

# Marksman

## May 2021



St Marks Church of Scotland (Oldhall), Paisley

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Scottish Charity SC011210

From the Manse

As the days lengthen, and the sun shines more (ok - accompanied by the recent April showers) I was reminded of a poem by Rev Katy Owen, a retired minister and member of the Iona community.

“God of all seasons  
In the dreich, wet, cold and windy days of winter,  
Our spirits long for the warmth and comfort of spring.

As the sun revives  
And brings life to the whole of creation  
So we long to be part of that renewal and rebirth.

Hear our prayer for the re-awakening of hope and love and peace  
In ourselves and in the world.

And hear our songs of gratitude and praise  
As we join together with one voice  
In the universal song of love.”

Last Sunday afternoon I was able to visit my sister and her family and sit out in their garden enjoying the sunshine. We absorbed the warmth and comfort of the sunshine and enjoyed being together again – for the first time in four months. Many such reunions are happening across the country as we all have the opportunity to meet up with friends and family again. Hearts are full of joy, and relief, and yet there are many families, my own included, where the reunion makes us remember those who are no longer with us.

This year, more than ever, I think we are aware of the re-awakening of hope and love and peace across the world as our Covid restrictions ease. In Scotland, shops have reopened, and gyms and swimming pools. We can meet friends for coffee once again. However, all is not peace and hope. India is currently in the midst of a horrendous situation; its health care services totally unable to cope with the numbers of people seriously ill with Covid. Many parts of the world have still to begin a vaccination programme. And climate change has dropped off the international agenda.

Sometimes it feels we are powerless in the face of adversities like these, and yet small steps can make a difference. We have learnt to wear a face mask and use hand sanitiser almost automatically now. We take our reusable shopping bags with us to the supermarket. We recycle our cardboard, even if our blue recycle bin has got a lot fuller with our online deliveries this last year. Each little step we take makes a difference.

This month finds us in Christian Aid week again. There will be no coffee mornings or cake sales and any sponsored events will take place quietly, individually, like the Moderator, Martin Fair walking along the banks of the Tay on Saturday as part of the Kilt Walk weekend. Our Service on Christian Aid Sunday (9<sup>th</sup> May) will be focused on Christian Aid, and I aim to have a Climate Sunday service before the COP26 conference begins in November. Climate change is not something that just affects people in far off places, costal levels will change around Scotland too, increasing acidity of the seas is already affecting some Scottish businesses, and our marine wildlife is suffering. And the conference of world leaders is happening on our very doorstep. I believe it is important for us as Christians not just to pray for hope and love and peace across the world, but to do what we can to make it happen. Bringing love to our own little corner, and doing what we can to help our brothers and sisters across the world.

The Bible is full of references to the environment in which we live, from the creation stories of the beautiful Garden of Eden and the plethora of wildlife that was created there, the rainbow shown to Noah after the first great flood, the vines, the sheep, the fig tree, and the lilies of the field that Jesus used as examples, and many, many more. God created the world and “God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased.” (Gen 1:31) God gave humankind the responsibility to look after the earth and all its creatures, and charged us with the responsibility to ‘love our neighbour.’ (Leviticus 19:18, and Matt 22:39). I fear God will not be ‘very pleased’ when now looking at the mess humankind has made of his beautiful planet.

We pray for a re-awakening of hope, love, and peace across the world, and we need to work to make it happen. We have seen signs that the world can unite to fight the Covid-19 pandemic; vaccine development has shown that, but more needs to be done. My heart was lifted to read of ventilators, oxygen concentrators and other medical supplies being

sent from many countries to help out in India. Christian Aid are already working with the most vulnerable communities, let us reach out our hands and help them in their work, joining in in a 'universal song of love.'

I am delighted that each week now I am seeing new faces in church, or perhaps I should say old faces returning once more. It may be some time before our numbers can increase above 50 due to the size of our building, but I look forward to meeting more of you when out and about, or in your gardens. Please speak to me and introduce yourself if I don't recognise you – face masks and sunglasses are a hazardous combination for recognition!

Your friend and minister  
Sonia

### **A Reflection based on John 15:1-8 which I didn't use on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May**

'I am', you said, 'the true vine.'  
And I... am connected: a branch.  
At times, firm and strong,  
flourishing and fruiting with kindness and care;  
peaceful, patient.  
Rooted in love,  
watered with grace,  
tended with tenderness.

But Lord, at times,  
I'm barely clinging on,  
faltering and flailing,  
wondering if you're there;  
rattled and restless.  
Wretched, alone— withered,  
joy gone, heavy with helplessness.  
In the green times and the dry,  
still, you remain and so,  
connected,  
help me abide.

## **Worship Matters**

The church reopened for services on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March.

Services are being held under current Covid restrictions, with the number attending limited to 50 people, and so you need to book a seat by phoning or emailing the church office. Face coverings are required, no singing is allowed and we need to observe the 2m distancing, but it is good that we can gather to worship together again.

No other meetings are allowed at the present time although activities for young people can begin again in the halls following the guidelines.

Wednesday morning services will recommence in Church from Wed 5<sup>th</sup> May.

**Christian Aid Week**

**10-16 May 2021**

**Christian Aid Envelopes will be available in the Church on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May. If you prefer standard envelopes can also be used – just mark it clearly ‘Christian Aid’. Please return on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May.**

With every gift, we help people like Rose and stop this climate crisis

In Kenya, extreme weather is making it harder and harder to survive. For communities fighting the climate crisis, every last drop matters and every last one of us can help them thrive. The coronavirus pandemic has only increased the urgent need for families to access a reliable source of water.

The devastating climate crisis robs people of the water and food they need to live.

Rose walks for six hours to fetch water for her grandchildren. She tries hard to give them the kind of life she remembers from when she was a girl: when the rivers flowed with water and the crops bore fruit.



**Photo credit:** Christian Aid/Tom Pilston

Rose and her grandchildren shouldn't have to go hungry. A simple earth dam, built with the help of Christian Aid's partners and your donations, could completely change her life. This Christian Aid Week, you can be one of the hundreds of thousands of our supporters who give, act and pray to stop this climate crisis driving people like Rose to hunger.

From envelope collections to walking 300,000 steps in May, Christian Aid Week brings people together as one community against global poverty and injustice.

This Christian Aid Week (10-16 May), please:

- **Give** generously to help ensure people like Rose fight this climate crisis.
- **Act** as we call on the UK Prime Minister to lead the world with ambitious climate action that will also address inequality.
- **Pray** for a radical change of heart for politicians, and that as a global community we will care for our common home and for people living in poverty.

Together we **stop** this climate crisis.

Join us at [caweek.org](http://caweek.org)



### **Help Needed Please!**

Now that it looks as if we are beginning to come to terms with this virus and can explore the possibility of returning to some sort of normality in our day to day lives, I am asking for volunteers to visit Church members in Care Homes and those who are housebound.

If two ladies (or gentlemen!) would like to double up to visit a Care Home that would be much easier than visiting on their own. Also, if they would prefer to visit those who are housebound in pairs, that would be equally acceptable. These visits would mean so much to the recipients as, being housebound, they don't get out to meet their friends as they did, and a visit would be something to look forward to when they can have a blether and catch up on the local news.

If you feel you could spare an afternoon once a month to help, please contact me, and by the time we are given permission to visit once more, we will be organised and ready to go.

Looking forward to being inundated by your replies,

Doris Grant

0141 883 1887

Pastoral Team



## 39<sup>th</sup>A Paisley Brownies



Yippee!!! Brownies are back to meeting face to face!!

After 8 months of meeting virtually, we were able to return to meeting outdoors last week. The sun shone on us and we had our maximum number of 15 joining in the fun.

The Brownies were delighted to be back and their parents reported there was great excitement in the lead up to this return. We played games and had great fun making “fizzy flying rockets”!! Who knew we could get film canisters [remember them??] to fly about 3 meters high!!



During the Easter holidays, we joined the 1<sup>st</sup> East Rainbows online for a visit from a London Chef. Zoe, from “Shiny Kitchen”, took us step by step through making chocolate brownies – what an appropriate choice of baking!!



As the brownies baked, the girls were encouraged to clean up (mainly by licking their spoons) and asked Zoe lots of interesting questions. I think you will agree that the finished brownies look delicious!!

One Mum sent me a message to say she had to pop out before the baking came out of the oven. Here is all she returned to!!!



As part of National Careers week, Girlguiding asked the Brownies to share a drawing of their ideal career to show their ideal career. One of our youngest Brownies, Ruyi (maybe inspired by our challenges) decided she would like to be a baker. Girlguiding have selected her drawing to be added to the Girlguiding



blog <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/our-stories-and-news/blogs>

Here is her great drawing – well done Ruyi!!

We are planning to continue meeting outside (weather permitting) till we have permission to return to indoor meetings. Let's hope it is not too long!!

Christine Hair

Brown Owl

### **39<sup>th</sup> Paisley Brownies (Tuesday)**

Delighted to say, we had our first Face to Face meeting outdoors following the Easter break. The girls, and leaders, were really happy to be able to get together again. Much form filling required by the parents, but everyone has been so good and complied with all our requirements.



For our first venture out of doors, we played some old games and learned some new ones.

You may think that the Brownies are simply “chilling” on the steps, but we were playing Legs 11, a new game for us and one I think which will be a favourite.



Another new game was Snap, Crackle and Pop, which had us doing an action at the same time as remembering where we were in the sequence. We also played Tadpoles, Charades, and a Who am I guessing game, with subjects from HM the Queen to Princess Fiona from Shrek, Spiderman to Mary Poppins.

Our Face to Face meetings outdoors are going to be very dependent on us getting decent weather, but we will have a Plan B to jump on to a Zoom call if the weather is really inclement.

We will hope to have Face to Face outdoors during May, and our final evening will be back on Zoom as we have a special treat planned, joining up with the Tuesday Rainbows.

As I write this, I am sorry to hear the news of the passing of Elspeth Little. Elspeth was Brown Owl on a Tuesday night for many years at St Marks, and held District, Division and County appointments.

Sheena Tonner, Brownie Leader

### **1<sup>st</sup> East Rainbows – Wednesday Night**

We have been a busy bunch so far this year.

Some of the girls joined in Girl Guidings Thinking Day 2021 celebration where Francesca made her promise with the Chief guide. She received this lovely card and badge



We have continued with our home link packs and the girls have had fun completing at home



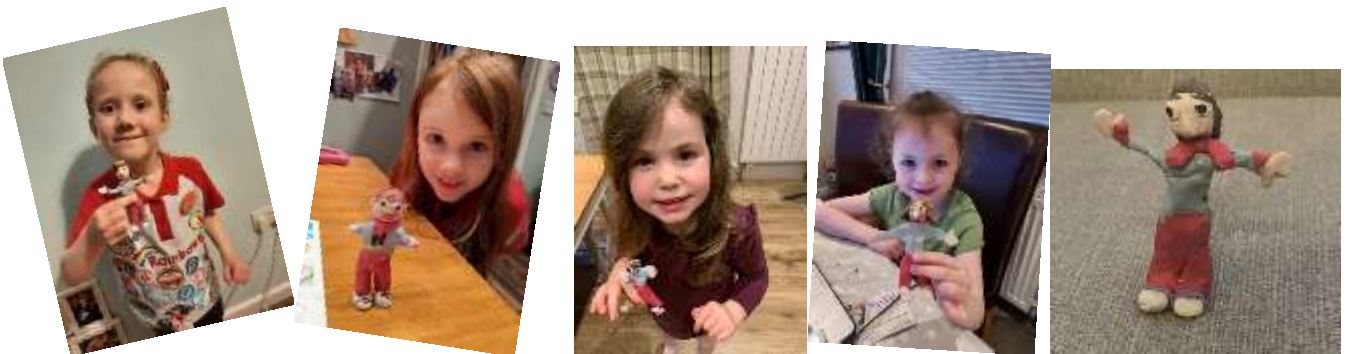
For thinking day, we found out about guiding and our guiding family. We made the guiding logo out of house hold items;



We have joined in with another cooking session with Shiny Kitchen and Zoe. For this event we invited the 39<sup>th</sup> a Brownies and the 9<sup>th</sup> Paisley Rainbows to join in the fun. The brownies we made were delicious.



We have made plasticine rainbows with Steve from Art for All



We became illustrators for the night with Liz Millions





Blue cross rescue came and talked to us one night and this sparked the imagination of one of the rainbows who along with her mum organised a scavenger hunt for the rainbows in Barshaw Park. Daisy raised £201.80.



The Rainbows will continue to meet online until the end of term unless we can get back into the hall.

We are planning a parent's night on the grass outside the church as we have a number of awards and badges to award to the girls. I will be in touch with everyone once we have the date arranged and times .

If you or your child would like to join any of the units at St Marks, they can register an interest at <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus/>

Lesley S Barclay  
Rainbow Leader

### Thy Kingdom Come



Thy Kingdom Come is all about praying for people to come to know the amazing, life-transforming love of Jesus. We encourage everyone to choose 5 people they know and pray for them throughout the 11 days and beyond!

There are so many creative ways you can pray for your 5. You can use a band and tie 5 knots, each one representing one of your 5. Or maybe each time you drink a cup of tea or coffee, you could remember to pray?

You could write their name on your bathroom mirror, or on a little card, to help remind you to pray throughout the day. Or perhaps you could pray during your daily exercise such as running or walking.

## **Word Mission Update**

### **India Prayer Request**

India's tally of recorded coronavirus cases exceeds 12 million, the second-highest in the world. The pandemic, which has spoiled economies and burdened medical infrastructure, worsened at the end of February in India and the country has since been reporting record Covid-19 cases every day. On 20 April this year, India had 295,158 new Covid-19 infections, according to World Health Organisation data.

The General Secretary of the Church of South India writes: "We earnestly solicit your active prayers and timely accompaniment with us to combat the adverse situation. The Church must ensure the availability of vaccines, basic food, interim financial support, and other necessary missional accompaniment with the people, especially the most vulnerable."

As a responsible and accountable body, the Church of Scotland cannot be passive and ignore the vital issues. The Church must be serving as a centre of courage and hope to the people without any discrimination. We do strongly believe that it is the prophetic role of the Church to address the vital issues which severely affect people's lives and livelihoods.



### **Prayer Request from Bangladesh**

Rt Rev Samuel Mankhin, Bishop of Dhaka, has written about the second Covid-19 wave which has hit Bangladesh.

He writes: "At the moment, we are going through the second nationwide lockdown, which started from 14 April and will continue till 21 April. There is every possibility of extending the period of lockdown. All the project activities have been stopped, yet church services are going on maintaining the social distance and with safe measures [in place]." In the past week, Bangladesh reported 47,392 new cases; a 13% increase compared to last week. The country also reported 473 new deaths; a 30% increase.

Bishop Mankhin continues, "A good number of Christian people have passed away due to Covid-19 and many are still fighting to survive with the situation, having lost their jobs and businesses. As a result, the Church of Bangladesh is becoming helpless to support these families during their crisis period.

"We keep them all in God's gracious hand and believe that He will grant His blessings for those families. We have closed our offices and are working remotely from our residences. We request you to uphold Bangladesh and our Church in your prayers. We believe at some stage, God will heal the world from Covid-19 and we all will be able to join hand in hand to praise our Lord the Saviour."





## **Prayer diary for May 2021**

### **Saturday 1**

Thank God for the additional freedoms we are now beginning to enjoy again. Help us continue to act with common sense and care for each other.

### **Sunday 2**

We thank You for another opportunity to come and worship with others in church, as well as online, and we ask that You would be with Sonia as she leads us this morning. As restrictions ease, pray that there would be an opportunity for TRASH youngsters and leaders to meet again face to face.

### **Monday 3**

Our first streets this month are **Rotherwick Drive, School Road and Southwold Road**. Pray for those who live there, that they would know God's blessing on them this week.

This is also **World Press Freedom Day**. Remember many journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.

### **Tuesday 4**

We continue to pray for the youngsters at school who are sitting their National Five and Higher assessments. Be with them as they study for them, as this has been a difficult year for them. Especially remember our own youngsters in church.

### **Wednesday 5**

Our first **Word for Wednesday** is scheduled for today at 11.00 .....at the moment no need to book. If numbers rise near 50 you may need to!  
Prayer Group continues to meet on Zoom at 7:00

Remember our **Brownies. 39th A Paisley** meet outdoors again and we ask that they have good weather to enjoy their time together. Pray for Christine Hair and the leaders as they work with the girls.

**African World Heritage Day** remembers the culture and communities throughout Africa, and the heritage they have. Pray for the many countries in Africa who are vulnerable due to climate or economic difficulties.

### **Thursday 6**

**ELECTION DAY** – we pray that Your will would be done and that those elected would seek Your wisdom. Help elected members to lead with integrity and for the good of all.

### **Friday 7**

Pray for the preparations that have gone into making the Plant Sale tomorrow possible. We ask that you would bless this venture.

### **Saturday 8**

**PLANT SALE this morning 10:00 – 1:00.** Pray that the weather would be favourable and many folks from the church and the community would be able to attend. Covid guidance in place.

### **Sunday 9**

As we gather to worship, we ask that we would know Your presence with us this morning. Bless the message that is brought to us. Help us continue to grow in our knowledge and understanding

Pray for our youngsters in Evolution, Trash and for Peter and the other leaders.

### **Monday 10**

**Springfield Avenue, Strathmore Avenue, Tylney Road and Woodend Drive** are our featured streets for the coming days. Pray for those you know who live there, and for their neighbours and friends.

### **Tuesday 11**

Take time to pray for those who live alone, those in Care Homes or residential homes, those who are shut in or isolated and ask that God will be close to them today.

Remember the Brownies of the **39<sup>th</sup> Paisley** as they meet on Tuesday evenings, and hopefully enjoy clear weather for their outdoor get togethers. Be with Sheena Tonner and the leaders too.

### **Wednesday 12**

Word for Wednesday meets at 11.00

Prayer Group this evening on Zoom

### **Thursday 13**

**The THY KINGDOM COME EVENT** begins today and runs through until the **23 May**. This is a prayer event that runs 24 hours a day through this time and we are invited to pray when we can. Some folk have indicated times they will be praying, but if you haven't, why not set aside a specific time and pray that God will move in our land and around the world and many will come to know Him. The idea is to pray for 5 people you know during this time, that they will come to know God.

### **Friday 14**

We pray for the boys of the **Boys Brigade** and their leaders. At the moment they are still meeting on Zoom.

### **Saturday 15**

**This is international day of families.** Pray for your own family, the families of friends and for those families where there are difficulties and tensions. Thank God for the gift of families and for our own church family here in St Marks.

Bible Study meets again today on Zoom 10.15 for 10.30 start. Contact [irene.pollock03@gmail.com](mailto:irene.pollock03@gmail.com) for details.

### **Sunday 16**

Pray for Sonia this morning and all who participate in our service this morning. Help us listen and apply what you have to say to us

Today is **International Day of Light**, and how the quality of light affects the quality of our lives.

Falling on a Sunday, it is good to stop and think about the creator of light, and of Jesus, the Light of the World.

### **Monday 17**

As we move through our community, we bring **those who live outside the district** but attend our church or are members of St Marks. Pray for them this week to know God's presence with them.

### **Tuesday 18**

Pray for countries around the world where there are still difficulties getting vaccinations to people.

We continue to remember countries like India and Brazil, where there have been real difficulties of health care. Myanmar health service has almost ground to a halt, with many doctors leaving and fleeing from the military regime they find themselves under.

### **Wednesday 19**

Remember the Word for Wednesday at 11.00  
Prayer Group on Zoom still meeting at 7:00.

### **Thursday 20**

Take time to stop and give thanks for the many good things you enjoy. If someone has been an encouragement to you, why not phone or write to say how much you appreciate their support.

### **Friday 21.**

We bring the local community and the businesses around St Marks to You in prayer. We hope that the economy opening up again helps businesses get back on track.

### **Saturday 22**

May we be able to relax and enjoy the weekend as we can get out and about a little more now. Give thanks that we are at this stage, after a long, difficult year.

### **Sunday 23**

Pray for Sonia again today as she leads us in worship. We pray for her and her family and ask that You would bless them.

### **Monday 24**

We think again of the people and families of **Allanton Avenue, Alton Road and Atholl Crescent**. We bring them and their needs to You today and through the coming week.

### **Tuesday 25**

Today we remember the many charities and agencies that aim to support those who are vulnerable and in need. We pray for Women's Refuge, Shelter, The Food Bank and others like them.

### **Wednesday 26**

Word for Wednesday again at 11.00  
Prayer Group meets on Zoom at 7:00

### **Thursday 27**

Thank you for the essential services who serve us - for all those who have kept us going through the pandemic, bringing goods to shops and home.

### **Friday 28**

We continue to remember all those who work in the NHS, for administrative staff, porters, cleaners, nursing and medical staff and all the support disciplines. We ask that there will be opportunity for clinics to open up again and allow people to get the treatment they need but haven't been able to due to Covid.

### **Saturday 29**

Bible Study meets again today on Zoom at 10.15 for 10.30. You are welcome to join us.

**International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.** Pray for all who have this role and help them as they try to keep peace where there is conflict and trouble.

### **Sunday 30**

On this final Sunday of May we come to worship in church, and online, help us to give thanks for the freedom we have to do this. Remember those who are persecuted for their faith and those who are unable to meet for fear of imprisonment.

### **Monday 31**

**Auchmannoch Avenue, Balfron Road and Barshaw Place** are the highlighted streets this week, as we pray for those living there. Give thanks for the month gone by.

### **Office Hours**

Tue, Wed & Fri 11:15am – 2:45pm