe and wonder draw us closer
to the natural world, and through it to you,
the God of all things.
We pray in Jesus name,
Amen

Revd Cate Williams
Environment Officer, Diocese of Gloucester,
(Church of England website with permission)



The Presbytery of Perth

I have experienced a few moments in my life when a change has occurred. When I was in my last year at school, I really didn't think very much about what I was going to do in life. Clearly, not a sustainable state of mind because change was coming whether I liked it or not.

My headmaster took me into his office and asked me what I was going to do when I left school. It was the first time anybody had challenged me about my future. That was the start of a discussion which has shaped my life.

Over the past few years the Church of Scotland has been challenged to think about the future. You will all be aware of the statistics which feature mostly diminishing numbers of people entering the ministry and diminishing numbers of people attending church. It is clear that something has to change.

As part of a response to these pressures, the Church of Scotland has undertaken a major reorganisation of the presbytery system.

Until January of this year there were 42 presbyteries across Scotland, one of them being the Presbytery of Stirling.

Under the revised system, Stirling presbytery has been combined with the presbyteries of Dundee, Perth, Angus and Dunkeld and Meikle.



As a result, it is a much larger organisation and therefore has a need for permanent staff to manage it. This is a change from what has previously happened in Stirling where the Presbytery Clerk was Rev Alan Miller, minister of Holy Rude and Viewfield and the Deputy Presbytery Clerk was Ed Morton.

We now have a full time Presbytery Clerk, Rev Dr John Anderson. He came from Aberdeen where he was Presbytery Clerk previously and also parish minister at Maryculter. Ed Morton is the Presbytery Administrator and there is also a Communications Officer, Ruth Rankin, a Treasurer, Rhona Nicol and a Buildings Officer, Jamie McNamara.

You may ask why it is necessary to employ people full time to do these tasks. Given the size of the presbytery and the number of parishes, churches and other organisations that need to be managed and coordinated, it's difficult to conceive of doing this without full-time staff.

The staff of presbytery have been very busy since before January this year and more recently, John Anderson came and spoke to presbytery elders in the former Stirling presbytery to give us an update on some of the statistics relating to the presbytery.

I will try and summarise these for you in a way that is not too boring.

The new Perth presbytery is very large at 9,715 km². Indeed, in the new arrangement of presbyteries it is the third largest by surface area.

The population living in the area is 510,410 and 41,675 are members of the Church of Scotland. That is 8.1% of the people living in the new presbytery area.

There are 113 charges made up of 157 congregations. There are 77 ministers in charges across the Presbytery.

I think you can see from these numbers that one of the challenges facing the Church of Scotland is declining membership. Another is that there are too few ministers for all the charges in the presbytery area. Consequently, the number of church buildings is too large for the number of people who use those buildings for worship and other activities.

We are all too aware from our local circumstances of the need to reduce the number of church buildings and we are no different from other areas in the presbytery of Perth. Nonetheless, the buildings need to be maintained even if they don't have a congregation until such time as the redundant buildings are sold and this is where the buildings officer comes in along with the property and maintenance committee of the presbytery.

The presbytery itself is made-up of a number of committees that do the business of the Church of Scotland in the Perth presbytery. These committees are:

Principal Committees	Support committees
Business	Congregational support
Stewardship, Finance and Property	Safeguarding
Church and Planning and Deployment	Connections and Nominations
Community	Vacancy Procedure Committee
Mission Action	Complaints

As your presbytery elder for Stirling Park church, I along with the minister and Peter Murdoch the Session Clerk attend the presbytery meetings. Given that there are over 300 ministers and presbytery elders in the new presbytery, it is quite difficult to make sure that everybody is able to attend these meetings. There are four meetings a year and all are hybrid so that there is the possibility of meeting in person but with the distances and the potential for weather to affect travel, it is good to be able to attend online.

So far, I have been able to attend the virtual meetings and one of the in person meetings.

Bill Clinton said the price of doing the same old thing is far higher than the price of change.

The evidence suggests that not doing anything will be very costly for the Church of Scotland.

Ian Ritchie

WEST HIGHLAND WAY

**For many a year a wish I've had
To do this walk be it good or bad
Perhaps in my advancing years
It would all end up in tears**

**Husband Stuart said don't be silly
It's not that hard and isn't hilly
Off we went for 7 days walking
At the end would we still be talking?**

**Not many hills did I hear him say?
I managed to find one – every day!
Downhill definitely the best
Followed by a well-earned rest**

**Up Loch Lomond's bonny banks
In lovely weather we gave thanks-
For sunshine and hardly any rain
And feet that felt no lasting pain**

**The Devil's Staircase quite a feat
A mile uphill and not a seat
I'd puff and pant and have to stop
But always made it to the top**

**We were no doubt the oldest pair
But had a common aim to share
With lots of folk from foreign parts
They seemed to take us to their hearts**

**I'll end this saga with a laugh
At Kinlochleven there was a bath
To ease my aches and pains, what luck
Until...you've guessed it, I got stuck!
With grunts and groans and one loud shout
Stuart pulled and pulled and hauled me out**

**I was well outside my comfort zone
But never wished I was back home
Now it's off my bucket list
And something I would not have missed**

JANE WILSON (with apologies to any poets)



Jane enjoying a well deserved rest!



**Park Church Harvest envelopes raised £ 1,928.00
(with Gift Aid) for Christian Aid.**

**The Annual Stirling Christian Aid Coffee Morning held on Saturday 21st
October 2023 in Park Church Raised £974.20**

Many thanks to all who donated so generously to both events

Grumpy Old Mens' Lunch Club

With the welcome induction of three new members over the last couple of months, the brotherhood of 'Grumpy Old Men' is alive and, more or less, kicking.

Meeting monthly for lunch (3rd. Wednesday of the month in the Torbrex Inn, at 1.00pm.) the brotherhood exists to provide a relief valve and an outlet for grumpiness, in any of its manifestations.

Membership is free. There is no joining fee, subscription, rules or elaborate, initiation ritual, the only requirements being:- male, over 50, naturally grumpy and/or opinionated and with a fondness for beer, flavoured drinks. Many of our current members have not, in the past, oftentimes erroneously, regarded themselves as "grumpy," however, we are available to enlighten those individuals by giving master classes in grumpiness if required.

Those with any lingering doubts as to their grumpiness quotient, need only ask their nearest and dearest who will generally provide an immediate, comprehensive and, sometimes, damning evaluation.

Cost is usually circa £25 a head for a 2 course lunch with liquid refreshment. Duration is from 1.00pm to approx. 3.00pm.

If you feel drawn to attend, please email me at duncanwcrombie@gmail.com so that I can confirm numbers with the pub.

GIVING WITH GIFT AID

The Government via H.M.R.C. allows taxpayers who donate to charities to Gift Aid on such donations. The taxpayer must sign a form to gift aid and the charity submits a claim based on the donation. The charity then receives a sum of 25% of the donation.

Park Church members are very generous givers and just over 100 members gift aid to the church.

This is a crucial amount of money and helps keep the church in a credit balance. The amount of tax reclaimed for 2022 was £20092.

To gift aid the member must be a taxpayer and have completed the Gift Aid form.

If anybody wishes to become a Gift Aid payer then our Treasurer [Catherine Jones] can supply the form and once it is completed then no further action is required.

If you are Gift Aiding and cease to pay tax then you cannot Gift Aid, so you should let Catherine Jones know.

To those who are Gift Aiding many thanks -it really makes a difference.

Brian Walker

Chair of Finance Committee.

Park Church Ladies Group– Winter 2023– All welcome
Meetings at 7.30 pm in the Main Hall unless otherwise stated

January 8th The Vine Trust-Rev Albert Bogle

January 22nd Burns Night Celebration

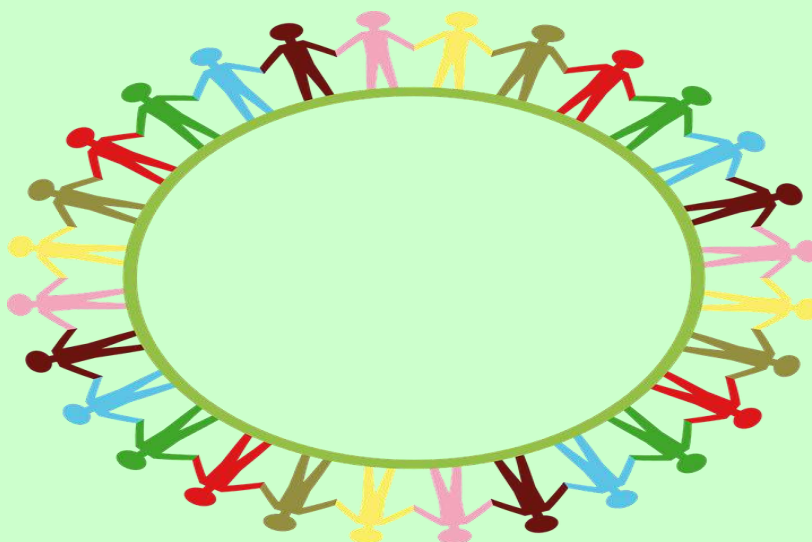
February 5th Poppy Scotland– Isla Martin

February 19th Maggie's Centre, Larbert

March 4th The Wellhouse, Bridge of Allan-Chris Caulder

March 18th Ayrshire to Alaska through sight & sound

March 25th Closing Dinner– venue to be confirmed





Community group 'Food Train' are looking for volunteers to support older people with essential shopping!

Join our brilliant team of shoppers based in Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Waitrose supermarkets in Stirling.

We have teams of shoppers who make up shopping orders for older people who are unable to get out and do their own shopping.

By helping us make up these orders you'll be helping our customers get the groceries they need and want.

We are particularly looking for people who could volunteer on a Wednesday morning, but we also have opportunities for Tuesday and Thursday mornings as well.

This is a great opportunity for community minded people who like working in a team and getting to know people.

If you would be interested in helping one morning a week, please get in touch on 01786 450 536 or stirling@thefoodtrain.co.uk. You can find out more about Food Train by visiting www.thefoodtrain.co.uk (Volunteers must be 16+ years old)

Two new additions to the Church Library

Understanding A.D.H.D. -Dr Christopher Green and Dr Kit Chee. This book is a parent's guide to Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity Disorder in children. In his typically friendly and direct style, Dr Green explains the causes and affects of A.D.H.D. and provides well tried, practical strategies to help cope with common problems such as inattention, impulsiveness and underachievement.

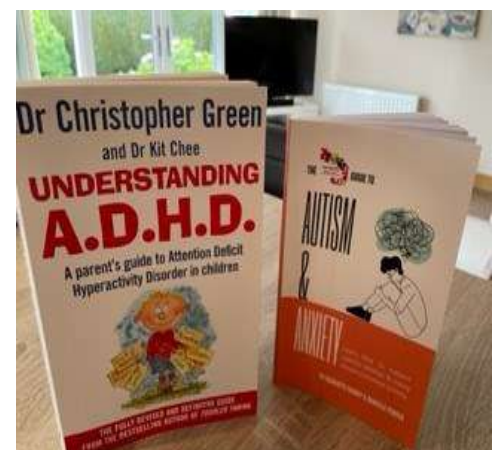
The Guide to Autism & Anxiety-Charlotte Chaney & Danielle Punter. This book is designed to give parents and professionals an insight into anxiety from an autistic point of view. With practical suggestions and ideas on how to calm, regulate and inspire confidence in your autistic child, you will find the help you've been looking for.

Both these titles can be found in the General Reading Section (green sticker)

Thank you for the donation.

Books can be signed out and are generally catalogued by author's last name .

Lyndsay Boyack





The children who attend the pre-school play group were pleased to dig up the potatoes planted in the spring. And have fun with new dressing up clothes and toys



Forth Valley Inclusion

Rev Philip Hacking recently spoke to an informal meeting of elders from Park Church, St Ninians' Old Viewfield Erskine and Holy Rude explaining some of his work as a prison chaplain at HMP Glenochil and HMP Stirling. He mentioned some of the challenges including a significant increase in the prison population in the last year, increasing overcrowding (well above capacity) and a marked rise in sickness absence amongst prison staff.

He commended the work done by Forth Valley Inclusion, a charity established by the Churches and other faith communities in the Forth Valley area. The charity is non-denominational They have supported the opening of visitors centre in both prisons. The aim of these is to provide a supportive, friendly and welcoming environment for relatives and friends visiting the establishments. Trained volunteers support the staff. Together everyone aims to ensure that experiences of prison visiting are less stressful. This helps reduce distress to families and increases the likelihood of rehabilitation of offenders.

Our Kirk Session is being asked to become a friend of the charity but support of individuals is also sought. Further details are noted on leaflets in the church hall.

Peter Murdoch

Park Puzzles No 006

Robert Burns

Your Task: Find out if your knowledge of Burns is "unco guid"



1	Are we prevented from using his title?	
2	Disappeared with the exciseman	
3	Great chieftain o' the puddin' race	
4	Town full of honest men and bonnie lasses	
5	Tam o' Shanter's horse	
6	"Thou hell o' a' diseases"	
7	Certainly not that rogue Bill	
8	Sae rantingly, sae wantonly he said farewell	
9	Was tempted to sell his fiddle for wine	
10	Location of Cauld Kail	
11	He wrote his challenge from Dunbar	
12	Colour of the Cockade	
13	There'll never be peace till he comes hame	
14	We'll tak a cup o' kindness for this	
15	A gory bed, or victory for these patriots	
16	Burn's year of birth: a) 1739; b) 1749; c) 1759	
17	Burn's birth place	
18	This river flows gently	
19	In June, Burn's love looked like this	
20	Sleekit, cowrin rodent	



The sponsored walk at the
University of Stirling campus
raised £ 2,000

Walkers were blessed with
beautiful weather

The Park Church representative is Willie Troup

Ian White (1944-2023) an appreciation.

“Carpe diem”

...is a phrase attributed to the Roman poet Horace, it means, literally “pluck the day” although it’s usually translated as “seize the day.” A looser translation might be “enjoy yourself while you have the chance.”

But for the passage of 2100 or so years, the phrase could have been written for, or even by my friend of 40+ years, Ian White, whose funeral service was held at Bannockburn Crematorium on 21st August.

Immensely talented designer, photographer, cartoonist – bon vivant, raconteur and sometime outrageous flirt, we occasionally had dinner together in one of our favourite Italian restaurants, where one evening we overheard ladies of a certain age, at an adjoining table, referring to us as Sean Connery and George Clooney? We saw no point in arguing with their perception and we never did figure out who was who, but the waiter was convinced!

For a time, through business, Margaret and I had access to a large, timeshare property in Ballater on the Craigendarroch complex which we were able to enjoy with friends. On one occasion we had booked to eat out at a restaurant in the village. On arriving early at the restaurant, we were seated in the lounge bar to await our table. On the table in front of us was a huge, solid ashtray fashioned from a very old, granite curling stone. Ian immediately launched into this great, meandering tale about the origin of the curling stone. It was, according to the tale, one of Queen Victoria’s curling stones. In time, as the tale unfolded, I became aware that a rapt silence had fallen over the entire room as it became obvious that all the other occupants were listening intently to the tale. It was, of course, absolute nonsense, but such was Ian’s skill in weaving the tale that the audience was well and truly ‘hooked.’

On another occasion, we set off for the 12.6km walk round Loch Muick (pronounced Muck) on the Balmoral Estate. At the half-way point we stopped for a picnic lunch on the small, sandy beach that lies at the south west end of the loch – accompanied by a bottle of well cooled Chablis which I carried. The lunch and Chablis were duly consumed at which point Ian was looking for a refill. “Sorry” I said, “but the wine’s finished.” “What do you mean ‘finished,’ says Ian, “you mean you only brought the one bottle?”

On the occasions when we were “allowed out to play” on our own we walked and climbed a number of the Lake District’s most iconic routes including Cat Bells, Coniston Old Man, The Rydal Round, Coniston Copper Valley, The Fairfield Horseshoe (in winter) where we met and chatted to Sir Chris Bonnington the English climber who lives in the Lake District. On these occasions we also permitted ourselves the “forbidden fruit” of Little Chef ‘all-day breakfasts’ before setting out for the day.

Carpe diem! Rejoice while you are alive; enjoy the day; live life to the fullest; make the most of what you have. It is later than you think.

RIP Ian, our lives have been immeasurably enriched by knowing you and we’ll miss you.

Duncan Crombie

Iain Wright Harvey (1965-2023) – an appreciation

It is with great sadness but also with thankfulness that I write this tribute to a dearly loved and devoted husband, father, son, son-in-law, much respected colleague, teacher and friend-Iain Harvey.

A great lover of the outdoors, Iain enjoyed hill walking accompanied by his brother Bryan and late father-in-law, Charlie. A keen historian with a passion for books, he so enjoyed his profession of teaching and is well remembered by his colleagues and pupils alike. Indeed many pupils have sent messages to say how much they appreciated his guidance and skill, one saying how he brought science “alive” for him.

Most of all Iain was a proud Scot and family man and although not a frequent churchgoer whenever his girls were taking part in the service whether it be at Christmas in the Nativity Play or other Bible Class activities, he would be there to support them -sitting in the gallery with his beloved Sandra. A Dad who was so proud of Lynn and Ailsa and their many achievements both sporting and academic.

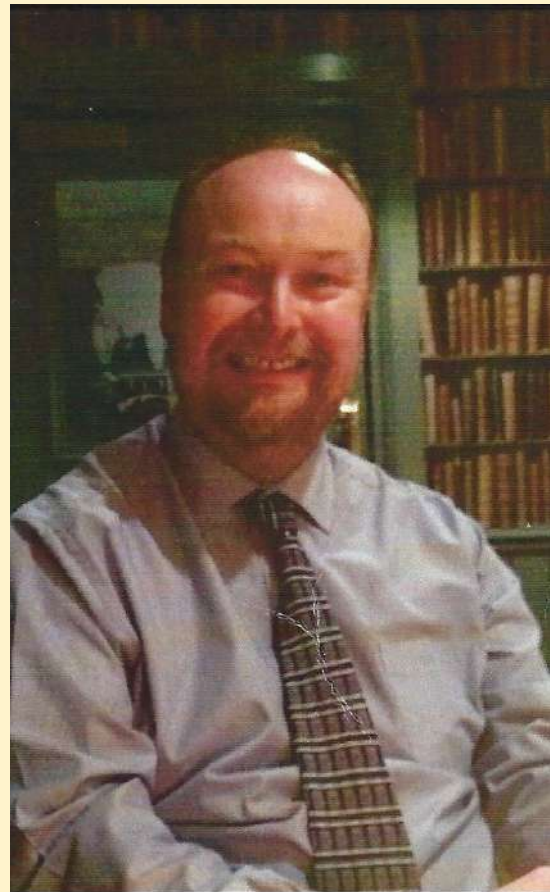
Although taken from us far too early by such a devastating illness he will be remembered always by those who loved him best. I personally feel truly blessed to have had such a fine son-in-law. Rest in peace, our gentle giant.

Muriel Croall

Thanks

The family would like to convey their sincere thanks to the members of Park Church for the overwhelming amount of cards, letters flowers kind thoughts and prayers extended to them and for the caring support received from Attie.

Thank you too for the generous donations gifted to MND Scotland in Iain's memory .



The Christian calendar is divided up by festivals and seasons.

Some, like Christmas Day, happen on the same date every year, while others move around within a range of dates. The main festival that moves is Easter, and since many other festivals have their dates fixed in relation to Easter, they move with it.

Advent (3 December - 24 December 2023)

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 2023 - 5 January 2024)

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 2024)

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 (14 February – 30 March 2024)

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.

Answers to Burns Quiz

1. Bard
2. The Deil
3. Haggis
4. Auld Ayr
5. Meg
6. Toothache
7. Holy Willie
8. MacPherson
9. Rattlin', Roarin' Willie
10. Aberdeen
11. Jonnie Cope
12. White
13. Jamie
14. Auld Lang Syne
15. Scots(Wha Hae)
16. 1759
17. Alloway
18. Sweet Afton
19. Red, Red rose
20. Mouse



In loving memory

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

Betty Nicol of Charter St

Valerie McIntosh of Shirra's Brae Rd

Iain Harvey of Ogilvie Rd

Janet Don of Hanover Court

New Members

We are delighted to welcome the following new members to Park Church congregation:

Norma Duncan, Alloa

Sheila MacCallum, Stirling

Norma Anderson, Stirling

Edit Frenyo, Stirling

Joy Graham-Mar, Stirling

Alan Marshall, Stirling

An interesting item from the past

Sheena Tait, Church Administrator, writes to say :

"We've just received a set of pew rental books for St Columba's Church covering 1936 to the 1960s.

If anyone would like to find out how much their relatives paid for their seat in the church, or where they used to sit (there is also a seating plan) we'll keep the books in the church office until the new year after which they will be forwarded to the National Archives of Scotland for safekeeping and preservation."

**May the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
fill your life with faith, hope, and love.**

**May His light guide you through challenging times,
and may His life inspire you to be a source of compassion
and kindness to all.**

On this day and forevermore.

Amen



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The Park Church, Stirling website is :

www.parkchurchstirling.org

Newsletter



NEW CONTRIBUTORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED

Any photos, articles, notices and other 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 9th February 2024** to enable copies to be printed in time for Elders to distribute before Communion on Sunday 3rd March .

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 as the spring newsletter is prepared from January onwards.

The Spring edition (covers March , April & May)

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Park Church Stirling (SC001414)

Based in the Peter Memorial building

We warmly welcome you to join our activities and events

Each Sunday we gather together at 11am for worship and fellowship

Our mission is to share the love of God in a modern world

Further details are on the website :www.parkchurchstirling.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ParkChurchStirling