

Marksman

November 2020



St Marks Church of Scotland (Oldhall), Paisley

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From the Manse November 2020

This weekend has seen the end of British Summer Time, and although I enjoyed the brightness this morning, I am aware it is only a temporary respite before the day shortens significantly and we are in darkness as we get up and in darkness again by teatime. There is something comforting about drawing the curtains and shutting out the darkness in the winter evenings. However, I am aware that there are many of you who are also experiencing an inner darkness. For there are many experiences of life that cast long shadows of darkness in our lives, the illness of a loved one, a bereavement, any type of loss, financial worries, and that's before we even get into the loneliness and isolation caused this year by the Covid 19 pandemic.

Parker Palmer is a contemporary writer and teacher who plumbs the depth of the human spirit, and sinks deeply into the darkness of the Holy Spirit. It is there, in the darkness, that he most often finds the light.

Palmer often wrote of his own experiences – years when he lived in the dark pit of depression. As he withdrew and wallowed in darkness friends tried to 'fix him'. All their best efforts failed. They intended well, but they were avoiding or minimising his suffering. They were unable to be 'with him' in his suffering. Finally, a friend came to see him, and said nothing. Instead he sat at Parker's feet, took off his shoes, and rubbed his feet. The friend returned often in the next few weeks – just to touch Parker, and sit 'with him' in his suffering.

This story reminds me that serving others – touching others when they hurt most is the call of Christian discipleship. I am reminded through my own discomfort that the world is full of suffering and pain, which makes my own troubles fade in comparison. Recognising how much I need to be loved when my strength is at a low point opens me to hear Jesus in a new way. If he can hang broken on a cross, I can open my heart to feel the pain of the world, and I can re-commit myself to love those who are suffering in the world.

But Parker writes too, about the need to care for ourselves, "Self-care is never a selfish act - it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true

self and give the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch.”

Look after yourselves, be kind to yourselves, and don't be too hard on yourself if you are finding it difficult to feel optimistic at the moment.

Read and pray through the Psalms for comfort.

Psalm 22 is a plea for deliverance from suffering.

Psalm 121 and Psalm 23 remind us where our help comes from.

Psalm 149 and 150 give us reasons to praise God whatever our circumstances.

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!”

Now, I can't offer a foot rub at the moment, but I can offer a listening ear and a telephone call, a word of encouragement, or a reminder that I am here for you.

Your friend and minister,

Sonia

Worship Matters

Remembrance Sunday – the service will be held on Sunday 8th November at 10.45am. Please note the earlier start time. There will be no ceremony at Hawkhead Cemetery this year.

Christmas – We are planning how we can bring the usual variety of Christmas services, including carol singing and Nativity but in a very different way to normal. There will still be a Gift Service, with gifts going to Women's Aid as usual. More info in due course.

Christmas Card & Parcel Delivery

We are still planning on delivering Christmas Cards to the Parish this year along with parcels to the elderly members of the Church. If you are able to help deliver please let Julie know as soon as possible.

Harvest Thanksgiving

Harvest was celebrated twice this year with the usual Sunday morning service at 11am, which 48 people attended, (our largest attendance since reopening), and a family service at 2pm attended by 29 people.

The services were different to usual but were varied and purposeful. God's goodness to us was remembered and thanks given, and we also thought about other people who are not as fortunate as we are. Although we were not able to sing, we enjoyed a harvest reflection thinking about the words of traditional harvest hymns including 'We plough the fields and scatter' and 'Come ye thankful people come', and in the afternoon service we praised God with a musical cacophony as everyone joined in with percussion instruments.



There was a beautiful display on the chancel, with fruit and flowers and a harvest loaf in the shape of a wheat sheaf. And there were many more food donations which didn't make it into the display.

A massive 269kg of food (that's over 42stone) was taken to the Renfrewshire Foodbank, along with monetary donations of £317. Still more donations of tins and dried goods are appearing at church and I will make another trip to the foodbank soon.

Many thanks for your generosity, and thank you to those who continue to remember the foodbank through out the year.



Scottish Interfaith Week - Global Faith Engagement

Scottish Interfaith Week, which this year runs from 8-15 November, provides an opportunity for interfaith groups, faith communities, schools, organisations and local communities across the country to celebrate Scotland's religious diversity by planning events that bring people together to promote dialogue, understanding and co-operation between Scotland's diverse religious communities and cultures.

As part of the celebrations, this year there is a fantastic opportunity to connect with interfaith activists from across the globe during the '[Connecting Globally: Interfaith Engagement in an Interconnected World](#)' event.

The online event will have award-winning guest speakers from Israel, the USA and New Zealand. Speakers include Dr Hayat Ghazala (St Louis University), Jocelyn Armstrong (Religious Diversity Trust of New Zealand) and Dr Sarah Bernstein (Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue, Israel).



39th Paisley Brownies (Tuesday)

Brownies have continued via Zoom, and we've been very fortunate that all the girls have been able to join in with the call most weeks.

Our six new Brownies are ready to make their Promise, which is what they are going to do on 3 November, when we will also present everyone with their Aviation Badges, Skills Builder and Theme Badges. Our activities over the recent weeks have involved Cake Making, Sugar Skull mask decorating, Escape Rooms, and the Brownies are painting stones for Remembrance Sunday (look out for these at the church).

We've tried to vary the activity on Zoom, so as to maintain their attention, but we normally have a simple craft (packs provide), some fun games (do you know how many types of beans we can be – French, string, Mexican, runner) and some activities where the girls have to work together to solve puzzles on screen. Packs provided to the girls have given them everything they need, and we've also provided pictures to colour, word searches and puzzles to keep them involved with our Guiding themes.

Last Friday night some of us took part in the Paisley Division Virtual Halloween Sleepover, led by our Division Commissioner and team, but involving Lauren Jack from our own unit. Lauren is still currently home in the east, studying online for her Uni course, and joining us by Zoom. Lauren is also a Cheerleader and took the girls on the call through a session of warmups, and the start of a routine to "Thriller". Saturday morning had the girls introduced to a variety of animals, reptiles and arachnoids – where they learned that a Chameleon's tongue moves at 60 mph. Someone should have warned the insect it devoured!

Our next few weeks will focus on St Andrews Day, our normal crafting for Christmas, and we have arranged a virtual pantomime, where Peter Duncan (formerly of Blue Peter and former Chief Scout) is the pantomime dame.

Our aim will be to meet indoors again at the hall, when all Risk Assessments are complete, and we are all comfortable that it will be safe to do so.

Sheena Tonner, Brownie Leader

39thA Paisley Brownies



In the last Marksman, I reported that we hoped soon to be able to return to indoor, face to face meetings with the Brownies. We completed a Risk Assessment and this was approved by the Church and our Girlguiding Commissioner. We even sent out forms to all the Brownies to ensure our database was up-to-date!! Unfortunately, before we could start back, the Scottish

Government introduced the tier system and we now require permission from the Scottish Commissioner. We have sent HQ our Risk Assessment and await the outcome.

In the meantime, we continue to meet virtually so that the girls can experience some of the fun that Guiding offers. There are a small number of the girls who feel confident and comfortable to join in Zoom meetings and we have played games and even managed some work towards badges. During this time of restrictions, we have had 7 girls who have reached the age to move onto Guides. Usually we would have a presentation to them but since this has not been possible, I delivered a wee gift to them to remind them of their time in Brownies. I have lots of Anniversary badges waiting for the Brownies when we return to meetings!!



In October, we had a joint meeting [online] with the 1st East Rainbows. As a different experience, we were visited by the Essex Reptile Encounters. The girls were able to see some different creatures on their screen. The meeting was run by James who gave the girls lots of information and answered their many questions!!



At the end of October, Paisley Division of Girlguiding organised a “Hallowe’en Virtual Sleepover”. A few of the girls joined in the fun. I delivered a pack to them with assorted activities and they were even encouraged to dress up. The girls loved that!!



And of course, no Brownie event is complete without a badge!!



Hopefully the next time I share our activities with you, we will be able to meet the Brownies face to face and get back to (almost) normal meetings. We have made some plans for this but until then, we will continue to offer to meet virtually.

Until then, I hope we all stay safe and well and a big “thank you” to all the leaders for their continued hard work and to the parents and St Mark’s for their support.

Christine Hair
(Brown Owl)

CHRISTMAS TREE & PLANT SALE

Save the date

Saturday 5th December

From 10am

5ft-8ft Real Trees, Door & Cemetery
Wreathes, Indoor Pots & Tubs, Nursery
Grown Bedding Plants primrose etc.

COVID19 masks and social distancing required

Pre ordering recommended. Pick up slots available to ensure your purchases are reserved and crowds are avoided.

Prices to be confirmed. Register your interest now to assist us with ordering and we will send price list when available.

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Cheques and cash only

**On the Church Lawns, Glasgow Road,
opposite Penilee Road**

Stock by MacLarens Nurserin by Barrheades, Lugton



Prayer diary for November 2020

Sunday 1 November

Our first Sunday of worship this month. Be with the Worship Team as they bring Your word to us, and make us eager recipients, ready to do what You ask us to. Help us grow in faith and let that be seen in our actions towards one another. Be with Sonia as she is off on holiday. Give her a peaceful, relaxing and refreshing time.

Monday 2

Our streets' focus today is for all those living in Springfield Avenue, Strathmore Avenue, Tylney Road and Woodend Drive International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. Not something I would have normally given a thought to, but pray for those who are trying to tell the stories of countries world wide where there is injustice and corruption.

Tuesday 3

Pray for all those who are shut in, both those of our congregation and those in the wider community. Where we are able, help us to keep in contact with them, and may they know there are people thinking of them. We pray for America as the election comes to a climax. May both sides accept the result maturely.

Wednesday 4

Pray for all who meet at the Wednesday service this morning. Remember the Zoom Prayer group as they meet this evening. Pray too, for all those who join in at home, as they faithfully pray through this guide.

Thursday 5

Tsunami Awareness Day. We have all read of the devastation brought about to countries from Tsunami. Pray for countries where they are still trying to recover and rebuild.

Friday 6

Pray for carers, and for their own health as they look after others. Throughout the month pray for the COVID situation as it fluctuates, and different areas of the country are dealing with different restrictions. Give patience to us all, breakthroughs to the scientists developing vaccines, and strength and protection to those in frontline services.

Saturday 7

We pray for those who have been bereaved, recently or a long time ago, that they will know Your comfort. Bible studies resume today. Pray for all who have taken

the booklets on Hope that they may increase their hope in You, and find strength as we journey through this difficult time.

Sunday 8

Remembrance Service today We pray for Sonia, and her family, and for all aspects of her ministry.

Monday 9

We have completed all our district streets over the past months, so start again praying for all those in Allanton Avenue, Alton Road and Atholl Crescent.

Tuesday 10

Keep our local businesses in your prayers, as many are struggling to keep going.

Wednesday 11

Our next Zoom Session meeting takes place this evening at 7:30. Be with Sonia as she leads us, and help us all to discuss respectfully and make decisions led by Your Spirit.

Thursday 12

Remember all our young people, at school, at leisure, and when they're part of our organisations. Pray for teachers, parents, leaders too, as they work with them. Remember our Pastoral Team as they 'zoom' .a tonight and help them in the decisions they make to show love to others.

Friday 13

We pray for the elders of St Marks. Help them to walk closely with You and to work together as we strive to make St Marks a light in the community.

Saturday 14

NHS, emergency services, and others in a caring role are brought before You today. Bless them in the work they're doing. Give them strength to keep going in difficult circumstances.

Sunday 15

Today is World Day for remembrance of road traffic victims. We remember those families whose lives have been torn apart by accidents and loss of loved ones.

Monday 16

Remember all who live in Auchmannoch Avenue, Balfron Road and Barshaw Place this week. You may live there yourself, so ask God to bless you this week, as well as the other folk who live there.

Tuesday 17

We pray for all members and adherents of St Marks, for those who come occasionally, and for those who may now be joining us online.

Wednesday 18

Pray for the Wednesday service today. Pray for the Zoom group that meets every Wednesday to pray. Also for those who join in at home. Help us to continue us to be faithful in prayer, knowing that 'the prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with.' James 5:16 The Message Bible

Thursday 19

World Toilet Day. We give thanks for Tearfund project for toilet twinning. If you are interested in giving to this, please get in touch with Dawn. She can give you Direct Debit details if you wish to do this yourself.

Friday 20

Today is World Children's Day. We think of the inequalities there are for children throughout our community, our country and worldwide. Pray that more will be done to help those in poverty, those who have known nothing but war, and those who are refugees. Stir us to help where we can, to give generously and to continue to pray for agencies who work to bring about change for children.

Saturday 21

Today, take time to stop and think of someone in your life who has helped you, supported you, encouraged you or even challenged you in your faith journey. Give thanks for them. You may want to let them know how much you appreciate them! Bible Study again today.

Sunday 22

Be with us as we gather in person, and online, to worship You today.

Monday 23

We bring the people and families in Barshaw Place, Bathgo Avenue and Buchlyvie Road before you this week. Be there in the different situations, known to You, and may they know Your love.

Tuesday 24

We thank You for all who help to prepare the church for our services, to deliver the online services, cds and DVDs, manage our finances, keep the gardens tidy, and do pastoral work in various forms.

Wednesday 25

International Day for the elimination of violence against women. When we read of countries where women are still subjected to dreadful violence , we must surely be moved to prayer for them. However, it is not just countries abroad, but here at home too, where there are women suffering. We would remember the work of the Women's Refuge too.

Thursday 26

We pray for all who experience mental illness, that help may be available. Bring peace to troubled minds, and help with motivation.

Friday 27

Pray for our own country, for our governments, for issues around Brexit, for businesses and the uncertainty that faces them.

Saturday 28

Once again, we ask that people who have been working all week, and have time off, are able to find ways to relax and refresh this weekend. For those who have to work over the weekend, be with them and give them time to relax during the week.

Sunday 29

Today is the first Sunday in Advent. Give us an assurance of the hope You bring through the birth of Your Son. Despite the difficulties of the past months, help us to keep our faith in You.

Monday 30

Crookston Drive, Dalfoil Court and Darvel Crescent are the streets we are praying for this week. Also today is Day of remembrance for all victims of chemical warfare. We pray for all those who have been affected by atrocities perpetuated by others in this way.