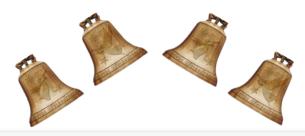
Marksman



December, 2024 / January, 2025





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Scottish Charity SC011210



From the Manse



As I write, it is a beautiful autumn day, with blue sky, only a few clouds, and sun which has been streaming in through my office window at such a low angle that earlier I had to draw a curtain to keep it out of my face. However, many of our autumn skies have been grey and dull which was certainly the case when I was on Iona. Seeing the sun today reminds me of God's love which is, like the sun, always there whether we feel it or not, and we can know that it is there, and hold to that knowledge, and await the time when we will feel it again.

My retreat on lona was a time for me to step back from the busyness of parish life and spend time with God. It was important to me to recognise that it was about choosing to spend that time with God out of all the other things I could have done with the time. It is a beautiful place; even in the rain and the mist, Iona is atmospheric, and there were a few moments when the cloud lifted, or the sun broke through the clouds which lifted our hearts. This was a guided week of reflection and contemplation led by a Christian mystic and contemplative minister called Stephen Wright, who lives and ministers in the Lake District. A time to spend with other likeminded people, none of whom I had met before, who came from Scotland, England, the Netherlands and the USA. We spent our time in quiet, in conversation, in walking, in stillness, in work and in worship. (When I say work, we all had daily tasks to contribute to the life of the community - my responsibility was cleaning the toilets or showers on one floor of the accommodation wing, others chopped vegetables, set tables, swept floors, and cleaned mirrors!) We lived in the quest accommodation at Iona Abbev. ate together in the refectory, and worshipped in Iona Abbey twice a day.

It was a blessed time, a fitting respite before the onslaught of the Advent and Christmas season, a time to recharge my physical and spiritual batteries ready for the time ahead. I came away with a thick book, to read, reflect on and work through as I continue to explore Heartfulness, the way of Contemplation.

I look forward to returning to Iona in September, 2025 with a small group from St Mark's to share in the wonder of that 'thin place' where God feels so close. It's not too late for you to join us. Please let me know if you are interested.

In the meantime, I am gearing up for Advent, and Christmas and all that they entail. A full list of our services is below. Can I highlight the Let us remember Bereavement Service on the 1st December at 4pm, to remember those whom we have loved and lost for a while. Anyone is welcome, at this and any of our services. For the two Sundays after Christmas we will be joining together with the folk of Sherwood Greenlaw Church. On Sunday 29th I will lead worship at Sherwood Greenlaw and I hope you will join me there. On 5th January the two congregations will worship together again, this time in St Mark's and the service will be led by Rev. Tom Cant, who is the dad of our organist, Dawn, and current locum at Sherwood Greenlaw.

I look forward to spending Advent and then Christmas with you, as we look forward to and celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus.

Your friend and minister,

Sonía



Worship Matters

1st December 11am Communion

4pm Bereavement Service

8th December 11am Gift Service - gifts go to Renfrewshire Women's Aid

22nd December 11am Nativity

24th Dec 7pm Christmas Eve Family Service

(Carol singing begins 15 minutes before the service)

11.30pm Watchnight service

(Carol singing begins 15 minutes before the service)

25th Dec 10.30am Christmas Day Service

29th Dec 11am Joint Service at Sherwood Greenlaw led by Sonia

5th Jan 11am Joint Service at St Mark's led by Rev. Tom Cant

Let Us Remember Service

Sunday 1st December, 4pm.

A quiet, reflective service with hymns and prayers to remember those whom we have loved and lost.



Christian Aid Anniversary Service – 26 January, 2025

2025 will mark 80 years of Christian Aid. We will be remembering our history, looking towards the future and celebrating the unstoppable power of hope throughout the year. Our first event will be a special service at Paisley Abbey on Sunday, 26 January from 3:30pm. The Heart & Soul Swing Band and the Abbey Choir will lead us in worship, and the Rt Rev. Dr Shaw Paterson, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, will speak. Let us know if you plan to join us: edinburgh@christian-aid.org.

Session Report



All activities within the church seem to be operating well and we are grateful for all the helpers in the various organisations who lend their support to caring for our young folk and also the older generation.

I am mindful of the many in our congregation who work behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of many ventures: those who prepare the church flowers; those who contribute to the flower fund; those who help prepare all the tasty soups and produce for the café; those who tend the church garden areas; those who look after the heating and lighting; those who operate the screens during services; those who bid folks welcome on Sunday mornings; those who help with ROAR; those who do readings; those who fill in for Sonia for Sunday services and our Pastoral Care Team. We are indeed fortunate to have so many willing hands.

With this in mind, I am aware that so often the same faces do many of the above duties and I would be pleased if more members would consider offering their help in any capacity in which they may feel able.

We could do with some volunteers for door duty - only 6 times per year. We could do with help to sweep the church paths and keep them free of debris. We could do with help for the after-service teas on Sundays. The choir would also appreciate new members.

In the words of Lord Kitchener...Your Church Needs You.

Colin Reid (Session Clerk)



Sunday Duty Team Rota

DATE	TEAM	LEADER	DATE	TEAM	LEADER
DECEMBER			JANUARY		
01/12/2024	5	Mr A.Boyd	05/01/2025	2	Mr A. Taylor
08/12/2024	6	Dr C. Reid	12/01/2025	2	Mr A. Taylor
15/12/2024	6	Dr C. Reid	19/01/2025	3	Mrs C. Hair
22/12/2024	1	Mr J. Goodall	26/01/2025	3	Mrs C. Hair
29/12/2024	1	Mr J. Goodall			







TRASH

Trash has been going well over the past few months. Our numbers have been reduced with some of the young people saying they feel too old for it. There is a wee group of the older ones who are still keen to do something at the church outwith *Trash* and we are trying to work out what we do for them.

We still have a group of young people who come along very regularly. As usual there is some chill time and then a game altogether before turning to the bible study part of the evening. We still have a wide range of ages and maturities so we are creating bible study material that gives the young people the option to stay for an extended study or leave and go back to games. We have been studying the Sermon on the Mount with the young people over the past few months.

All the young people wanted to be a part of running the *Tearfund* quiz this year. This took place on Sunday 17th November and we raised £270 for *Tearfund*. Thank you to everyone who came along and supported the event.



The Junction Youth Café is a space for young people from P6 to S3 to come together and have fun with their friends and play some games together. Since the week-long *Junction* in the summer we have had to limit the number of young people coming along. We had over 70 different young people come along since October last year so needed to make sure they all didn't turn up on the same night.

We invited those who were coming regularly before the summer and those who came along to most of the summer nights. So, we have an active list of about 35 young people with a waiting list for everyone else.

The Junction started back in October and has had a few busy nights with 34 young people on the busiest night.



Messy Church is on the last Saturday of every month from 2pm to 3.30pm. Over the past few months we have been looking at stories from the Old Testament: Joseph, Daniel and Gideon.

In November we will have an Advent/ Christmas event and look at stories of Jesus in the New Year.

The number of people attending *Messy Church* has been down slightly since the summer, but we have clashed with other events and holidays. In October we had 31 people attend a fun afternoon.

The church has bought a subscription to Fischy Music so we will use some of their songs at *Messy Church*. These videos will be known to the young people as they use them in school.

Ralston Primary School



Since the summer, Sonia and I have been back into the school to take assemblies. We were looking at changes that we face in life and talked about the story of Saul, and how his life was changed by his encounter with Jesus.

I have started doing some maths work with some of the senior school and go in every Tuesday morning to work with groups of young people. Due to the success of *The Junction*, I already know most of the P7s which is very helpful for this work.

The school choir is coming down to the church for the *Pastoral Afternoon Tea and* the school will be down for their Christmas services.

Looking ahead into the new year, we will start to get organised for the Easter holiday club. If you are interested in helping out at the holiday club, please come and speak to me or Eileen.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for your continued support of me and the work I do at St Mark's.

Peter

→NOITULOVE

Since the beginning of September we have been exploring *The Armour of God.* We are working through the different pieces of armour: the *Belt of Truth*, the *Breastplate of Righteousness*, the *Shoes of Peace*, the *Shield of Faith*, the *Helmet of Salvation* and the *Sword of the Spirit.* To illustrate this, we have life-size cut-outs of the children with the armour attached. Come and see these in the large hall.

We realise that the way we teach the children in Evolution now may be quite different to how some of our members remember Sunday School. Should anyone wish to come and see and participate in what we do on a Sunday morning, just come and arrange a date. You will be most welcome!

As we move towards Advent we will be covering the Christmas story and preparing for our Nativity Service – A Not so Silent Night.

There is a relatively small group of leaders who ensure that Evolution runs throughout the year, including those who cover during the holidays, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their support, help and enthusiasm. They do a wonderful job to make Evolution both fun and instructive.

Thank you all for your support this year and the leaders and young people of Evolution would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas.

Ruth Forrest



Christmas (II)

The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be?
My God, no hymn for Thee?

My soul's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.

The pasture is Thy word: the streams, Thy grace Enriching all the place.

Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers Outsing the daylight hours.

Then will we chide the sun for letting night Take up his place and right:

We sing one common Lord; wherefore he should Himself the candle hold.

I will go searching, till I find a sun Shall stay, till we have done;

A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly, As frost-nipped suns look sadly.

Then will we sing, and shine all our own day, And one another pay:

His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine, Till ev'n His beams sing, and my music shine.







Flowers in Church

Ladies Delivering Flowers

01.12.24	Mrs Liz Morgan
08.12.24	Mr & Mrs Black
15.12.24	Mrs K. McLauchlan
22.12.24	Mrs R. McNeil
29.12.24	
05.01.25	Mrs N. Dryburgh
12.01.25	Mr & Mrs Tonner
19.01.25	Mrs E. Macdonald
26.01.25	Mrs I. Ritchie

01.12.24	Mrs A. Black	
08.12.24	Mrs K. McLauchlan	
15.12.24	Mrs M. Scobie	
22.12.24	Mrs M. Robin	
29.12.24	Mrs K. McLauchlan	
05.01.25	Mrs M. Currie	
12.01.25	Mrs A. Christie	
19.01.25		
26.01.25	Mrs E. Macdonald	



Sending Warmest Christmas and New Year wishes to all the people who kindly contribute to the work of our Church by donating and delivering the flowers after the Sunday service.

As we move forward to 2025, if there is anyone who would like to help with the Church Flowers, or fill the vacant weeks, please contact Kate, Isobel or June.





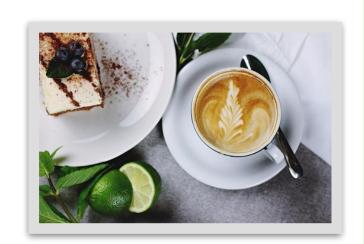
Dementia-Friendly Drop-In Café ('The Haven' from 2025)

St Mark's Church (2-4pm)

Future Dates

Thursday 19 December - Christmas Get Together

Thursday 23 January







Film Club

Thursday 5 December

1.45 - 4 p.m.

Home Alone





		DECEMBER, 2024
Sun	1	Today is the first Sunday of Advent (HOPE) and we come in anticipation as we look forward to the celebration of the birth of Christ, and as we commemorate the work of Christ through his death and resurrection during Communion. Pray for all who attend the Annual Bereavement Service this afternoon.
Mon	2	Pray for the Guild today as they meet. Our streets for prayer this week are Crookston Drive, Dalfoil Court and Darvel Crescent. Remember all who live there.
Tue	3	Our Kirk Session meets this evening. Again, we ask that we come ready to do your will for us here in St Mark's. International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
Wed	4	Midweek service this morning. Prayer Groups on Zoom and in church, followed by Bible Study in church. Pray for the 39th A Brownies as they go on a visit to the Pantomime tonight.
Thu	5	Film Club today. May all who come along enjoy time of fellowship together. Pray for the young people who attend the Junction tonight.
Fri	6	Remember all the young lads who attend Anchor Boys, Junior Company and Senior Company this evening. Be with the leaders and helpers too.
Sat	7	Treemendous Event today. Pray for a good turnout from our community.
Sun	8	Pray for Sonia as she leads worship this morning and for the GIFT service. Help us to be generous in our giving to help those less fortunate. This is the second Sunday of Advent (PEACE). There will be a Virtual Tour of the Nativity with Shafik from the Holy Land at 3:30 today. Shafik guided several tours for our church visits. Pray for this ministry today.
Mon	9	Pray for the folk living in Drummond Drive, Duchray Drive and Dunchurch Road this coming week.
Tue	10	Human Rights Day – remember countries where people are denied their human rights and pray this would change.
Wed	11	Midweek service this morning. Prayer Groups on Zoom and in church tonight.
Thu	12	We ask that you bless all who prepare, all who volunteer and all who attend the Pastoral Afternoon Tea today.
Fri	13	We pray for all in the Property Team and for the work they do maintaining the church and manse. Thank you for their skills and talents.
Sat	14	Bible Study this morning on Zoom - last one this session.
Sun	15	We pray for Sonia in her preparations for this third Sunday of Advent (JOY).
Mon	16	Gartartan Road, Gartmore Road and Glasgow Road are our week's streets for prayer.
Tue	17	Pray for Meena and all who volunteer in the Café, and be with them as they meet and greet people coming in.
Wed	18	Midweek service this morning. Prayer groups on Zoom and in church followed by Bible Study in church – last for this session.



		DECEMBER, 2024
Thu	19	Our Presbytery Elder comes under our prayers this week. Bless her in the work she does.
Fri	20	Ralston School Service today in church. Pray that everyone who attends learns more of God's love through the birth of his Son.
Sat	21	In the busyness of Christmas activities, help us to take time to stop and remember we celebrate because of the birth of Jesus.
Sun	22	Today is our NATIVITY service. May we learn afresh the message of Christmas – the reason for the season. This is the fourth Sunday in Advent (LOVE).
Mon	23	We pray for all who live in Golf Drive, Hawkhead Road and Killearn Drive this week.
Tue	24	Christmas Eve Family Service at 7:00pm. Watchnight Service at 11:30pm.
Wed	25	Christmas Day Service at 10:30am.
Thu	26	Continue to keep our church worker in your prayers for all he is involved in – young folk, IT, worship input and much more!
Fri	27	We pray for those who find this time of year difficult and ask that they would experience your love and kindness through others.
Sat	28	We thank you for times of holiday and celebrations.
Sun	29	Pray for the joint services at Sherwood Greenlaw today with Sonia leading us. We pray that we enjoy the fellowship with one another and that we know God's blessing.
Mon	30	We pray for all who find themselves estranged from family or friends and ask your restoration for them.
Tue	31	As we reach the last day of 2024, we give thanks for the many blessings you have given us, individually and as a church family, over the past year. We pray for those who have had difficulties during the year and ask that you will strengthen and uphold them as they approach a new year. We know that you never change and that you are the same 'yesterday, today and forever.'



1st and 2nd East Rainbow Unit

The Rainbows started back in September with thirty girls aged 4-7 years old.

We had a visit on the 2nd of October from Lego Go Construct which was paid for using Tesco's Stronger Starts funding we had secured.

The girls had a blast and enjoyed letting their imagination go wild before trying to create the strongest shape.









We said a fond farewell to Aimee Duncan who, after many years of volunteering with us, has had to take a step back due to university and work commitments. Pink will be missed, and we wish her well on her next journey in life.

Some of the girls attended church parade in October and joined in with the hymns with gusto and tried to keep up with the actions.

In October we also had our Hallowe'en Fancy Dress Night with many colourful costumes under the theme of *Recycled*. One Rainbow came as a box of Macaroni. The girls had a chance to 'dook for apples' and got goodie bags on the way home.







November

Lots of badges were awarded including Family Tree, Recycling, Animal Lover, Health: Mind, Drawing, Book Lover and Construction.







We also had an evening all about healthy eating and this involved making edible faces.



2nd East Rainbows joined us last year on the 15th November as a temporary arrangement due to their unit leader's ill heath. In the summer this became a permanent arrangement.

St Mark's has gone from 46 Rainbow spaces for girls aged 4-7 to 30 and this will be reduced again in September, 2025.

If you think you could help the girls and are interested in supporting guiding, please register your interests at :

www.girlguiding.org.uk .

1st and 2nd East Rainbow Unit (Cont'd)

11 Rainbows made their promise and joined the guiding family at Rainbows and parents joined in this celebration for Bronagh, Eilish, Cailyn, Ella, Harper, Ava, Isabelle, Jessica C, Sophie C, Imogen, and Tilly.

Eilish McD transferred to us from another unit and received her Bronze Award.

Alba and Eilidh K received Silver Award.



Girls who have been in guiding received 1st Anniversary Badges:

Alba, Eilidh K, Laurie, Skye, Eilidh McQ, Ellie, Laurie, Bella, Daniela, Everly, Mia G, Summer, Mia D, Grace, Jessica F, Sophie C, Mollie.

2nd Anniversary

Charlotte

Waiting List 2025+

The Rainbow Waiting List for session 2025-26 is almost full as I must cap numbers due to the loss of volunteers to support a large unit.

We are now taking enquiries for 2026-27 start for Rainbows so, if you have a child starting school in 2026, it might be worth registering with the unit now.

www.girlguiding.org.uk/registermychild

Purple



39th A Paisley Brownies

Wednesday nights fly by and it is hard to believe that we are getting close to Christmas!

October was a very busy month for the Pack. One Saturday, 20 Brownies and 3 leaders joined 200 Brownies from across the County at RenFest. It was a fun-packed day at Parks Mains High School with lots of experiences for the Brownies. They tried out circus skills including juggling, stilt-walking and diabolo tricks. The giant inflatables were a big hit as were the fairground activities, including a teacup ride and an ice cream van. There was even a fun photo booth. Our thanks go to the County Organisers for helping the Brownies make memories.

The attendance at the Church Dedication service was very encouraging. Evie did a great job of carrying the Brownie flag and Beth read with confidence. It was also great that Beth, Evie and Freya were all presented with the highest award in Brownies – the Gold Award. Well done, Brownies!

We were finally able to invite parents and friends to join us for the presentation of lots of badges and certificates. This should have taken place in June but, due a sickness bug, we had cancelled. As well as the 3 Gold Awards mentioned above, we were also able to present Bronze Awards to Breagha, Charlotte C, Charlotte L, Esme, Kaie Macd and Maisie. Lauren achieved the Silver Award.

In September, we had lots of 'new starts' and they were ready to make their Promise. It was great to have this ceremony as part of our presentation night. We welcomed the parents of Alexa-Rae, Anna C, Aoife, Beth B, Bella, Charlotte Mac, Charlotte Max, Emily, Eve, Georgia, Leah and Poppy to this happy event.

We are delighted to welcome the latest girl to the waiting list for Girlguiding: Hedwig had a baby in October and Cora is now the youngest person on the Rainbow waiting list. (Next youngest is her sister, Faith!)

Many of the Brownies enjoy working on Interest Badges at home and they often share what they have been doing with the rest of the Pack.











Recently we have been able to award the following:

Tilly - Archaeology, Local History, Speak Out

Freya - Inventing

Keavagh – Charities, Dancing, Local History, Mindfulness

Katie Macd - Aviation

Jess - Mindfulness

To celebrate their time in Guiding, Felicity was awarded her 3rd Anniversary Badge

Anniversary Badge - 3 year - Felicity.

Plans are in hand to keep us busy till Christmas and this includes a trip to the Pantomime, Christmas crafts and taking part in the *Treemendous* event.

If you know of anyone (young person or adult) who would like to join Girlguiding, a warm welcome awaits them! (www.girlguiding.org.uk)

Christine Hair Brown Owl



A Date for Your Diary

Sunday 8th December (3.30-5.00pm)

Venue: St Mark's Church

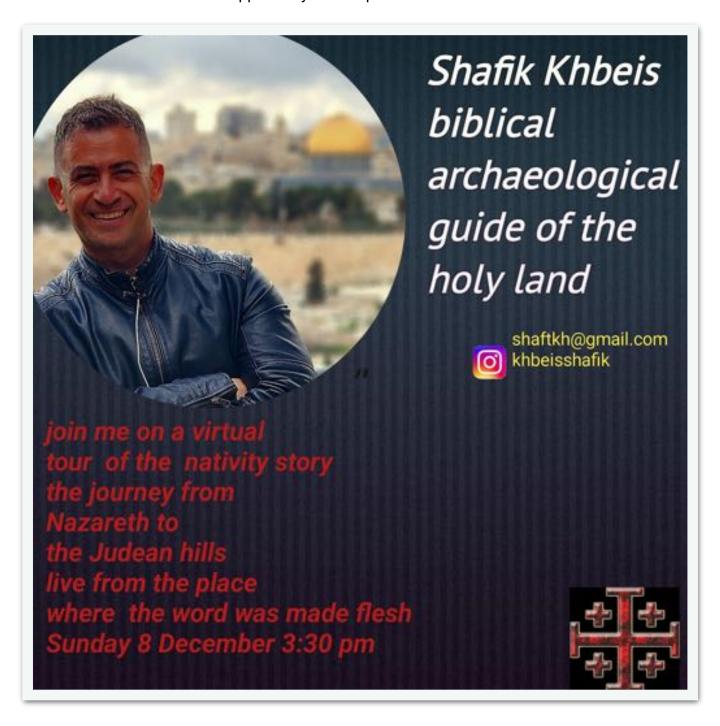
No charge with the opportunity to give a donation.

Tea and coffee will be served at the end.



Shafik, a local Guide known to us from previous visits to the Holy Land, will be talking about the Nativity Story with photos of the churches and scenery in Nazareth and Bethlehem. Shafik is very knowledgeable and an excellent speaker.

This will be a live link with the opportunity to ask questions.





		JANUARY, 2025
Wed	1	Pray for each other on the first day of 2025. May we each strive to walk closer to God and to experience his love and care as we move forward throughout the year.
Thu	2	For many people this is still a time of holiday and we ask that they are refreshed for the year ahead.
Fri	3	World Braille Day – pray for those who have poor vision, those who have lost their sight.
Sat	4	We pray that you would bring us hope in you for all that lies ahead.
Sun	5	Gladden our hearts as we come to worship You at the start of a New Year. Our joint service with Sherwood Greenlaw is held in St Mark's and is to be led by Rev. Tom Cant.
Mon	6	We bring the people living in Kinpurnie Road, Lanfine Road and Marchbank Gardens to you this week in our prayers.
Tue	7	We pray for Street Pastors who work at the weekends, that you will be with them and keep them safe as they seek to help those they meet.
Wed	8	Wednesday Prayer groups start up again on Zoom and in church.
Thu	9	Pray for refugees in our country and for those worldwide that they may see God's love in action.
Fri	10	Pray for local, national and worldwide governments that they may be honest and fair, and that they seek to do the best for those they lead.
Sat	11	We pray for Women's refuges, for places that help those with addiction, and for you to show us ways we can help.
Sun	12	As we come to worship this morning, fill us with a real sense of your presence with us. Help us worship you as we ought.
Mon	13	Netherdale Drive, Newtyle Road and Newnham Road are our streets for prayer this week.
Tue	14	We pray for the 39th Brownies as they meet each week.
Wed	15	Prayer groups on Zoom and in church.
Thu	16	The Junction meets tonight and again, pray for all who are coming along.
Fri	17	Remember all those who live alone, those who are unable to get out and about and those in Care Homes and Residential Homes.
Sat	18	As many people will have made resolutions at the start of this month, we pray that we would be resolved to read your Word more deeply, and to realise afresh the power of prayer, on our own and corporately.







		JANUARY, 2025
Sun	19	Be with Sonia this morning, and with the congregation in church or online, as we meet together to hear your word.
Mon	20	Pray for all in Oldhall Road, Ossian Avenue and Penilee Road this week. Guild today.
Tue	21	39 th Brownies meet tonight. Pray for the different teams that help in the work of the church – Pastoral, Administration, Worship, Green, Finance, Mission and Christian Education, Garden, and Café.
Wed	22	Prayer Groups tonight on Zoom and in church. 39th A Brownies meet this evening.
Thu	23	We remember the Haven Café today (formerly the Dementia-Friendly Café) as they meet for the first time this year.
Fri	24	International Day of Education — give thanks for the access we have in this country to education and pray for countries where this is poor or denied.
Sat	25	It is Messy Church this afternoon and we pray that everyone enjoys their time together and you bless this work.
Sun	26	As Sonia prepares and leads us in worship this morning, bless her and prepare us to listen to what you have to say to us. Pray for Christian Aid 80 th Anniversary Service at Paisley Abbey, at 3:30. Heart & Soul Swing Band and Abbey Choir will lead in worship. Rt Rev. Dr Shaw Paterson, Moderator of CoS will speak.
Mon	27	Please pray for the folk who live in Ralston Avenue, Roffey Park Road and Rosshall Avenue this week. International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Holocaust.
Tue	28	Pray for all the members, and adherents of St. Mark's and Sherwood Greenlaw. Be with the 39th Brownies this evening
Wed	29	Prayer Groups on Zoom and in church tonight.
Thu	30	Choir meets this evening – be with them as they practise and bless them. The Junction is on tonight. Remember leaders and those who attend.
Fri	31	Give thanks for God taking us through this first month and bringing us from the darker days to the promise of brighter days ahead.





How well do you know Paisley?

Answers to quiz in Oct/Nov edition.



Scots valley and small stream. Glenburn
 No light in the lobby. Blackhall
 Scots wall and sandbank. Dykebar

4. Famous racehorse's weight? Arkleston

5. Except Irish playwright bring car to rest. Barshaw Park

6. Almost tumble team. Falside

7. Pale low-lying meadow by river. Whitehaugh

8. Lake on farmland. Lochfield

9. Pursuer on the mound. Hunterhill

10. Swindled shape reportedly? Dunn Square

11. Sanctuary at hand. Abbey Close

12. Trade little island. Barterholm

13. Below copse. Underwood

14. Cleric's small farm. Priorscroft

15. Solitary conclusion. Lonend

With thanks to Old Paisley Society.











Please send articles for the Marksman to the editor at:

marksman@stmarksoldhall.org.uk

Contribution deadline for Feb / Mar edition: 12 noon, 16 January, 2025.