

Marksman

July & August 2020



St Marks Church of Scotland (Oldhall), Paisley

334 Glasgow Road, Paisley, PA1 3DL

Office Telephone – 0141 882 2755

Email: office@stmarksoldhall.org.uk

www.stmarksoldhall.org.uk

Scottish Charity SC011210

From the Manse (July/Aug 2020)

Hello again, from the manse in Lockdown.

So, we continue in Lockdown, most of us allowed a little more freedom, but all of us still requiring to be cautious and stay home as much as possible and stay safe.

I am sure the big question on many people's lips is:

“When can we get back into Church?”

The honest answer is “Not just yet.”

Whilst the easing of restrictions would allow us to open for ‘private prayer’ the regulations around this are just as stringent as for reopening for services requiring supervision, cleaning, distancing etc, that it seems best to wait for the next Phase when we hope we will be able to gather again. However this will not be for church as usual – so please read the later article carefully that lays out some of what will and won't be allowed to happen.

In the meantime remember God is everywhere, we can speak to him and meet with him anywhere, and for the moment, loving our neighbour means staying at a distance from them.

Another question you may be wanting to ask me is:

“How on earth did **YOU** get to be on TV?”

Well, I was as keen to know the answer to that one as everyone else!

Firstly I was emailed by the Church of Scotland media department asking if I would consider being in a programme the BBC were planning around science and religion. Within 24hrs, whilst I was still thinking about my answer, I received a phone call from a man, who introduced himself as David Strachan, and explained he had formerly been a C of S minister but now was responsible for much of BBC Scotland's religious broadcasting and specifically was producing “Reflections at the Quay”. By the end of that conversation I was committed. It turned out someone on the team knew the Glasgow City Free Church minister had been a Research Chemist, so when their thoughts had turned to the topic of

science and religion he seemed an obvious choice. They then approached the Church of Scotland media department asking if they had a female minister with a science background. Having covered my Ordination and Induction in January, and remembering that I had made the transition from being a doctor to minister, I was the first person to come into their mind.

A series of 4 Zoom meetings followed in the course of a fortnight, discussing possible content, then planning and refining the pieces we each wrote individually, and selecting music from the limited BBC Scotland archive – fortunately supplemented by the recently recorded music from Celtic Worship.

Finally on the Friday morning I ventured to find my way to the Quay. We met in person for the first time, and met the floor crew – limited in number (and no hair or make-up!) and physically distancing, having been temperature checked on entry to the building, we recorded the programme. There were two or three takes of each segment, but no music at that point. The first I saw it all put together was on Sunday morning watching as you were from home. Thank you for your positive feedback, which I received from near and far – including from a friend from school days whom I hadn't been in contact with for over 30 years.

It was a great opportunity to speak about my life, faith and prayer. I hope God will use it for his work, and to his glory. He certainly is leading me into some new and interesting situations.

And a final question, perhaps:

“Why are you having holidays now?”

Since my arrival in Ralston in January, it has been a difficult and challenging time. As ministers we are encouraged to take care of ourselves, so that we can best take care of others. As part of this we are being encouraged to take time off as usual this year despite the Covid restrictions. Originally I planned the timing of my weeks off to allow me to be present for the first couple of weeks of re-opening, however the timeline for this was pushed back, so it now potentially falls during my holiday, however I decided not to adjust again, mainly for family reasons. I hope my daughter will be able to come back to the UK from Germany to visit and I need to start the process of clearing my Mother's

house. I leave you in safe hands, the worship team are planning the services and pastoral cover will be in place.

And I hope to see, at least some of you, back in Church soon, and for all of us to gather once it is safe to do so. In the meantime, may you know God is with you, whether you stay at home or manage to get away.

May you keep safe, keep well, and keep hopeful, this time will pass, and “All will be well.”

Your friend and minister,

Sonia

Reopening of the Church Building

I am sure many of you are wondering when we will be able to meet again in the Church building for worship. As yet there is no definite date, but the earliest this will be is after the next review by the Scottish Government, of our progression through the various phases of exit from Lockdown, scheduled for 23rd July. As I will be on holiday at this time, so I suggest that we begin now to work towards reopening, and then consider exactly when this can happen on Monday 10th August, when I return.

I received an extensive dossier from the Church’s head office at 121, laying out the requirements that we need to meet before we can re-open, and we will need to submit appropriate documentation to Presbytery and receive their approval before we can do so.

I convened a Zoom meeting of a small group of representatives from the main (relevant) committees of the Church – Property, Finance, Youth work, Health and Safety, who met with Elizabeth (Session Clerk), Peter and I to discuss how we proceed. Work is currently underway to do the required checks, and reorganisation that our building will require. This will involve removing seats, setting up sanitisation, and cleaning procedures and structuring entry and exit arrangements. Our numbers will be restricted because of the requirement to distance, so do not be surprised if you get a phone call or email asking if you are planning to return to church as soon as possible, or if you will continue isolating

because you or a family member is still shielding, or are unwilling to venture out just yet. We know this will be a major undertaking for many. Please be honest, no one will judge you for staying home for longer. The virus has not gone away, and we will need to be cautious for a long time yet.

When we are back in Church it will not be for Church as we knew it.

- The wearing of facemasks is **strongly** recommended.
- No groups will be allowed to gather and chat.
- If you come alone you will need to sit alone.
- We will have seating for couples and families to sit together – but this may not be in the part of church where you usually sit.
- There will be no singing, although we will have some music.
- Services will be shorter than usual (because there will be no hymns).
- Services will continue to be recorded and will be available online and by recording as at present. In due course the actual service will be filmed and uploaded.
- There will be no tea and coffee after the service.
- Collection plates will be situated at the door for your offerings.

I appreciate this is probably not what you want to hear but we have to be safe and follow the guidance we are given. What we don't want to happen is for the church to become a focal point for the spread of the Coronavirus.

More news will follow, via email or on the Church website when we know what will happen, and knowing the people of St Mark's, word will soon spread on the bush telegraph until everyone hears the news.

I look forward to seeing you in Church just as soon as it is safe to do so, and until then, you must content yourselves to see me on a Sunday, as we have been doing for the last three months.

Sonia

Virtually Keswick Convention

You may well have heard of the Keswick Convention, a three week long series of Christian meetings, which is normally held each summer in Keswick. It is, like so many other events, cancelled because of Covid 19.

In its place is a new online event, which has the theme of Hope. Going online gives many other people the opportunity to participate, and gives Christians a chance to be part of something bigger, under the banner "All One in Christ Jesus."

The Bible Reader, Christopher Ash, will speak of 'Hope in Jesus' from the Psalms each morning at 10am. There will be a daily seminar from 11am exploring hope from a different angle. In the evenings, at 8pm, a celebration will highlight a different aspect of the hope found in Jesus Christ with several different speakers.

The full programme is available on the new Virtually Keswick Convention website: (<https://vkc.keswickministries.org/>). During the online Convention, sessions will be livestreamed on the website and via YouTube – and all events will be available for catch up, after broadcast, from the vkc website and our YouTube channel.

I hope that you will be able to join in and that this will be a source of encouragement at this time, and who knows it might encourage you to make the trip to Keswick next year.

Church Office

The office will be closed from Monday 13th July until Tuesday 28th July.

Afternoon Tea



On Saturday 20th June a delicious Afternoon Tea was prepared and delivered to members of our congregation who, under normal circumstances, would have been invited to the Church Hall to share Afternoon Tea with their friends. This summer, because of the coronavirus pandemic, this was not possible but folk wanted to do *something* and Peter came up with the idea of preparing an Afternoon Tea and delivering it to people's homes instead. There was a box filled with a variety of dainty sandwiches, and another box full of scrumptious cakes such as melt-in-the-mouth meringues; very moreish chocolate brownies; light-as-a-feather lemon drizzle cake; beautifully decorated cup-cakes; fruit loaf and shortbread – to name but a few. They even provided the butter and strawberry jam for the scones. To crown it all, each household received a very attractive bookmark with a text and a signed card by Sonia – she must have had writer's cramp after that marathon. The *piece de resistance* ... everyone received a balloon!

Peter worked very hard organising this together with a team of willing helpers. Everything had to be prepared and a number of very talented bakers [including TRASH, who made the cup-cakes] worked hard last week, the sandwich makers were up at the crack of dawn preparing these on Saturday and then the parcels had all to be ferried round the district by willing drivers and their helpers.

This took a tremendous amount of planning and preparation which has been greatly appreciated by all the grateful recipients.

Doris Grant



Give to St Mark's whilst you shop online

Many of us are shopping more online during the current Coronavirus outbreak.

Did you know that if you shop on smile.amazon.co.uk rather than the normal Amazon website, Amazon will donate a portion of what you spend to your chosen charity. You can choose to nominate St Mark's Church of Scotland, Oldhall, Paisley as your chosen charity.

Simply go to smile.amazon.co.uk on your computer or mobile device. And select St Mark's Church of Scotland, Oldhall, Paisley, as your charitable organisation, we will then receive donations from eligible purchases when you are shopping. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.co.uk will result in a donation to the church. All you then need do is to remember after that to shop at [Smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk) instead of [Amazon.co.uk](https://amazon.co.uk).

Millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations to charities by Amazon. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for smile.amazon.co.uk donation" on their product detail pages. AmazonSmile will occasionally contact you about donation amounts disbursed to your chosen charity or about the programme.

Wednesday Rainbows

Although Guiding is not going on in face to face weekly meetings, there is still lots of guiding going on in family homes.

The 1st East Rainbows recently took part in Girlguiding Scotland's "Guiding at Home" challenge. The girls had to complete 6 challenges over 4 weeks. 1 each week and 2 of their own choosing from the 4 weeks.

Which included Binary Bling! 3D Delicious, Rainbow Challenge 2.0, Get ready to launch and #Uniform 4 uniforms!, Week 2 Helpful Robots, come up with a local limerick, Tartan gig tunes, Make your own junk journal, It's national share a story and fire art fruit. Week 3 Algo-rhythm, mental health awareness, pizza portraits, meditation wonders and the Sky's the limit. The rainbows did a lot of "starfish meditation" and pizza portraits. Week 4 Start a band, create a mini garden, zine zone, future fashions, classic campfire treats and have adventures indoors. The rainbows all joined the virtual sleepover run by Paisley division and had so much fun and we made the papers.

Some of the rainbows took part and showed off their talents. We had 3D Nessie cakes, Star fish meditation, Virtual sleepovers, Pizza faces, binary bling, and a Paisley Limerick.



Daisy's limerick (age 6)

There was a young lady called Daisy

Who lived in a town called Paisley.

There was a lovely abbey.

It wasn't too shabby.

All the people who lived there were crazy!!

On the 1st of July we had a virtual parent's night to finish of this very unusual session the girls and their families have enjoyed taking part and are now about to start on the 1st East Rainbows summer challenge.

The girls have been busy at home with school work but also with badge work and the following girls were awarded :

Nature – Jessie, Freya, Beth, Phoebe and Jessica

Animal Lover – Daisy

Family Tree- Ruyi, Lauren, Freya

Drawing – Sophie, Phoebe and Freya

Helper – Jessie

Agility – Daisy and Lilah

Fruit and Veg - Ruyi

I also awarded Skill builder badges:

Reflect – Beth, Daisy, Freya, Jessie, Joanna, Lilah, Phoebe, Ruyi & Sophie W

Innovate to Sophie, Joanna, Jessie, Phoebe, Harper Rose & Daisy

I have also awarded Express myself awards to Phoebe, Freya and Sophie and Take action awards to Ruyi and Lauren.

3 girls made their virtual promise in May Freya and Jessie and Lilah that was new to all of us.

I will continue to keep in touch with the girls over the summer. I have put together a summer challenge and each week they will get a special activity to do, some may need a wee bit of adult help, but lots are for them to try themselves.

Have a good summer

Purple

39thA Paisley Brownies – July 2020

So lockdown continues and so do Brownies!!!!



At the end of May, we had 16 girls and 2 leaders take part in Paisley Division “Virtual Sleepover”. It was great to see the girls show us dens they had built or tents pitched to join in. I will confess, I slept in my own bed!!! On Friday night, the Brownies played games with others online, then made a bracelet and a paper plane and investigated how to improve the model, offline. We came back together with all the rest of the Paisley Brownies for a virtual campfire. The Brownies had a “hugging card” to make before they went to bed.

In the morning, they had been sent an outdoor scavenger hunt challenge and it was lovely to meet some of the girls as they walked around the area. All the Brownies came back together in the “virtual world” for the closing ceremony which included a visit from a magician which was great fun.



The Brownies seem to have enjoyed this adventure into the “virtual world” so we gave them a chance to have a fun meeting with others in the pack. We arranged a Zoom meeting and ten of the girls joined in. We had a scavenger hunt to collect items beginning with the different letters to spell Brownies. Then the girls made some truffles as a Father’s Day gift before we finished with a quiz. It was good to celebrate Father’s Day as our session is usually over before this important celebration. We hope Dads / Grandpas enjoyed!!! The Brownies certainly had fun making the treats.



We are planning to continue occasional meetings throughout the summer so we can all keep in touch till we can meet again.

If you know of any girls who might be interested in joining Brownies [or other stages of Girlguiding] please encourage them to register online through **[girlguiding.org.uk](https://www.girlguiding.org.uk)**

I hope when I next report to you that we will be meeting in the “real world” rather than the virtual one.

Stay well.

Christine Hair [Brown Owl]

Update from 24th Paisley Boys' Brigade

Sparrows, recycled monsters, washing basket basketball, mountain climbing, 3-D holograms and Pringle Rings. These are just some of the items to feature in the Company's lockdown experience.

Although we would normally have ended the session by now we have decided to keep in contact going over Zoom sessions which have been well received by both boys and parents over recent months.

The Zoom sessions combined with the BBatHome Activity packs (boys-brigade.org.uk/bbathome/activity-packs) have provided entertainment and challenges since back in March. The Anchors and Juniors were challenged to make monsters from recycled waste. Well done to Elliot Jack, Callum Martin and Lang McCartney who produced some scary monsters and proudly showed them off at our Zoom sessions. They are pictured here. You will notice they didn't use many plastic bottles. This is because those were being used for indoor tenpin bowling instead – don't ask.



3-Holograms were suggested as a Junior Section Activity but I would recommend it to anyone. You make a fairly simple prism from recycled clear plastic and place it on your mobile whilst playing a video. You see a hologram inside the prism like the one shown. It certainly kept me entertained.



One of the Company section challenges was to make a ring with Pringle crisps. Not as easy as it sounds when you are too busy eating them. We had a few successful attempts like Euan Houston's classic version shown here.



The older boys also had a go at washing basket basketball. It is a simple enough challenge – how many items of clothing can you throw into a washing basket from 10 paces in 45 seconds. The tricky part is that you must be wearing the items of clothing at the start. The Company record is only 4 if you fancy a challenge.

Not to be outdone, the Company Section Staff, with a contribution from Euan, took up the challenge of The Climb for Tearfund. Since the start of lockdown, between us we have “virtually” climbed the 4 highest peaks in each of the UK nations and then climbed Kilimanjaro for good measure. A bungalow seems like a good idea now.

You will be thinking – where do the sparrows fit into this? They appeared in one of our Bible Classes. There are many types of bird mentioned in the bible from doves to eagles but Jesus only talks about one: the humble and ordinary sparrow. In Matthew 10:29 Jesus says that God knows when a sparrow anywhere falls to the ground. If God cares for each little sparrow how much more must he care for us even if we do not feel special – just ordinary. We are special and unique to God and if you see or hear a sparrow it is a good reminder of that fact.

I now need to head off and make a racing car from toilet roll tubes and bottle tops. I'm not kidding – the challenges just keep coming!

Prayer diary July and August 2020

Wednesday 1 July

A new month and new easing of restrictions. Give thanks for getting to this point, and pray we can continue to move forward.

Our Zoom prayer meeting meets tonight at 7:00. Many others choose to pray at home at the same time, and it has been wonderful to see so many involved over these past few months. There is always room for more!

Thursday 2 July

Pray for wisdom – and patience – for Sonia and the church leadership as they work through a 36 page document on re-opening of churches! As we reopen, things will be quite different from what we are used to. Give us grace to accept change without grumbling ☐

Friday 3 July

We join in celebrating the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Alasdair and Lesley Campbell. Congratulations to them.

Saturday 4 July

We pray for countries in South America where there are still many people affected by the virus. May they be able to access the health care they require.

Sunday 5 July

As we meet together as your church, together but separate, help us know Your presence with us, and open our hearts to hear what You have to say to us today.

Monday 6 July

Starting this month I have included streets in our district for us to pray for specifically. We will start with Allanton Avenue, Alton Road and Athlon Crescent. Pray for all who live there.

Tuesday 7 July

Our young people are on holiday now from school. As easing of restrictions mean they are able to get out and about a bit more, please keep them safe. We pray for the online church activities throughout the summer, that the youngsters will engage and be blessed. Thank you for those organising these.

Wednesday 8 July

We bring to You today those who suffer from mental health problems, and have not been able to access the help they normally would have received. As the NHS opens up to other areas again, we ask that they will receive the support they need.

Thursday 9 July

We pray for those in our congregation who are unwell: those recovering from operations, those waiting on test results, and those still recovering from coronavirus.

Friday 10 July

This week people are being allowed to meet indoors with up to two other households, thank you that the loneliness that many have experienced may begin to dissipate as they enjoy company of family again.

Saturday 11 July

Again, we share in celebrating another Golden Wedding Anniversary, this time, Gordon and Grace Kerr. We pray they have a happy day.

Sunday 12 July

We ask that you will be with Sonia today as she brings Your message to us.

Monday 13 July

For those living in Auchmannoch Avenue, Blair Road and Balfron Road we remember them in prayer today.

Tuesday 14 July

Many people would have been jetting off to foreign places around this time. We pray for those who had made plans and are disappointed they've come to nothing. May they be able to find a way to relax and refresh themselves at home.

Wednesday 15 July

Today sees further changes to easing of restrictions (assuming all is still going in the right direction) and holiday accommodation can open up again, as well as indoor hospitality and some places e.g, museums. We remember those who have lost jobs, whose workplaces have been closed. We pray they will find new employment quickly.

Thursday 16 July

We pray for Tearfund, Christian Aid and other Aid agencies. Locally we remember Glasgow City Mission and Crossreach services to those who are vulnerable.

Friday 17 July

Many youngsters had booked to attend Scripture Union holiday camps through the summer period. We pray for them and ask that you will be with them, and with the leaders

Saturday 18

Give thanks for all who have looked after our church buildings and gardens during lockdown. We appreciate their work.

Sunday 19 July

We give thanks for Sonia and all who have helped with the services on Sundays and Wednesdays during this pandemic.

Monday 20 July

Barshaw Place, Bathgo Avenue and Buchlyvie Road are brought to You in prayer today.

Tuesday 21 July

We think of Yemen, which is being called the worst humanitarian disaster, hit by Coronavirus. Pray for this country and its inhabitants and show Your love and compassion on them. Bless all who are working to bring peace and relief in this troubled land.

Wednesday 22 July

Prayer meeting again tonight. If you have anything you wish brought for prayer, do let Julie or Irene know.

Thursday 23

We remember all who have been widowed, and those recently bereaved. Give them Your comfort and peace.

Friday 24 July

We pray for doctors, nurses, care assistants, and associates health agencies. Many will be totally exhausted and traumatised as a result of the virus situation. Give them rest, refreshment and stamina. Heal their minds and bring them peace.

Saturday 25 July

We pray for all involved in preparations for the schools opening in August. For safety and health for both staff and pupils, and for all as they move from lockdown to the structures of the school day. For parents trying to juggle work and getting children to school, if they are not back full time.

Sunday 26 July

We are getting closer to our churches re-opening, dependent on advice from the Scottish Government. Thank you to the team of helpers working behind the scenes to set up the sanctuary to allow this to happen. Give wisdom and guidance on how best to take this forward. Pray for Sonia as she continues to lead us in worship online.

Monday 27 July

For folks who live in Crookston Drive, Dalfoil Court and Darvel Crescent we bring our prayers today.

Tuesday 28 July

We remember the Guild, locally and nationally. Be with them in discussions and planning for next year's work and programmes. Thank you for their work and witness.

Wednesday 29 July

Once again, we bring farmers and food production businesses to You. We ask that the harvest would be good and you would provide people to help with this.

We pray for hospitality businesses too – many have folded during this pandemic. Be with those who have lost jobs and are facing financial difficulties. Be with those who are returning, to find safe ways of working, and help the economy to move on.

Thursday 30 July

International Day of Friendship and World Day against trafficking in Persons.

Friday 31 July

As we look to the month ahead, many things will have changed since March. Help us to live in the hope that only You can bring. As we look back help us to look for the positives we have found during this time, and not dwell on the negatives.

Thank you to everyone who has commented that they are finding this guide helpful. It is good to know people are praying for each other, our church, our community and our world.

‘We thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour promoted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.’ 1 Thessalonians 1 verses 2,3.

The prayer guide for the month of August is different. Credit goes to Lynne Seal from West Kilbride Parish Church. She has used the prayer of the retiring Moderator, Rev Colin Sinclair, which he posted on the 13 March at the outbreak of the coronavirus. She spread it across the month, and has kindly given me permission to replicate it.

I trust you will find the prayer prompts useful. They can be used in any order or followed chronologically.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Living God, in our hour of need we turn to you, for we have nowhere else to turn	We put our faith in you, because you have proved your faithfulness time and again	We affirm our love for you because you have never let us go	We thank you that you are not distant from us but have drawn near, in your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ	Jesus shared our life, tasted our death and defeated it; He understands our worries and our fears	Help us to respond as your children now	We pray for the pandemic spread across our world, remembering all who have lost loved ones
We pray for all who are seriously ill at this time	We uphold the NHS as it has responded to this added pressure on its already overstretched services	We pray for the doctors, nurses and all in the caring professions who work to help and support people as best they can	We remember those working behind the scenes testing samples, confirming results and giving information to patients	We uphold others trying to understand the virus better, working to create an effective remedy	We pray for our Governments in Westminster and Holyrood	We pray as they work with the best medical advice to guide us on how we should respond and what action we should take

We pray that guidelines might be taken seriously and that all would put them into practice	May this crisis bring out the best in us, and not the worst	Help us to live by faith and not by fear; to build bridges not barriers, and to resist all who would speak ill of any other group	May we not forget our responsibility to one another, not least the vulnerable and the voiceless in our communities	Help us to find ways of keeping in touch and offering reassurance to those with underlying health issues	We pray for any who feel particularly vulnerable or in danger at present	With the virus spread, we pray for all the disruption it caused to normal life, bringing new fears and anxieties
We pray for those laid off from their work; for financial hardship and individuals and businesses	For the impact on the economy and pensions when austerity has already left its mark	We pray for those whose trips, both for business and pleasure, have been cancelled	For others, where events, long anticipated and planned for, have been postponed	We pray for those doing home-based work or child-care, home-school or who studied for exams	May our inconvenience not blind us to others' losses	We remember those who cannot visit loved ones in locked down care homes
The elderly whose social contacts have been severely curtailed	Children who have had their education disrupted	May congregations find new ways of living through this time. May we not forget our faith but draw strength from it	God of grace and God of mercy hear our prayers at this time	Strengthen us with your Spirit, so that we may carry on our lives as best as we are able	May we look out for others, showing love in action, being faithful in prayer and bringing encouragement, hope and peace	May we always trust in you our Rock and our Redeemer

Office Hours

Tue, Wed & Fri 11:15am – 2:45pm