

# Marksman

## October 2020



St Marks Church of Scotland (Oldhall), Paisley

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From the Manse October 2020

Autumn is one of my favourite seasons of the year. I love to watch the trees turning orange, and the vibrancy of the colours in many different hues. I revel in walking through piles of crispy leaves, kicking them up as I go, and hearing them crunch. I enjoy the smell of bonfires as people tidy up their gardens. And the taste of autumn – well that comes from the hedgerow pickings of blackberries usually made into crumbles or pies. It amazes me that so often when we enjoy something all our senses are involved.

I have been enjoying a harvest of raspberries from the manse garden throughout the summer, and now it is time for cooking apples and blackberries. My dog Mylo has learnt a new skill and he can now pick berries off the bushes himself! I'm not usually someone who bothers much with a dessert, but at this time of year there is nothing I enjoy more than a dish of home made crumble with lashings of hot custard. Yum! I hope many of you have been enjoying produce from your gardens in recent weeks. Food grown at home tastes so much better, and growing our own, or buying local produce, and shopping seasonally all helps us be environmentally responsible for our planet.

So now is the time to celebrate Harvest Thanksgiving. To give thanks to God for the harvest and his goodness to us. Sometimes in our urban setting, we can feel disconnected with the Harvest, not seeing the wheat grow in the field, not watching the changing seasons in orchard or valley, but we do have Arkleston farm within our parish, and I can attest to a lovely crop of blackberries along its hedgerows. Whether we see it or not the harvest **is** gathered in, all around the world and it ends up on our plates, so I believe we should still take the time to give thanks to God for the food and for those who grow and produce it for us.

**“You are my God and I will give you thanks; you are my God and I will exalt you.” Ps 118:28**

**“For the Lord your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.”  
Deuteronomy 16:15**

Our Harvest Thanksgiving will take place on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October. We will have two services, the usual one at 11am, and a second at 2pm, which will be more family orientated. Although our young peoples activities have continued on zoom we have not yet had a chance to gather in person and I look forward to seeing many of them back in church then. (Seats will still need to be booked in the usual way, and face masks worn, and 2m distance kept). Our harvest gifts will go to Renfrewshire Food Bank, and these can be either dried or tinned goods, or jams or squash etc., or financial. I will open the church (Corrie Drive entrance) on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October between 12noon and 2pm to receive donations, which will then be displayed on the chancel for the services. Monetary donations can be placed in a normal envelope and marked Harvest/Foodbank and placed in the offering plate on entry to church or given to any Office Bearer.

My earliest Harvest Festival memory is from when I was about 6 years old, of a Harvest service led by my Dad, who had been a Methodist lay preacher in his younger days. It was at a caravan rally, (my parents were keen caravanners through my childhood, and beyond) in a field, in a large white tent. My enduring memory is of a vibrant display of flowers and fruit on the table and of a crowd of people singing “We plough the fields and scatter”.

Harvest isn't harvest without that hymn, so I have found a way to incorporate it and a couple of others into the morning service and I also plan for there to be an additional video online of harvest hymns for you to sing along to, in the comfort of your own homes. I hope that helps make amends for the absence of hymn singing in Church. I know many people are missing that but at the present time it is not allowed, so if we want to sing, (although not everyone does, many do), we must sing in our own homes, to praise and worship God, reassured that he is always listening.

I hope too, in your lives you are seeing the fruits of the Spirit growing, the fruits of **“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”** (Galatians 5:22-3.) We need to nurture and nourish these fruits with the Spirit's help, by the grace of God.

It has been lovely to be able to meet a few more people in recent weeks back in Church. Please don't be offended if I still have to ask who you are. Seeing only half a face above a mask makes it much more difficult for me to recognise you, and it is now over six months since I met you for the first time. Please be patient with me, I will get to know all your names and faces, it's just taking much longer than I expected.

Please keep safe, and let me know if you would like a phone chat,

Your friend and Minister,

Sonia

### **Dedication Service**

It will not be possible to hold the usual Dedication for the organisations. Instead I am planning to dedicate the Boys' Brigade and Girl Guides, (of all ages) by a couple of zoom meetings held across the units.

### **Communion - Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October**

Because of the difficulties of sharing Communion within the Covid 19 restrictions, I plan to have an online Communion Service with us all sharing from home, in addition to the morning service from Church which will not include the sacrament of Communion.

### **Remembrance Sunday**

The service will be held on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November at 10.45am.

I do not envisage it being the usual type of service with the youth organisations out in force, but it will still be marked, and wreaths will be laid.

## **Christmas**

This will also be different this year. 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. More info in due course.

## **Renfrewshire Foodbank**

Whilst there will be hopefully a large delivery to the Foodbank after the Harvest Service I will continue to take groceries across every couple of weeks. Feel free to drop anything at the manse or let me know if you'd like me to collect from you.

Thank you.

## **24<sup>th</sup> Paisley Boys Brigade**

It was really heartening to see a unanimously positive response when the Company Section boys were asked at last week's Zoom session if they would support a return to face to face meetings. If only the desire to meet face to face was enough. It does make us more determined to continue with our plans for even limited meetings subject to Government and Church Guidelines. Prior to the new restrictions we were aiming for some face to face sessions after the October school week but we will of course proceed with caution recognising the need to reassure boys, parents and staff that we can do so safely.

Eitherway, October is an important month for the Brigade. The 4<sup>th</sup> October marks 137 year of the Boys' Brigade and it has rarely been more important to remember that over those years the organisation has survived the Boer War, the Great Depression and two World Wars. I am sure it will withstand the current pandemic too.

The methodology of the BB has certainly changed over the years. I don't expect they could have imagined "virtual BB" back in 1883. I could not have imagined it in 1983 or even last year. Much has certainly changed but the core objective of "Advancing Christ's Kingdom" remains. So we are delighted to be planning a re-dedication of the Company with the Minister via Zoom this month.

There were a couple of very good “object lessons” at last week’s Zoom meeting courtesy of Mr & Mrs Boyd. The first reminded us of how difficult it is to take back something we say or do that might hurt others. This was explained by destroying a banana and then trying to reconstruct it with sticky tape as demonstrated by Lang. It showed that the damage we do cannot be easily repaired and reminded us of the importance of those parts of the BB Object that relate to discipline, reverence and of course the important commandment to love your neighbour. A timely reminder at this time when we are all so reliant on the behaviour of each other.



The second activity involved a bit of science. We learned about chromatography and the boys and staff were all able to try it at home. Elliot managed to make it work perfectly as you can see and Alexander proudly shows off the finished article – a rainbow. This experiment was great fun but more importantly it allowed us to talk about the significance of a rainbow and how it symbolises God’s covenant with us and also the hope that better days will lie ahead if we remain faithful. That message has survived even longer than 137 years which is even more reassuring. Jack Goodall (Company Captain)



## 39<sup>th</sup>A Paisley Brownies – October 2020

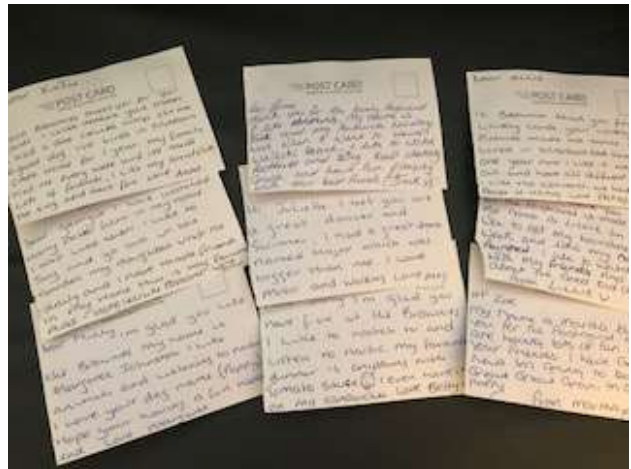
Having met “virtually” in June and July, Girlguiding gave permission for limited numbers of Brownies to meet face to face outdoors!! We were very excited to be able to see the girls and were very lucky that the church allowed us to use the garden for some meetings. The weather was kind to us and we played games and enjoyed being back together as a uniformed organisation showing the passing public that we were still working together.



One night we were able to present badges to girls including some celebrating Anniversary milestones in Girlguiding. Since this presentation, Charlotte G has completed the Grow your own badge which completes the Be Well Theme. I have now applied for a Bronze Award for her. Well done Charlotte!!



In February, the Brownies had drawn pictures on postcards and shared a little bit of information about their interests. These were then sent to some local Care Homes. The idea of this is to stimulate interest and conversation for the residents. When I was able to return to the church building, I found we had had some replies from one of the homes. The Brownies were thrilled to receive their postcards and to know that their efforts have been appreciated.



At the moment, we are in the process of completing risk assessments in the hope that we can return to indoor meetings soon. In the meantime, as the “nights are fair drawing in”, we are returning to “virtual” meetings on Zoom.

Christine Hair

Brown Owl



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

We started back with smaller numbers this year, mainly due to 10 Brownies having reached the age to move on to Guides. We moved 5 up from the Rainbows, and our Guiding newbie, Jessica, joined us. So we are currently sitting at around 14 Brownies.

As you will know, we cannot currently meet indoors, so our options starting up were outdoors or on Zoom. This, of course, has got to be weather dependent, so there has been a lot of weather watching and final messaging going out via WhatsApp to advise where our meeting will be. It's also meant a lot of organising, delivering packs just in case, and having different options and activities up our sleeves. However, we're managing. The girls continue to come along, or meet on screen, and we've already completed one Interest Badge with them and are well on the way to completing a Skills Builder. That will help us achieve another Theme Badge.

So for anyone who has been passing St Marks on a Tuesday night, you may have witnessed airplane launches, kite making and much activity focussed on being at camp. Indeed we even set up camp underneath the spreading boughs of the tree and shared the story of how the Brownies got their name, complete with imaginary Wise Owl in the branches above us.

Our Zoom meetings have included doves of peace for International Day of Peace, and making gadgets out of marshmallows and bbq sticks, followed of course by the obligatory campfire building skills and toasting the marshmallows.

Continuing on a food theme, we are going to recreate a fire out of biscuits, cream cheese and twiglets – followed by microwaved Cake in a Mug. Zoom has been a learning experience, but we are getting more proficient, and it's amazing how quickly the time goes in. We are currently thinking through Risk Assessments for getting us back indoors, but that is so dependent on Church guidelines, GirlGuiding guidelines and local restrictions. It's a lot to think about. So Halloween activities on screen for us meantime!

Sheena Tonner, Brownie Leader

# EVOLUTION

As a result of the pandemic it has been some months since we met as a group on a Sunday morning. We are constantly reviewing the guidance and once we are allowed to meet we shall restart our groups at the church.

About this time we usually start to think about our Nativity Service. This year it is no different –the way in which the young people of St Marks interact with the congregation and tell the Nativity Story will change but we will still be here on the Sunday before Christmas.

So, this year it will probably be a “Socially Distant Nativity” There may be no singing, we may not all be in church at the same time, but we will endeavour to make it as memorable and enjoyable as in previous years.

## **Peter's News**

Over the past few weeks Trash have been looking at some well-known and important bible verses. So instead of looking at a whole Bible story we have been focused on individual verses, thinking about the significance of all the words and the bigger picture of its importance in relation to the story of the bible.

How would you answer if you were asked why is Genesis 1:1 important “In the beginning God created the heavens and earth”? Or what is the significance to us of Hebrews 12:2 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.”? On Sunday we looked at Ephesians 2:8 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” And we had discussions about what grace is, how we are saved by the gift of God.

There are so many important verses in the bible for us to study and try and learn. I would be interested to know what verses in the bible are most significant to you? If you let myself or Julie know what your favourite verses are we will try and look at some of these over the next few months.

In the last Marksman I said about some of the young people of TRASH going to Teen Ranch for a day's activities. We had a lovely sunny day there doing archery, BMXing, horse riding, rifle shooting, a tractor ride, trampolining, and nukemball. It was great meeting up together and spending the day together.



We are hoping to be able to meet up again in the church in the near future. This will be dependent on the current guidelines but we are moving forward with our plans.

Schools work can't start back at the moment, however I have spoken to the school about the possibility of doing assemblies remotely.

The streaming of the church services has been a learning curve over the past few weeks. This has not been helped by the fault in the new camera that the church bought. A replacement has been sent out and we should have that in place in the next week or so. The services that have been put online are usually being watched 100 to 150 times which is good to see.

I am looking forward to the harvest services this weekend and particular the family service. It will be nice to see a number of the families back in the church building again.

There will be another Tearfund church quiz organised for November. Unlike the past two years it will be an online quiz, full details will be intimated soon.

God bless,

Peter

## **Mary's Meals**

We know that porridge has the power to change lives. That's why we're celebrating World Porridge Day on Saturday, 10 October!

In Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, we serve a steaming mug of vitamin-enriched porridge to more than one million children every school day. This meal attracts little ones into the classroom, where they receive an education that can, in the future, be their ladder out of poverty.

Yvonne, 11, from Malawi, dreams of being a teacher. She says: "Porridge makes me full. I don't feel hungry anymore. When I have eaten, I can listen attentively in class and understand what the teacher is saying."



During the Covid-19 pandemic our work hasn't stopped – in countries where schools are still closed, we are distributing food for parents to collect and cook for their children. Whether it is in the classroom or at home, we are still safely reaching almost all of the 1.6 million little ones who eat Mary's Meals.

We hope you'll celebrate World Porridge Day by holding a **Porridge Party** for your friends and family, either in your home or virtually. For your free Porridge Party pack, including recipes, information about our work and a porridge-themed quiz follow the link <https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/porridgeday/request-your-porridge-party-pack>

You are also invited to our biggest ever Porridge Party, which will take place at 10am on Saturday, 10 October during the next **Mary's Meals Family Hour**. Prepare your favourite porridge dish and join us on YouTube for updates from colleagues, volunteers and supporters from around the globe.



## **World Mission**

A ground breaking project that has helped transform the lives of refugees seeking sanctuary in Scotland has been extended by three months.

The New Scots Holiday Programme, which enables congregations to provide hospitality and friendship to people who have fled war-torn countries like Syria, was due to finish on September 30 when a £130,000 funding package awarded by the European Union in 2018 runs out.

But thanks to a grant from the Scottish Refugee Council the project will now run until December 31.



It is part of the Scotland-wide New Scots Integration Project, run in partnership with the Scottish Refugee Council, WEA Scotland and Bridges Programmes, which also provides tailored advice and support to individual refugees and families as they rebuild their lives.

Co-ordinated by [Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees](#), a multi-faith partnership project hosted by the Church of Scotland, New Scots Holidays provides a wonderful opportunity to build friendships across cultures and introduce people to new experiences beyond the locality where they live.

Members of Strath and Sleat Parish Church on the Isle of Skye hosted a group of people last October and the visit, which included a ceilidh, was described as a “positive” experience for everyone involved.

Rev Barbara Ann Sweetin, minister of East and Old Parish Church in Forfar, Angus, and her husband Billy hosted a Syrian family for a weekend last October.

They met members of the congregation and attended a Sunday morning service and spoke about their lives.

For more information on this project and for more items on World Mission –

<https://mailchi.mp/churchofscotland/world-mission-update-12946980?e=0f8ad90444>

## **Prayer diary for October 2020**

### Thursday 1

We remember Heather McLintock who was married this weekend, and we pray that God would bless her and her new husband Finlay MacDonald, in their new life together in Kyle of Lochalsh. This is International Day of Older persons. Thank God for those of our congregation who have faithfully served here at St Marks for many years. Pray for those older folk who aren't able to join us in church or online. Give thanks for their years of wisdom and experience.

### Friday 2

There are quite a number of international days observed by the UN this month and I have taken the liberty of including several of them. Today is International Day of Non-Violence. We pray that God would bring peace to many nations where violence is commonplace, and we ask that we strive to live at peace with those around us.

### Saturday 3

While this is the start of the weekend, we remember World Teachers' Day. Pray for all those in our schools, for mission workers who are teachers, for countries where education is mainly for boys, and those who try to bring opportunities and education to girls. Pray for the ladies in the community who are running a MacMillan Cake Stall in the church grounds today. May the weather be favourable for them.

### Sunday 4

We meet again to worship You, and are grateful to have this freedom, albeit somewhat restricted in buildings. Pray for our services today marking Harvest, and bless those gifts and monies donated this weekend. May they be used to help others less fortunate than ourselves.

### Monday 5

Our streets for prayer this week are Netherdale Drive, Newtyle Road and Newnham Road. (Think we might all know someone in Newtyle!). Pray for God to meet the needs of those people who live there.

### Tuesday 6

We continue to remember our organisations, and think of our Brownies this evening and tomorrow evening. Give them fun and fellowship, and may God's love be shown to them through their leaders.

### Wednesday 7

We are still Zooming for prayer together. If you haven't already joined us, this is not an exclusive group, and you will be made most welcome. Just let Irene know and she can send you the link. We are greatly encouraged by the many answers to prayer we are seeing, and for the encouragement we are gaining from each other, either from those who can Zoom or those praying along with us from their own homes.

### Thursday 8

Today we remember all those who have been, or are still, unwell in our congregation and community: some will be ill due to Covid, but others will be suffering from different ailments. We pray God's healing on them.

### Friday 9

BB meets again, and we ask you to be with leaders and children, in whatever form this takes.

### Saturday 10

This is World Mental Health Day. There are so many people struggling in our world, exacerbated by the lockdown and restrictions placed upon them. Help them find the support they need at this time. I've put this one in for certain members! World Migratory Bird Day. Take time to think about the amazing journeys birds make, for the wonder of their creation and for the intrinsic information they have that helps them navigate across continents!

### Sunday 11

We ask for Your presence with us this morning in our worship. Give thanks for the readings, the preparation, the music, stewards, and message brought today. This is International Day of the Girl Child. Give thanks that just a couple of weeks ago, laws have changed in Afghanistan to allow mothers' names to be printed on their child's national identity cards. Pray for girl babies born across the world that they

are kept safe and allowed to live. Pray for young girls trafficked in many countries, some as young as 8 or 9, and for charities trying to help them out of these desperate situations.

### Monday 12

If you are able to walk the community, pray for the following streets as you go by: Oldhall Road, Ossian Avenue and Penilee Road. If you're at home, you can still pray for the people who live there. You might not know them, but God does!

### Tuesday 13

Remember the ladies of The Guild this week. They would have started back by now and be getting into the swing of things. Be with them as they are separated, and help them keep in contact with one another through other means.

### Wednesday 14

Mid way through this month, we ask that you will be with our Governments in the decisions they make around Covid. We ask for patience as we continue to deal with the situation, and as we perhaps are getting frustrated with the length of time and how our lives are affected. Give us hope in place of despair, and let us rest on Your promise to be with us.

### Thursday 15

We remember The Guides today. We pray for their leaders and for the youngsters. We also think of our church young people, and ask that you will be with them in their studies and leisure time. Protect them and help them know we miss them.

### Friday 16

International Food Day. Stop and give thanks for the choice of food you have in your cupboard right now, and remember those who don't have that option. Can we help by giving to the Food Bank? Can we try to change the amount of waste we produce?

### Saturday 17

And linked with yesterday this is International Day for the Education of Poverty. I know that I can't understand what it must be like when I have so much, but I ask that God will help me find ways to help those less fortunate than myself. Ask God to show you what you can do too.

### Sunday 18

Give thanks that we can meet as the people of St Marks, both in church and online. Bless the service and the message that is presented this morning. We



remember, too, the youngsters of Evolution and Trash. Be with each of them at school and as they meet in different ways during this time.

### Monday 19

Spotlight for prayer this week are the following streets: Ralston Avenue, Roffey Park Road, and Rosshall Avenue. If you live in one of those streets, know that there are people praying for you this week!

### Tuesday 20

We remember all who have been furloughed and ask that God will be with them as this may come to an end soon. We pray for those who have lost jobs, are in financial difficulty and struggling to make ends meet.

### Wednesday 21

Pray for the Pastoral Team and the work they do supporting members of the congregation in many ways. Pray for Julie and others who deal with the administrative tasks relating to our church, and for those looking after financial affairs.

### Thursday 22

Looking out from our local community we pray for our world. So many countries are in turmoil. We pray that Your hand would be upon them, and that You would bring comfort to the many displaced people, to those who are suffering from famine, flood or fire. May Your comfort be known through those who are working to help others in these lands.

### Friday 23

We bring before You those of our congregation who are unwell at this time. Some have been unwell for a while, and we ask that You lay a healing hand on them. Be with them and help them to be very aware of Your presence with them.

### Saturday 24

Another weekend and time off for many people. Help us to enjoy our leisure time and appreciate Your giving us time to relax and recharge. Remember those who have to work to keep essential services running.

### Sunday 25

Today is our Communion Sunday and we pray for Sonia as she leads this special time of fellowship and worship. We remember Sonia's family too, and ask you to bless them where they are.

### Monday 26

We highlight Rotherwick Drive, School Road and Southwold Road in our prayers today and for the week ahead. We ask that Sonia will have a time of rest and relaxation during a week off.

### Tuesday 27

We pray for plans and decisions to be made about Christmas services etc. While this is still a wee bit away, pray that God will direct Sonia and others how to prepare for this special time of year.

### Wednesday 28

We pray for Martin Fair, our Moderator, and ask that You continue to bless the work he is doing this year.

### Thursday 29

In the busyness of life take time to STOP and LISTEN for God speaking to you. That can be difficult but give it a try. Make a note of anything you feel God said to you through the thoughts and feelings that came into your mind.

### Friday 30

The ACORN group that Sonia set up a number of weeks ago, meets regularly and those involved are finding it an encouragement to their faith. If you would like to participate then please speak to Sonia about it. It follows on from yesterday's comment and encourages us to listen for God's prompting and to act upon that.

### Saturday 31

As we reach the end of another month, help us to think of those in our lives we sometimes take for granted. Are there ways we can demonstrate to them how grateful we are for having them in our lives?

'Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.' 1 John 4 verse 7

### **Office Hours**

Tue, Wed & Fri 11:15am – 2:45pm