

**Park Church Stirling  
Newsletter  
Spring 2025**



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# Message from the Minister

Dear Friends,

As we step into the season of Spring, we are reminded of God's promise of renewal, hope, and new beginnings. The longer days, blooming flowers, and singing birds mirror the new life that Christ brings to us.

We are also in the season of Lent, a time of reflection, repentance and preparation, as we journey towards the great celebration of Easter. This sacred season invites us to draw closer to God, refocus our hearts, and remember the depth of Christ's love and sacrifice for us.

Many Christian believers choose to give up something during these 40 days, such as sweets or social activities, as a form of fasting. The idea is that each time one longs for the thing they have given up, they instead turn to prayer or reflect on the life of Jesus. Others use this time to take up something meaningful, often acts of charity or service that bless others in need. The heart of Lent is not just about giving something up or taking something on - it is about focusing on Jesus and learning to live as He did.

The Apostle Paul reminds us:

***"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:  
The old has gone, the new is here!" - 2 Corinthians 5:17***

Just as Spring brings fresh life to the world around us, Easter brings new life to our souls. The resurrection of Jesus is not just a historical event - it is the foundation of our faith, the source of our hope, and the promise of God's endless grace.

I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to our Office Bearers, Team Leaders, Administrator and the many volunteers who serve our church with dedication and commitment. Your efforts make it possible for us to continue with our weekly activities, ensuring that our church remains a place of worship, fellowship, and service. A special thanks to our new church newsletter editorial team, which is doing a brilliant job of keeping us informed on various activities and interesting articles. Feel free to get in touch with our Editor, Sheila MacCallum, if you would like to make any contributions.

As we approach Easter, I warmly invite you to join us for our special services. On Palm Sunday, I encourage you to invite your neighbour to come along as we celebrate the beginning of Holy Week together. What better time to share the joy and hope of Christ than in this sacred season?

May this be a time of renewed faith, deepened love, and joyful anticipation as we prepare to celebrate the Risen Christ. May God bless you abundantly in this season of hope and renewal.

Yours in Christ,

**Attie**

***Your minister and friend***



# Message from the Session Clerk

## Kirk Session Update

The Kirk Session met on 5<sup>th</sup> February, when it was very encouraged on several fronts, including:

### **New Visitors and Members**

It has been great to welcome and get to know new folk and old friends, and we are committed to helping everyone feel valued and at home in the church family. One consequence is that extra volunteers are needed to help with refreshments after church. This month we welcomed Thomas and Susie Dagleish, and John Conway as new members.

### **Presbytery Review**

As summarised on the next page, the visiting Presbytery team last summer commended progress made by the congregation and endorsed its action plan, which elders review every month.

### **Property Maintenance**

Recent activity has included essential tree surgery in the front car park, repair of the CCTV and renovation of doors to the Main Hall, Gallery and Anderson Hall. This renovation involved scores of hours of painstaking work by the convenor Jim Gray, helped by John Magrath. We are getting a comprehensive review of the roof and exterior of the church through Stirling City Heritage Trust in the next few weeks. The Property committee has been very grateful for the expert input from Gordon Kerr for three decades. He will be reducing his commitment, but the property team is pleased to welcome Peter Langley as a new member.

### **Inter-generational Worship**

The Youth Committee will be more involved in all-age talks in the future. We have been encouraged by a national "Growing Young" organisation, focusing on the challenge of engaging and nurturing young people. Some elders will be attending a webinar in February about this and Session will be considering enrolling in their programme.

### **Young Adults' Fellowship**

The monthly evenings of worship food and fellowship have now outgrown the capacity of the manse because of increased numbers and have moved to church halls.

### **New Audio-Visual Project**

Work is scheduled for the end of April and beginning of May.

### **Extra Copies of Hymn Books**

We are buying more words-only hymn books to meet increased demand.

### **Links with Neighbouring Congregations**

We continue to work with neighbouring congregations in shared activities, such as monthly friendship lunches and forthcoming shared Holy Week services (details of which will be shared nearer the time) and explore future closer partnership and team ministry.

We are most grateful not only for those involved in these activities, but appreciate the multiple prayer and practical contributions and talents of so many more who enrich our church family. Please do not hesitate to contact myself or the Minister if you have any queries or suggestions.

Thank you.

**Peter Murdoch**  
**Session Clerk**

# Local Church Review - Park Church Stirling 2024

The visiting team from the Presbytery of Perth shared their reports with members of Presbytery at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025. This included the agreed Action Plan and Presbytery agreed the resolutions noted on the next pages.

## Summary

The Local Church Review (LCR) Team visited Park Church in Stirling over the summer and autumn of 2024.

This is a “new” congregation, having only been in place since 2020, and with their current Minister since 2022. From the beginning of the visit there was positivity, excitement, optimism, commitment and a real desire to look to the future and grasp every opportunity, in the words of their Mission - to share the love of God in a modern world. This congregation is not going to stand still; they have a clear vision statement and even in the short time the Team was there, they could see achievements. The implementation of the new accounting system and the arrival of new members bringing, and willing to, share musical expertise, to name but two.

The financial situation is secure. The buildings are well looked after and the halls well used by various community groups. There is a thriving congregation, averaging around 110 on Sunday mornings, a small Sunday school and other opportunities for worship and study for members and members of other churches.

There is a strong working relationship between office bearers. The Kirk Session has produced a clear and achievable Action Plan, produced with full cognisance of the Five Marks of Mission and covering 4 main areas; the development of worship and music; the development of additional leadership and support to achieve greater resilience, capacity and fresh perspective; to clarify and make progress with the parish grouping and proposed team ministry; to explore the appointment of additional support staff.

The Team would like to send their best wishes to this congregation and give them every encouragement in taking forward their Action Plan.

Presbytery:

thanks the Minister, Session Clerk/s, Office Bearers, Kirk Session and all Members of Park Church for the warm welcome, openness and frank discussion which took place during the course of the review;

acknowledges and commends the hard work, endeavour and achievements which have taken place since the establishment of the charge;

commends the well focused Action Plan and encourages the support of Presbytery committees in achieving these actions.

**Peter Murdoch**  
**Session Clerk**

## Local Church Review Action Plan (1/2)

<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Park Church Stirling</b>	<b>Plan of Action for (dates)</b>	<b>2024-2029</b>
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### PLAN OF ACTION – SUBMISSION FORMAT (to accompany the Local Church Review report)

The "ACTION PLAN" should use the "SMART" formula as the matrix for its implementation:

- Specific** Well defined. Clear to anyone who has a basic knowledge of the activity.
- Measurable** Know if the task is obtainable and how far away completion is. Know when it has been achieved.
- Agreed Upon** Agreement with all the stakeholders what the tasks should be.
- Realistic** Can be achieved within the availability of resources, knowledge and time.
- Time Based** Enough time to achieve the task. Not too much time.

Action Point Number	Action Plan (Note that there is inevitably considerable overlap between the actions)	Timescale	Who Responsible	Resources/support required
1	Develop range of worship and music to meet needs of different generations	<p>Within year 1- Establish Worship Support Team- to review and trial innovations in range and style of worship, research and improve the A/V system and augment the a/v team.</p> <p>-Year 1-3 Encourage and Identify musicians, worship leaders and leaders to plan and lead worship with the minister and train as necessary</p>	Minister, Worship Support team ,AV team and new talent identified in the process	AV team to identify needs, Session to support. Presbytery to support if upgrades required and with worship leaders training. Church of Scotland Ministries resources regarding music if required. Musical and technical training of volunteers and possibly fund from outside sources if required.
2	Development of additional leadership and support to help minister and key office-bearers providing greater resilience, capacity and fresh perspectives	<p>Within 2 years identify activity and teams most needing support, encouraging both newer and younger members to contribute; succession planning - fixed term posts to refresh teams.</p>	Minister, clerks, session and membership of Park Church.	Counterparts in partner congregations Presbytery and other training resources and guidance.

## Local Church Review Action Plan (2/2)

		Within 2-5 years, look to greater sharing of resources and more effective team working with partner congregations		
3	Clarify and make practical progress with parish grouping and proposed team ministry.	<p>Within 1-2 years have bi-monthly meetings of ministers and clerks and twice-yearly meetings of sessions.</p> <p>Within 2 years, share action plans and increase mutual support.</p> <p>Within 5 years, develop and agree plans for implementation of team ministry involving the 3 existing congregations</p>	Ministers, office-bearers and elders of the three congregations	Facilitation and support of Presbytery including congregational support and planning. May need external funding support to maintain Church of the Holy Rude
4	Explore shared appointment of support staff such as a family worker (MDS) facilitating work with younger people and planning	<p>Within the next 3-5 years</p>	Park Church to steer the initiative as responsible for most relevant activities but support from the two other ministers and sessions in the grouping is essential	Funding from congregations in the grouping. Applications for funding will be made to Giving to Grow and also relevant community funding eg Foundation Scotland. Presbytery approval also sought
5				

**NOTES :**

1. The Congregation's Plan of Action **MUST** be submitted in this format.
2. The number of Action Plan Points should be a minimum of three and a maximum of six.
3. There is no limit to the number of lines you can use. Simply 'tab' from the last box and an additional line will open. (Each line will open downwards to accommodate text).



# UPDATES FROM WINTER 2024

## Paediatric First Aid Course

Last Autumn, 10 Sparks' helpers attended an all-day Paediatric First Aid training course, led by Scott McGregor (an experienced firefighter) from STA (Safety Training Awards), assisted by his wife (a qualified nurse). The qualification we gained is SQA accredited, HSE and Care Commission recognised.

This was very worthwhile, especially for those who had had no prior first aid training. Whilst we concentrated on how to administer first aid to children (from babies to teenagers), most of what we learned can also be applied to adults. We covered a wide range of situations and symptoms, from bandages and bleeding noses to CPR and using the Defibrillator. Some of this was quite daunting, and although we hoped we'd never have to apply some of our learned skills in the most serious of situations, we all felt that the course gave us more confidence to deal with children or adults in difficulty. It also provided us with some tools to help us anticipate and look out for dangers and obstacles that could be removed to prevent accidents and/or injuries occurring in the first place.



# Stirling Street Pastors



We may be familiar with the name, but who are Street Pastors and what do we do?

Street Pastors are Christian Volunteers from different churches, who care about the safety and wellbeing of individuals in the local community and aim to be a caring, listening and helpful presence in our communities. We are trained to be approachable, non-judgemental to advise or care for anyone who needs support.

The service is welcomed by relevant statutory and voluntary agencies, including Police Scotland, as a complementary support for individuals in need or in distress. The Stirling group, women and men of all ages, offer peaceful and practical help to people who are out and about on the weekend night-time streets of Stirling and sometimes find themselves in trouble or needing help to get home safely, and on the university campus on a Friday.

As a relative newcomer to Stirling, I followed up on a longer-term interest in Street Pastors, something I had been thinking about for some time, having previous involvement in church youth work, which I enjoyed. I was interested to learn that Park Church is the base for Stirling Street Pastors and together with the witness and encouragement of Peter Murdoch, I explored the opportunity to serve.

First call was role specific training (12 sessions) which was invaluable, covering topics such as Roles and Responsibilities of a Street Pastor, Listening Skills, Youth Culture, Drug & Alcohol Awareness, Mental Health Awareness, First Aid, Safeguarding, Police Training, Knowing Your Community, Prayer and the Good News and Ethos. A level of training is mandatory and is accompanied by a Disclosure Scotland check and supported by continued professional development.

The approach in Stirling is very flexible, with options and choices about where we feel most able to serve, and there is a desired minimum commitment of around once a month. Interestingly, across the UK, other teams may offer the service in a number of different places and times, however we each have the same values and aims and our presence is obvious by our identifiable blue uniforms.

We carry water, basic first aid kit, space blankets, brush (for broken glass), sick bags, coffee, biscuits, lollipops and flip flops (!), particularly welcome by young people after a night of dancing in ill-fitting shoes. We can signpost to relevant services, and also provide a pocket-size information card. Some experienced volunteers also carry Narcan (naloxone) pens to administer for emergency drug overdose.

My main experience has been around the University campus, 2 hours on a Friday, and I have been surprised and encouraged by the engagement of students. We recognise that some may feel isolated, having come from other countries, and others may wish a listening ear – conversations are welcomed!

Peter and I speak regularly about the service, and we would be very pleased and encouraged if you have any questions, or want to ask about Street Pastors and the work that we all do.

Please pray for Street Pastors as we make ourselves available for this work of service.

**Ingrid McLean**



**Ingrid, right, at her commissioning in Nov 2024**

# Hafvenstein Nepal Newsletter #28 - December 2024

Dear friends,

We've moved out of Kathmandu to start Fiona's fieldwork - and so far it's been wonderful. Thank you so much for keeping us in your prayers.

Tansen, where we're living now, is particularly special to us. Fiona was born in the mission hospital here, and Joel's family used to be based just an hour or two's drive away, so it was where they often came on holidays (or when anyone got sick). Twenty-four years ago, Tansen is where Joel and Fi unexpectedly ran into each other again as young adults and became friends. We spent happy weeks here as a family during our time serving with UMN.



It's a beautiful hilltop town with Himalayan views from its pine forests. We're staying in a traditional Nepali stone-and-adobe house (albeit one with indoor plumbing) with hammocks on the balcony and a treehouse just outside. The boys have made friends with the doctors' kids who live nearby. We're all enjoying being part of the fantastic community in and around the Tansen hospital and the local churches.

Looking back at our key prayer requests from last time: we're happy to report that the visa renewal process went smoothly, as did preparations for home school and packing up/handing over our home to subletters.

The research authorization has had a few more hiccups. Getting remote-area research permission for Dolpa up on the Tibet border turned out to be a more complex process than Fiona had been told (including by the district government head himself, when she visited Dolpa in the spring). In the end we weren't able to get the special permit this year, and will have to try again next year.

But that may be a blessing in disguise. Some of the medicinal plants Fiona is most interested in will be in season in Dolpa in the autumn, rather than spring, when we'd planned to be there. The delay also gives us more flexibility in the first two stages of fieldwork, Tansen and Rukum, which we can now stretch out into the months we'd originally planned to spend in Dolpa.

That flex has been helpful, since getting research authorisation for our time in Rukum is also taking a little longer than expected. Please pray that permission from the Nepal Health Research Council now comes quickly, so that we can get a good start in Rukum from January 2025.

With regard to Fi's health, she was hit by some longer and more intense migraines when we first got here, but soldiered through and has as planned been refining her questionnaires through practice with doctors and patients here. Please pray for continued energy and good health as she completes this phase of her work.

She's also planning a pre-Christmas visit back to Kathmandu to share her MSc research results and meet some people who may be helpful in getting the Dolpa research permits next year. We'd be grateful for prayer for safety, health, and favor on that trip.

Isaac is just young enough to join the tutorial group of hospital staff kids, while Joel has started home-schooling Caleb, which is going well. The three of them have gone on day trips to visit Joel's old home in Galyang, as well as Butwal, where Fiona's family was based when she was born, and to the Rani Mahal, an old palace in the Kali Gandaki river valley. Both boys are thriving here, which is a real answer to prayer!

Thank you so much, again, for supporting us in this stage of our work in Nepal. Your prayer opens the doors for us to serve.

Blessings,

**Joel and Fiona  
Caleb and Isaac**



**Did you know** ..... that Captain Cook sighted, then landed, on Easter Island on 11th April 1774?

**Did you know** ..... that there's a tradition that the sun dances on Easter Day?

# Bubblegum & Fluff - December 2024

During the early part of December, we completed our first schools' programme "Bubblegum & Fluff", with Primary 5 children from Allan's PS and St Ninians PS. Unfortunately, Borestone PS was unable to participate this year, which meant that we were only able to engage with 80 children. However, the smaller numbers meant that we only had to cover 3 sessions over 2 days, instead of 5 sessions over 3 days (as had become the norm). As usual, the children engaged with the activities and enjoyed being involved. We had our very willing and dedicated group of helpers, without whom the programme could not run, and the Youth Committee thanks everyone for all their help and enthusiasm.

As this is the first time the children from senior stages come along to the church to join in our schools' programmes, we feel that an important aim is that they enjoy the experience, as well as learn something new. It is also important that the children feel comfortable with all the helpers and enjoy engaging with them. The evaluation sheets given to both children and the teachers and adults who accompany them, let us know how they have felt about the experience. The dates of the programme were a little later than usual this year and the children's comments were not as full as they sometimes are, perhaps due to pressures in schools as they approach Christmas. However, generally the majority really enjoyed the experience. Some of the comments from children and adults included the following, as well as giving us feedback on what might be improved.

## Children

*Going to the church was nice.*

*I liked writing the candles and thinking of other people for a bit.*

*I learned about waiting.*

*It was so fun playing a Roman soldier. I liked seeing everyone laugh.*

*I liked hearing about Zaccheus and learning that there is something sweet in someone mean.*

## Adults

*Thank you so much for having us – children and adults thoroughly enjoyed it.*

*Children who can struggle to engage were able to access the activities and all abilities were able to join in too.*

*Good structure and short & sweet activities kept the children interested and busy.*

*Many thanks for another lovely morning to get us in the Christmas spirit.*

*I just wanted to say thank you to all the church volunteers for providing the Bubblegum and Fluff workshops for the children. I have heard so many positive comments and it is lovely still to have this link with Park Church (Depute Headteacher).*

**Joy Macfarlane**  
**Youth Group Convenor**

**Did you know** ..... that one of Mozart's first songs is supposed to have been composed to be written on an Easter Egg?

**Did you know** ..... that the largest chocolate Easter Egg was made in Italy in 2011 and weighed 7,200kg?

## Bubblegum & Fluff Reflection - Allan's Primary 5

We are so pleased to get the chance to tell you how amazing Bubblegum & Fluff is. Mrs Mitchell has been the Primary 5 teacher at Allan's for the past few years and she always looks forward to coming along with classes too! We love being able to come to the church, everyone is so welcoming and we really enjoy all the different Advent activities. It helps us to think what is important as we get ready for Christmas. Please can you pass on thanks to the wonderful team of volunteers.

Many thanks.

### P5 Allan's



**Decorating ceramic tiles with festive themes, using lots of different mosaic materials and even more glitter!**

## Giving to Grow

This is the national scheme through which the Church of Scotland Stewardship and Finance Department assesses all congregations for contributions to enable ministry and mission to be provided not only in our parish but across the country.

Park Church's Giving to Grow contribution for the year 2025 is £71,045, which is paid in monthly instalments. The congregation is paying 100% towards the cost of our ministry, but is also contributing £7,830 towards ministry in other places. This is helping to support and sustain congregations that are not currently in a position to cover the cost of the ministries allocated to them. All charges also pay a contribution towards shared activities - those programmes and services which are provided by the Church nationally. Our congregation's contribution to these shared activities for 2025 is £12,400.

The Church of Scotland thanks all who support this congregation to meet these demands by their voluntary giving. This Giving to Grow contribution is the main expenditure of our congregation. Spending on utilities is, by contrast, costing the congregation around £2,000 per month.

Gift Aid is a scheme that allows charities to receive money from the government. Anyone who is a taxpayer can, by signing a simple form, help their charity (Park Church: Stirling) at no cost to themselves. This is an important source of income for the Church, being 9%. Forms can be obtained from Catherine Jones, Church Treasurer.

**Brian Walker**  
**Finance Convenor**

# All Kirks Together

## All-Age Friendship Lunch update for 2024

The lunches were held in Park Church every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month all year. We welcomed between 50 to 70 people to the lunch each month. Regular attenders and some new faces, which was lovely.

The team of helpers has changed slightly over the year, with some people stepping down, but new people joining the team. Thank you to all of those who help.

Those attending the lunch have a lovely time chatting and catching up while they tuck into bowls of soup – five choices – filled rolls (egg seems to be the most popular) and delicious home baking (especially the meringues!).



70 people attended the Christmas lunch in December and enjoyed the added opportunity of singing carols – thank you Ross for playing for us.

Those attending the lunch kindly make a donation for the food and with so many people coming, the Kirks Together committee have found that we easily cover any costs, including a donation to the church for use of the hall.

Your generosity enabled us to make four donations at Christmas to different charities.

We were able to support CrossReach, MND, Leprosy Mission and Alzheimer Scotland.

We look forward to welcoming everyone each month in 2025.

**Johan Stirling**

**Coordinator, 07584834846**



# CHRISTMAS AT PARK CHURCH

## Carols: A Cantata for Congregation and Choir



For our Lessons and Carols Service on December 8<sup>th</sup> 2024, we “pulled out all the stops” in mounting a performance of Heather Sorenson’s arrangement of Christmas carols titled ***Carols: A Cantata for Congregation and Choir***. Featuring the Park Church Choir, a second volunteer choir of twenty-four Park Church members, three vocal soloists, a trumpeter, two percussionists, the organ, the piano, two readers and a guest conductor who travelled all the way from Birmingham through Storm Darragh (arriving at 2am on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>), this whole-service cantata also involved the congregation and an array of wonderful bells.

Ross, Attie and Jennifer are extremely grateful to everyone who took a giant leap of faith in saying “yes” to performing this cantata. With only four weeks of one-hour rehearsals, the task was a tall order, but the commitment, the spirit of enthusiasm and the hours of home practice gifted by all involved, resulted in an exciting, uplifting and most inspiring service of community singing.

**Jennifer M Barker**





# All-Age Service

## A Nativity Play - Shepherds v Kings

On 15<sup>th</sup> December 2024, we had an All-Age Service at Park Church. The title was “Shepherds v Kings” and everyone was invited to take part if they wished. Several children and an adult happily volunteered to play extras in this Nativity Play, but everyone in the congregation took part by singing Christmas hymns and songs at appropriate times. A special thank you is given to those who took part in the flash mob at the beginning of the play, and Oscars must surely be given to all the actors in the main parts! There are others who also helped with this service, but were in the background, and without their help things would not have gone well. As usual in Park Church, everyone pulled together as a team and we were glad to be given good feedback afterwards.

**Moira Parry**



## Stirling Kirks Together

### Joint Service of Lessons and Carols held at St Ninians Old Parish Church

Photo shows Emma Cuthbert (member of Park Church), performing a beautiful solo.

Rev Gary McIntyre and The Right Rev Dr Shaw J Paterson, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, are sitting behind the chancel table.



## Christmas Music on the Organ by our Minister, Attie



A big **THANK YOU** to all who participated in the festive services and made them such a success. The church was full of festive joy, wonderful music and warm fellowship amongst the congregation throughout December.

Whether you wrote, created, directed, acted, sang, narrated, read Bible passages, played instruments, conducted, dressed up, controlled lighting and sound, took photos, were part of welcome and hospitality teams or a willing helper in other areas, your contributions ensured that everything ran smoothly, and were very much appreciated and enjoyed by everyone who attended.

Special mentions go to Jennifer Barker for bringing together Park Church Choir and willing and enthusiastic singers from the congregation to perform the Christmas Cantata, a first for Park Church; and Moira Parry for writing and directing Shepherds v Kings.

Thank yous are also due to Willie and Evelyn Crawford for again donating a lovely Christmas tree; the team who decorated the tree and sanctuary so beautifully; and all those who contributed gifts to Women's Aid for disadvantaged children.

All in all a very enjoyable, successful and rewarding festive period at Park Church.

# Family Carol Service (Christmas Eve)



We raised £900 from the collection on Christmas Eve and this was split between Start Up Stirling and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland's Challenge, 'Let your Little Light Shine'.

This initiative will enable children in Malawi to do their homework and advance their schooling with the aid of small solar lights they can borrow from their school. More information can be found on the Church of Scotland website.

Thanks to all who contributed.

**Catherine Jones**  
Church Treasurer



# EASTER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

## Upcoming Bible Studies & Holy Week Gatherings

We warmly invite you to join us for our upcoming Bible Studies and Holy Week services - a time for reflection, learning, and fellowship.

### Park Church Bible Study

Everyone is welcome - both from Park Church and beyond - to join us for our weekly Bible Study on **Tuesday evenings at 6pm** at our church premises. In the following weeks, we will focus on the life of Jesus, with **Rev Attie van Wyk** guiding our discussions. Whether you're a regular attendee or coming along for the first time, you'll find a welcoming space to grow in faith together.

### Lent Kirks Together Bible Study

Another wonderful opportunity for fellowship and spiritual growth awaits at the **Lent Kirks Together Bible Study**. These sessions will be led by **Revs Gary McIntyre, Attie van Wyk, and Alan Miller**.

**Dates:** **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March**

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March**

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March**

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April**

**Time:** **7pm - 8pm**

**Venue:** **Church of the Holy Rude (Castle-side entrance)  
Kirk Session Room**

All are welcome to join us as we journey deeper into Scripture together.

### Holy Week Services

Holy Week begins on **Palm Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**, marking a sacred time of worship and reflection. We would like to encourage you to invite your neighbour to join this service at Park Church. We are reminded of many people who came to see Jesus entering Jerusalem, and we therefore want people to join in this special service, where we reflect on the beginning of the last week of Jesus's earthly life.

The Holy Week services will be held across different congregations in town from **April 14<sup>th</sup> through Good Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>**. A full schedule, including times and locations, will be shared closer to the date. After each evening service, the hosting congregation will offer hospitality, providing a warm space for fellowship.

We encourage you to take part in these meaningful gatherings as we prepare our hearts for Easter.

**Come as you are, and bring a friend!**



# The Christian Calendar

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.

## Lent (5<sup>th</sup> March - 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025)

Lent is the 40-day period before Easter, beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending on Maundy Thursday. 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.



## Holy Week (13<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> April 2025)

Holy Week is the last week of Lent. It is the week preceding Easter and the period in the Christian year when Christians remember the last week in Jesus' life.

### EASTER

Easter is the season in which Christians remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the most important festival in the Christian year.

**Good Friday - 18<sup>th</sup> April**

**Holy Saturday - 19<sup>th</sup> April**

**Easter Sunday / Easter Day - 20<sup>th</sup> April**

**Easter Monday - 21<sup>st</sup> April**

## Ascension Day (29<sup>th</sup> May 2025)

Ascension Day commemorates the ascension of Jesus into heaven 40 days after his resurrection from the dead. It can be understood traditionally as his taking up into heaven at the conclusion of his earthly ministry.

## Season of Pentecost (8<sup>th</sup> June 2025)

Pentecost is the festival when Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is celebrated on the Sunday fifty days after Easter. Pentecost is also known as Whitsun.

**You are warmly invited to join us in  
THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION  
on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March at 11am in Park Church**

# WHAT'S ON - SPRING 2025

## Forthcoming Schools' Projects

The next schools' event in the calendar looks at exploring events during the last week of Jesus's life on earth. This is entitled "Easter Journey" and is a programme for the Primary 6s in each of our schools. It will run in the church on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> and Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March, with hopefully a couple of sessions on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April.

We then finish the year with the Primary 7s looking at the concept and meaning of Pentecost through fun activities. This will run using the main hall, Anderson Hall and church, from Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May to Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June. If you would like to come along to either of these events to participate or observe, you will be made very welcome.

**Joy Macfarlane**  
Youth Group Convenor

## Easter Holiday Club

Our Easter Holiday Club will take place this year in St Ninians Parish Halls from 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> April in the mornings. The title of the club is "Restoration Station" and is for Primary School age children.

Each day the children will explore a story about Jesus healing and restoring some very different people, including the son of an important official, a blind man and his friend Peter.

They will take part in craft work, singing, games and many other activities, sometimes individually, sometimes in groups and sometimes as a large group.

Registration is important and this can be done through Park Church office (details on page 38). The cost for each day is £2, which includes a snack.

**Moira Parry**

## NEW CONTRIBUTIONS ALWAYS WELCOME

Please submit any items for the Summer 2025 Newsletter to the **Editor**, Sheila MacCallum, at [s.maccallum@sky.com](mailto:s.maccallum@sky.com), by **5pm on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025**, to enable material to be formatted, reviewed, and proofread before copies are printed in time for Elders to distribute before Communion on Sunday 1st June 2025.

Articles, notices and other content should be in **WORD** format.

Photos should be submitted in **JPG** format, to allow re-sizing as appropriate.

Handwritten copies will be accepted, typed up and returned for your review prior to being included, as long as sufficient time is given.

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

The Summer edition will cover June, July and August 2025.

# **Stirling Kirks Together**

## **All-Age Friendship Lunches**

These will continue to be held **on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday** of every month as follows:

**12<sup>th</sup> March**

**9<sup>th</sup> April**

**14<sup>th</sup> May**

**Time: 12 noon - 1.30pm**

**Place: Park Church Main Hall**

**Cost: £3 donation (*Optional*)**



**Conversation**  
**Soup & Rolls**  
**Tea, Coffee and Home Baking**  
**ALL WELCOME**

For further information, contact **Johan Stirling on 01786 461571**

# Park Church Ladies' Group

We hold our meetings on *alternate Mondays* at 7.30pm in Park Church Hall.

A very warm welcome is extended to *anyone* who would like to join us at *any* of our meetings, *not just members of the congregation*.

The remaining Programme for Spring 2025 is below:-

- 3<sup>rd</sup> March**            **Lily Blanche Jewellery**
- 15<sup>th</sup> March**        **COFFEE MORNING (details opposite)**
- 17<sup>th</sup> March**        **Sights & Sounds from Ayrshire to Alaska**
- 31<sup>st</sup> March**        **Closing Dinner**

**Rae Scott**  
*Secretary*



**Christmas Fayre**



**Christmas Dinner**



**Scottish Night**





# **Park Church Coffee Morning Saturday 15th**

**March**  
**10am-12noon**



**Tea, coffee  
&  
home baking**

**tickets**  
**Adults £4**  
**Children £1**

PUT SOME **ART** INTO  
YOUR SUMMER!

Join our Art Club  
- Thursdays 2-4pm

24<sup>th</sup> April - 12<sup>th</sup> June

£2 per session

Open to all and absolutely  
NO experience needed!

Further details: Kate 07971529  
485

# WaterAid Lent Appeal 2025



## Jars of Change

Lent starts this year on 5<sup>th</sup> March and ends on 19<sup>th</sup> April.



This year's appeal concerns women having babies without access to clean water. In many parts of the world, mothers have to worry about protecting their families from disease. They may have to sacrifice hours to walk to a river and collect water for their families, pregnant or carrying a baby all the way. The river water may be dirty, but there is no option. Every trip may mean time away from home or lost opportunities to earn income.

For pregnant women like Mastewal, drinking dirty water risks dangerous infections. Collecting water increases the likelihood of complications. And giving birth in hospitals without clean water, where staff cannot wash their hands or equipment, puts mothers and babies at risk of deadly infections like sepsis. **So, will you support WaterAid, and bring clean water to more mothers like Mastewal?**

The congregation has, for many years, supported this appeal by giving up something for Lent, eg. long showers, less coffees or wasting food. For this appeal, you can put the money saved in a Jam Jar and hand it into the church on the two Sundays at the end of Lent - **20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> April**. If you wish to Gift Aid your donation, labels will be available at the front and back doors from Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March to put inside your jam jar with your donation. Again, I have set up a link if you wish to give by Just Giving: [www.justgiving.com/page/helen-reid-25](http://www.justgiving.com/page/helen-reid-25).

There will also be a poster in the hall with details.

Thank you.

**Helen McDonald & Helen Reid**



Christian Aid Week in 2025 is from 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> May.

Envelopes may be picked up on 11<sup>th</sup> May at both doors, to be returned the following two Sundays.

Helen Reid will also set up a Just Giving page and the link will be published in the intimations from 11<sup>th</sup> May for two weeks.

The **Annual Christian Aid Coffee Morning's** date has yet to be decided, but will be in our church at the end of October. The details will be given in the intimations and next newsletter.

**Helen McDonald and Helen Reid**

## God's Plan

As some of you may know, my school career was not always easy for me. I tried my best, but often my dyslexia was a barrier not only to my reading, writing and spelling, but also to my processing of information and working memory. This meant that if the teacher was presenting a lot of information, I couldn't take it in fast enough and of that I could take in, only a portion went into my long-term memory, unless I did something practical with the information I had just heard or read. My escape from this stress was always kayaking, where I felt free and accepted.

As I approached the end of fifth year, I decided that I wanted to leave school, but did not know what direction to go in. I had at one point wanted to be a quantity surveyor, then I thought of cyber security (computers make sense to my brain), then I thought of joining the Army as part of their cyber security and data communications division, but none of these seemed quite right. Luckily, one of the organisers at kayaking suggested a course in sports and adventure coaching at Kelvin College in Glasgow, which sounded right up my street.

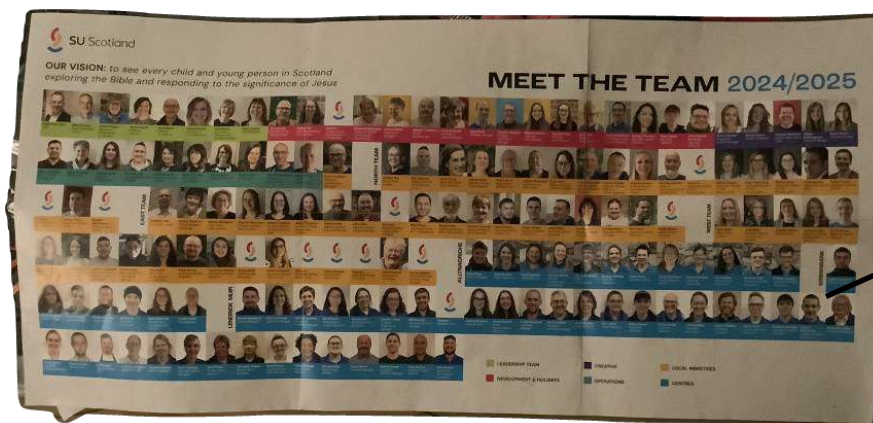
So I applied and received an unconditional offer within 3 days. I was delighted and really enjoyed the course, taking on as many extra qualifications as I could during it.

At the end of the course, one of my lecturers suggested I apply for a 2 year apprenticeship with Scripture Union as a trainee activities instructor, so I did. I was invited to a selection camp where I got to try out a lot of the activities and was then offered the job, which I gladly accepted.

I now live at Lendrick Muir in Kinross, and instruct children and young people in kayaking, climbing, mountain biking and many other outdoor pursuits. Further information about this centre can be found at [www.lendrickmuir.org.uk](http://www.lendrickmuir.org.uk).

I feel I have been incredibly lucky to end up with a job which I love. I find it so rewarding and thank God for guiding me into this career, even though at times I could not see his plan. I suppose it was always there and this is where I am meant to be.

## Callum McDonald



# The Church Flower Borders

The Garden Team is looking forward to Spring and the opportunity to tend the church flower borders again this year.

We have been encouraged to see the team continue to grow and thanks this year are due to Alan Semple, Maureen and Jimmy McArthur, Sheila MacCallum, Marie Muir, Wendy McLean, Peter Langley, Iain Wesley and John Palmer. The invitation to help is flexible and does not require everyone to come every time and is always open.

We have recently worked with the Property Group to see a contractor trim the main trees in the area at the front of the church, and hope this will enhance the light and moisture into the Memorial Garden, and reduce any risk from storms, etc.

We will soon add to the sustainability of the borders through more perennial flowers and plants, in addition to the annuals that bring so much attractive colour, which is admired by church members and others.

The flowers and the lawn are regularly complimented by passers-by who frequently stop to comment. We are blessed with a central location and are reminded of the witness that the garden creates for the church within our community, and we would value your prayers for our continued work.

We therefore look forward to a year of development, to other volunteers joining with us for a spot of gardening, fellowship and coffee which is very attractive and always welcome!

**Sam McLean**  
**Garden Team Convenor**



# Men's Badminton Group

The group meets every Tuesday at 12.30pm in the main hall. We currently have 6 members with an average weekly turnout of 4. This allows us to play doubles which is slightly less energetic than singles!

However, we would welcome new members of any age and ability. You don't even need to have a racquet, as we have some spare.

Although we play for about 90 minutes there is no necessity to stay for the whole session, so you'd be welcome to pop in at any time.

We also have a WhatsApp group so we can communicate who is available each week.

More details from **Ian Jones on 07730 679449**.



# Junior Church



My name is Autumn. I am 6 years old, but it's my birthday soon. A birthday I stole from my Mum as we share the day!!

I go to church most Sundays and sit with my Granny in the Choir. I am also seen at the front door handing out the Order of Service.

I have an older brother Tyler, who is 15. We were both baptised in Park Church (when it was St Columba's).

I am learning the violin at Big Noise. I go to 1<sup>st</sup> Raploch Beavers. On Wednesday evenings I have started Taekwondo and I also go to swimming.



In December, the children enjoyed a Christmas party where the guest of honour, Santa, gave each child a present. Santa also had individual photographs taken with some of the children under the Christmas tree and a good time was had by all.

At the end of March, the children will take part in an Easter Egg Hunt and at the end of the session in June, we will have our annual Teddy Bears' Picnic.

**Moira Parry**  
**Sparks' Lead**



# Become a Member of the Park Church Family

## An Invitation to Belong

To have support and be connected to familiar faces and friends is vital for a holistic and healthy life. Jesus teaches us to care for one another, and as Paul reminds us in Hebrews 10:25, *“Do not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another.”*

We warmly invite you to join our congregation if you have not yet done so - it's a place to share in fellowship, bring your talents and gifts, worship together, and find a spiritual home where you truly belong.

Some may worry that joining requires standing in front of the congregation to make long vows. There is the option of confessing your faith to the congregation, however there are also other processes. A personal conversation with our minister, Attie, will help you explore the way forward. Following this, Attie will share with our Kirk Session, who will affirm new members by faith or resolution.

Over the past three years, we have grown together as a congregation, and many have found that their initial fears were overcome by the warmth of a friendly welcome.

If you would like more information, please contact **Attie** or **Peter Murdoch**.

We look forward to walking this journey of faith with you!



JOURNEY  
OF  
FAITH

## Fellowship for Young Adults

We warmly invite all young adults from the age of 20 – 45 to join our Young Adults' Fellowship evenings, which take place on the **first Sunday evening of each month** while the academic terms are running. The evening usually kicks off with a meal, followed by a time of fellowship, informal worship, Bible reflection, and socialising.

We look forward to seeing you there and sharing this time of connection and encouragement together!

# Young Adults' Fellowship Group

From what started as 5 people sat awkwardly in Attie's living room, to 15 people bursting out the house and having to move to the church for space, the Stirling Churches Under 30s Team has gone from strength to strength. Our monthly get togethers usually involve food (LOTS of food!), laughter and time spent with Jesus. We are all united through our love of God and regardless of background, race, sexuality or status, all are welcome to join and share fellowship.

These evenings are so precious to everyone involved, and we have all gone from acquaintances who nod to each other at church, to a very solid community who are usually the noisiest table at post-service coffee!

It can be really tough to be a younger Christian. It can be isolating being the only one in your friendship group that always has plans on a Sunday morning, and daunting to try to volunteer in church when you might not have anyone your age to relate with. However, this group has given us the chance to share our faith in a supportive space with others in our position, while also having some team support to further engage within the church. We may not be the best Christmas light decorators, but we did it while singing carols and attempting to spread joy in the midst of our chaos...

We are all looking forward to another year ahead and feel very blessed to be part of such a loving community.

*"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them" –  
Matthew 18:20*

## Eilidh Wynd





# Christian Apps to Enrich Your Faith Journey

In today's digital age, technology can be a wonderful tool to support our **prayer life, Bible study, and spiritual growth**. There are many apps designed to help Christians stay connected to God throughout the day. Here are three **highly recommended** Christian devotional orientated apps for your mobile phone, iPad or tablet, to explore:

## 1. Pray As You Go

Created by the **Jesuits in Britain**, *Pray As You Go* offers **daily audio prayer sessions** that blend **music, scripture, and guided reflection**. Each session lasts about **10-13 minutes**, making it ideal for **prayer on the go** - whether commuting, walking, or taking a quiet moment at home. It also includes **seasonal reflections, the Examen prayer, and special themed prayer series**.

📱 Free on iOS & Android | Website: [www.pray-as-you-go.org](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org)

## 2. Daily Bread

*Daily Bread* is a simple yet powerful app offering **daily Bible readings, devotionals, and reflections** to help you meditate on God's Word. It provides **short, meaningful devotionals** that can be easily incorporated into your morning routine, making it a great way to **start the day with Scripture and prayer**.

📱 Available on iOS & Android

## 3. YouVersion Bible App

One of the most popular Christian apps worldwide, the *YouVersion Bible App* provides **hundreds of Bible translations** in multiple languages, along with **reading plans, devotionals, and Bible study tools**. It includes features like **audio Bibles, verse highlights, and sharing options** to help you engage with Scripture in a personal and interactive way.

📱 Free on iOS & Android | Website: [www.bible.com](http://www.bible.com)

These apps are **wonderful resources** to deepen your faith, stay connected to God's Word, and **nurture your spiritual life**. We encourage you to explore them and find one that best supports your **daily walk with Christ**.

If you have any trouble accessing or downloading them, feel free to ask Attie, our minister, to guide you.



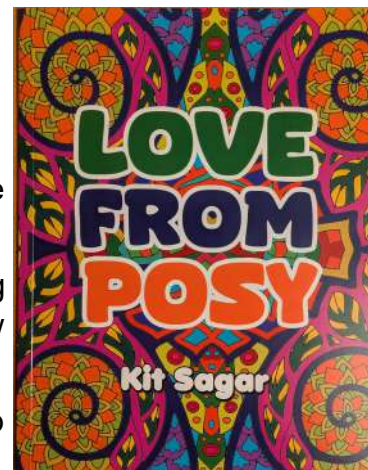
# Addition to the Church Library

## Love from Posy, by Kit Sagar

“*Love from Posy* is a fun and joyful story for young children, about the adventures of Posy the doll and her best friend, Sam.

Through rhyme and colourful illustrations, Posy’s story is about learning new things, growing to love the unexpected and diving into new adventures.

It touches upon the challenges of moving to a new country and will help encourage children to adapt to new situations and circumstances.”



This lovely children’s book, beautifully illustrated, has been donated by the author, Catriona Weatherston, now Kit Sagar.

Some of you may remember her, as she was a member of Junior Church at St Columba’s, as was, from the age of three, latterly as a helper with the youngest children.

She was Head Girl at Stirling High School, before going on to study Law at Glasgow University and she worked with the Scottish Court Service for many years.

She is now living in Abu Dhabi, with husband Cristopher and sons Sebastian and Samuel. She has retrained as a teacher, working with Early Years.

We very much appreciate Kit kindly gifting us a copy of her book for our church library, made all the more special because of her close connection with our church.

## Horn Solo - Dr John David Smith

On January 19<sup>th</sup> 2025, the air outside was cold and brisk, but the air inside Park Church was warm and full of brass! Dr John David Smith, a Juilliard graduate and University of Delaware Professor, who performs with orchestras such as the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, graciously agreed to perform a solo work, Franz Strauss’ *Nocturno*, as the reflective music for our service. Although on a borrowed instrument, which was far too small for his left hand and in dire need of a cleaning, Dr Smith performed masterfully and beautifully as always. Although, his fine performance was most likely enhanced by his week-long tasting of good Scottish fare: haggis, black pudding, sticky toffee pudding, steak pie and bacon rolls!



Jennifer M Barker

# CONGRATULATIONS!

## Peter and Sarah Murdoch's Golden Wedding Anniversary



Peter and Sarah Murdoch were married on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1974 in St Francis Church Anglican Church in Petts Wood, Kent. They then moved to Edinburgh, prior to leaving for missionary service in Nigeria. The wedding day was very cold and windy, which made outdoor photos challenging.

They celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary with a small family lunch held in the Hollybank restaurant in Stirling. The best man and one bridesmaid were among the guests. The youngest was the four month old son of Sarah's niece.

A happy gathering and two ministers present to bless the occasion!



## Dr Ian McIntosh: A Life of Adventure, Service and Music

Among us are many remarkable individuals - talented, adventurous, and well-travelled. One such extraordinary person in our church community is Dr Ian McIntosh, who recently celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. During the celebrations, we discovered even more about his fascinating life, and we were left in awe of his achievements, experiences, and unstoppable spirit.

Dr McIntosh's life is nothing short of an adventure. He has visited over 180 countries, built his own boat, and even climbed all 282 Munros in Scotland. A true explorer, he once had to jump aboard a cruise ship as it was leaving the harbour - just one of many daring escapades. He has been knocked off his motorbike by a bus, run off the road by a helicopter, and even chased by a bull! He has spent a night in jail, been arrested, and was once stopped by the police three times in one night - each incident no doubt with an interesting story behind it!

Beyond his adventures, Dr McIntosh has devoted his life to serving others. He worked as a GP in Stirling, caring for countless patients with dedication. His leadership extended beyond medicine - he was also an International Scout Leader, guiding and inspiring young people to embrace adventure and personal growth.

A man of many talents, he has had 30 different paid occupations over the years. He once ordered a piano and then had to build it himself! Music has been a constant in his life, as he plays several instruments, including the ukulele, clarinet, accordion, and even the bagpipes. In fact, he once played his accordion while crossing the Arctic Circle on a ferry - an image that perfectly captures his love for both music and adventure.

Even at 90, Dr McIntosh remains active and engaged. A keen gardener, he still tends to his own garden, keeping it in immaculate condition. His energy and enthusiasm show no signs of fading - his next planned adventure? A hot air balloon trip!

Dr Ian McIntosh is a true inspiration. His life reminds us that adventure, service, and lifelong learning know no age limit. We celebrate his incredible journey and look forward to hearing about many more of his fascinating experiences in the years to come!



# Church Roll

## In Loving Memory

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

- **John Leitch**
- **Clive Denton (husband of member, Janey Denton)**
- **Mark Munro (son of member, Robert Munro)**

## New Members

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

- **Susie Dalgleish**
- **Thomas Dalgleish**
- **John Conway**

## In Loving Memory of Clive Denton

At Park Church, we give thanks for the life of Clive Denton, a beloved friend amongst us at Park Church who has passed on, but will be remembered as a true gentleman whose kindness, warmth, and devotion to family, faith, and community touched many lives.

Clive was a man of many passions. He and Janey shared a love for gardening, devoting years to caring for the Park Church garden, creating a beautiful and welcoming space for all. We extend our deepest thanks to them both for their dedication and hard work in making our church surroundings so special. Clive also enjoyed growing vegetables, often with the enthusiastic help of his beloved grandchildren - Archie, Angus, Forbes, Will, Logan and Harriet whom we often see at Park Church.



Clive lived a full and happy life, devoted to his family, faith, and community and will be deeply missed. As we remember Clive, we give thanks for a life well lived - a life filled with love, laughter, kindness, and faith.

*"Well done, good and faithful servant!" – Matthew 25:23*

May he rest in peace, and may his memory continue to inspire us all.

# CONTACT DETAILS

**Minister:** Rev Attie Van Wyk  
Tel: 01786 478269  
Email: [Avanwyk@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:Avanwyk@churchofscotland.org.uk)

**Session Clerk:** Dr Peter Murdoch  
Tel: 01786 473087  
Email: [murdochps@btinternet.com](mailto:murdochps@btinternet.com)

**Depute Session Clerks:** Mrs Marjorie McGowan  
Tel: 01786 461258  
Email: [randmmcgowan@gmail.com](mailto:randmmcgowan@gmail.com)

Mrs Johan Stirling  
Tel: 01786 461571  
Email: [johan.stirling@btinternet.com](mailto:johan.stirling@btinternet.com)

**Organist:** Mr Ross McGowan  
Tel: 01786 461258  
Email: [randmmcgowan@gmail.com](mailto:randmmcgowan@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Mrs Catherine Jones  
Tel: 01786 473601  
Email: [jonescatherine728@gmail.com](mailto:jonescatherine728@gmail.com)

**Church Administrator  
& Roll Keeper:**

Mrs Sheena Tait  
Office Tel: 01786 462400 (*messages can be left on this number*)

**The office is open Tuesday to Friday, 9.30am to 12.30pm**

Email: [parkchurchstirling@gmail.com](mailto:parkchurchstirling@gmail.com)

Church website: [www.parkchurchstirling.org](http://www.parkchurchstirling.org)





## **Park Church Stirling (SC001414)**

**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.**

**Website: [www.parkchurchstirling.org](http://www.parkchurchstirling.org)**

**Instagram: [@parkchurchstirling](https://www.instagram.com/parkchurchstirling)**

**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ParkChurchStirling](https://www.facebook.com/ParkChurchStirling)**