

Marksman

December, 2023 / January, 2024



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From the Manse

Happy Advent!

This year Advent doesn't begin until the 3rd of December. This is the latest day it can ever begin on. This happens when Christmas Day falls on a Monday and so there are five Sundays within December, with Christmas Eve being the fourth of these. (2024 will follow a similar pattern when Advent begins on December 1st, but by 2025 we will be back to the more usual pattern of Advent beginning at the end of November.)

Whenever it starts, Advent is the four-week period running up to Christmas and is traditionally a time of preparation, a time of contemplation before the birth of Jesus Christ, and also a time of anticipation of his return to earth in glory. For many of us, the weeks leading to the Christmas season fly by in a flurry of activities, and for some Christmas is the most stressful time of the year. It can be a time of contrasting emotions, we can be eager yet frazzled, sentimental yet indifferent, excited and yet can't be bothered with it all. One minute we look forward to going out with family and friends, later we feel lonely; our excitement can be tinged with dread, our anticipation loaded with worry and concern.

Even those who genuinely love Christmas can often miss its point. Content with candles and carols, and good food, we bask in the warmth of familiar traditions, watch the Christmas movies, and enjoy the feelings of general goodwill. How many remember the harsh realities of Jesus' birth? The dark and dank stable, the closed door of the inn? How many of us share the longing of the prophets, who foresaw Christ's birth centuries before he was born?



Now, I'm not saying we should do away with all the trimmings, I love Christmas as much as the next person, but this Advent I encourage you to take some time to remember the true message of Christmas. Let God be the God of your life, let him be the most important thing. Work to have the attitude of Christ, described in the Christ hymn in Philippians chapter 2:

“ He always had the nature of God, but he didn't think that by force he should try to remain equal with God. Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had and took the nature of a servant. He became like a human being and appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death – his death on the cross. For this reason, God raised him to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name”.
(*Philippians 2:6-9*)

I do think it is amazing, that at a time when the church has lost its relevance to so many, the whole world stops at Christmas to mark the birth of God's own son. Across the globe Christmas is celebrated, by Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, so many people have adopted some of the traditions of Christmas whether they claim to believe in Jesus or not. So many people stop, for a moment to mark, whether they realise it or not, the biggest, most important day the world has ever known: the day God the Son, came to live among us.

One day, in the future, his name will be worshipped by all mankind. He will be respected and honoured as he deserves:

“And so, in honour of the name of Jesus, all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below, will fall on their knees and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father.” (*Philippians 2:10-11*)

Until that day comes, even as we prepare the cards, the presents, and the food for the Christmas season, we look forward to Christ's birth and to his second coming.

Let God be God of your life, not Christmas itself. Use Christmas as an opportunity to put your faith into action, to share friendship and fellowship, to care for others, to show love, in Christ's name.

Let Us Remember Service.

(Sunday 3rd December 4pm)

This is a special service to remember those we have lost in the previous year, and at any time in the past. With hymns, readings and times of reflection we stop before the busyness of Christmas to remember together. The list of those who have died this year will be read out, and I would like to add to this the names of others whom you are remembering, (Christian names only).

There have been fewer funerals this year, and there may only be a few families attending, so I would encourage you to consider if this is a service to which you could come along.

Funerals

10th November Helen Petrie of
Darvel Crescent



I hope you have a blessed time this Christmas, that you find the peace of the Christ child, the love of the Son of God, who loved you enough to die for you, and the and encouragement of the Holy Spirit as we await the second coming of our Lord.

Wishing you peace, and love, and hope, and joy in the Lord,

Your friend and minister,

Sonia



Baptism

Sunday 15th October, Lilah Rachel Hunter, daughter of Andrew and Rebecca, of Barshaw Road, was baptised and admitted to the worldwide family of faith.

Jesus says, "Let the children come to me."
Matthew 19:14

WELCOME

New members

Beth Henderson admitted by certificate of transference from Oakshaw Trinity Church.
Duncan Elder admitted by certificate of transference from Bearsden Cross Church.

Session Report



At the session meeting on 29th August we learned that most church activities are restarting with the various organisations commencing their winter sessions. We are grateful to have so many activities going on in our premises.

Our church worker, Peter, continues with his contribution to the support of young people with a successful *Junction* event and continuing *TRASH* evenings. There was also a good turn out at recent *Messy Church*.

The Green Team continue their works and thanks are due to Jack Goodall and his team for the garden and Andy Grant for lighting changes in the church ; not forgetting the excellent work of Ann and Graeme Black in maintaining the grounds.

The repairs to the manse walls have been completed, but there is still a little work to be carried out on the roof. Hopefully soon. Plaster work in church should also be completed soon.

The church café still awaits a business plan and we expect this soon to allow us to progress the work already completed.

We have been offering hospitality to the Church of the Nazarene and Kingdom Ambassadors who have both recently lost access to their previous premises. They visit on Sunday afternoons.

We are glad to report that Fiona in the office has returned to work, with her crutches, and we are grateful for her return.



We are pleased to announce that Julie Wright has agreed to take on the role of Church Treasurer. We are confident she will do an excellent job and will have a willing team of helpers to support her in this new undertaking.

We were surprised to be served with a tree preservation order by the council. It took a few emails to get full details, but it applies to the two beech trees at the front of the church on Glasgow Road. It was initiated by a helpful, non-member of our congregation. We have a copy of the tree inspection for our records and are assured that at the moment these trees are in an acceptable condition.

We have just learned that Rev. John Murning of Sherwood has indicated he will retire on 14.2.24. We were supposed to have a joint meeting with them on 7th November, but they cancelled this. Our understanding is that Presbytery will step in when John retires, appoint an interim moderator and then we can progress things thereafter.

We are also in negotiation with the council to have Christmas lights installed on the two larger trees at the north-east corner of our grounds. We hope they can help with this.

Finally ... for those who help with door duties each Sunday morning, the complete list of dates is on the notice board outside the vestry with the various teams and their respective dates.

Colin Reid, Session Clerk

Church Giving Day 19th November 2023



Many members participated in last year's *National Giving Day*. This was a Church of Scotland initiative and was very successful.

This year St Mark's is having another *Giving Day*.

A big thank you to all our members who continue to give their offerings throughout the year and also support our *Church Giving Day Appeal*. This year's *Giving Day* will be on Sunday 19th November.

On November 19th donation envelopes will be available in church. Please indicate on the slip if you would allow us to collect Gift Aid on your donation and specify how you would like your gift used – e.g. towards the salary for Peter, our church worker, or for funds for our café, or general church funds.

Please consider supporting our Giving Day. Again, this will run as a season of thanksgiving between November 19th and December 3rd. Donations can be made by cash or cheque or directly into the church's bank account 80-09-29 Ac 00173385 St Mark's Church of Scotland.

It is another opportunity for our members of any age to reflect and remember God's presence with us at all times and to offer our gifts of thanksgiving back to God.

The Finance Committee



Sunday Duty Team Rota

DATE	TEAM	LEADER	DATE	TEAM	LEADER
DEC			JAN		
03/12/2023	3	Mrs C. Hair	07/01/2024	6	Dr C. Reid
10/12/2023	4	Mr G. Black	14/01/2024	6	Dr C. Reid
17/12/2023	4	Mr G. Black	21/01/2024	1	Mr J. Goodall
24/12/2023	5	Mr A. Boyd	28/01/2024	1	Mr J. Goodall
31/12/2023	5	Mr A. Boyd			



The *Trash* group is doing really well and we continue to have 14 young people who are there most weeks. We have the usual format of some chill time followed by bible study and then some games time at the end, if time allows.

Over the last few months we have been looking at some of the stories of the bible that the young people thought were important, including Balaam's talking donkey. We also looked at the purpose of the cross. The questions and discussions that follow are always interesting!

The young people hosted the Tearfund Big Quiz in November and raised £350.15. Thank you to everyone who came along. We hope you had a fun night of quizzing.



The Junction Youth Café is a space for young people from P6 to S3 to come together and have fun with their friends. After the success of the summer week, we ran for a few days during the October holidays and had a good turnout. There was demand for running something more regularly for this group so we are running a trial fortnightly until Christmas on a Thursday night and have had 14 people along so far.

Thank you to the people who have volunteered to help run this. If anyone else is keen to help out, please do speak to me.



Messy Church is on the last Saturday of every month (apart from December) from 2pm to 3.30pm. Our September *Messy Church* was the busiest we have ever had with 39 people coming along to enjoy a very messy *Messy Church*. We looked at the story of Jesus calming the storm. In October we looked at the story of Zacchaeus. Thank you to everyone who comes along to *Messy Church* and also to those who help run it.



Alpha

The church is going to run an Alpha Course in the New Year on Monday nights at 7.30pm in the Session Room/ Café space. This is a chance to discuss and think about the big questions in life and about the Christian faith. It is open for anyone to come along for a tea or coffee, watch a video clip and then have some discussion and questions about the video.

We are running the course in person as well as online and full details are on the church website. The 10-week course will start on **Monday 15th January**. Please do pray for the course and people that might want to come along.

Ralston Primary School

We were a bit later starting the assemblies in the school this year, but Sonia and I were in at the start of November. We were talking with the young people about memories and symbols that help you remember and finally looking at the Remembrance Poppy as well as the cross.

I am involved with the school as they try and gain their *Reading Schools Gold Award*. To gain their award they are looking to promote reading not just in the school, but also in the wider community. In the New Year I hope to be back in the school doing some maths work with the P7s.

Thank you to everyone for their continued support of the work that is happening at St Mark's and for the support given to me personally. I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas season as we count down to celebrate the nativity.

God bless,

Peter



39th Paisley Brownies (Tuesday)

Our ten new Brownies made their Promise on 7 November, and we were delighted to be joined by parents, grandparents, and our visiting Elders, Simone Smith and Margaret Currie. We were saddened not to be joined by Donna Skalley, Rainbow Leader, who is currently ill in hospital.



The girls were also awarded the *Adventure Under the Sea Challenge Badge*, as well as the *Feel Good SkillsBuilder*. We've enjoyed making Mocktails, playing *Under The Sea Bingo*, learning about creatures who live in our seas and oceans, and how to protect them. It's been an interesting badge, with lots of scope for learning, as well as fun and crafts.

We also awarded Anniversary Badges to the girls, dependent on the time that they have been in GirlGuiding. A mixture of 1, 2, 3 and 4 years badges were awarded.

Four Brownies had joined me and the other leaders on Hallowe'en to 'Grab a Badge', and we did the *Painting Interest Badge*, so this was also presented. Well done to the girls who came along to that night, and for sharing their knowledge on artists including Van Gogh (a topic at St John Ogilvy), and my favourite, Monet.

Leading up to *Remembrance Day*, we also devoted some time to thinking about the wars, including what is currently happening in the world, and the girls were also presented with a *Remembrance Day Badge*.



The girls have decided that they would like to do another fun badge, the *12 Days of Christmas*, so I'm currently working up a schedule to fit all 12 activities into our next few weeks. We are also planning a few sessions on mindfulness, which will help the girls achieve the *Mindfulness Interest badge*.

We are attending *Beauty and the Beast* at PACE, and luckily this ticks off one of the 12 activities, as does going to the cinema to see *WISH*, which we are doing in December.

The girls are also helping to create tree decorations for the GirlGuiding Christmas Tree for the *Treemendous* event on 9 December, and we'll be encouraging their parents to come along, vote for our tree, and enjoy the Christmas festivities on offer.

We'll then finish with a Christmas Party and invite the girls' parents to come along and join us for a Christmas singalong. So lots to cram in, but we hope a few more badges will be handed out before the turn of the year.

We wish all the congregation at St Mark's a Very Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

Sheena Tonner

Brownie Leader

39thA Paisley Brownies

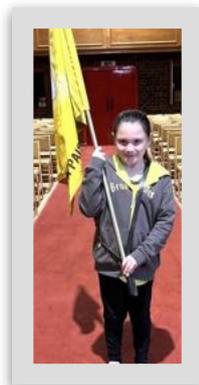


Our Wednesday meetings are filled with activities. We had 8 'new starts' who completed finding out what it means to be a Brownie and decided they wanted to make their Promise. We were delighted to welcome parents and families to join us in the sanctuary for this special ceremony. Well done to Ada, Emily, Katie MacD, Keavagh, Jess, Isla, Nina and Tilly. It was lovely to have one of our adult volunteers make her Promise at this event. Well done and welcome to Snowy Owl!

We are now working on the *Make Change* and *Influence* Skill Builders as part of the *Take Action* theme. Through different activities, the Brownies are being supported to know that they have the right to make choices and the ability to affect their surroundings.

We spent an evening planting hyacinth bulbs. The Brownies have taken them home to care for them. We hope to be able to share these with others once they have grown. This will give the Brownies the opportunity to complete the *Grow Your Own* Interest badge.

Several of the Brownies were able to attend the *Dedication Service* in October. It was great to have them joining in the service. A special 'well done' to Breagha who, due to illness of the original flag bearer, had to step in at the last moment to carry the Pack flag. She did a great job!



At the end of October, we had a fun night. The theme for the evening was *Fairytales* and some of the Brownies dressed up, while others brought a soft toy to represent their favourite character. The Brownies enjoyed learning about pointillism as they painted fairytale pictures. They went into the sanctuary for a Silent Disco and had fun dancing in the coloured lights. Many thanks to Susan from *Daring Greatly* for encouraging the Brownies and providing the music they requested.

The leadership would like it to be known that we had permission and did not set up a 'rave' in the church immediately the Minister went on holiday!



One of our newest Brownies, Tilly, has been enthused by Interest badges and has already completed the Charities badge. She ran a bake stall and used the money raised to buy groceries for the Renfrewshire Foodbank. It was lovely to hear her confidently tell the rest of the Pack what she had done and we were able to present her with a certificate from the Foodbank. Tilly has also now completed the *Mindfulness* Badge and is planning her next badge. It's great to have such a 'keen bean'!

39thA Paisley Brownies

We were able to present Maisie with the *Collector* badge. She has used the abundance of autumn to collect and display leaves after she had pressed them. Well done! Maisie has now completed the *Know Myself* theme and was awarded this badge too.

We also had several Brownies awarded with *Anniversary* badges to celebrate their time in Girlguiding –

2 years – Felicity

3 years – Charlotte, Evie

4 years – Beth, Emily H, Joanna

We are looking forward to a craft evening at the end of November that will allow us to prepare our decorations for the Guiding entry in the *TREEmendous* event!

Our final meeting of this year will be a visit to the pantomime performed by PACE. We cannot wait [**oh no we can't!!!**] for a fun evening. It will be even more special as one of our Young Leaders, Emily, will be performing. 'Break a leg', Emily!

If you have any new neighbours with girls in the family, please encourage them to come along and enjoy the fun and friendship that Girlguiding offers. Local Girlguiding is desperate for adult volunteers and a very warm welcome awaits anyone who would like to join in the fun. Interest should be registered at www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus

Christine Hair

Brown Owl



Treemendous



This year's *TREEmendous Event* will take place on **Saturday 9th December** from 10am till 1pm.
Come and join us for this fantastic community event.

24th Paisley Boys' Brigade

We are well into the new session now, but it is worth recognising some achievements from last session. In October we were able to present certificates to a couple of the senior boys. Kyle Stirling was presented with his Queen's Badge Certificate at a Civic Reception in Elderslie Kirk. Angus McCartney received his President's Badge Certificate at Barrhead, St Andrews. Angus is now working towards his Queen's Badge although it may be renamed the King's Badge when he achieves it in a couple of years.



The Anchors definitely know how to celebrate and they enjoyed their own cake courtesy of Mr Boyd. They also demonstrated their Lego skill to mark the anniversary.

The Juniors got creative too, making a variety of paper planes. The aerodynamics of their creations were tested from the gallery with our own airline pilot, Mr Smith, judging their success.



In terms of this session, we have already enjoyed a very varied programme of activities, not least celebrating 140 years of the Boys' Brigade. We attended the Battalion's 140 Celebration Service in Renfrew where the focus was not only about celebrating 140 years, but on the future and the continuing mission of the Brigade to pass on the Good News. There was birthday cake too! If you are curious about the beach balls in the photograph we can explain - just ask!



More recently, the Juniors created different paper creations. We have been talking about peace and tolerance in recent weeks and the boys made paper doves and olive branches as we considered some symbols of peace. It was encouraging to see the boys' curiosity and interest in this subject in light of recent events in Ukraine and Israel/Gaza in particular. It can be difficult for any of us to know what we can do to work for peace, but as we shared with the boys, we can all pray and practise the words of Mother Theresa, "Peace begins with a smile". Let's all try to smile a little bit more and see what difference it can make.

Jack Goodall (Company Captain)



Blythwood Care Shoebox Appeal

Delivery was made to Blythwood Care and they were delighted. Your donations amounted to 36 shoeboxes, a large bag of additional items and the sum of £194.00.

Thank you to you, the members of the congregation, for your, as ever, generous support and to the organisations who also made Christmas a happy time for boys and girls, men and women with little to celebrate in Eastern Europe.



Dementia-Friendly Drop-In Café

St Mark's Church (2-4pm)

Future Dates

Thursday 14 December, 2023
(includes festive sweets and songs)

Thursday 18 January, 2024



Ralston Golf Club

Seniors Lunch Club

We would like to invite any members of our community who would like to come and join us for lunch and a good chat on Tuesdays in Ralston Golf Club.

We pick up and drop off again after our lunch which is thoroughly enjoyed by our members.

If you are interested in coming along or finding out more please contact **Christine Harrison** on 07718477711. You will be made most welcome by us all.



Prayer Guide



DECEMBER, 2023		
Fri	1	This is <i>World AIDS Day</i> , and we pray for those who work to support people who suffer.
Sat	2	We pray for our local community, for the Community Council, for local businesses and for our schools.
Sun	3	Pray for Sonia as she leads our Communion Service this morning on this First Sunday of Advent. This afternoon is the <i>Let us Remember Bereavement Service</i> . <i>International Day of Persons with Disabilities</i> . Remember the vast range of disabilities that affect so many people.
Mon	4	We pray for those living in Golf Drive, Hawkhead Road and Killearn Drive.
Tue	5	39th Brownies are off to the Panto tonight. Pray they have fun.
Wed	6	Morning Service. Prayer groups on Zoom and in church. <i>Winter Connections</i> . 39A Brownies off to the Panto tonight. We hope they have a great evening.
Thu	7	The Junction on this evening. Pray for young folk to come along.
Fri	8	Pray for our Presbytery Elder and for the Presbytery when it meets. May discussions and decisions be made in a spirit of love.
Sat	9	<i>TREEmendous Event</i> this morning. <i>International Anti-corruption Day</i> .
Sun	10	Second Sunday of Advent. Pray as we come together to worship. Gift Service in aid of <i>Women's Aid</i> . 39th Brownies will be at a screening of <i>Wish</i> in the cinema today.
Mon	11	Our streets for prayer this week are Kinpurnie Road, Lanfine Road and Marchbank Gardens. Pray for the Guild and all who come along.
Tue	12	Pastoral Afternoon Tea. Remember all who prepare, help serve, bring people along and all of the church family who will attend. May they enjoy catching up with others and have a wonderful time together. 39 Brownies (and maybe Rainbows) have a party tonight as they finish up for this year.
Wed	13	Weekly Wednesday Service. Prayer groups on Zoom and in church. <i>Winter Connections</i> .
Thu	14	Pray for the <i>Dementia-Friendly Café Christmas Afternoon</i> that all who come will have a lovely time.
Fri	15	We remember the Mission Planning group as they look at preparations for Alpha group meetings in the New Year. Pray also for the BB and the new framework/model which seeks to explain more of what BB is about, and to engage young people with the Christian Faith. It has four parts and we will pray for each over the next few weeks.
Sat	16	As shops and businesses ramp up the festive frenzy, help us to take time to stop and remember the reason for the season.

Prayer Guide



DECEMBER, 2023		
Sun	17	We look forward to our Nativity Service today and give thanks for the work put in by Ruth and her helpers. Third Sunday in Advent.
Mon	18	Remember all who live in Netherdale Drive, Newtyle Road and Newnham Road. <i>International Migrants Day.</i>
Tue	19	We remember the 2 nd East Rainbows as they meet.
Wed	20	Wednesday Service. <i>Winter Connections.</i> Prayer groups on Zoom and in church.
Thu	21	Pray specifically for our minister, Sonia, today and ask that she is given health and strength to do the work set before her, especially at this busy time of year. May she know your blessing on her.
Fri	22	Ralston School services this morning. Pray for staff, pupils and parents. We pray for those who find this time of year difficult, who are alone or homeless. May they find comfort through actions of others.
Sat	23	Pray for the <i>BB Faith Journey Framework</i> and part 1 <i>Engage</i> which looks at the work done to set up groups and connect with young people.
Sun	24	Fourth Sunday in Advent. Pray for Sonia as she leads us throughout this time of celebration. <i>Lessons and Carols Service</i> this morning. <i>Christmas Eve Family Service</i> tonight at 7:00p.m. followed by <i>Watchnight Service</i> at 11:30p.m.
Mon	25	<i>Christmas Day Service</i> this morning at 10:30a.m. Keep all who live in the following streets in your prayers this week: Oldhall Road, Ossian Road, and Penilee Road.
Tue	26	Pray Sonia is able to relax after the busy time of celebration and to have been blessed in the services she has taken.
Wed	27	No prayer groups this week.
Thu	28	We remember our church worker, Peter, and all he does in St Mark's and in the community. Be with him and those who help him in the various ways he connects with the young people in our area.
Fri	29	Pray for part 2 of the <i>BB Faith Journey : Explore</i> looking at opportunities given to introduce young people to the Bible and the Christian Faith.
Sat	30	We pray for each of our elders, our members, adherents and all who have come across our threshold this past year. Be with each of them as they enter a new year.
Sun	31	As we reflect on the year gone by and look ahead to the incoming year, may we go forward in your strength and knowing you are with us. Bless Sonia as she leads us in worship this week.



Flowers in Church

03.12.23	Mrs Liz Morgan
10.12.23	Mr and Mrs G. Black
17.12.23	Mrs K. McLauchlan
24.12.23	Mrs Reba McNeil
31.12.23	
07.01.24	Mrs N. Dryburgh
14.01.24	Mr and Mrs R. Tonner
21.01.24	Mrs E. Macdonald
28.01.24	Mrs I. Ritchie

Ladies Delivering Flowers

03.12.23	Mrs A. Black	
10.12.23	Mrs K. McLauchlan	
17.12.23	Mrs M. Scobie	
24.12.23	Mrs M. Robin	
31.12.23	Mrs K. McLauchlan	
07.01.24	Mrs M. Currie	Mrs E. Boyd
14.01.24	Mrs I. Ritchie	
21.01.24		
28.01.24	Mrs E. Macdonald	Mrs W. Keith



Saint Nicholas

Saint Nicholas of Myra (traditionally 15 March 270 – 6 December 343), also known as **Nicholas of Bari**, was an early Christian bishop of Greek descent from the maritime city of Myra in Asia Minor, (now known as Demri, in modern-day Turkey) during the time of the Roman Empire. Because of the many miracles attributed to him, he is also known as **Nicholas the Wonderworker**.

Saint Nicholas is the patron saint of sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, children, brewers, pawnbrokers, unmarried people, and students in various cities and countries around Europe. His reputation, evolved following his legendary habit of secret gift-giving, gave rise to the traditional model of **Santa Claus**.

Little is known about the historical Saint Nicholas. The earliest accounts of his life were written centuries after his death and probably contain legendary elaborations. He is said to have been born in the Greek seaport of Patara, Lycia, in Asia Minor to wealthy Christian parents.

In one of the earliest attested and most famous incidents from his life, he is said to have rescued three girls from being forced into prostitution by dropping a purse of gold coins through the window of their house each night for three nights so their father could pay a dowry for each of them.

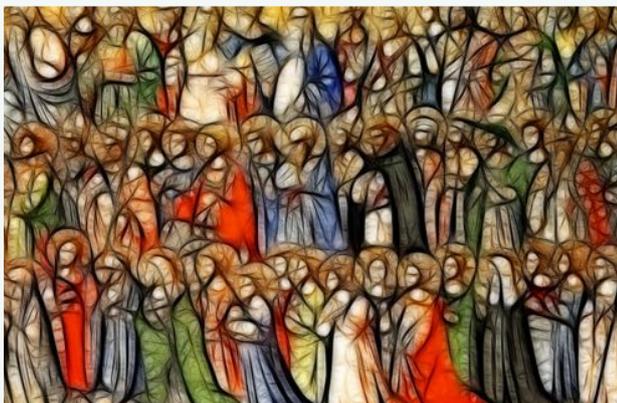


Other early stories tell of him calming a storm at sea, saving three innocent soldiers from wrongful execution, and chopping down a tree possessed by a demon. In his youth, he is said to have made a pilgrimage to Egypt and Palestine, where he lived near the site of the Nativity. Shortly after his return, he became Bishop of Myra. He was later cast into prison during the persecution of Diocletian, but was released after the accession of Constantine.

An early list makes him an attendee at the First Council of Nicaea in 325, but he is never mentioned in any writings by people who were at the council.

Fewer than 200 years after Nicholas's death, the St. Nicholas Church was built in Myra under the orders of Theodosius II over the site of the church where he had served as bishop, and his remains were moved to a sarcophagus in that church. He is frequently portrayed on icons in the Eastern Orthodox Church often shown as an elderly man, with a short white beard, balding head wearing in Bishop's robes.

St Nicholas predated the Celtic saints by many centuries, but is seasonally appropriate. His feast day is 6th December, the date of his death, and traditionally those who leave their shoes out for St Nick on that day will find a coin inside them in remembrance of his frequent secret gift-giving.



(Thanks to Wikipedia)

Choir



Now it is that time of year again when members of the congregation are invited to enhance the numbers in the choir on Thursday evenings from 30th November to sing Christmas carols during the season of Advent.

“All are welcome,” to quote that great hymn, so do come along 7-8pm.

Now, to get you in the spirit of Christmas music, here is a wee quiz to get the grey cells working.

Meal Train



I am looking to set up a meal train in St Mark’s church. This is a scheme to provide a few meals for someone/a family who have an illness, new baby, suffered loss, just out of hospital, adoption or basically anyone in need.

I would rely on members of the congregation telling me who could benefit from this and dates that prepared and cooked meals would be helpful, along with likes/dislikes/allergies of food.

I would obviously be looking for volunteers to make these dinners using the information gathered regarding dates and food preferences.

Name the carol

Can you name the carol from only four words? (Answers at foot of page).

1. Down where he lay
2. Silent stars go by
3. Sleep in heavenly peace
4. With royal beauty bright
5. Shining in the east
6. Come and behold Him
7. With angelic host proclaim
8. Brightly shone the moon
9. On the dusty road
10. Fall on your knees



It is a great scheme and benefits many people in their time of need. I am willing to organise this for a trial period to see if we can make it work here in St Mark’s church.

If you are willing to do some extra cooking, then please do let me know (sign up sheet at the organ beside me) so we can get this up and running as soon as possible as I am sure there are many that would benefit from this right now.

Thank you.

Dawn Hope

1. Away in a Manger
2. O Little Town of Bethlehem
3. Silent Night
4. We Three Kings
5. The First Noel
6. O Come All Ye Faithful
7. Hark! the Herald Angels Sing
8. Good King Wenceslas
9. Little Donkey
10. O Holy Night

How to pray for Israel and Gaza



The crisis in Gaza and Israel is escalating and has already devastated thousands of lives. You can use this prayer guide to call out to God in intercessory prayer, which simply means praying on behalf of someone else. God hears your prayers. You can trust him with them.

What to pray...

Pray for peace

- Pray for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the violence.
- Pray for world leaders with influence in the region to make wise decisions that lead to lasting peace.
- Pray that God's peace would fill the hearts and minds of everyone who is suffering as a result of this conflict.

Pray for safety

- Pray for all civilians – that God would protect them from harm, particularly the most vulnerable, including children, older people, and people with disabilities.
- Pray for humanitarian workers – for protection for those who are working to provide humanitarian assistance and medical supplies.
- Pray for safe access to food, water, sanitary items, medical supplies, fuel and electricity.
- Pray for people forced to flee their homes – pray for safe places to stay and that they will be able to return home.

Pray for strength

- Pray for church leaders – for wisdom and strength to lead people through fear and uncertainty. Pray for bravery as they guide their communities and offer loving support.
- Pray for Christian communities and faith leaders across the region – for unity, connection and mutual understanding so that they can help bring people together and show kindness.
- Pray for humanitarian workers – that God would strengthen their resolve and ability to provide relief and humanitarian assistance.

Pray for hope

- Pray for those who are terrified, mourning and suffering in Israel and Gaza. Ask God to save them from despair – for the trauma and violence they've experienced not to overshadow hope.
- Pray that people in Gaza and Israel and those in the wider region wouldn't lose hope that peace is possible.

Pray for healing

- Pray for people who have been traumatised or injured; ask God to heal their physical and emotional wounds and bring them deep comfort.
- Pray for hospitals and medical workers who are struggling with limited resources and overwhelming needs. Ask God to provide all the resources and equipment they need to treat the sick and injured.

'With God, all things are possible'. *Matthew 19:26*

Prayer Guide



JANUARY, 2024		
Mon	1	At the start of this new year remember those living in Ralston Avenue, Roffey Park Road and Rosshall Avenue.
Tue	2	We pray for families, as many will have the opportunity to get together over this festive season.
Wed	3	No prayer groups this week.
Thu	4	We pray for each of the organisations that meet in St Mark's. After the Christmas break, we ask that they come back refreshed and ready for the new session. <i>World Braille Day.</i>
Fri	5	Remember to pray for Sonia throughout the week as she prepares for each Sunday's worship.
Sat	6	We pray for Scripture Union (SU) work in schools and camps.
Sun	7	As we come to worship this morning, may we be very aware of God's presence with us.
Mon	8	Pray for those who live in Rotherwick Drive, School Road and Southwold Road. Pray for staff and children as they begin the new term.
Tue	9	Tonight the 39th Brownies recommence. There may some Rainbows moving up too, so pray for all the youngsters this week.
Wed	10	Weekly Service this morning. <i>Winter Connections.</i> Prayer groups on Zoom and in church. 39thA Brownies recommence their time together and 3 new starts will join them.
Thu	11	The Guild is the focus for our prayers this week. Be with those who attend and for visiting speakers.
Fri	12	We pray for the BB and the Anchor Boys as they meet. The third part of the <i>BB Faith Journey : Encounter</i> is one which offers opportunities personally to connect with God through the Bible, prayer and worship via groups, Church, camps and residential stays.
Sat	13	We pray for the ongoing wars, conflicts, and natural disasters we hear of throughout our world, and Lord, we pray your peace and comfort on all affected. Help us to remember others even though they are not known to us, for we know that they are known and precious to you.
Sun	14	Be with Sonia and all those involved in our service of worship this morning. Help us listen to what you have to say to us.
Mon	15	The <i>Alpha Course</i> begins this week and runs over the next 9 Mondays. Pray for those leading and for people to choose to come along. Pray for our Guild members to have a good meeting today.



Prayer Guide



JANUARY, 2024		
Tue	16	It's the turn of those living in Springfield Avenue, Strathmore Avenue, Tylney Road and Woodend Drive to be in our prayers this week. We pray for Sherwood Greenlaw also as they prepare for the retirement of Rev. John Murning in February.
Wed	17	Weekly Service this morning. <i>Winter Connections.</i> Prayer groups on Zoom and in church.
Thu	18	Pray for the first Dementia-Friendly Café for the new year. May all who come along, visitors or helpers, find warmth and fellowship as they meet.
Fri	19	We pray for all who are in the administration work of the church, and for Fiona in the office. Thank you for the work they do to help us function well and to share communication.
Sat	20	Pray for organisations such as <i>Glasgow City Mission</i> , the <i>Street Pastors</i> , <i>Tearfund</i> and many others who seek to bring help to the vulnerable.
Sun	21	Sunday worship and ask God to help us come ready to hear his word for us today.
Mon	22	We bring the people living outside our district to you in prayer this week. <i>Alpha Course</i> meets this evening.
Tue	23	We pray for rescue services across our land, for Coast Guards, emergency services and air and sea rescue services. Be with all who put their lives at risk for others.
Wed	24	Weekly Service this morning. <i>Winter Connections.</i> Prayer groups on Zoom and in church.
Thu	25	Our Flower Team carries out a wonderful job each Sunday and their skills bring joy and pleasure to those who are in receipt of the flowers after each service. Give thanks for their expertise and creativity.
Fri	26	Pray for the last part of <i>BB Faith Journey : Expand</i> which is about asking "What difference can I make?" and the way in which young people are supported to impact the world around them and in leadership training.
Sat	27	Pray for governments, local, national and international, to have wisdom and integrity, to work for fairness and justice and to look to you for guidance.
Sun	28	Be with Sonia as she brings God's message this morning.
Mon	29	Allanton Avenue, Alton Road and Atholl Crescent come under our prayers this week. <i>Alpha Course</i> meets this evening.
Tue	30	Give thanks for the many blessings God has given you at the start of this year.
Wed	31	Weekly Service this morning. <i>Winter Connections.</i> Prayer groups on Zoom and in church.



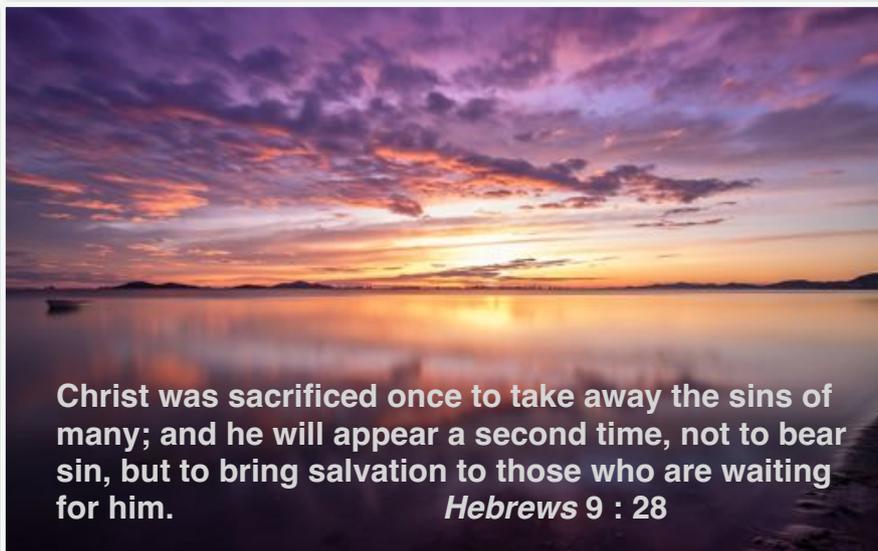
Please join us at any of our services

December

Sunday 3 rd	11.00 am 4.00 pm	Communion 'Let us Remember' Bereavement Service
Sunday 10 th	11.00 am	Gift Service (gifts to Women's Aid)
Sunday 17 th	11.00 am	Nativity
Sunday 24 th	11.00 am 7.00 pm	Lessons and Carols Service Christmas Eve Family Service
Monday 25 th	11.30 pm	Watchnight Service
Sunday 31 st	10.30 am 11.00 am	Christmas Day Service A Reflective Service at the End of the Year

Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:11



Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.
Hebrews 9 : 28

Happy New Year to all in our community.

2024



Please send articles for the *Marksman* to the editor at :

marksman@stmarksoldhall.org.uk

Contribution deadline for Feb/Mar edition : 12 noon, 18 January, 2024.