

Park Church Stirling Newsletter Summer 2026



CONTENTS

Message from the Minister	3
Kirk Session Update	5
A Tribute to Peter Murdoch	6
UPDATES FROM SPRING 2026	
Scottish Bible Society	7
Water Aid Lent Appeal 2026	7
SPARKS - Easter Egg Hunt	7
Easter at Park Church	8
Easter Journey	9
Easter Holiday Club	10
Ladies' Group - Review of 2025/26 session	11
Coffee Club	13
Park Church Choir	13
Tea & Testimony	13
Christian Aid News	13
WHAT'S ON - SUMMER 2026	
The Christian Calendar	14
Sacrament of Holy Communion	14
Stirling Kirks Together - All Age Friendship Lunches	15
NEWS FROM AROUND THE CHURCH	
The Art Club At (nearly) Four Years Old	16
Dollar Academy CCF – London Blitz Trip 2026	17
A Walk Along the Forth	19
Ashton Cuthbert - Life after school	21
Additions to the Church Library	22
Stirling Kirks Together Ceilidhs	24
Congratulations	25
Church Roll	26
Christian Aid - Save the Date	26
New Contributions	26
CONTACT DETAILS	27

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



Dear Friends

As we move into the summer season, I am reminded of the words from Galatians:

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9 (NIV)

There is something deeply fitting about these words at this point in the year. Summer brings longer days, growth in gardens and fields, and signs of new life all around us. It is also a time to pause and reflect on the many seeds that have been planted through the life and witness of the congregation.

Much of Christian service is often quiet, unseen, and at times tiring. Yet Paul reminds us that no act of faithfulness in God’s Kingdom is ever wasted. God sees every prayer prayed, every act of kindness offered, every hour given in service, and every quiet encouragement shared with others.

Over recent months, especially throughout the Easter season, I have once again seen the tremendous generosity, care and commitment of so many people within our church family. My sincere thanks go to all the members and volunteers of the many committees, teams, and groups here at Park Church who contribute so faithfully to the life and witness of the congregation and to the growth of God’s Kingdom in this part of the world.

Whether through hospitality, music, outreach, administration, practical care, worship, fellowship, hosting local primary schools during the Easter Journey programme, running a holiday club, baking, serving teas, preparing the elements for Communion, singing in a choir, checking alarms and light bulbs, operating microphone sound levels, planting or arranging flowers, supporting Christian Aid and WaterAid initiatives, or through countless other acts of quiet service and generosity behind the scenes, thank you.

So much of this work is carried out faithfully and without recognition, yet it makes a tremendous difference to the life and witness of the congregation and to all who come through our doors.

As I reflect on the past year, I do so with a grateful heart to God for His guidance, provision, and care over the life of the congregation. We have been richly blessed in many ways and shared much encouragement, fellowship and joy together.

At the same time, I am mindful that this year may not have been easy for everyone. Some among you may have faced illness, grief, uncertainty, loneliness, anxiety, or personal challenges known perhaps only to yourselves and to God. In such times, it is important to remember that the Lord sees, knows, and cares deeply for His people. We are reminded that our God is a relational, personal, and caring God. Therefore, the Bible says:

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)

My prayer is that these words may bring comfort and reassurance to all who are carrying burdens at this time.

This summer also brings significant moments of transition and thanksgiving as I recognise the retirement of two individuals who have given extraordinary service to the congregation.

Firstly, I offer my sincere and heartfelt thanks to Dr Peter Murdoch as he retires in his role as Session Clerk after 19 years of service.

Working closely with Peter, I came to know him over the past four and a half years as someone who serves others with remarkable diligence, wisdom, humility and grace. Throughout his years of service he consistently sought what was best for the congregation rather than personal recognition. His diplomacy, integrity and ability to build positive relationships have been a tremendous blessing to the congregation and to the Church of Scotland. Much of Peter's work took place quietly in the background, often unseen, but the congregation has benefited enormously from his faithful commitment and deep knowledge of congregational life and the Church of Scotland. I also want to express my warm thanks to Sarah Murdoch, whose encouragement and support alongside Peter throughout these years have meant so much.

I wish Peter and Sarah every blessing in this new season of life. I hope they will find opportunities for rest and refreshment, although, knowing them, they will no doubt continue to remain active and helpful in many ways.

As one chapter concludes and another begins, we warmly welcome Johan Stirling as our new Session Clerk and Dianne McNaughton as Depute Session Clerk. We give thanks for their willingness to serve the congregation in these important roles and assure them of our prayers, encouragement and support in the days ahead.

I also give thanks to Dr Brian Walker, who is retiring after 12 years as Convener of the Finance Committee.

Brian has brought enormous dedication, integrity and diligence to this demanding role, giving countless hours to ensuring that the finances and administration of the congregation have remained in good order. His faithful service and careful stewardship have been greatly appreciated. I thank him sincerely for all he has done, and wish both Brian and Mary every happiness and blessing for the future.

As summer now begins, I hope and pray that everyone will find time for rest, renewal, and encouragement. Whether you are travelling, spending time with family, or simply enjoying a quieter pace for a little while, may you know God's presence and peace.

And if we are permitted here in Scotland, may we even enjoy some good weather!

With every blessing,

Your minister and friend,

Attie

Last Update from this Session Clerk

The April Kirk Session meeting was devoted to discussion of our vision and priorities, and how our various teams and committees might work most effectively. Attie prepared a reminder of some key elements, including information about the key principles of the Growing Young Initiative of the Church of Scotland to which we subscribe.

Our Vision is that Park Church is a welcoming and inclusive Church, serving and engaging with our community and the world in Christ's name. Our stated mission is to share the love of God in a modern world. Our agreed goals are to love God and show our beliefs in our daily lives; to love others and show this in our mission and outreach; to encourage all in the congregation to engage and share in caring for others; and to work with others outside the congregation to grow and look forward in faith.

The Growing Young initiative is a Christ-centred approach to engaging young people and influences:

1. Sharing leadership with young people
2. Listen to and understand them
3. Keep a clear focus on Jesus and discipleship
4. Build warm intergenerational relationships
5. Make young people a priority across church life
6. Encourage service and engagement in the world

Session is very supportive of the initiative. As a congregation, we are very blessed by the large numbers of volunteers of all ages who contribute in so many different ways and we are dependent on their contributions. It is obvious how we have been enriched by the talents, enthusiasm and faith of younger adults, and we welcome new offers of help from all ages. We are delighted that Susie Dalgleish is a youth delegate at the General Assembly 15th-18th May, when Johan Stirling is also a commissioner.

This summer, Dr Brian Walker is stepping down as Finance Convenor of Park Church, having previously been Clerk to the Deacons' Court of St Columba's. He has worked tirelessly for over a decade to ensure that church finances are healthy and diligently managed. We owe him a great debt, but are very grateful to Alasdair Smith for taking over from him.

In April, Johan Stirling and Dianne McNaughton were unanimously elected as Session Clerk and Depute Clerk respectively, to take up office from 14th June. I have been very privileged to serve you as Session Clerk for 19 years, and am very grateful to the invaluable, prayerful and other support of members and my fellow office bearers. I could not have managed without this and that of the various ministers, especially Attie, but must thank my wife, Sarah, for her patience, practical support and encouragement - finally now it will be easier to plan a weekend away or holiday! I thank God for the blessing of seeing his work in the congregation over the years, and pray that Johan and Dianne will have the same support and encouragement in years to come.

Thank you all.

Peter

A Tribute to Peter Murdoch

Giving thanks for 19 years of service as Session Clerk

This year marks 19 years since Peter Murdoch took up the role of Session Clerk, following Ian Collie.

A great deal has changed since 2007. To mention only two events for which Peter bears no responsibility, there was the financial crash of 2008 and the pandemic that began in 2020. Yet it is fair to say that Peter's years as Session Clerk have been anything but quiet. When I spoke with him about his service to our congregation, he mentioned two particular highlights: the induction of our minister Attie, and, following the pandemic, the union of Allan Park South and St Columba's to form Stirling Park Church.

Peter also spoke warmly of the privilege of working with so many willing volunteers. He is especially grateful for the support he has received not only from the Kirk Session, but from the wider church family too; people who have encouraged him and valued all he has contributed, both as Session Clerk and as a worship leader.

When I asked about the more challenging seasons, Peter said that the period leading up to the union was particularly demanding, made harder by the restrictions of the pandemic. Those difficulties, however, have been balanced by the way the congregations have come together and begun working as one, seeking to serve and meet the needs of our local community.

Peter brings a unique breadth of experience that has served us well in the role of Session Clerk. I first became aware of Peter and Sarah in May 1974, when I attended the General Assembly at which they were presented before going to Nigeria for six years. After that time of service in West Africa, they returned to Edinburgh and in 1982, moved to Stirling, where Peter took up the post of Consultant in Medicine for the Elderly in Falkirk.

Peter has said that, when they arrived in Stirling, they visited a number of churches—but the welcome they received at St Columba's was such that he, Sarah and their two sons, Neil and John, did not want to go anywhere else.

Peter was ordained as an elder in 1984. Following his retirement from the NHS in 2015, he found he had more time and energy to devote to the work of the congregation.

Many will know the saying, "Behind every great man there is a surprised woman." It feels fitting then, to pay tribute to Sarah, who knows Peter well enough to be immune to surprises. Peter says she has been a constant support—particularly through her patience as he has juggled diaries and responded to the many demands of congregational and Presbytery life.

Peter has served our congregation faithfully and well. His support for Attie and for the Kirk Session has been dedicated and exemplary, and we give thanks for all he has done.

While Peter is stepping down from the role of Session Clerk, we are glad that he will continue to serve as a worship leader and in various Presbytery roles. His leadership will take a slightly different shape, but we are delighted that he remains among us.

Ian Ritchie

UPDATES FROM SPRING 2026

Scottish Bible Society

We held a very successful Quiz Night on Saturday 21st March at Park Church. Thank you to everyone who came along and helped raise £300 for the Society.



We've amalgamated with the Ochil Bible Group and had a lot of support from the Hillfoots area. We've also had good support from various churches in the Stirling area.

The next event will be our annual sponsored walk (approx. 2 miles) around Stirling University campus and grounds. This will be held on Saturday 22nd August at 10am. We hope many of you will join us. If you would like further details and/or a sponsorship form, please speak with me on a Sunday morning at church.

Thanking you in advance for your support.

Willie Troup
Church Representative

Water Aid Lent Appeal 2026

A very big Thank You to everyone who contributed to the Lent Appeal.



The wonderful sum of £1,556.76 was raised, including gift aid.

This was a great sum and much appreciated by Water Aid.



SPARKS held their annual Easter Egg Hunt at the end of March. The weather was pretty dreich, but the children ventured out into the church garden in their wellies and waterproof jackets, and had lots of fun searching for the numerous Easter Eggs that had been hidden!



EASTER AT PARK CHURCH



Easter Journey programme for schools

On Friday 20th and Monday 23rd March, we again had the pleasure of hosting the Easter Journey programme with around 50 young people in Primary 6, from St Ninians PS and Allan's PS. Illness and other factors meant that there were fewer children involved than we had planned for, but the advantage of this was that every child who wished to take part in the various acting roles in this programme were able to do so. There was unanimous participation, and it was clear from the evaluations that the children really appreciated this opportunity. So, we will need to have a look at how we can extend this possibility for future years.

The children re-enacted the events of Holy Week, and by following some of the experiences of Jesus and his disciples, they participated in 4 different activities, including Easter craft and a Passover meal, as well as hearing about Gethsemane and experiencing being part of a hostile crowd on Good Friday.

Comments in both the children and staff evaluations are always very interesting, and give us a base for planning for the following year. We have changed quite a few areas of all our programmes over the years, based both on suggestions and areas which children have indicated that they don't enjoy. The last part of the children's evaluation sheet asks if there is any way the children feel we might improve the programme, and we often get suggestions, some valid and reflective, and occasionally sometimes not so appropriate. One of the most interesting and insightful suggestions from a child this year was to perhaps give more time to each of the activity stations, which also reflects thoughts from some of our helpers. It is difficult to manage this part of the programme, as each of the activities is very different, but it is something we will look at for next session.

Generally the children's comments were positive in this area for improvement, including:

It was perfect and I loved everything.

Nothing different! Just be yourself and make it fun!

I think everyone has done a great job.

For some reason we only received one staff comment this year which was again positive:

Really well organized session. Children loved acting out the stories. Small group activities were well pitched and of a good length. Thank you.

Our groups of helpers included our friends in St Ninians Old Parish and thanks go to everyone who helped both to present and support during the two days.

Joy Macfarlane
Youth Group Convenor

Photos from Easter Journey



Easter Holiday Club

In April we held our Easter Holiday Club at Park Church for Primary age school children. The title was A Tale of Two Kings, which was about King David and Jesus, the King of Kings. Our hall was transformed into a medieval castle, Park Castle, and the children took part in various activities, including craft, songs, various games and even stoning Goliath! A good time was had by all.



Park Church Ladies' Group

Review of 2025/26 Session

The Ladies' Group meets in the Church Hall on alternate Monday evenings from September until March.

This session started with a wonderful presentation of music and images "From Ayrshire to Alaska" by Jennifer Barker, which was greatly appreciated."

Our next meeting was a very informative talk by Mia Noquet on the work of the "My Name's Doddie Foundation" (Doddie Weir), funding research into treatments for MND.

In October, Cat Perkington came along to show us her wonderful photos of the Aurora Borealis, and to tell us all about the attraction of this amazing natural phenomenon which draws otherwise normal folks out into the great outdoors on cold, clear late evenings in the hope of catching a glimpse of the heavenly dancers.

We then had a presentation on the history of The Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum (formerly The Smith Institute) by Aoife McKenna and an insight into some of the treasures it contains.

In November, Marie Muir and Helen Reid gave us a talk on the celebrations which took place commemorating 100 years of the Guide Hut in Glebe Avenue, the work of the Trefoil Guild and an insight into Girl Guides today.

This was followed by a very successful Christmas Craft Evening, which allowed us to pick up some unique early Christmas gifts thanks to the beautiful work of several local talented crafters.

We finished the year with a wonderful Christmas meal at the golf club.

In January we heard from Andrina Downie about the work of the Salvation Army. Andrina is currently serving the Salvation Army in Stirling, but has previously had several roles with the organisation, and gave a fascinating insight into the work they do among the homeless and disadvantaged within our communities.

To celebrate Burns Night, Ken Dow gave a wonderful presentation of Burns music and verse, rounded off with a little bit of community singing.

In February, Murray Cook from Stirling Archaeological Society came along to tell us about the findings of recent local digs and the ancient history to be found under our local streets and parks.

We then had a talk from Julie Ionta on the work of the Parkinson's Society, both in research into treatment and help for those currently suffering with the symptoms of this disease.

In March, our last meeting in the hall was an exercise to music class by Tricia Chillis, who put us all through our paces, no matter what level of ability or fitness we are, even if that was just enjoying the music.

We rounded off the session with a lovely afternoon at Stirling Golf Club enjoying a fabulous afternoon tea, after hosting an extremely successful Coffee Morning which managed to raise £1072, which will be distributed between the Church (heating, garden and flowers) and the Charities who came along and spoke at our meetings throughout the year.

The committee is already hard at work planning for our next session, which starts in September. We are a friendly and welcoming group, open to all, not just members of the congregation – we would love to see you at any of our meetings.

Rae Scott
Secretary



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!

Please note there will be **NO** Coffee Club on **2nd and 16th July**.

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**.



Park Church Choir

Church Choir practices are on a summer break, but they will resume in September.

If you are interested in joining the choir, you would be very welcome. Please speak with Alasdair Smith, or any current choir member, if you would like more information.



Young Adults' Group

Tea & Testimony

Tea & Testimony will be taking a tea break over the summer months, but don't worry. It will be returning in September, and more details will be announced nearer the time.

Watch this space!



Christian Aid Week in May has raised just over £1,000 to date. The final total will be announced in the Autumn Newsletter. Thank you to all who donated.

There were two winners of the **Christian Aid Quiz** this year - Sheena Tweedle and Yvonne McQueen. Well done to both! They will each receive a Marks & Spencer Gift Card. The Quiz raised £60 for Christian Aid.

Thank you to Eilidh Wynd for selling the Quiz sheets and to all those who attempted the questions, but didn't quite make it into the winners' circle. Better luck next year!!

WHAT'S ON - SUMMER 2026

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.

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.

Trinity Sunday (31st May 2026)

Trinity Sunday is a day when Christians think of the nature of God rather than, as with other festivals, commemorating historical events of special significance.

You are warmly invited to join us in
THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION
on Sunday 7th June at 11am in Park Church





**STIRLING KIRKS TOGETHER
INVITE YOU TO THE**

**All are
Welcome!**
ORIENTED

ALL AGE FRIENDSHIP LUNCH

**WEDNESDAY 10TH JUNE 2026
WEDNESDAY 8TH JULY 2026
WEDNESDAY 12TH AUGUST 2026
WEDNESDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 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 07584 834846

NEWS FROM AROUND THE CHURCH

The Art Club at (nearly) Four Years Old

Sometimes people ask me – what do you do? My standard reply is ‘drink tea/coffee and have posh biscuits’ – but this, of course, isn’t quite everything.

So, in the interests of complete transparency – and to tempt you to join us – I’ll divulge all...

We meet every Thursday. The ‘club’ is on in Park Church hall at 2pm – quite a few come early as the car park gets busy. Most of our members are people from outside the church.

I provide two still life arrangements for folk to draw/paint if they so desire, also some pictures of other artists’ work to copy (thanks to our administrator Sheena for printing), and we provide materials so that people can experiment with new mediums. Quite a few people elect to pursue a project they’re busy with – some bring photos of their holidays which they want to capture as landscape paintings, some like dogs or birds and need advice as to how to paint them.

I say ‘advice’ to make it clear that I am not teaching as such – we just provide a safe, peaceful and happy place for you to experiment, practise and (hopefully) improve your art. I’m sure you’ll agree that the work displayed on our mini ‘gallery’ in the hall is brilliant!

I’ve heard lots of folk say ‘ooo I couldn’t do that!’, but everyone has to start somewhere and we are a mixed bag of complete novices and more experienced artists. Plus, we don’t bite!

Besides – there’s always biscuits!

SAVE THE DATE!

Art Club’s Autumn term is: **13th August to 1st October 2026.**

Places are limited, so please contact Kate first on 07971 529485.

Kate Langley

Art Club Co-ordinator



Dollar Academy CCF – London Blitz Trip 2026

At the end of March, a group of pupils from Dollar Academy travelled to London for a three-day trip all about the Second World War and the Blitz. We left school very early in the morning, at 4:30am, and began the long drive south. After several stops and a lot of snacks, we reached our first visit of the trip: the Battle of Britain Bunker in Uxbridge. This underground room was where RAF officers helped defend Britain during the Battle of Britain. Churchill visited it during the war, and standing in the same room made the history feel very real.

After the tour, we headed into central London for a walking tour. We passed famous places like Piccadilly Circus, Leicester Square, Trafalgar Square and the Thames. By early evening, we reached HMS Belfast, the Royal Navy ship where we would spend the night. The “Kip in a Ship” experience was a highlight. We had a Navy-style dinner, took part in an evening activity, and even got a special tour of the Captain’s Bridge after the ship had closed to the public.



The next morning, after breakfast on board, we met our guide again and set off on a long London Blitz walking tour. We started at the Tower of London and Trinity Square Gardens, learning about how the city worked during the war and how people were remembered afterwards. At the Monument, we talked about the Great Fire of London and how the government used propaganda and censorship during WW2. We visited the Bank of England, Guildhall and several churchyards, learning about everything from wartime finance to how London protected its art and culture during the Blitz.



We finished the morning at St Paul's Cathedral and the Firefighters' Memorial, where we learned about the huge effort to protect the city during bombing raids. After crossing the Millennium Bridge, we rejoined the coach and travelled to the Imperial War Museum, where we explored the WW2 galleries and saw many powerful exhibits about the Holocaust.

In the afternoon, we took another walking tour, this time around Whitehall and Westminster, where we saw Parliament and Buckingham Palace. Our guide explained how the government made decisions during the war and pointed out places that were damaged by bombs. The day ended with a short but meaningful act of remembrance at the Bomber Command Memorial.

On the final day, we visited the RAF Museum London, where we saw famous aircraft from the Battle of Britain and the Battle of the Atlantic. It was a great way to finish the trip, bringing together everything we had learned.

We arrived back at school late on Sunday night, tired but full of new knowledge. The trip helped us understand the courage and hardship of people who lived through the war, and it gave us memories we will not forget.

Scarlett Mina

4th Year Dollar Academy Student

Member of Park Church Hospitality Team

A Walk Along the Forth

A riverside walk along the links of the Forth as it winds its way through Stirling, brings many pleasures. Accessible from the Millennium footbridge, this easy scenic route is a rambler's "must-do" and offers rich reward for artist, photographer, naturalist and historian. A foot and cycle path leads ultimately to the motorway bridge, tracking through history by harbour, castle, abbey and monument, with the panoramic back drop of the Ochil Hills and cliffs of Dumyat providing enthralling views.

The trail starts by the Engine Shed and drops through trees to the water side, with rabbits and squirrels for immediate company and snowdrops in Spring, or autumnal blue bells, colouring the scene. Harbour porpoises are seen on the river here and families of mallard duck skirt the banks. Remnants of a wooden pier reminds of the armament boats that sailed up the Forth, to dock at the former army depot during WW2.

Close-by is the harbour, which once berthed passenger-boat traffic from Leith. High-masted schooners tied up here, but now only the rare canoe or skiff passes unused pontoons. The harbour is flanked by a high banked terrace of Victorian town houses with glimpses of the castle to the rear. When dinghy sailing on this river reach, one can feel the presence of yesteryear sailors bustling about the port. In the early morning or late evening, the link-engirdled field to landward is regularly frequented by fallow deer and their fawns.



The footbridge from Abbey Road carries a branch of the path across to Cambuskenneth and a circular detour which thrusts the walker further back in time, for the peninsula was once owned by Augustinian monks and worked as an orchard. There are panoramic views across the Carse to the Ochil Hills and at low tide, remaining fragments of the old rowboat jetty are visible, where foot passengers once crossed to the village. A right turn downstream, passes the recently excavated road leading to a tiny Roman harbour and at the far side of the link, the legions forded the river in their advance north.

The Abbey is an important medieval religious site with picturesque ruins dominated by a tall, 13th Century bell tower. Founded by King David I of Scotland, mediaeval parliaments met there, and a reminder of royal use, are the ruins of James III of Scotland and Margaret of Denmark's tombs. After the Battle of Bannockburn, the abbey was associated with Robert the Bruce, but during the Scottish Reformation, it fell into decline, with stone reused in local buildings.

Once again on the town-side of the Forth, the walk passes alongside parkland fringed by a long avenue of cherry trees, a splendid sight in the Spring, the pink blossom an extensive cloud of pink and white accentuated by the backdrop of the Wallace monument and bastion cliffs of Dumyat. Swathes of snowdrops, then later daffodils and aconites, add to this enchanted scene. Tide-borne adventurous seals sometimes venture this far upriver to gaze at human activity on the bank.

The path now sweeps round the river loop and ducks under the busy north road bridge and on to the Old Bridge of Stirling. Crossing over the ancient cobbles is another jostle back into history. Its wooden predecessor was the lowest practical crossing point of the Forth, strategically vital as the gateway between Highlands and Lowlands, and site of the famous Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297, where William Wallace defeated the English forces in first war of Scottish Independence. The current ancient masonry dates from around 1500. In the 1745 Jacobite Rising, government forces ordered one arch destroyed to slow the Jacobite army moving south. The four semicircular stone arches reflect in the water below and with the backdrop of Dumyat, provide an idyllic scene captured by many artists and photographers. A return diversion over the cobbles and across the narrow bridge nudges imagination, encouraging the walker to slip back in time to the clashing of arms and the fury of battle along the causeway in time long past.



Onward to the west one cannot escape the impact of local history. Just beyond the bridge, the legend of Stirling and environs is spelled out on plaques beside the neglected herb garden. The footpath tells its own tale of years gone by, with history written underfoot, cut into granite slabs interspersed along the route. Moss-covered stones are now a timeline - relics of the Millennium project and themselves showing the advance of years. The first of a dozen commemorates the founding of the Raploch - flatlands used by archers-lying under the castle now standing prominently above.

The first fishing village was established here in 1437. Nets were used to catch salmon and sustain a community almost wiped out by the Black Death pandemic in 1645. A local poet recorded the passing of Bonnie Prince Charlie through the village, on his way to Culloden in 1745.

The riverside stroll skirts the village along a reach once frequented by poachers using prohibited "Jiggers" - a hooked line - to catch fish. Now a heron patrols the river, the only danger to passing fish. At Kildean, the water shallows on the bend and stones from the old ford mark the way across. Used by advancing and retreating armies through ages past, it can still be crossed today, although waist deep on the north side.

Stirling training college looms ahead and the chance of a coffee and scone in the restaurant, which has an expansive view along the carse and northern hill-lands. One final stretch leads beyond dwellings and into the resident world of wild life. Initially subject to winter flooding, the path is encroached by reeds frequented by reed buntings and wagtails, with blue and coal tits flirting among the silver birch trees. Skylarks soar into the air, singing lustily despite the danger from patrolling buzzards and sparrow hawks. On the river there are shelducks, tufted and mallard ducks, with herons standing on fishing platforms competing with anglers. In a small pond, newts and frogs are regular inhabitants and the water is gelatinous with spawn in early summer.

At Cruive Dykes, semi-submerged fish traps can be seen, relics of an 18th Century fishing industry when salmon were trapped in nets stretched across this water. The River Allan reaches the Forth here, with the main waterflow split by a large island almost covered in snowdrops early in the year. The path follows the southern narrow channel where, in early morning, otters can sometimes be seen. The river rejoins the main channel close to the former mill at the old weir, highest point of the tidal river Forth, with salt water carried 18 miles from the estuary at Alloa.

At low water there is a waterfall here, as the water crosses a rock-shelf and a wild display of surrounding champions brings colour to a pretty picture and great photo-shot. On the far bank there are little sandy promontories with favoured stances for anglers, and kites swoop low over the water in their absence.

The motorway bridge lies ahead and the end of the stroll, but the view is panoramic across the river and wheatlands to the Ochil Hills and the Grampian outliers of Ben Ledi and Ben Vorlich. In the evening, sunset glows over the river, plovers, peewit in the fields and a forlorn curlew plaintively announces the end of day – a fitting end to a scenic walk through nature and history.

I B Mackay

Ashton Cuthbert - Life after school

Since leaving school in June 2025 I have been fairly busy. Last summer I went on my first boys' holiday to Malia. There were 14 of us who headed off to spend our last summer together before moving on to college or uni. We had a great week together and it's definitely a summer to remember.

In August of last year I started a Visual Communication (Graphic Design) HND course at FVC Stirling Campus. Whilst still attending during the week, I also started to look into University Courses to start in September 2026. Just before Christmas I was successful and received an Unconditional offer



to study Sports' Coaching Science down in Manchester. I will be attending UCFB (University Campus of Football and Business), which has links with West of London University. UCFB works closely with some of the biggest sports teams in the world, and as a football fan this is very exciting.

More recently I have just started a part time job, so I will be kept busy until I get ready to start my next journey down in Manchester.

Ashton Cuthbert

Additions to the Library

The Eagle Rider Saga

A Scottish young adult, fantasy adventure series featuring an epic quest (or two!), a dark wizard (back from the dead), runic magic, a warrior Princess, wild forests and ancient fortresses, magical creatures (inspired by Scottish mythology), heroic battles and, of course, Eagle Riders!

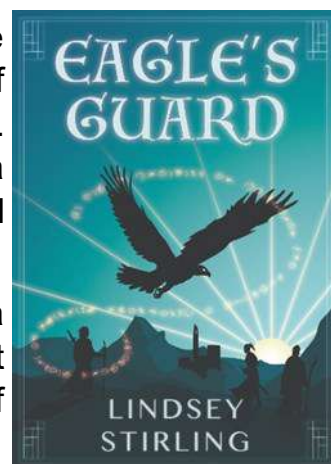
Eagle's Guard

Book 1 of the Eagle Rider Saga

“Well, enjoy your afternoon in the real world,” said Aiden, giving her a big grin. “I’m going for an adventure.”

Seventeen year old Aiden has done what few others ever achieve: he has taught himself to wield the eighteen magical runes. He dreams of adventure, yet he feels trapped in his life as a cloakmaker’s apprentice. Then one day, amidst the flames of a burning building, Aiden has a chance encounter with an Eagle Rider—one of the elite magical guardians of the kingdom.

When the Eagle Riders go missing, Aiden finds himself caught up in a conspiracy surrounding a long dead wizard. Untrained and torn apart from his family, Aiden must embark on a journey in the hope of rescuing the few people powerful enough to save them all.



Eagle's Path

Book 2 of the Eagle Rider Saga

“You can never know what lies down the path until you fly it.”



The dark wizard Sorcier has returned. Wielding twisted versions of the eighteen magical runes, his army advances quickly across the land, hunting down all who support the deposed King. Aiden is desperate to fight the rising darkness alongside the weakened Eagle Riders. When they forbid him from flying again, he and lolair look for a different path.

Tristan leads the Feather Guard, yet in the wake of Aiden’s decision, he is torn between following orders or helping his friends. Meanwhile, Branwyn, a simple baker’s daughter, contends for her place in a world of warriors and wizards. As Sorcier renews his strength, Aiden and his friends race to reunite their people before it’s too late.

Eagle's War

Book 3 of the Eagle Rider Saga

"There is much that has been forgotten. Only in remembering can we have hope of victory."

The land is at war. Aiden and Iolair are called by the Silver Eagle to learn the ancient ways of the Eagle Riders. They seek the strength to defeat Sorcier, but the old powers are not easily mastered. Elsewhere, Erin must unite the people as Queen before the next battle comes, though not all are eager to join her cause. Tristan and Branwyn journey into enemy territory, where the cunning schemes of the wizard Dageny await them. Meanwhile, Andor searches for his own adventure amongst wizards and Sidhe.

Scattered, the friends battle twisted magic and their own fears, hoping for victory before Sorcier corrupts every forest, mountain and river.



About the Author (www.lindseystirling.uk)

Lindsey Stirling grew up in the Highlands of Scotland with her Mum and Dad, brother Iain, Skye the cat, and a dog called Spark. Her childhood was spent reading lots of books, climbing mountains, and exploring ruined castles.

She studied Archaeology and Celtic Studies at the University of Aberdeen and graduated with an MSc degree in Archaeology of the North in 2014. She now works as an archaeologist in the Highlands and regularly makes use of archaeology, Scottish and Scandinavian folklore and the Bible to inspire her writing.

Johan Stirling



PRITCHARD John - Twenty Questions Jesus Asked

(Found under Christian Faith - yellow sticker)

In this book, the author draws us into twenty of Jesus' most important questions, which ring true today as ever they did.

Questions like 'Why are you afraid?' and 'Do you love me?' become vividly relevant in this book.

Comes highly recommended!

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Just a reminder that we have many books available in our Children's Section, which is located in the library in the low-level storage box.

Please feel free to borrow - no fines ever!

Lyndsay Boyack
Church Librarian

Stirling Kirks Together Ceilidhs

The latest ceilidh was held on Saturday 9th May in St Ninians Church Hall and, as can be seen from the photos below, a great time was had by all who attended.

The next ceilidh will be held in November. Watch this space for more details in the Autumn Newsletter.



CONGRATULATIONS!



Moira was busy again with her knitting needles and other crafting materials, this time for Easter. She produced these lovely knitted chicks, bunnies and baskets, as well as duster chicks, all hiding Crème and Mini Eggs inside - yum!!!

By selling these at church and in their shop at the hospice, Moira has raised £324.50 for Strathcarron Hospice.

Iain McIntosh would like to thank Park Church congregation and Art Club for publicising and supporting the Forth Valley College Art Exhibition in April, at which he exhibited some of his paintings.

He has advised that the event raised approximately £1600 for Strathcarron Hospice.

Well done to Iain and his fellow artists for helping raise a wonderful sum for such a deserving cause.



Congratulations to Gordon Luke, a member of our congregation who produces CDs of our services every week, who completed the 2026 London Marathon in 4 hours, 9 minutes and 18 seconds! He raised over £3,000 in aid of Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Well done Gordon!

Church Roll

In Loving Memory

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

- Alexander Dick
- Barbara Hamilton

New Members

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

- Rev Jim Todd (from Labert Tryst)

SAVE THE DATE!



The Annual Coffee Morning will be held
on **Saturday 24th October 2026**
in **St Ninians Old Parish Church Hall,**
10am - 12 noon



NEW CONTRIBUTIONS ALWAYS WELCOME

Please submit items for the Autumn 2026 Newsletter to the **Editor**, Sheila MacCallum, at [**parkchurchnewsletter@gmail.com**](mailto:parkchurchnewsletter@gmail.com) by **5pm on Wednesday 5th August**, to enable material to be formatted, reviewed, and proofread before being printed in time for Elders to distribute from **16th August**, two weeks before Communion on Sunday 6th September.

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

Please submit photos in **JPG** format to allow re-sizing where 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 Autumn edition will cover September, October and November 2026.

If you have any queries, please contact the Editor on the above email.

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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