

**Park Church Stirling
Newsletter
Spring 2026**



CONTENTS

Message from the Minister	4
New Member / Pastoral Care Elder / 30 year Elder Service	5
Kirk Session Update	6
Sacrament of Holy Communion	6
UPDATES FROM WINTER 2025	
Congregational Lunch	7
Bubblemum & Fluff	8
Sparks	9
Stirling Kirks Together All Age Friendship Lunches - Review of 2025	10
Review of Festive Services and Events	11
WHAT'S ON - SPRING 2026	
World Day of Prayer	15
Scottish Bible Society - Quiz Night	15
EASTER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY	
The Christian Calendar	16
Upcoming Bible Studies	17
Holy Week Services	17
Coffee Club	18
Young Adults' Group - Tea & Testimony	18
Stirling Kirks Together - All Age Friendship Lunches	19
Ladies' Group - Spring Syllabus	20
Park Church Coffee Morning	21
Summer Art Club	22
Forthcoming Schools' Events	
Easter Journey	23
Easter Holiday Club	23
Water Aid Lent Appeal 2026	
Jam Jar Appeal	24

CONTENTS

NEWS FROM AROUND THE CHURCH

Worship Leader Training	25
Liturgy and Change	26
Twinning	27
Additions to the Church Library	28
Christian Aid Week 2026	28
Church Garden Update	29
Church Flowers	29
Church Giving	30
E-Newsletters	30
Park Church Choir	30
Ring Found in Church Memorial Garden	30
Stirling Kirks Together Ceilidhs	31
Poppies - knitting and crochet patterns	32
Congratulations	33
Church Roll	34
New Contributions Always Welcome	34

CONTACT DETAILS

35

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Dear Friends,

Christmas is still fresh in our minds, and what a joyful time we shared at Park Church. From music and singing that lifted the space, to a range of services where many took part, including some new and brave actors reaching for the stars. It was a season marked by warmth, laughter, and shared joy, all grounded in the birth of our loving Lord, Jesus Christ. Thank you to everyone who offered their time, gifts, and energy to make Christmas such a meaningful celebration.



And now we are in Lent. It can feel like a sudden change of pace, but Lent invites us to slow down rather than rush on. It gives us space to be honest about life as it really is, about what is broken in the world and in ourselves, and about our deep need for God's grace. Lent does not end in itself, though. It gently draws us forward towards Easter.

Easter is the heart of the church year. It speaks of hope, not as something vague or sentimental, but as something costly and real, born out of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The

empty tomb does not deny suffering, but it tells us clearly that suffering does not have the final word. Through Christ, we are more than conquerors.

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."
Romans 8:37

At the end of Romans 8, Paul speaks honestly about pain, loss, and uncertainty, about a world that groans under the weight of brokenness. We recognise that world because we live in it. Faith does not remove our questions or struggles, but it does change how we face them.

Paul dares to say that God is for us. Not distant or detached, but actively for us. We know this because God did not hold back His own Son, but gave Him in love. Because Christ has died and risen, we are invited to see our lives differently. Not pretending everything is fine, but trusting that God is at work even when things are hard.

This is the heart of Easter. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Not fear. Not loss. Not illness. Not uncertainty. This love steadies us and gives us the courage to keep going, to keep caring, and to keep hoping.

And Easter is also joy. Not shallow happiness, but deep joy rooted in truth. Christ is risen. Love has not been defeated. Death does not get the final word. So we celebrate, not because life is perfect, but because God has already acted for us.

At Park Church, this shapes who we are and how we live. We are called to be a welcoming and inclusive church, serving and engaging with our community and the wider world in Christ's name. Not finished, not flawless, but open, growing, and willing to love as we have been loved. I thank you for being Easter people.

May this Lent give us space to reflect, and may Easter find us ready to celebrate the love of Christ with honest hearts and real joy.

With best wishes,

Attie

Your minister and friend



New Member Ashton Cuthbert



**New Pastoral Care Elder,
Marcella McLennan**



**30 year Elder Service Award,
Sheila Keddie**

KIRK SESSION UPDATE

The last few months in Park Church have been a great encouragement - increasing attendances and participation in a variety of Christmas services, more new members and friends, record numbers of pre-school children coming to SPARKS, and ever more volunteers helping in many different ways. We thank God for these blessings and for the ministry and the leadership of our minister Attie.

The Kirk Session had a discussion session on 4th February, which considered our opportunities and challenges, and drafted an updated action plan for Presbytery, building on our local church review two years ago; and reviewing our progress under various headings.

The main topic for discussion that evening was our participation in a national initiative called Growing Young – not the elixir for eternal youth, but rather a two year programme looking at churches that are successful in attracting young people (under 35), and are growing and thriving.

This involves a series of all day Saturday gatherings in Edinburgh, several online meetings and discussions. Park Church has a team of eight people, whose ages vary from their twenties to their seventies, who are considering the core commitments and principles proven to be of value, and are encouraging all those in the church to think how we might practically encourage, enthuse, enable and empower all in the congregation and community. Growing investment in youth and younger adults leads to growth of the whole congregation, and benefits everyone. In Park Church, we have certainly been enriched and encouraged in recent months by younger adults' leadership of the "Tea and Testimony" initiative, audio-visual services, communications, and by Eilidh Wynd's successful completion of Presbytery Worship Leaders' training.

I must thank so many people who contribute to the life of the church in various ways. Some of our Elders have recently stepped down as Trustees, though continuing to serve the church through pastoral care, music, welcome, hospitality, communications, regular prayer and in other ways. These include Margaret Crombie, Gordon Luke, Ross and Marjorie McGowan, Hector McLean, Ronnie McPhee and Brenda Smith. We thank them for their invaluable decades of service.

I have only covered a small fraction of our activity, but please do not hesitate to contact our minister Attie, Johan Stirling or myself with any concerns, queries or suggestions.

Peter Murdoch
Session Clerk

You are warmly invited to join us in
THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION
on Sunday 8th March at 11am in Park Church



UPDATES FROM WINTER 2025

Park Church Congregational Lunch

On Sunday 30th November 2025, the church celebrated both the 1st day in Advent and St Andrew's Day.

St Andrew's Day is Scotland's national day, celebrated annually, marking the feast day of St Andrew the Apostle, one of Jesus's disciples and Scotland's patron saint. Andrew was a fisherman, who introduced his brother Peter and many others to Jesus. He was introduced to Jesus by John the Baptist and left his fishing boats and followed Jesus. He was an early evangelist, drawing people to Christ and sharing Christ's love.

St Andrew became Scotland's patron saint after his relics were brought to Scotland, with the Saltire linked to a vision of his X-shaped cross before a pivotal battle (of Athelstaneford) in 832AD.

Advent begins on the Sunday falling on, or closest to, November 30th and ends at Christmas, encompassing four Sundays.

Over the four weeks before Christmas we prepare our hearts to celebrate Christ's birth. This is a time when we can also be evangelists, like Andrew. We can let Christ's love shine through us in our daily lives and with the people around us.

Following our church service, we gathered in the hall to share fellowship over lunch. There were 90 people sitting down together, enjoying lunch, chat, a quiz and some singing. The time was greatly enjoyed by all.

Thanks go to all those involved in the preparation of the hall, organising the food, serving and pouring lots of teas and coffees. Thanks also to those providing the entertainment and the many hands who helped clear up very efficiently.

Dianne McNaughton and Johan Stirling
Hospitality Team



Bubblegum & Fluff

On Friday 5th December, we started off gently with a small group of children from Allan's Primary School coming along to the church for the first time to experience "Bubblegum and Fluff", the first of our Schools' programmes. This was followed by a much larger group from St Ninians Primary School in the afternoon. On Monday 8th in the morning, we then had a well deserved rest, followed in the afternoon by the second group from St Ninians. On Tuesday 9th, Riverside Primary School participated for the first time. Altogether, we had around 150 children taking part over the three days.

All of the Primary 5 children are coming on their initial visit to our church, with none of them knowing quite what to expect when they first come in, and it was, as always, a pleasure to see them relax and throw themselves into things with gusto. Despite being a rather noisy affair for parts of the session, there were also times when they listened attentively and their written candle thoughts at the end of their time with us showed a depth of understanding often surprising for their age. As always, we appreciate enormously the time and commitment given by our many helpers, who are willing to lend their hands to a variety of tasks and help make the programme such fun for the children.

Evaluations from the staff indicated that they appreciated the organisation of the event and the great fun around the simple message that resulted in a lovely morning/afternoon that the children really appreciated.

The children's comments showed that the majority enjoyed the sessions. The evaluation sheet asks them what they like best and what they don't like so much, as well as asking what they might have learned from the experience. The interesting thing is that for every child who really enjoys an activity there is often one who doesn't enjoy it at all.



Comments included remarks that are factual, such as “I learned a new song”, “I learned about Zaccheus” and “The tile creations were beautiful”.

Some were very rewarding, such as “I learned that Jesus was born at Christmas”, “I learned that Jesus is the reason that Christmas exists” and “I like that it wasn’t just about presents and toys”.

Some were heart-warming, such as “I learned that Jesus was real and a wonderful person”, “I learned why Christmas and Christianity is important” and “I learned that anyone can make a change”.

And finally, one child wrote “Writing the candles was pretty important”.

We are always amazed at the thinking that generally goes into the comments on the candles, where the children write about their hopes for how the world can be changed for a better future, and whilst many children find this final section difficult, it is gratifying to learn that they have a real interest and lots of ideas to offer in trying to create a better world.

Joy Macfarlane
Youth Group Convenor



The toddlers at Sparks’ Christmas Party had great fun dressing up and enacting their own Nativity. They also enjoyed a visit from Santa!



Stirling Kirks Together

All Age Friendship Lunches - Review of 2025

As many in the congregation know, on the second Wednesday of every month, Park Church hall is busy with a Friendship Lunch, organised by Stirling Kirks Together under the leadership of Johan Stirling.

The lunches provide valuable fellowship for all those attending, as well as for all those volunteering to assist with running the lunches. Among the volunteers, this allows sharing of experience and ideas across all the Stirling Kirks Together congregations of Park Church, St Ninians Old Parish, Holy Rude Viewfield, St Mark's and United Free. The lunches are a regular and consistent expression of the work of Stirling Kirks Together to strengthen the links between the member congregations and express our Christian life together.

Each lunch draws on the efforts of 15 volunteers in setting up the hall, preparing food in advance or on the day, hosting those attending, as well as washing up and tidying the hall afterwards. Each month's volunteers are drawn from a wider pool of some 20 people from the different Kirks Together congregations and beyond.

Many of the attendees are regulars, who attend in a small group or individually, but always knowing that they will find a warm welcome, a good lunch and a chat. Visitors to Stirling regularly see the lunch banner and come in to enjoy the lunch. Typically, there will be 50 to 60 people sharing lunch. The carol singing at the December lunch was enjoyed by all, with everyone joining in and making a wonderful sound.



The lunches consist of homemade soup, filled rolls and an array of home baking, washed down with cups of tea and coffee. Attendees are asked to make a donation to cover the cost of providing the lunch and do so generously, so that even after volunteers are reimbursed for their costs, the lunches generate a financial surplus for Stirling Kirks Together. This is used to support other collaborative Kirks Together activities, including the schools' outreach, a carol concert and a ceilidh, plus supporting different charities during the year. Recent donations have included UNICEF, CrossReach, Stirling Street Pastors, Stirling Food Train and Maggie's, a cancer charity.

If you are free on the second Wednesday of the month, come along from 12 noon to 1.30pm to enjoy the fellowship and food that the Friendship Lunches provide.

Hugh Buchanan
Mission and Outreach

REVIEW OF FESTIVE OF SERVICES AND EVENTS

Come to Bethlehem - A Nativity Play

The annual Nativity Play, which was held on 21st December, was truly an All Age venture, ranging from three little angels of primary school age through to a number of young adults to more mature members of the congregation. At the end we even had a baby joining in. This very enthusiastic and competent cast was enlisted to ask the congregation to “Come to Bethlehem”, but this of course entailed lots of rehearsal periods, and everyone involved willingly gave their time to this.

There were also many helpers behind the scenes who played their parts, including John Palmer, who constructed a magnificent stable backdrop, which can be used for many years to come, made all the more authentic by the addition of hay bales provided by Moira Stewart.

Other invaluable help with costumes, stage setting, and particularly sound and vision, contributed to the final performance, and it is gratifying that everyone’s hard work was appreciated by congregation, members and friends.

Joy and Peter Macfarlane



A huge thank you also goes to Joy and Peter Macfarlane for writing, directing and producing “Come to Bethlehem”. Their enthusiasm and motivation rubbed off on all who were involved. They gave up numerous hours during the weeks leading up to 21st December to organise rehearsals, provided helpful guidance notes before, and debriefs after, each rehearsal to ensure everyone felt comfortable in their role, that the sound and vision enhanced what was being said and acted in the aisles, on the chancel and in the pulpit.

Well done Joy and Peter!



Carols and Nine Characters

The carol service on 14 December sought to give the service of 9 Lessons and Carols a contemporary twist, with 9 characters replacing the traditional 9 lessons. Those 'volunteering' to read really got into the spirit, wearing fancy dress appropriate to their character. Some of the characters were to be expected – Mary, Joseph, the angel. Then there were Herod and the innkeeper seeking to defend their actions and meanness; the donkey and a sheep sharing the story through animal eyes; the star giving an age-old perspective; and a drunken beggar, representing the prodigal (lost) son later in the gospel, and the message that the story which begins with Christmas is not complete until we are all part of it.

A big thank you to those who joined and augmented the choir, and who rose to the challenge of some less familiar carols – there aren't many carols written about Joseph or Herod or drunken beggars – his carol was O come all ye faithful, with the emphasis on 'all'.

Alasdair Smith Organist



Thank you to Alasdair for writing and directing, not to mention acting, playing the organ and conducting the choir for this entertaining, contemporary twist on 9 Lessons and Carols. Thanks also to Attie for accompanying on the keyboard!

Christmas Eve Collections

We are pleased to announce that collections from the two Christmas Eve services raised a total of £1,140.31. This was distributed equally between Medecins Sans Frontieres, Stirling Street Pastors and Enable, ie. £380.10 each.

Thank you to all who contributed.

Catherine Jones
Church Treasurer

Thank You letters below from two of the charities have been posted on the noticeboard in the main church hall.

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES
DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

2,473,700 Sick and injured people were provided with emergency treatment	134,000 Surgical interventions were performed	143,800 Patients were treated for cholera	368,900 Births were assisted, including caesarean operations	1,318,100 People were vaccinated against measles	209,000 Severely malnourished children were given urgent care
--	---	---	--	--	---

THANK YOU
for your donation of **£380.10**



Stirling Street Pastors
Caring, Listening and Helping
Office: Park Church,
Park Terrace, Stirling, FK8 2NA

Park Church
Park Terrace
Stirling
FK8 2NA

19/1/2026

Donation to Stirling Street Pastors

Hello,

I would like to thank Park Church for the donation raised at your Christmas collection of £380.10 to Stirling Street Pastors, received on 30/12/2025, and the donation raised at your Ceilidh of £60.25 received on 24/12/2025. We really appreciate your continuing financial and prayerful support.

Your donation will be used to:

- Resource patrols on the streets with flip-flops, bottled water, blankets and essential items to care for people.
- Contribute towards employee and volunteer expenses.
- Pay for ongoing training and uniform costs.
- Help with costs of maintaining a base for patrol operations and other meetings.
- Cover essential administrative costs such as legal, safeguarding and insurance costs which we pay through our governing body, Ascension Trust (Scotland).

Thank you and all at Park Church for your continuing support and prayers.

With every blessing,

Russell Boyd
Coordinator
Stirling Street Pastors

Contact us: 07545527511, stirling@streetpastors.org.uk
Registered Scottish charity: SC053257

FESTIVE THANKS TO:

- Willie and Evelyn Crawford for once again donating a beautiful Christmas tree for the Church.
- The large team of volunteers who, led by Maureen McArthur and Claire Brown, did an excellent job of decorating the Christmas tree, as well as the sanctuary with some wonderful floral displays.
- All who donated gifts to Women's Aid for disadvantaged children. This photo shows boxes full of gifts that will hopefully have given the children some much needed joy on Christmas morning.



WHAT'S ON - SPRING 2026

World Day of Prayer
March 6th, 2026



“I will give you rest; - Come”
Matthew 11 : 28



Worship Service

Prepared by the WDP Committee of Nigeria

World Day of Prayer (Scottish Committee)
Charity Number SC020446
Website <http://www.wdpScotland.org.uk>

To mark **World Day of Prayer** “Nigeria”, a service will be hosted by St Mark’s Church, Drip Road, Stirling, on 6th March 2026 at 2pm.

The focus will be on the theme of rest (Matthew 11: 28-30).

More information can be found at:

<https://www.wdpScotland.org.uk/ministries/nigeria-2026/>

<https://www.wdpScotland.org.uk/resources/>



Scottish Bible Society Quiz Night

The Scottish Bible Society will be holding its annual fundraising Quiz Night as follows:

Date: Saturday 21st March

Time: 7.15pm for 7.30pm start

Venue: Park Church, Main Church Hall

Format: Teams of 4, but don't worry if you don't have a team. Come along and you'll be teamed up with others.

Willie Troup
Church Representative

EASTER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

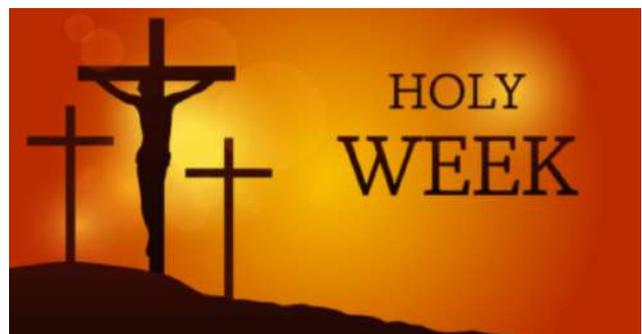
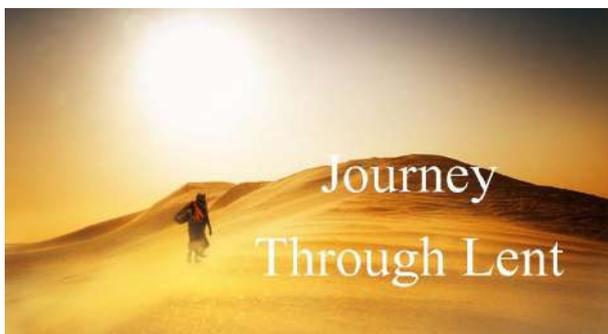
The Christian Calendar

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 (18th February - 4th April 2026)

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 (30th March - 3rd April 2026)

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 - 3rd April

Holy Saturday - 4th April

Easter Day - 5th April

Easter Monday - 6th April

Ascension Day (14th May 2026)

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 (24th May 2026)

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.

Upcoming Bible Studies

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

Kirks Together Lenten Bible Study

Everyone is welcome - both from Park Church and beyond - to join us for our Kirks Together Lenten Bible Studies in March. Details are as follows:

Dates: **Thursday 5th March**

Wednesday 11th March

Wednesday 18th March

Wednesday 25th March

Time: **7pm - 8pm**

Venue: **St Ninians Old Parish**

These sessions will be led by Revs Gary McIntyre, Jake Lehman, Alan Miller and Attie van Wyk.

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

Holy Week Services

Holy Week begins on **Monday March 30th**, 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 **March 30th through Good Friday, April 3rd**. 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.

There will also be a Stirling Kirks Together Open Air Easter Sunday Morning service in the King's Park at 7.30am, followed by breakfast in Park Church.

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!



Coffee Club

Coffee Club meets weekly on Thursdays, 10.30 - 11.30am, in the main church hall.

All are welcome, including young children, for whom there will be toys to play with while the adults chat over a cuppa, biscuits and home baking!

If anyone would like to volunteer to bake and/or serve at the Coffee Club on a rota basis, please contact Rae Scott or Sarah Murdoch.



Young Adults' Group

Tea & Testimony

Having launched "Tea & Testimony" in September 2025, we have been delighted with the response. These short services take place on the last Tuesday of the month. This is a time for fellowship, sharing of faith and a different format of service, to appeal to as many people as possible. Can't make it on a Sunday because of work commitments? Try Tea & Testimony. Can't manage a morning service and an evening suits better? Try Tea & Testimony.

We are also planning on expanding this, to include the other Churches in Stirling, to strengthen our community and hear from even more followers of Christ. There is something truly special growing with Tea & Testimony and we are so excited to see where it goes!

So far, we have been lucky to have Lewis, Edit, Susie, Peter and Sarah share their story, and the overall response has been wonderful! Our next service is Tuesday 24th February, We would love to see you there, and if you would like to share your story, please contact me.

Eilidh Wynd





STIRLING KIRKS TOGETHER
INVITE YOU TO THE

**All are
Welcome!**
ORIENTED

ALL AGE FRIENDSHIP LUNCH

WEDNESDAY 11TH MARCH 2026
WEDNESDAY 8TH APRIL 2026
WEDNESDAY 13TH MAY 2026
WEDNESDAY 10TH JUNE 2026

CONVERSATION, SOUP & ROLLS, TEA/COFFEE AND HOME-BAKING



Time: 12.00 - 1.30pm

Location: Park Church, Main Hall

Donation: £3.00 (optional)

For further information, please
contact

Johan Stirling on 01786 461571

Park Church Ladies' Group

Spring Syllabus

The Ladies' Group meets at 7.30pm in the Main Church Hall, and will continue on alternate Monday evenings until 23rd March.

We are a welcoming group meeting for fun and fellowship, we are open to all and are not restricted to members of the congregation.

The remaining Programme for Spring 2026 is below:-

9th March: Tricia Chillas will be putting us through our paces with “**Exercise to Music**”!

14th March: Coffee Morning - see poster opposite

23rd March: Closing Event - Afternoon Tea at Stirling Golf Club (2pm—4pm)

A very warm welcome is extended to everyone to join us at any or all of these events.

Rae Scott
Secretary



Park Church Coffee Morning Saturday

14th March

10am-12noon



**Tea, coffee
&
home baking**

**Tickets
Adult £5**



Summer Art Club

Thurs 23rd April - Thurs 11th June

at Park Church

2-4pm

£2 per session

If you'd like to join us, contact
Kate first on: 07971529485~

NB. Spring term ends on 12th March and Summer term will commence on 23rd April, after the Easter break.

Forthcoming Schools' Events

Easter Journey

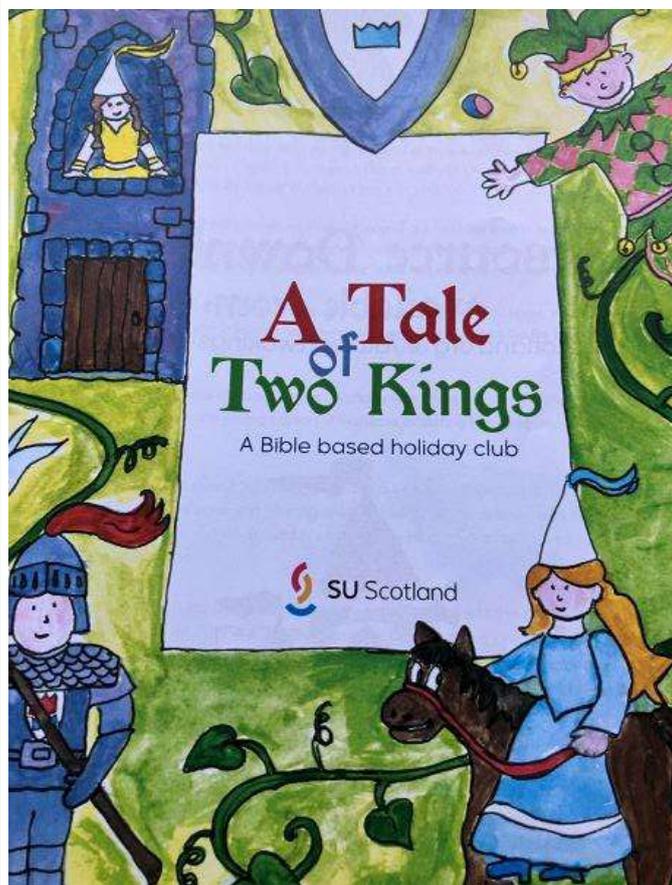
The next event in the calendar of Schools' Programmes is Easter Journey for Primary 6 children in our partner schools. They will learn about Jesus's last journey to Jerusalem and follow some of the events of Holy Week, finding out more about the Christian festival of Easter. The Programme will take place on Friday 20th, Monday 23rd and Tuesday 24th March.

We follow this up with the final event for Primary 7s on Friday 22nd, Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th May, when the children will learn about the less well known story of Pentecost through a fun programme entitled "Popcorn & Cake".

Anyone who wishes to come along to observe or participate in either of these events will be most welcome. Just let our minister or any member of the Youth Committee know of your interest. We also invite congregation members to remember these events in prayer, as we try to introduce some of our Christian beliefs to our senior Primary School children.

Joy Macfarlane
Youth Group Convenor

Easter Holiday Club



Our joint Easter Holiday Club with St Ninians Old will take place at Park Church from Monday 13th - Wednesday 15th April from 10.00am - 12.30pm and will cost £1 for each session.

This Club is for primary school age children and at it the children will find out something about the two kings - David and Jesus, while meeting knights, princesses and bards.

Please share this information about the club with your children, grandchildren, friends and acquaintances!

Registration for the club can be done through Park Church.

Moira Parry

Water Aid Lent Appeal 2026

This appeal will start on February 18th and end on April 2nd. It has been part of our church life since 2008, so I hope you will all support it again.

Here is an example of what life is like without water:

Harriet has three children and lives in the small village of Noala in Malawi. There's no clean water in the community. The water point is about an hour away. She has to travel there and wait for people to finish drawing water and then go back. She starts around 6am, but does not return until midday.

If her children are sick she has to leave them to get water. She does not like leaving them when they are sick and feels very sad.

How can we help?



Jam Jar Appeal

The Lent Appeal involves you giving something up for Lent – it can be something small that you use or buy. The money you save can then be placed in a jam jar to be handed in on Sunday 5th April.

If you are able, you may Gift Aid your contribution, by using a label to put inside the jar with your details. These will be available on 15th February on the table at the front door.

Please support this cause – as Clean water is a Right not a Privilege.

Helen Reid

Worship Leader Training

In Spring 2024, I took part in the Perth Presbytery Worship Leaders' Course. This was something I had never heard of before, so thought I would explain it a bit further!

The Worship Leader Course consists of 3 full-day training sessions (spread across a 6 week period), which is concluded by a final session where you lead a mini worship session in pairs, to the fellow participants to show all that you have learned

There were around 25 people on my course (I was the youngest female participant) and everyone was from a wide range of congregations. This brought a depth of opinions and experiences which generated great conversations

The course covered a variety of topics - how to structure prayers, sermons, different styles of services and pairing hymns dependent on themes and seasons. I found the whole course interesting and it was fun to give a slightly more modern viewpoint to discussions.

For our final mini worship session, we were all given a theme to preach on. My partner for the course and I preached on "Keep It Simple". It was slightly nerve-wracking, but a real privilege and great practice!

After the course, to become a fully certified worship leader, you need to complete a Sunday service...in FULL....ON YOUR OWN. Despite being known as someone who will chat to anyone that will listen, I found this a very daunting notion. What if people don't take me seriously? What if people don't like what I have to say, or how I say it? What if my service is actually 3 hours long....or 3 minutes

For varying reasons I delayed completing my final service until now.

When Attie offered me the opportunity to complete on Sunday 28th December, I knew this was the right time....It was God's time.

I preached on the metaphor, "The same hot water that boils the egg softens the potato" – give it a listen if you want some average preaching but top tier humour! I was absolutely terrified until I started talking, because I knew God had got me covered and it would all be ok.

Post service, I was questioned on my sermon and my methods by 2 presbytery members to complete all the official paperwork. I am grateful to have been supported by Peter Murdoch and Peter Brown during this, as well as all the congregation members who encouraged me in the lead up to the day.

Subject to final approval at the Presbytery meeting in February, I am a qualified Worship Leader.

If anyone else is interested in the course, I am more than happy to discuss it further, and I am very grateful for everyone's kind words after the service.

"She confidently trusts the Lord to take care of her" – Psalm 112:7.

Eilidh Wynd

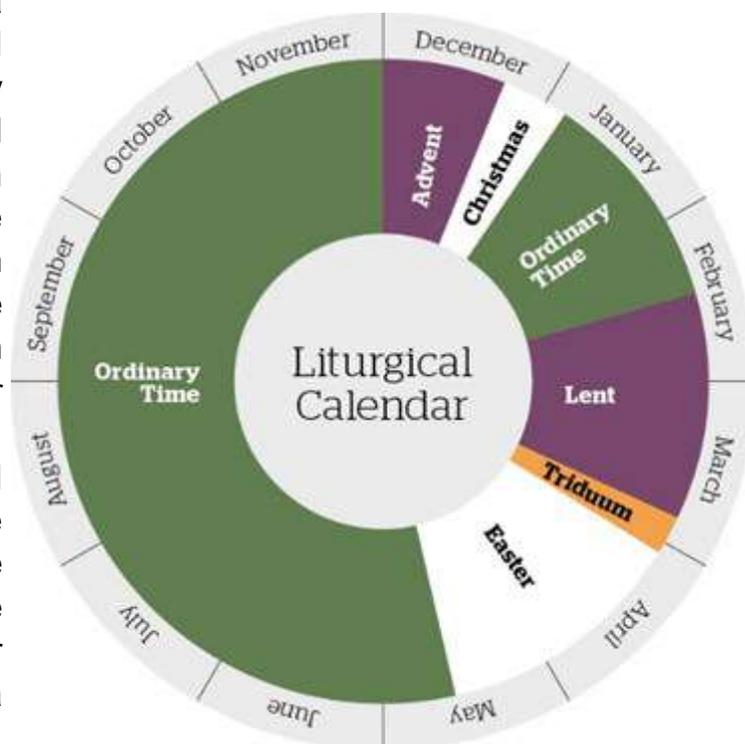
Liturgy and Change

In September I attended an event titled “Liturgy and Change” in Edinburgh hosted by, what might be termed a liturgical action group, or explorative thinktank, “Responding to the Sacred+”. The group is a merry mix of academics and clergy, and other invested participants who want to understand and further our engagement with the Sacred in present times.

You can re-watch the evening on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVbsA9sQGwU&t=1115s>

Over the years I have been exposed to a whole array of different services and worship traditions. Christianity not only harbours a wide spread of theological denominations; that is to say differences in theological interpretation, but these are additionally coloured by differences in posture or liturgical practice. If you have attended a service at another church recently, you may have found this even or especially within the Church of Scotland, where a Sunday morning at one church and congregation can look and feel quite different from the next, even though the “building blocks” are still recognisably the same. Liturgy is a means of structuring our space and time together, not just during a specific service, but throughout the year.



Liturgy, in our public act of worship, is necessarily structured to allow us to form an expectation of what role we assume during the service, the words we say, the movements and acts of service through prayer, response, teaching and thanksgiving. Attie’s recent service on Paul (watch the service from 25th January if you have missed it!) picked up on this. Liturgy is a way to sustain Christian fellowship by introducing the relationship of our individual faith lives, our individual stories with God to our community in public confession of our belonging to God.

The evening in September asked questions about where we see our connectedness in our faith to the sacred. How much of our tradition is culture, and how much of it is divine encounter? Can we and should we see it as ecumenical, as a way to meet beyond the confines of our denominational horizons? How much do we hold on to unnecessarily? How can liturgy prepare us in the face of change? Are there elements of the liturgy that cannot accommodate change and if so, why?

Speakers of the plenum shared their experiences and perspectives:

- Liturgy as a learning and testing space.
- Liturgy as a place of safety.
- Liturgy as a source of renewal.
- Liturgy as a tool for making the unknown present and revealing the new in the already known.

Bit by bit the discussion moved from the dressings we love and cherish in a service (when to speak, when to stand, the spaces we occupy in the sanctuary and the church) to our deeper connection with the earth and our humanity. It made me return to the liturgical calendar and appreciate the “seasons” that are mapped out in the story of salvation written onto the seasons of time. Not only a response to God, but also an answer to our needs in the climate and pressures we find ourselves.

We all recognise the experience when what we say or do takes on new meaning unexpectedly. I wouldn't be part of the choir if I didn't think of hymns here. Familiar and present, yet at one point in time they can capture us differently; a hymn that reminds us of a wedding, a funeral, a moment in time we felt found. The familiar sometimes requires patience to disclose its source of newness, in building relationship to parts in ourselves and our congregational life that we did not foresee or expect or were present to. Liturgy builds the sensibilities of our communal worship, in exploration, sharing and trusting that the message can be heard. It is also a source of collective memory, for the church and the congregation, and a moment in time that holds a horizon for our future.

Kat Neumann
Church Choir member

Twining

I recently took on the task to support our twinning relationship with our partner church in Paris, Église Protestante Unie de Pentemont-Luxembourg, and have started by sending on my introductions. It made me think about the importance of the ecumenical movement that this partnership signals. How important it is to have a link to other communities of faith and share and support one another. Often we think of our “mission partners” in connection with calls for donations. But first and foremost, it is an invitation to exercise missional thinking. We commit to a wider horizon. Park Church, amongst the rumblings of changes around the presbytery, is also part of something much broader, and we can learn and grow with our twinning partners to be in relationship through prayer and information, building up our understanding of this friendship in Christ that is not dictated by the geographic or economic distance that the cost of a visit might bring.

I look forward to keeping you updated on this project and ways we can celebrate our friendship together.

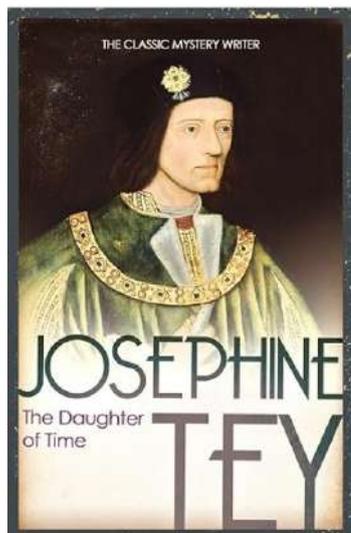
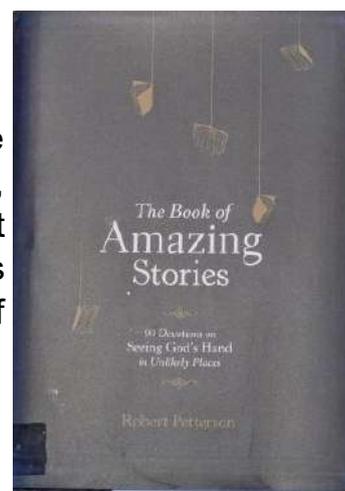
Kat Neumann
Church Choir member



Additions to the Library

Robert Petterson - The Book of Amazing Stories (Green-General Reading)

You probably thought you knew about the lives of famous people such as Martin Luther King Jr., Marilyn Munroe, Ronald Regan, Winston Churchill and many others. But in this book, you'll find out so much more about Ronnie's famous Mum, and Winston's disastrous military career. You'll marvel at how God used the lives of ordinary people to change the course of history.



Josephine Tey - The Daughter of Time (Green-General Reading)

This Book is a 1951 detective novel, concerning a modern police officer's investigation into the alleged crimes of King Richard 111 of England. It was the last book Tey published in her lifetime, shortly before her death. In 1990, it was voted number one in The Top 100 Crime Novels of All Time list compiled by the British Crime Writers' Association. In 1995 it was voted number four in The Top 100 Mystery Awards of All Time list compiled by the Mystery Writers' of America.

Enjoy!

Lyndsay Boyack
Church Librarian

Christian Aid Week

Christian Aid Week will take place **10th - 16th May 2026**.

Envelopes will be available at the church door in advance and there will also be an opportunity to give online. Details will be provided in due course.

The Annual Coffee Morning will be held on Saturday 24th October in St Ninians Old Parish Church Hall, 10am - 12 noon. Please put the date in your diary!

We hope you will support this charity as well as you have done in the past.

Thank you.

Helen Macdonald and Helen Reid



Church Garden Update

As we note the comparatively dormant garden, we are pleased with the progress made in the flower borders last year. We continue to receive compliments about the garden, which is witness to our community about the beauty, and our stewardship, of God's creation and His goodness to us.

We are very grateful to our team of volunteers and are always keen to hear from anyone who has an interest. We welcome new members who can commit a couple of hours occasionally, or regularly, to share in an enjoyable morning. Watch out for more information at the start of Spring as we start again in early April.

Sam McLean
(07712 648339)

Church Flowers

Thank you for your continuing support!

The Flower Arranging Team are all volunteers who buy and arrange the fresh flowers each week in the church. They are reimbursed for the cost of the flowers by the Treasurer.

Flowers are sponsored by generous donors, often in memory of a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion. They are present during the service and then distributed by other volunteers to persons that the Minister or Session Clerk know would appreciate them, with a message of blessing.

Donations to the Flower Fund can be anonymous, or if you wish there are a few dates available in 2026 to sponsor the flowers. Please speak to me if you would like to do this.

Most weeks we have simple bunches which do not require a floristry exam to arrange in a vase. At Christmas, Easter and Harvest, the church is decorated with some extra flowers and a group of helpers come in to arrange extra vases.

Several new members have joined the team this spring, but we would always welcome additional folk to join our rota. If you feel this is something you would like to try, please speak to me, or email me at murdochsarah@btinternet.com.

Sarah Murdoch
Acting Church Flower Co-ordinator

We are very grateful to Sarah for looking after the Church Flowers in Maureen's absence.

We wish Maureen all the very best with her recovery and look forward to welcoming her back to Park Church in the not too distant future.



Church Giving

Many of you already gift your offerings by Standing Order. This method of giving is free for both you and us. It also saves time, is more secure, saves money on the purchase of envelopes, and means that you do not need to think about having the correct cash available to put in the your envelope.

If you currently give by envelope or cheque, would you consider changing to Standing Order? If you would like a form, our bank details, or more information, please speak with me, or email me at treasurer@parkchurchstirling.org, and I will be happy to help you.

Catherine Jones
Church Treasurer

E-Newsletters

If anyone would like to receive their copy of the Church newsletter electronically, please email Sheena Tait, Church Administrator, at parkchurchstirling@gmail.com.

Please note that Church Newsletters can also be read on the Church website at www.parkchurchstirling.org.

Park Church Choir

Church Choir practices take place on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm in the main church hall.

Anyone wishing to sing in the choir is very welcome to come along and join us!



Ring found in Church Memorial Garden

The gardening team found a gold ring in the Memorial Garden while we were working there (in the section beside the John McDowell plaque). It looks like it could be a man's wedding band and has a diameter of approximately 1.8cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ "). There are initials engraved on the inside and we think it may have been in the ground for some time.

If you are able to help reunite the ring with its owner, please speak to Sheena in the Church office.

It has also occurred to us that the ring may have been buried intentionally, and so if it has not been claimed **by 31st March 2026**, it is our intention to bury it again in the garden.

Thank you for your help!



Stirling Kirks Together Ceilidhs

On 29th November 2025, (St Andrew's Day Eve), members of St Ninians Old Parish and Park Church gathered together in St Ninian's Church Hall for an evening of fellowship, fun and, of course, dancing.

Callum Wynd did a fabulous job of organising the event; he and his family certainly know their way round a dance floor, ceilidh style!

Folks from age one to 'somewhat older' took part in a variety of Scottish Country Dances, including The Gay Gordons, The St Bernard's Waltz, The Dashing White Sergeant and the high energy Flying Scotsman!

Much enthusiasm was shown on the dance floor and much laughter echoed throughout the hall. Our own minister can certainly turn his heels to a tune or two.

For some, it was their first experience of a Ceilidh and, luckily for them, and for those who couldn't attend, there will be another opportunity to get together and dance the evening away on **9th May 2026**.

Sandra Harvey



Poppies

The poppies displayed both inside and outside the church as part of our Remembrance commemorations were well received.

Several people commented that they would like to add to their numbers, so there will be a meeting after Morning Service on Sunday 15th March in the Youth Chapel. Collect your cup first and come through.

Nancy McLean from the Choir was responsible for the beautiful garlands of poppies adorning the pulpit and Communion table. She has very kindly put together both a knitting and crochet pattern which are printed below (full page copies will be available on the 15th). Many other patterns are available on the internet. Rarely are two poppies identical, so choose a pattern which suits you.

There will be a box in the vestibule in which to pick up red and black wool and drop off finished poppies. Please pop your name in the bag of poppy, or poppies, so I know who to thank.

If knitting or crocheting are not for you, don't worry, your talents may lie in getting the poppies ready for display so come along too. There will also be a meeting after the Summer holiday season to discuss next steps.

Hope to see you on Sunday 15th in the Youth Chapel.

Brenda Smith



EASY POPPY PATTERN

This pattern gives a full ribbed poppy using double knitting yarn. One red ball will make a number of poppies and only a little black wool is required for the centre.

BODY OF POPPY

Cast on 60 stitches in red

Row 1-10: K2 P2

Row 11: K2 tog P2 across the row

Row 12: Sl 1 K2 tog pss0 ...repeat across the row

Break off yarn with long tail, thread back through remaining stitches and pull tight. Join edges with mattress stitch.

CENTRE OF POPPY

Using black wool cast on 8 stitches and knit a square (approximately 8-10 rows) of stocking stitch. Cut yarn leaving a tail and thread through live stitches. The purl side is the right side. Run a line of running stitch around the outside of the knitted square and ease enough to pull the edges of the square into a round and tuck under.

FINISHING

Stitch the centre tucked side down to body of poppy and over stitch with black wool, or use a black or green button as the centre.

START AGAIN!

MacAREE BROTHERS' CROCHET PATTERN

DK YARN Red and Black (for centre)

For centre of poppy, create a magic ring (wrap yarn around finger) black yarn 3 ch (for first treble) 9 tr into loop.

Slip stitch into 3rd chain at start of round to join (10 sts).

For petals

Round 1: change to red. 1 ch, 2dc into each tr of previous round.

Slip stitch into 1 ch at beginning. Of round to join (20 sts).

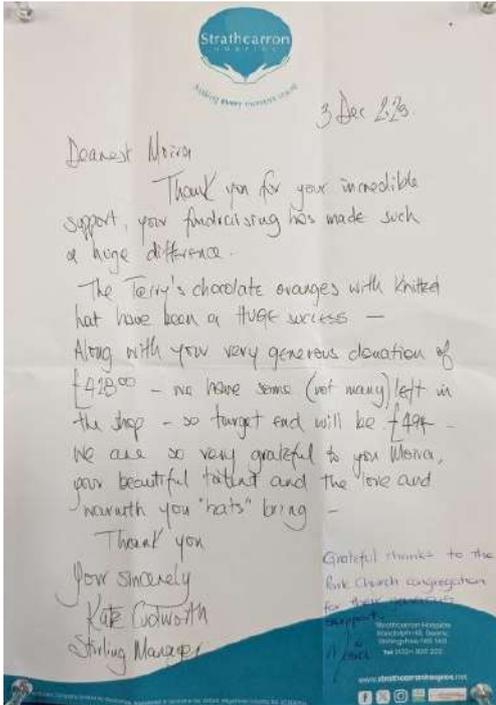
Round 2: 1ch, * (1tr 1dtr) into 1st st. 2dtr into next 3 sts (1dtr,1tr,1dc) into next st. rep from * 3 more times.

Slip stitch into 1st chain at start of round to join.

Break yarn and fasten off. Weave in all ends.



CONGRATULATIONS!



Congratulations to Moira Simpson for raising an amazing £494 for Strathcarron Hospice by knitting these festive, fun cozies for Chocolate Oranges.

Well done Moira!



Since writing about her Worship Leader training on page 25, Eilidh received approval at a recent Presbytery meeting, and is now a fully qualified Worship Leader.

Congratulations Eilidh!



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:

- Percy Lafferty
- Pauline Leask

New Members

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

- Pamela Hanson (transfer from Direlton Kirk, East Lothian)
- Ashton Cuthbert

We are also delighted to confirm that Marcella McLennan has been appointed Pastoral Care Elder for Park Church.

NEW CONTRIBUTIONS ALWAYS WELCOME

Please submit any items for the Summer 2026 Newsletter to the **Editor**, Sheila MacCallum, at parkchurchnewsletter@gmail.com by 5pm on Friday 9th May 2026, to enable material to be formatted, reviewed, and proofread before being printed in time for Elders to distribute from 24th May 2026, two weeks before Communion on Sunday 7th June 2026.

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

Please submit photos 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 2026.

CONTACT DETAILS

Minister: Rev Attie Van Wyk
Tel: 01786 478269
Email: Avanwyk@churchofscotland.org.uk

Session Clerk: Dr Peter Murdoch
Tel: 01786 473087
Email: murdochps@btinternet.com

Depute Session Clerk: Mrs Johan Stirling
Tel: 01786 461571
Email: johan.stirling@btinternet.com

Organist: Alasdair Smith
Tel: 01786 834460
Email: alasdair.smith@scottishwidows.co.uk

Treasurer: Mrs Catherine Jones
Tel: 01786 473601
Email: treasurer@parkchurchstirling.org

**Church Administrator
& Roll Keeper:** Mrs Sheena Tait
Park Church
Park Terrace
Stirling FK8 2NA

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

Church website: 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

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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ParkChurchStirling