

**The Final Newsletter & Magazine of
St. Columba's Church of Scotland
Issue 89: Spring 2020**



***St. Columba's Church of Scotland, Stirling (to April 1st 2020)
Worshipping in the Peter Memorial Building
Park Terrace, Stirling, FK8 2NA***

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From the Interim Moderator

Dear Friends,

I thought my letter to you in December was the last I would write as your Interim Moderator.

However, as the Presbytery decided the congregations of Allan Park South and St Columba's should not unite until the 1st of April, I have this opportunity to write to you again!

St Columba's has a long and fine history of which it can be rightly proud. You and those who were members before you have maintained a Christian presence in the centre of Stirling and beyond and your labours have ensured that the work of Jesus Christ has continued through the generations.

Now, you are about to begin a new chapter in your story. Along with the members of Allan Park South you will form a new congregation with a new identity and name, Park Church.

A union of two congregations, each with their own past and way of doing things, is a challenge but it is also an opportunity to demonstrate to the wider community that we are 'one' in Jesus Christ, and that though we are all different we are united in our love for Him and in our desire to serve Him.

I have been privileged to be your Interim Moderator on two occasions. On each occasion I have been fortunate to work alongside office bearers and others who are to be sincerely thanked and commended for their commitment, friendship and loyalty.

I look forward to being with you on Sunday, 1st March and then again on Sunday, 29th March, the Sunday prior to the union. I will have an opportunity to say more on both days but let me conclude this letter by assuring you of my warmest good wishes and prayers for the future.

Every blessing,
Gary J McIntyre



From the Session Clerk

We are now on a countdown to our union with Allan Park South Church on Wednesday 1st April to form the new Park Church and many people from each congregation are working together to achieve as smooth a transition as possible. We will have a service of Union at 7pm that evening in our soon to be renamed Church building in Park Terrace. It was very encouraging that so many of our members came out in the cold on 1st December for the congregational meeting and vote, a sign of your continuing commitment, which I trust will continue in the Springtime in our newly united congregation .

Our Kirk Session met on 8th January 2020 when there was further evidence of this- very encouraging reports of the Bubblegum & Fluff programme for over 110 Primary Five children, ongoing plans for Messy Church on 26th January, further schools event before Easter and Pentecost and an Easter Holiday Club, very successful Christmas Eve Services (with 230 at the early evening event), Stirling Kirks Together Friendship lunches and forthcoming visits from partners in Nepal and Paris. In addition, I have been very aware of members and elders really supporting each other in prayer, fellowship and practical actions. On a personal level, Sarah and I are most grateful for the continuing encouragement, patience and support of fellow office-bearers and members as we complete the practical steps of our Presbytery worship leaders' programme.

Archie MacCallum and Jean Wheeler have stepped down as elders, and tribute was paid to them for years of dedicated service.

We are also in good health financially with all the debt for the Hall Renovation cleared, Sanctuary restoration and ongoing maintenance completed and a reasonable reserve to help with youth work and future challenges. This is almost entirely due to the generous support of the recent Stewardship Campaign and ongoing commitment ,as well as good stewardship by property and other colleagues. The Formal Statutory accounts for 2019 will be available for approval by the Trustees on 4th March 2020 and made available for congregational inspection before a short annual congregational meeting on Sunday 29th March.

The Kirk Session was very supportive of the Stirling Street Pastor Welcome Scheme to encourage a very warm welcome to any newcomers who have met with Street Pastors. Of course ensuring a very warm welcome, introducing ourselves and befriending will be crucial in the new united Park Church where many people may be unfamiliar with each other and the building.

In the immediate future, we look forward to the service of union on 1st April and thereafter worshipping together at 11am from Sunday 5th April as the new Park Church congregation. This newsletter comes too early to give many details but these will be shared as soon as available. We will have a new Interim Moderator appointed for the newly united congregation. He or She will convene discussions of the office- bearers, election of office-bearers and make arrangements for conduct of worship.

Members giving by direct debit or standing orders will be notified in due course of any necessary changes to bank details, but there will be a transitional period of a few months to allow plenty time for this. I pray that we will build on the talents, achievements and commitments of both traditions, make new friends, grow in faith and share God's Love in our expanded parish and wider community.

As a congregation, we are tremendously indebted both to Rev Elinor Gordon for leading our worship for so many months and to Rev Gary McIntyre for his service as Interim Moderator. Elinor has provided pulpit supply from December 2018 to March 2019 and again from October 2019. So many people have remarked on her unfailing graciousness, the obvious thought involved in preparation of the whole service, and her both encouraging and challenging prayers and teaching. She has been a source of enormous comfort and continuity of worship over these months. I have hugely appreciated her courtesy, flexibility, warmth and sensitivity as well as mentoring of Presbytery worship leaders training and experience.

Gary, recently described by a peer of the realm as "God's antidote to gloom", has been a tower of strength and encouragement to the church as our Interim Moderator for the last 18 months. He has ensured pulpit supply, gone far above and beyond the call of duty with pastoral care and support of many of us, whilst guiding and steering office-bearers and members through the complexities of a vacancy and forthcoming union. We will be making presentations to them in the services on 22nd and 29th March respectively and having a special cake for them at our soup and sandwich lunch on 29th March. Please ensure they know how much they are appreciated.

Thanking you again for your steadfast support and looking forward in faith and hope,

Peter Murdoch



Thank you Rev Elinor Gordon!

The congregation of St. Columba's have been truly blessed to have had the services of Rev Elinor Gordon in 2018 and 2019.

Elinor spoke to the Ladies group about her fascinating career (s) as a teacher, Deaconess of the Church of Scotland, Missionary in South Korea and latterly as a Parish Minister.

We have enjoyed Elinor's carefully crafted services with interesting music, varied prayer styles and challenging sermons. Her rapport with young and old is natural and genuine. Elinor has been mentoring Peter & I in leading worship and as in all her ministry sets high standards.

We will all miss you Elinor and wish you God's richest blessings in your active retirement.

Sarah Murdoch

OUR PRAYER PARTNERS FROM NEPAL: JOEL AND FIONA HAVENSTEIN WITH SONS CALEB AND ISAAC, VISITED THE CONGREGATION ON JANUARY 12TH 2020.

Joel spoke to the congregation about the challenges of being a minority religion in a secular society but noted that this had not deterred the Nepali Christian from witnessing through their lives and kind actions for the community. The church is growing despite setbacks and persecution of individuals.

Fiona and the boys visited Junior Church and shared a new photo card game that they have gifted the congregation with the young people.

We all admired the ethnic Nepali shirts worn by Caleb and Isaac.

Please bring any unwanted, or new reading books for the boys to the crèche room where we will have a collecting box. The next parcel will be sent in March for Easter. They are good readers and especially enjoy books with lots of chapters! All books are read many times and passed on to others so are not wasted in a country where libraries are few and literacy is highly prized.

Rev. Elinor Gordon, Fiona, Caleb, Isaac and Joel after the service on 12th January 2020.



This is an extract from the Hafverstein's December 2019 Partner Plan letter written before they left Nepal:

In November, UMN's global supporting partners came to Kathmandu for our General Assembly, and Joel got to share with them about the recent achievements of the United Mission and the strategy for the next five years. That was a wonderfully encouraging, affirming time for both Fiona and Joel—a chance to take stock of where UMN has got to, and to share our excitement with friends from around the world.

There is so much amazing work going on through the mission:

- **women being saved from trafficking, sometimes right at the India-Nepal border;**
- **tens of thousands of lives saved through the work of our hospitals;**
- **smallholder farmers growing new cash crops, reducing the need for their families to migrate;**
- **rates of maternal mortality**

It's a stormy season for renewing It's a stormy season for renewing agreements like these. There's a lot of suspicion in Nepali media and government when it comes to the role of foreign aid agencies, with a widespread bias that international charities are corrupt, ineffective, spying, and/or inducing people to change religion. Other international organisations have been facing delays of up to a year in getting their agreements renewed, as officials comb through their proposals and demand multiple rounds of changes.

UMN's 65-year track record of extraordinary service to Nepal means that we do have quite a lot of senior people willing to defend our work. Our team has put a lot of work into preparing for the agreement renewals, and we can hope that it will go smoothly. But we need your prayer.

- **malnutrition dropping thanks to UMN's work with mothers' groups;**
 - **villagers getting their priorities into the local government budgets for the first time;**
 - **disabled women and men getting the support they need to live with dignity and earn an income for their families;**
 - **communities being restored after earthquake, flood, and fire;**
- and many other things, more than we could possibly fit into a single newsletter.**

Our single biggest prayer request is for the coming year.

UMN exists on the basis of agreements with the Government of Nepal that get renewed every five years.

At the moment, we have three: a General Agreement that allows us to exist in the country, a more detailed Project Agreement for our anti-poverty work in communities, and a Hospital Agreement for our two mission hospitals.

All of them expire in 2020.

Ladies Group

St Columba's Church Ladies Group meets in the Church hall on alternate Monday evenings at 7.30 pm from September till March.

We usually have a speaker, demonstration or entertainment followed by a light supper. The group is open to everyone; you don't need to be a member of the congregation to come along to any of our meetings. The committee would welcome all ladies and their friends at those evenings.

Please put the following dates in your diaries

Mon 2nd March Beekeeping

Saturday 7th March Coffee Morning 10am—12 noon

Mon 16th March Rock "n" Reel (Tricia Chillas)

Mon 30th March Closing Dinner

Coffee Morning
and
Daffodil Tea

Saturday 7th March

10am-12noon Choir



The Stirling Kirks Together

All- Age Friendship Lunches will continue to be held every 2nd Monday of the month

2020

Monday 13th April

Monday 11th May

Monday 8th June

From 12noon-1.30pm

Venue: Park Parish Church, Park Terrace, Stirling

(New name – same place)



Conversation

Soup & Rolls, Tea, Coffee and Home Baking

All welcome - No need to book

(Optional £2.50 donation)

For further information contact Johan Stirling on 01786 461571

Report on Bubblegum and Fluff Schools project event December 2019

December saw the first of our school projects for this church year, Bubblegum and Fluff, which unbelievably is the sixth time we have now run the programme. Again we invited children from Allan's PS, Borestone PS and St Ninians PS to come along to the church to take part in this Christmas Advent programme over two mornings.

Friday 6th turned out to be quite challenging as on this occasion, due to problems with staffing, Borestone Primary School had to send the complete P5/4 composite class instead of just the P5s, which gave us, together with the group from Allans Primary School, about 10 more children than we were expecting. It was pretty jam-packed and exhausting for the helpers but we managed to get through.

On Monday 9th only 56 children from St Ninians Primary felt like a welcome relief! It is always a joy to have over 100 Primary 5 children from three schools through our doors.

The children were delightful as usual, fully engaged in the activities and giving good feedback as to their enjoyment and learning. Having participated in the games, puppetry, music, stories and craft activities a gratifyingly large number of children indicated that they had learned why the programme was called Bubblegum & Fluff and how it linked with the truth of the Christmas story. Staff too indicated both personally and in feedback that they felt it was a worthwhile morning.

Comments from them included :

" This is the 3rd year I have been lucky enough to attend this, and I think it is a very well run event which the children enjoy and benefit from."

" A really lovely morning which the pupils enjoyed with just enough time for each activity. "

" A very simple but very effective and thought-provoking event for all children who seemed to understand well the message and concepts."

As usual the children showed a depth of insight for their age group when it came to the section where they were asked to write a candle wish for others at Christmas. Varied responses included personal wishes and hopes for the world and the environment.

Little "drops in the ocean" indicate that if we are encouraging even just a few children to think a little bit more deeply about a season that they normally take for granted, then hopefully the event is a worthwhile experience as well as a very enjoyable one.

One child's comment on what he/she had learned was a particular favourite of mine which might give us all " food for thought". He/She wrote

" I learned that if something doesn't look like something on the outside, it does on the inside."

Joy McFarlane and Lyndsay Boyack provided the report and photos

Our thanks goes both to a growing number of all our helpers who make it possible to work with such large numbers, and also to Morrisons and Waitrose who so generously donated food for the event.

Prayer wreaths and tiled craft gifts made by the children on the two days



Stirling Kirks Together: Messy Church

Report from Sunday 26th January 2020

Theme- The wise man built his house upon the rock. The story reminds us that we have foundations to be like Jesus and make good choices about helping people and trying to do kind things.

Our January Messy Church was held in St Ninians Old Parish Church Halls where we welcomed 30 children and 35 adults. There was a great buzz to the day and there is no doubt that having a Facebook presence plus getting the feeder schools to put it on their parent mail is proving successful.

We had our usual warm welcome, messy craft activities and craft, celebration and songs based on the theme and a sit down meal together.

It was great to work together with St Ninians Old and enjoy their hospitality. We are very fortunate to have so many folk willing to donate food and money, help out on the day and generally ensure that people experience Church -in a different form.

Some thoughts going forward-

How can we move Messy Church on, so that we can keep in touch with our families between sessions?

How can we develop deeper discipleship- requiring the relationship investment which asks the team to go beyond the all too familiar- "running a good event mindset".

As ever -lots to think about!

Lyndsay Boyack



Holiday Club

This Easter will be the 9th year that we have held a Holiday Club for Primary School age children, in conjunction with St Ninians Old.

We some more volunteers to help the club to be a success. Over the years we have been fortunate to have teams of enthusiastic helpers.

The club is running from Tuesday 14th - Thursday 16th, starting at 10.00 and finishing at 12.30.

Volunteers who can give of their time for one, two or all three mornings. Nothing is too difficult, planning is done for you, and a fun time is had by all.

An information meeting will be held on Monday 2nd March at 2pm in St Columba's Library to outline the theme of the club and the various roles/ types of help that are needed.

Any queries please contact Moira Parry on 07817 225970

Scottish Name Place Puzzle

1. Thirsty Lads
2. Agitate Heather
3. Teddy's Lair
4. Not Smaller
5. Seek Instrument
6. Scorched Isle
7. Has 21 Spots



A Rose by Any Other Name Would Smell as Sweet
(From *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare)

Some members of the congregation (myself included) may well be mourning the loss of the name “St Columba’s” as we unite with Allan Park South Church to form Park Parish Church. It is the name we know and love; some members may have been baptised or married in St Columba’s, others will remember the baptisms and marriages of their children, grandchildren and other family members in St Columba’s. However this congregation hasn’t always had that name; there are current members who were born before it became St Columba’s!

The church we know has its roots in the Disruption of 1843. Since the Reformation when Roman Catholicism ceased to be the main Christian Church in these islands, several “splinter” groups had disagreed with the policies of the Established Church of Scotland; they left the Church and formed their own congregations. However, the Disruption of 1843 was a major upheaval. Some ministers and members were becoming increasingly unhappy with the way that ministers were appointed to charges. The appointment was in the “gift” of the patron who might be a local landowner or the Burgh Council. It was felt that this was open to corruption and gave the congregation no say in who was to lead them in worship. Matters came to a head during the General Assembly of 1843 when 474 ministers “walked out” in protest and some of their members joined them in forming the Free Church of Scotland (that is, free of patronage).

One of those who “walked out” was Dr Alexander Beath, the minister of the newly-built North Parish Church which, at the time, was situated in Murray Place (roughly where Argos was until recently). A section of his congregation followed him and for a time they worshipped in the Corn Exchange Hall before moving to a new building down a lane next to the North Parish Church in 1844. They then raised a sum of money and built a church on the other side of Murray Place (now the Baptist Church). The new church opened in 1853 and was known as the Free North Church.

Two of the members of this new church were Mr and Mrs Peter, a childless couple who had made a significant sum of money from trade in alcohol in the gold fields of Australia. They retired to Stirling and lived in Gladstone Place. After Mrs Peter was widowed she had mobility problems and found it increasingly difficult to access the church in Murray Place. When she died in 1890, her residual estate was willed to the Free North Church with the express purpose of erecting a new church on level ground in the Kings Park area. It has been suggested that the Kirk Session of the day was reluctant to accept the money because it had been accumulated through the sale of alcohol but that may be apocryphal. Whatever the truth of that part of the story, the legacy was accepted and the terms of the will were agreed. A piece of ground was acquired on Park Terrace and the new church was completed in 1902.

Meanwhile in 1900, before the new building was completed, the Free Church of Scotland joined with the United Presbyterian Church. The new church was to be called the United Free Church. The Free North Church thus became the North United Free Church although it was also known as the Peter Memorial Church. (Of course, some congregations of the Free Church and of the United Presbyterian Church chose not to join up and continued with their former names).

In 1929, the United Free Church re-joined the Established Church of Scotland as the “sticking point”, the issue of patronage, no longer applied. (Of course, some congregations of the United Free Church chose not to join the Church of Scotland and continued with their former name).

The members of the North United Free Church had then to select a new name to go with their new status. There were a few suggestions, including Snowdon Church, but the congregation eventually decided on St Columba’s Church of Scotland.

Church history is extremely complicated so I hope I haven’t lost too many of you in this attempt to explain a small part of it. I have every confidence that Park Parish Church will continue the work and witness of the Free North Church, the North United Free Church, St Columba’s Church and, of course, Allan Park South Church (whose history would be for another article!)

(Much of this information came from the booklet produced for the centenary of the building in 2002. It also features on the church website: <http://www.stcolumbasstirling.org/Building>)

Sandra Muir



CROSS REACH : THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICE

Thank you!

CrossReach would like to wish you a very Happy New Year and to thank all individuals and congregations for the gifts, donations and offerings received over the festive period. You can keep up-to-date with CrossReach stories, news and events on their website: www.crossreach.org.uk

CrossReach @150

2020 dates, times and locations for the 150th Anniversary Exhibition will be made available on their website: www.crossreach.org.uk/150th-anniversary To read about the history of CrossReach please visit: www.crossreach.org.uk/about-us/the-history-of-crossreach

CrossReach events 2020

Are you looking for something exciting and adventurous to do this year? CrossReach has events taking place throughout 2020, where you can have fun whilst supporting its work across Scotland. For more information: www.crossreach.org.uk/events

Forth Bridge abseil

Join CrossReach CEO, Viv Dickenson, in abseiling down the Forth Bridge

on 10 May 2020. To sign up, please use the link below and select CrossReach: <https://www.rcsqsales.org.uk/register>

Zip Wire Challenge, Aviemore

Zip through the trees over a stunning gorge in Aviemore. Dates available: 2 May 2020 and 5 September 2020. For more information: events@crossreach.org.uk

Scottish Half and 10k 2020

The Scottish Half Marathon + 10K is the ultimate running experience, with stunning views of East Lothian's Golf Coast. For more information on how you can participate, please contact: events@crossreach.org.uk

The 5 Big Questions Survey

The Duchess of Cambridge has launched a new survey to bring about lasting change for children across the United Kingdom.

Join in the conversation by taking part in the 5 Big Questions survey available at: <https://5bigquestions.org.uk/>

Christmas Card Competition 2020 - Now Open

Design a CrossReach Christmas card for 2020. The winning design will be printed and sold through the CrossReach Christmas Card & Calendar Collection catalogue and website. Open to all ages.

Competition closes: Tuesday 31 March 2020

For full details visit: bit.ly/CrossReachCCComp20

Wondering what happens to the plastic milk bottle tops that we collect?

We thought you might want to know what happens to all the milk bottle tops that we are collect in the recycling container !

Locally, the Inner Wheel Club of Falkirk collect them and they go down to the borders, where the local Rotary and Inner Wheel Clubs sort them, wash them, before they go on to a local recycling plant where they are treated and passed to another local firm who make them into a coating for fibre optic cable and the Rotary get so much a ton for them. You can imagine it takes millions of tops to make a ton!

The money raised used to go towards the building of Palliative Care Unit in the borders which is now up and running.

The money now goes to the worthwhile 'Lavender Touch' charity which helps people in the Scottish borders through all stages of their cancer journey. They provide complementary therapies and naturally sourced products to help people living with the side effects of cancer.

So a BIG thank you and please keep them coming!



Flower Ministry

Many thanks, once again to those who contribute to our flower ministry Sunday by Sunday in many different ways. Those who receive the flowers after our service are always pleased to be remembered.

If you would like to join our team, do get in touch as you would be made most welcome. We aim to keep arrangements simple and on the whole, work in twos.

If you would like more information, I can be contacted on 01786 281190.

Maureen McArthur, Flower Convener

FLOWER DONOR

FLOWER DELIVERY

March 2020

1st March Catherine Wilkie

8th March Margaret Smith

15th March Eleanore Hunter

22nd March Margaret Risk

29th March Trish Shaw

April 2020

5th April Helen France

12th April Jan Gillies

19th April Helen McDonald

26th April Catherine Martin

(In memory of Janet & Bernard)

May 2020

3rd May Jess McNeill

10th May Jean Wheeler

(In memory of Janet Menzies)

17th May Vacant

24th May Helen Miller

31st May Bett Hunter

Alison Steele

Irene Timpson

Moira Parry

Jo Cunningham

Yvonne McQueen

Marie Muir

Kate Langley

Christine McInnes

Janet Brown

Sarah Murdoch

Muriel Croall

Janey Denton

Janice Douglas

Sandra Kerr





Stirling Kirks Together School Outreach 2020

“EASTER CODE “: 26th & 27th March 2020

THE REAL STORY OF EASTER FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS

On Thursday and Friday we will welcome groups from local schools to a morning of games, drama, craft, Bible stories, music and fun with puppets while exploring the Easter story.

“POPCORN AND CAKE “: 14th & 15th May

THE STORY OF PENTECOST FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS

On Thursday & Friday we will welcome groups from local schools to a morning of games, drama, craft, Bible stories, music and fun with puppets while exploring the Pentecost story and birth of the Christian Church.

Please pray for those from the Stirling Kirks Together team who will be presenting this event and the members of the Education & Learning Committee who are organising it.

Scottish Place Name quiz answers:

1. Drymen 2. Stirling 3. Bearsden 4. Bigger 5. Findhorn

Hello there friends.

You may not know me but I suspect I can recognise you as I watch you every week as you come in and out of worship at St Columba's. Like many before me who have contributed to this fine Link publication, I too wear a dog collar and from where I'm sitting, I think I play an equally important part in worship as my more prominent dog collar wearing colleagues. They may spend most of their time up at the business end of the Church but I prefer the more tranquil side of worship right at the back of proceedings. And just how many of them can claim to keep their dog collars on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in bed, in the shower or heaven forbid, on their holidays!

Many of you may think that the bald headed old guy who sits next to me every Sunday and you call Gordon and I call master is in charge of sound here at St Columba's but I can assure you that this is far from the truth as his hearing isn't a patch on mine and now that he's past the big 50, he needs constant reminding of when to bring up a mic or when to start playing a particular piece of music. To be fair he thinks my nudging is a hint to him that I'm looking for a treat and if one should appear it would be rude to refuse, but in reality I'm trying to tell him things, just so that he doesn't embarrass us both!

So, to formally introduce myself, I'm Quest Luke, your all round fantastic sound engineer on a Sunday and totally awesome Guide Dog to Gordon during the rest of the week.

That very nice lady Sarah, you know, the one who makes that fabulous marmalade (hint hint), asked if I could put paw to paper and tell you a wee bit more about my job, both on Sundays at St Columba's and more generally during the week. To be fair like my fellow dog collar wearing colleagues, Sunday tends to be my busiest day of the week as on Monday to Friday I spend most of my time asleep under Gordon's desk or occasionally joining him in very dull meetings where there is a lot of talking, but very little action.

A typical Sunday for me starts with a good long lie in my basket. A major highlight of my day then occurs with the arrival of breakfast. Both breakfast and tea are exactly the same for me consisting of 175 grams of very high energy dry food which I get mixed with water. However that horrible master of mine removes some of the dry pellets and puts them in his back pocket by way of treats which he dishes out during my working day. I mean, how would he like it if I removed some of his M&S extremely chocolatey biscuits and kept them back from him, only releasing some of them when he did something good! Let's face it, he'd never see any of them again!

At 10:47 the first of our alarms goes off to tell us to leave for Church. This continues every minute thereafter for the next 5 minutes, each one raising in intensity the panic note of we must leave. I suspect when he was younger, fitter and with a better turn of pace, my colleague could, at a pinch, still make the Church with 5 minutes to spare. However he's now so ancient and decrepit that there's no way his old legs have the pace to pull off such a feat. But his brain still thinks he can so every week we have to arrive at Church at a run.

Anyway I better explain just how my full time job as a Guide Dog works. It's actually quite simple:

I like to play this game whereby I pretend to be twice as wide as I am in reality and I must at all times keep a nice big gap on my right side. This means that when I walk down pavements, avoiding obstacles, especially moving human shaped ones, I must at all times have this imaginary extra width to my body. On top of that, every time I come to a road crossing I sit down and wait to be told to go forward. That friends, is the basic job of a Guide Dog. My master likes to play this game too, and will pretend not to see any of the obstacles, and does to be fair keep me on my toes when he tries extra tricks of pretending not to see things. He's actually very good at this game. What's especially good is that we only play this particular game whilst I'm wearing my harness though master also tries to play the non-seeing game at other times at home. There are a few other tricks to this Guide Dog lark such as finding buttons on traffic lights and going up and down stairs but you've got the basic ideas. Whenever I do one of these parts of our game well I get a treat from master out of my breakfast or tea. The official reason for this is to keep my weight under control, with master knowing what's going into me, but really I think it's just because master is tight fisted!

Coming back to my Sunday job we tend to arrive at Church flat out at a run, hoping fervently to hear Ross's beautiful organ sounds as that means we're not late. Then it's into our box right at the back of the kirk and master then fiddles with a few buttons and sliders before collapsing out of breath into his seat and giving me my customary treat for arriving on time. I pretty much let him get on with things after that but keep a close eye on him to ensure he doesn't do anything too catastrophic. I have on occasion dropped off during a service (I think it was Gary's December communion) and I was feeling a bit snoozy after an early rise along with Gary's melodic Argyllshire accent just let me nod off for a second or two. Seemingly I was giving out a rhythmic snoring sound but rather than relaxing my master I awoke to find him all uptight and sitting right up in his seat, solely to ensure that nobody thought it was him who was asleep! To be fair many fellow worshipers round about us were also looking round trying to spot who was snoring – but nobody looked in my direction!

After the service master does a bit more fiddling with his various controls and then some of my fans come to speak to me. They may occasionally say a few words to master giving him the impression that they want a word with him but I know it's really me they're in to visit and admire.

Master and myself agree on most points but there are one or two where our views differ. One such is master's reluctance to visit the hall for tea and biscuits immediately following worship. I'm always keen to go and greet more of my fans and perhaps grant them a selfie or two but master's not so keen at all. This I confess may be due more to one of these extra Guide Dog features that I've built into my repertoire. I like to keep floors tidy and free of crumbs. And despite your best efforts friends, I know you've occasionally had a wee mishap leading to you dropping a crumb or two. But luckily I'm here, like a super powered vacuum keeping the hall floor clear. Master though isn't so

When we get back home after Church I'm able to have a wee bit of a snooze whilst master fiddles with one of those computer things he's so fascinated with. For some reason I do get to hear parts of the service again all be it at a much faster pace. Eventually, after much scratching of his bald patch one of these silver CDs appears out of the side of the computer signalling that we will once again be on our travels again as we deliver the master CD for copying to Helen. This walk is one of my favourites of the week as it's a good long one, full of ups and downs and where I get to meet many of my friends from St Columba's en route who like us are out for a gentle Sunday afternoon stroll at master's pedestrian pace. At the end of the journey I'm always greeted by Helen's quiet wee dog Rocky who's always testing the tensile strength of Helen's front windows in her attempt to greet me!

Back at the ranch I spend a bit more essential time with my basket as master gets on with his Sunday chores. Of course if I think he's going to be eating something I'm right there by his side, offering my personalised vacuum service and giving him the benefit of my large pleading eyes. I just don't understand it, so many of you have realised the truth that I'm totally underfed, am nothing but skin and bone and clearly could do with a right good feed – at least three times a day. Many of you may have seen this from my pleading eyes but no matter how good a look I give the old fellow, he never falls for it! He even gives any kind hearted person that he spots a row if they ever try to feed me. Something about fat Guide Dogs being no good! Talking about food leads me nicely into thinking about another of the day's highlights – tea time. As the great event approaches the closer I get to master. If he's on his computer I simply stick my nose round the corner of the screen to remind him of my existence. Failing that I just dump my entire face on his keyboard thus pressing a few keys – something which always gets a reaction!



Following tea comes our last walk for the day – just to ensure master is in peak condition. All in all on Sundays we walk around 16,000 steps which collates to around 32,000 steps for me without even allowing for my shorter stride length. So you can see why I need to go back to work on the Monday for a well-earned rest.



That is just about all there is to my working day for a Sunday. I often get some playing in the evening though I prefer some quality basket time.

Please remember though friends if you ever find yourself unhappy with the sound within the Church sanctuary come along and have a word with the old guy and I'll help him put it right. All are welcome to visit me in my back row pew especially if you're bearing food like gifts! But please don't tell master or we'll both get into a lot of trouble!!!

Many thanks to our canine correspondent:

Quest our Sound Engineer Guide Dog (as told to Gordon Luke) and thanks to Rebecca Luke for photos.

START UP STIRLING : LENT APPEAL

Presbytery have asked us to remember to continue to donate items for the food bank over the school holidays when need is great and donations can go down .

A FAVORITE RECIPE FOR EASTER TREATS FROM IRENE YEAMAN

Ice Cream

Ingredients : 1 x tin Condensed Milk
600mls tub of double cream
(Optional small amount vanilla essence)

Method: Mix/whip to soft peaks and freeze

Butter scotch sauce

Ingredients: 2oz Butter
3oz Soft Brown Sugar
2oz White sugar
5oz Golden syrup (approx. 1/2 of a 1L tin)
5oz carton double cream
A few drops of vanilla essence

Method
pan. completely Place butter, brown and white sugar and syrup in a non stick
Heat slowly until butter melts and stir until sugars have completely
dissolved and formed a liquid.

Continue to heat very gently for another five minutes without stirring.

Turn off heat under pan and gradually stir in cream plus a few drops of vanilla essence.

Stir for a few minutes until the sauce is smooth

Serve Hot or cold.

Keep in fridge if not completely used in a sealed container.



CHOCOLATE FUDGE : A RECIPE FROM CHRISTINE BAUER

Christine is a member of the Torbrex Community Choir who meet in the Main Hall on Tuesday mornings.

Torbrex choir are performing a **charity concert on Saturday 25th April in aid of “Start Up Stirling” and “The Food Train”**

Ingredients for chocolate Fudge:

125g x Good cooking chocolate

125g x Butter

Small tin of condensed milk

Melt the above in a pan , very slowly, then add

225g x crushed digestive biscuits

Plus sultanas/ dried cranberries / mixed peel , to whatever quantity or variety suits

Mix well and press into a small Swiss roll tin.

When cooled, top with a further amount of melted cooking chocolate

Just before the mixture is fully cooled mark off into squares for cutting

Enjoy!





The Scottish and United Bible Society have embarked on a project encouraging the Church to read the Bible aloud in towns and cities in every city across the world.

With over 50 partner Bible Societies involved and many more within the UBS fellowship considering how they might participate, to date over 69% of the world's population live in a country where someone each day will read aloud for their country and pray for them.

In Scotland they are developing a programme of ideas to help churches make the most of the opportunities Bible 2020 brings.

The reading programme for the year is available for download from the Bible 2020 website or on the bespoke Bible 2020 App, where users can upload a selfie video of their reading and join the global video wall; *everyone everywhere* united in covering God's world in His Word.

Find out more and sign up at: [www Bible 2020.org](http://www.Bible2020.org).

Willie Troup (congregational representative)



Thy Kingdom Come 2020

Thy Kingdom Come is a prayer initiative led by the Church of England for evangelisation. It was last held between Ascension and Pentecost, 30th May to Sunday 9th June 2019.

The next dates are 21st May to 31st May 2020.

2020 will be the 5th year in which it has been held and it continues to grow, especially in its ecumenical reach of different churches and denominations involved. In particular both the Methodist and Roman Catholic churches have a more formal part to play with some of their own dedicated resources and videos being produced for their national networks. Many other [member churches](#) of Churches Together in England have a national 'Champion' who has been appointed to facilitate communication, advice, resources and networking within their denomination along the lines of the advice from the Archbishop of Canterbury 'pray in your own way'.

The theme and logo *Thy Kingdom Come* is now established in many parts of the world as world networks of churches and denominations in 85 countries are praying at the same time, using the Lords Prayer with the intention of evangelisation. Resources are being produced in many different languages.

A key theme for individual Christians who [#pledgetoprayer \(Twitter hashtag\)](#) is 'Pray for Five'. Christians are praying for five people they know that at least one might become a follower of Jesus. *Thy Kingdom Come* is not prescriptive as to how that might happen and individual churches and groups of churches are encouraged to pray for their own ways of outreach.

LETTER TO ALL CONGREGATIONS FROM THE MODERATOR

Dear All,

Thy Kingdom Come is a global, ecumenical prayer movement which takes place each year from Ascension to Pentecost. Christians are encouraged to pray for more people to come to faith during these 11 days of prayer. This will be its fifth year.

From Bangladesh to Brazil, Australia to Austria, and South Africa to the Solomon Islands, more than two million Christians, across 65 different denominations and traditions, in 90% of countries worldwide have participated. Ruth and I had the privilege of attending and participating in the 2019 Thy Kingdom Come Beacon Event in Trafalgar Square. The square was packed and we found it very moving that three Archbishops (Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox) could stand side by side and pray for our country. Senior leaders from the emergency services also shared items for prayer.

In 2019 the app was downloaded thousands of times in almost 100 countries worldwide – more than twice as many as in 2018.

In their annual feedback survey, the organisers found that:

92% of those taking part were praying for friends and family members to come to know Jesus – with nearly two thirds (62%) of this group planning to follow up or talk to the people they were praying for;

70% of those who took part felt more encouraged to share their faith;

40% of respondents took part for the first time this year – which shows this is still very much a growing movement;

99% want to be involved again in 2020, the same figure as last year – demonstrating growth and value.

The Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church are both officially involved with Thy Kingdom Come. Resources were distributed widely and a prayer diary was translated into Gaelic.

HRH The Queen praised Thy Kingdom Come as an example of the close working together of the Church of England and Church of Scotland.

It also enables local congregations to share in a global Kingdom-focused initiative.

This year Thy Kingdom Come will begin in the week of the General Assembly and we hope it will be marked in some suitable way.

Can I ask you to consider [signing up to Pledge2Pray as an individual and as a church](#) in order that together we will see God's Kingdom Come.

Equally, if you are considering [organising an event can I encourage you to sign up](#).

Thank you for taking the time to read this and please do consider how you might be involved where you are.

Wishing you every blessing,

Rt Rev Colin Sinclair,

Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Dates for your Diary

SUNDAY MARCH 1ST Rev Gary McIntyre

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION AT 11AM SERVICE

ANNFIELD CARE HOME SERVICE 3.15pm

Please join us for short service with residents and staff

Wednesday 4th March at 7.30pm

Final Meeting of St.Columba's Kirk Session with Interim Moderator

Rev.Gary McIntyre

Saturday 7th March

Ladies Group Coffee Morning 10am to 12 noon

Sunday 8th March 11am

Service led by Rev.Elinor Gordon

(Visit of Bernard & Nicol Calvino, from Paris Pentemont-Luxembourg twinned congregation)

Wednesday 18th March 1pm Grumpy Old Men's Lunch Club

Sunday 22nd March

Rev Elinor Gordon takes her final service at 11am

STIRLING KIRKS TOGETHER "EASTER CODE" SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Thursday 26th March 9.30-11.30 am

Friday 27th March 10am to 12 noon

Sunday 29th March 2020

Farewell service led by Rev Gary McIntyre (Interim Moderator) at 11am

Followed by brief Annual Meeting , Soup and Sandwich lunch for everyone attending and presentation to Rev. G. McIntyre

**WEDNESDAY 1st APRIL 2020 7pm Stirling Presbytery will hold a
Service of Union with Allan Park South Church to form the new
Park Church**

This will be followed by light refreshments in the Main Hall.

Sunday 5th April

Service at 11am led by Interim Moderator

ANNFIELD CARE HOME SERVICE 3.15pm

Please join us for short service with residents and staff

EASTER WEEK SERVICES :

INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

EASTER SUNDAY APRIL 12TH SERVICE AT 11AM

Saturday 25th April at 7.30pm

Torbex Community Choir Spring Charity Concert

Sunday 3rd May

ANNFIELD CARE HOME SERVICE 3.15pm

Please join us for short service with residents and staff

STIRLING KIRKS TOGETHER "POPCORN AND CAKE" :

SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Thursday 14th May 9.30-11.30 am

Friday 15th May 10am to 12 noon

PRAY FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 16-22 MAY 2020

This year the Lord High Commissioner, who is the Sovereign's personal representative to the annual General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is **Prince William**. He will make the opening and closing addresses to the Assembly, as well as carrying out official visits across Scotland.

There are major changes and plans to be discussed at the Assembly and we trust that God will inspire and challenge the commissioners and ministers in their challenging roles. Please pray for the debates and deliverances— many are live streamed from the Assembly Hall and can be watched on a tablet or computer.

A PRAYER FOR RADICAL CHANGE

God,
thank You,
thank You for seeds of new life.
[In quiet, reflect on where you see seeds of new life in your church & neighbourhood.]
God,
we pray,
we pray for the young people we encounter.
[In quiet, remember the young people that you are particularly close to.]
May they grow up hopeful about what lies ahead,
may they grow up into the likeness of Christ.

God,
thank You,
thank You for seeds of new life.
[In quiet, reflect on where you see seeds of new life in your church & neighbourhood.]
God,
we pray,
we pray for the young people we encounter.
[In quiet, remember the young people that you are particularly close to.]
May they grow up hopeful about what lies ahead,
may they grow up into the likeness of Christ.

God,
we pray,
we pray for the Church,
the church we know and love,
the church we hope for and desire.
[In quiet, pray for the growth of the Church.]
We pray for creativity and innovation,
as new worshipping communities grow throughout the land.
God,
we pray,
we pray for our communities.

[In quiet, pray for the growth of our communities.]
May they come to look a bit more like heaven,
full of laughter and joy, full of fairness and justice.
God,
help us,
help us to recognise the environments where growth can happen.
We pray for growth,
and for the work of the Growth Fund.
In all that we do,
may we be
seeing,
listening,
enabling,
growing.
[In quiet, reflect on how God is calling us to change.]
In the Name of the God
who calls us all to grow
into the likeness of Christ.
Amen.

Rev Martin Johnstone

NEWSLETTERS FOR Summer 2020

Any content for the next newsletter must be handed into the Church office or sent by e-mail to the Interim Editor by 5pm on the date noted below.

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

Please send text as a **Windows** file and photos as **JPEG** format.

Any submissions received **AFTER** 5pm on the copy deadline will **NOT** be included in the next issue.

Summer Edition (June/July/August)

COPY DEADLINE: Friday 15th May 2020

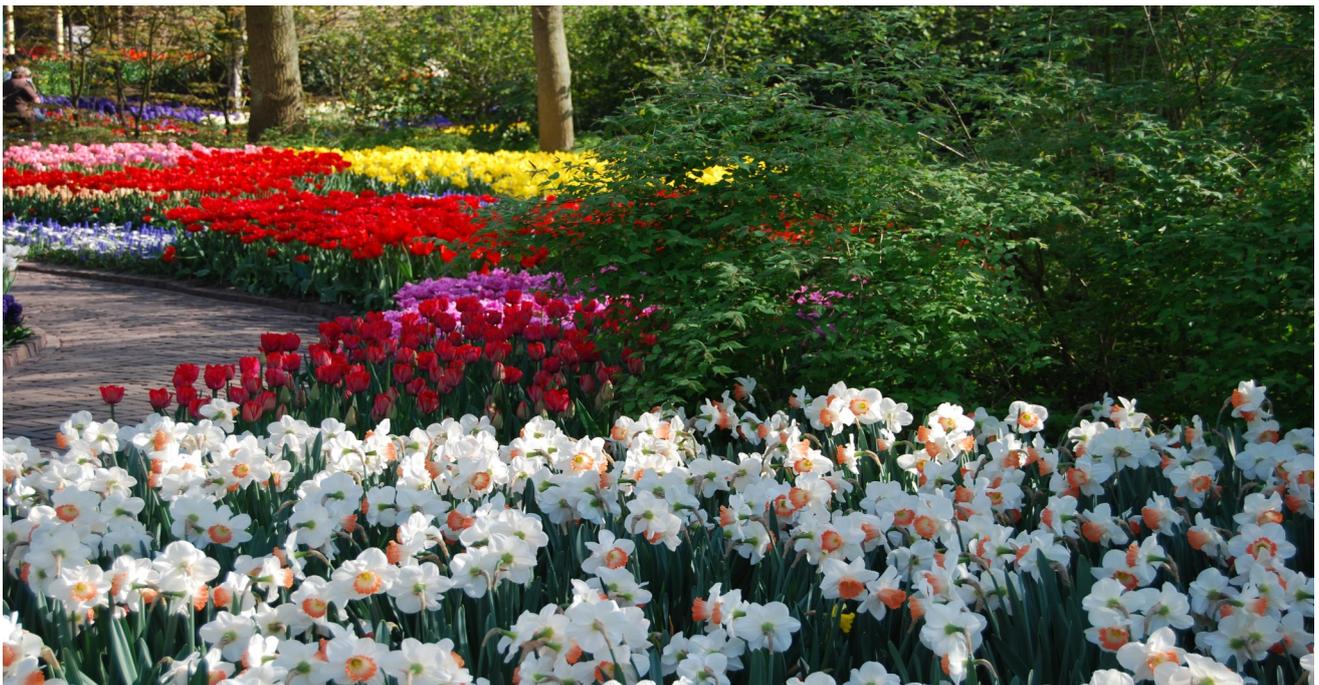
Interim editor's e-mail: Murdochsarah@btinternet.com

In loving memory

It is with sadness, but great thankfulness for lives well lived, that we have to share the news of deaths of the following members of St.Columba's congregation:

Dr James Marshall Munn, of Queen's Road Stirling

Mr Alex Tocher, of Kenningknowes Road. Stirling



Key Contacts until April 1st 2020

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The Church Office is open Tuesday to Friday from 9.30 to 12 noon except when the Administrator is on holiday.

The Church e-mail address is: *stcolumbasstirling@gmail.com*

The NEW church office telephone number is: 01786- 462400



A Job Well Done

The Deacons Court of St Columba's held their last formal meeting on 5th February 2020 when this photograph was taken (not all elders and deacons were able to be present)

Our Interim Moderator reminded us that this was the final meeting of a court that had been responsible for the temporal (primarily property and financial) affairs of the congregation since its formation in 1843.

St Columba's has its origins in the great disruption of 1843 when one third of ministers of the Church of Scotland led by Rev Thomas Chalmers and our own Dr Alexander Beith led one third of ministers out of the General Assembly that year because of their refusal to accept landowner patronage and control to form the Free Church of Scotland. All the new congregations had a new constitution with distinct deacons' courts and Kirk Sessions (who were confined to spiritual matters).

In 1929, almost all the disestablished congregations rejoined the Church of Scotland but were allowed to keep their constitutions. However because of changes in Trustee Legislation, the General Assembly of 2008, determined that any new congregation or union should adopt the Unitary Constitution whereby the Kirk Session has sole responsibility as Church Trustees for all congregational matters both spiritual and temporal.

From the date of the upcoming union, the role of Trustees will be that of the new Kirk Session of the united congregation, who will delegate detailed work on various aspects of church life including finance and property to various committees or teams of elders and members, who will report to the Kirk Session.

We give thanks for 177 years of dedicated service and achievement of the Deacons who have underpinned the congregation and given us a very rich foundation.



Jam jar appeal for Water Aid during Lent (February 27th to Easter Sunday 11th April) and Bible Class Coffee Morning Saturday May 23rd 2020

Right now some of the world's poorest people do not have **clean water** to drink, **decent toilets** or **hygiene**. Unsafe supplies and walking miles carrying water results in illness for all ages but especially children.

This Lent, we can all help to think about the cost of water e.g. **by not wasting water**.

Can you fill a jam jar with any small change you do not need? Every penny counts and last year we raised over £600. Labels for your jar are available at the front and rear entrances to the church during Lent. Please return your contribution on Easter Sunday or soon afterwards.

Many thanks

Helen Reid

Our Church Library recently benefitted from a donation of titles from Rev. Lynne Mack who has retired as an ordained local minister.

BIBLE STUDY-black dots

BAINES Nick-Marking Time
BARTON Stephen-The Spiritually of the Gospels
HARPUR James-Joseph of Arimathea
HARRISON Robert-Oriel's Diary
HOUSTON Tom-Characters Around the Cradle
LUCAS Jeff-Gideon
LUZ Ulrich-The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew
MORTON T Ralph -The Twelve Together
PAWSON David-Unlocking the Bible
SENIOR Donald-What are they saying about Matthew?
CD -i POCKETBIBLE-New Living Translation Edition

CHRISTIAN FAITH-yellow dots

BLANCHARD John-Dead or Alive
DEVOTIONAL CLASSICS -Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups
GILES Richard-At Heaven's Gate

GENERAL READING-green dots

BOWER John-The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions
FISHER Mary Pat-Living Religions

PASTORAL CARE-blue dots

GORDON Tom-A Need for Living
WHITAKER Agnes-All in the End is Harvest

Lent (26 February - 9 April 2020)

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

Holy Week (5 - 11 April 2020)

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 - 10 April

Holy Saturday - 11 April

Easter Sunday or Easter Day - 12 April

Easter Monday - 13 April

Ascension Day (21 May 2020)

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 (31 May 2020)

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.





**Welcome to Park Church, Stirling
Park Terrace, Stirling FK8 2NA
(From April 1st 2020 onwards)**

All are welcome to worship with the new congregation

We are members of the Church of Scotland nationally, and Stirling Kirks Together in Stirling City Centre, reaching out in love and faith to witness for Jesus.

After the 11am service on Sunday we have tea, coffee or juice and biscuits in the hall: why not come in and join us for a chat and meet some new friends?

