

Marksman

October / November, 2025



St Mark's Church of Scotland (Oldhall), Paisley

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Scottish Charity SC011210



From the Manse



Recently there have been two themes on my mind – beside the myriad of daily life and work details. The themes of celebration and of ‘face the fear and do it anyway’. There have been celebrations aplenty. Last Sunday, (as I write this), was our annual celebration of Harvest Thanksgiving, which I always love. I love autumn, the richness of the autumn colours, the productivity of the land, being able to ‘coorie in’ as the days grow colder and shorter. (The old Scots word which feels so apt to describe snuggling or nestling in to seek protection from the weather.) I’ve also helped families celebrate the lives of their loved ones. Funerals are, for me, usually as much about a celebration of the life of the person who has died, as much as a formality to mark their passing. I’ve been fortunate this far not to have to take the funeral of a child or young person, although I’m sure that time will come.

I was also blessed to recently celebrate a small, intimate, just close family wedding – the bride and groom not wanting to broadcast their desire to get married just now. (And, yes, that explains the confetti – all biodegradable – at the church front door.)

It was lovely to celebrate my first wedding in St Mark’s, and it made me smile when the bride whispered to me, “I didn’t think it would be so scary to walk down the aisle.”

That brings me to my second theme : ‘feel the fear and do it anyway’, and that applies to anxieties too. When we are placed in a difficult situation there are often two options open to us, the first to turn and flee, avoiding whatever difficulty lies before us, or alternatively to stand our ground and face it anyway. My bride didn’t really have much choice ; she wanted to get married, and in order to do so, she had to face her anxiety, swallow it down, and to walk down that aisle to her future husband – and at least she had her dad for support!

For myself, well, you probably have heard about my *Zip Slide the Clyde* adventure when my daughter and I traversed a 1.2km long, 100m high zipslide as a fund raiser for Glasgow City Mission – more info and photos coming as you read on. That was definitely a ‘face the fear and do it anyway’

experience. When the email came in offering the chance to sign up, my initial thought was ‘what a great opportunity’. Only once I had submitted my application did I start to think about what it would entail! Fortunately, we didn’t have to climb hundreds of steps to get up there – we were hoisted up as a group of 6 in a metal cage, and I didn’t have to step off the edge into the air – which was my greatest fear ; rather we were harnessed onto the line one at a time, instructed to sit down in our harnesses already suspended and then you simply lifted your feet and you were away. It was a great experience and now, having done it once, I would do it again.

Life is full of small and large celebrations, and big and small fears and anxieties and we have to decide how we approach each one of them. Sometime people fear the approach of a significant birthday, and don’t want to celebrate, choosing instead to try and forget all about it. We face some of our fears – like going to the dentist, and others we choose to step away from, avoiding situations and experiences that might enhance our lives if we just took the chance. It seems to me that in both situations we have the comfort of knowing our heavenly Father is with us, just as my bride had her dad’s arm to hold onto. Isaiah wrote, “Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God,” (Isaiah 41:10) and we can trust and know this to be true, even if we don’t feel God’s presence with us at the time.

Jesus said, “Do not be afraid,” in the Sermon on the Mount, to the disciples at the Transfiguration, to the women at the tomb, in the locked room after his Resurrection, and many more times too.

My prayer is that whether you are celebrating, or facing your fears and anxieties in the days and weeks ahead, you know God’s presence in your life, and you can trust in him.

Autumnal Blessings to you and your families,
Your friend and minister,

Sonia



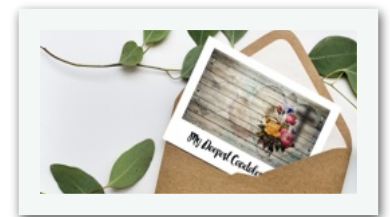
Worship Matters

Sunday 5 th October	Youth Dedication Service
Sunday 26 th October	Joint Service of Holy Communion with Sherwood Greenlaw (at St Mark's)
Sunday 9 th November	Remembrance Sunday (Service starts at 10.45am)
Sunday 16 th November	Safeguarding Sunday
Sunday 23 rd November	Joint service at Sherwood Greenlaw led by Sonia

Next Kirk Session meeting 28th October

Funerals

- 21st August Patricia (Pat) Goudie, Rotherwick Drive.
26th August Elizabeth Hogg, Canada, (Interment of Ashes).
28th August Richard Cumming, Southwold Road.
17th Sept John (Jack) Mathie, Marchbank Cres.



Choir



Rehearsals have commenced on Thursday evenings, 7-8pm (just 60 minutes) in the church café. They are full of fun and laughter while also being really good for your health.

Rehearsals involve singing through the hymns for the forthcoming Sunday morning worship and also rehearsing a choir anthem and sometimes introit for the same service.

Due to Sonia's forward planning, these anthems and introits are usually rehearsed for several weeks prior to worship so are quite familiar to the choir members by the time of public singing.

There is no requirement to read music. The only requirement is to come along and have fun while worshipping our Lord and Saviour.

Please do consider joining us, even for one week to have a try. It is good fun and also good for your health in so many ways.

Singing is a proven mood booster, and just 5 minutes a day will do the trick, according to research by the British Academy of Sound Therapy. As well as releasing feel-good endorphins, singing engages abdominal muscles, stimulates circulation and helps us to breathe more deeply, which can bring relief to some long-term lung conditions. Further research has also proved that singing can aid breathing issues caused by long COVID.

Dawn Hope

Session Report



At our recent session meeting, we had an update from Peter Blair, our church worker, on what he would like to do for the young people in the church. As you are aware, he ran, along with a team of helpers, a *Summer Club* which attracted over 50 youngsters over the week and he also helps organise our *TRASH* and *JUNCTION* groups, again with some willing helpers. In addition, he prepares the monthly *Messy Church* activities and has a waiting list of children who would like to take part in our activities. We pray for success in his ventures.

As I have said several times, we have an excellent group of people who help run the many happenings in our church : those who do readings ; those who man the communication board ; those who help with Brownies, Guides, BB company and Anchor Boys ; those who volunteer in the café ; those who help with after- service teas ; those who run The Haven ; those who help with Ralston Seniors Group ; those who prepare the food and soup for the café ; the Pastoral Care Team ; the

elders who do their visits ; the welcome teams on our doors ; those who look after the grounds ; the maintenance experts ; the supplies organiser ; the heating controller ; the magazine editor ; those who deliver Christmas gifts and flowers ; those who bring the immobile to worship and those who are volunteering to cover for our cleaner Gillian who is currently on sick leave.

Progress is slow with our upcoming union with Sherwood/Greenlaw, but we hope soon for a positive update. We wish a successful trip to Iona for Sonia and visiting group.

Do you have 2 minutes free per day? That would make 60 minutes in a month. Could you use that 60 minutes to get involved in even one of our many activities ?

Please think about it and get back to me or through the church office.

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU!

Colin Reid - Session Clerk



Sunday Duty Team Rota

DATE	TEAM	LEADER	DATE	TEAM	LEADER
05/10/2025	3	Mrs C. Hair	02/11/2025	5	Mr A. Boyd
12/10/2025	4	Mr G. Black	09/11/2025	6	Dr C. Reid
19/10/2025	4	Mr G. Black	16/11/2025	6	Dr C. Reid
26/10/2025	5	Mr A. Boyd	23/11/2025	1	Mr J. Goodall
			30/11/2025	1	Mr J. Goodall

Peter's News

Towards the end of the summer school break, I spent some time reflecting on my work here and the wider work of St Mark's Oldhall. I was inspired to reflect after reading the quote : "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God" in the first page of the bible gifted to St Mark's in 1937. I asked myself the question, "What great things am I, or are we as a church, attempting for God?"

With that question on my mind, I have also been thinking about how do we best serve the needs of the young people, families and everyone else of our church and wider community? I shared some of this with the Kirk Session and asked for people to pray about the work we do here. I certainly do not have all the answers, but by sharing with Session, I have been encouraged by how quickly plans can form.

There are a few age groups that I would like to see if we can provide more for. Some immediate ideas were: we had a lot of children sign up for *Holiday Club* so there is an opportunity to do a *Children's Club* more regularly than once a year; I think we could provide a *Parent and Child Group* one morning a week; providing something more for older teens/ early 20s. There are many opportunities for mission and discipleship. It is just seeking God's guidance on what we do and how we do it.

On the last week of the school holidays we ran the *Junction Youth Café* for P6 to S3. It was a busy week with a lot of young people and a lot of energy and enthusiasm about the place. We had an average attendance of 34 people with 39 there on the busiest day and a total of 50 young people coming along. From those 50, 22 had never been to the *Junction* before with the majority being in P6. The difficulty we have with this is that we currently don't have space for them to come along to the fortnightly *Junction* that runs through the whole year. How we best provide for these young people is something that I am currently looking at.

Sonia and I have been in at the school taking our first assemblies of the year. The school did a collection for the Foodbank and we were in talking about Harvest. I spoke to the P7 teachers and they are keen for me to come back into the school to do weekly maths work with the P7s, so that will be starting soon.

TRASH has also restarted after the summer holidays with a group of five young people. We are going to try different styles of teaching to best meet the young people that we have.

Messy Church has gone well the past few months with a few busy sessions. Over the next few sessions, we are going to be looking at some Old Testament stories: Noah, Abraham, Esther before we turn to Advent in November.

There are plenty of opportunities to serve within the children's/ youth/ family's work of the church. For our monthly *Messy Church* there is a rota so you could do as often or little as you want – or even be on a reserved list if we are short of helpers. For the *Junction*, you could run our tuck shop for an evening or get involved in what the young people are doing. If we start a *Babies and Toddlers Group* or a *Children's Club*, we will need some help with these. Offering help at any of these does not tie you in for ever and you can help as you want. Please speak to me if you are interested in helping at any of these; to Ruth, Eileen or Jen if you are interested in helping on a Sunday morning at *Evolution* or to the youth organisation leaders if you are interested in helping there.

We serve a Great Big God, as the song says, who is in control of the world. So, we can pray with boldness for what he is leading us, and the church, to do. We should "expect great things **from** God" as we "attempt great things **for** God."

God bless,
Peter

Prayer Diary



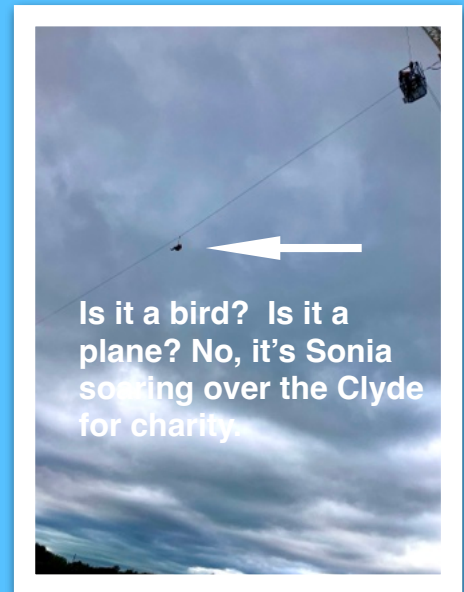
		OCTOBER, 2025
Wed	1	Prayer Group on Zoom and in church tonight, followed by Bible Study in church. International Day of Older Persons.
Thu	2	We pray for the Flower Team and the ministry they provide, bringing comfort and cheer to many.
Fri	3	Our prayers are for the Anchor Boys, and Boys' Brigade as they meet this evening.
Sat	4	Pray for our Local Community, for the Community Council, and for all the businesses in the area.
Sun	5	Pray for Sonia this morning as she brings us God's word. May we come ready to hear and share in worship. Youth Dedication Service today. Brownies hope to attend.
Mon	6	Guild starts up again today. Pray for all who attend that they will be blessed and enjoy the fellowship together. Pray for all who live in Drummond Drive, Duchray Drive and Dunchurch Road.
Tue	7	Pray for 39 th Brownies this evening as they meet, for the girls and for the leaders and helpers.
Wed	8	Prayer Group on Zoom and in church tonight.
Thu	9	World Mental Health Day. Remember all who help in our Green Team, keeping grounds tidy, reusing, reducing and recycling where they can.
Fri	10	Thanks to all who have made the Ralston Seniors Group possible, and we pray for leaders, volunteers and all those who come along to enjoy time and fellowship together.
Sat	11	Bible Study on Zoom this morning.
Sun	12	Our service this morning in church and online. We pray for all who attend or watch that they may be blessed by your Word.
Mon	13	Remember those who live in Gartartan Road, Gartmore Road and Glasgow Road this week.
Tue	14	We remember other folk who use our buildings and pray for them as they meet on different days throughout the week.
Wed	15	Mid week worship services begin again today at 11:00a.m. All welcome. Prayer Group on Zoom and in church tonight, followed by Bible Study in church. Pray for the 39 th A Brownies as they meet tonight and be with all who lead, help and attend.

Prayer Diary



		OCTOBER, 2025
Thu	16	Give thanks for all who are in our Worship Team and for the part they play in our services throughout the year. Bless them as they serve in this way.
Fri	17	Take time at the end of the week to reflect on the days gone by and give thanks to God for all He has done for you.
Sat	18	We pray for all who are struggling with life in diverse ways, in our own country and throughout the world.
Sun	19	We pray for the young people who attend today. May they learn more about you and your love for them.
Mon	20	Our streets for prayer this week are Golf Drive, Hawkhead Road and Killearn Drive.
Tue	21	We remember all those in our congregation who are in Care Homes and Residential Homes. May they know your presence with them and be cared for lovingly and well.
Wed	22	Mid week worship service this morning at 11:00a.m. Prayer Group on Zoom and in church tonight.
Thu	23	Our Pastoral Team serve in many ways, some seen and many unseen. Thank you for the care and love shown to many in a variety of ways. The Haven meets this afternoon in the café.
Fri	24	United Nations Day.
Sat	25	Bible Study on Zoom this morning. Pray for all involved in Messy Church this afternoon.
Sun	26	Joint Communion Service this morning with Sherwood Greenlaw in St Mark's. May we come ready to give thanks to God for the sacrifice of his Son, and may we enjoy fellowship together.
Mon	27	Kinpurnie Road, Lanfine Road and Marchbank Gardens come under our prayers for the week.
Tue	28	Kirk Session meets this evening in the Sanctuary. 39 th Brownies hope their new Brownies will make their Promise tonight.
Wed	29	Mid week worship service this morning at 11:00a.m. Prayer Group on Zoom and in church tonight, followed by Bible Study in church.
Thu	30	We are grateful for the financial talents of the Finance Team and give thanks they are working to use our resources wisely and for your kingdom.
Fri	31	Remember Sonia on her Street Pastors Patrol this evening. We thank you for the work she and many others do to bring your love to others in this practical way.

Sonia and Christina Soar High for Glasgow City Mission



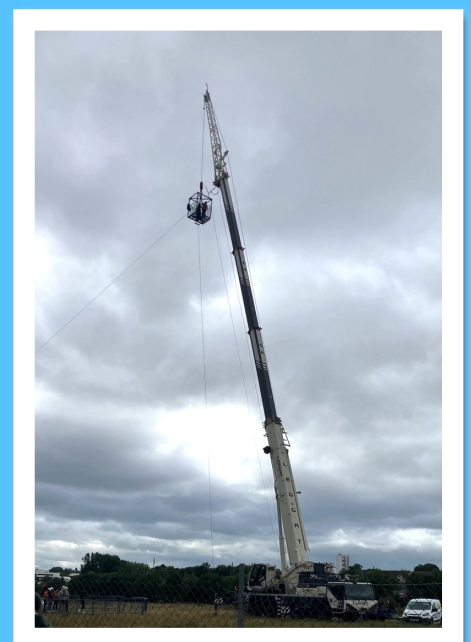
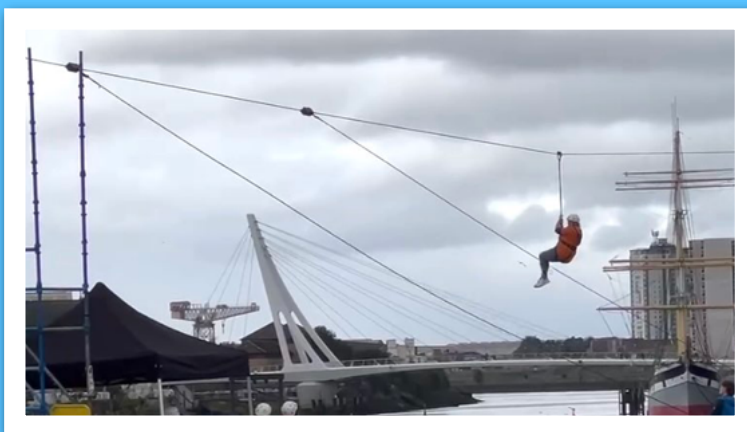
On Friday 29th August, my daughter Christina and I went to the Riverside Museum to 'Zip Slide the Clyde'.

The 1.2km zipslide started 100m up in the air, and we were hoisted up to the start point in a metal cage, then, one at a time, let loose to go along the zip slide to reach ground point, passing over the Clyde in the process.

Thank you to everyone who supported us, in person and by making donations.

We raised the amazing sum of £2290.

This is a fantastic sum and will help Glasgow City Mission keep on with the vital work they do, in God's name with the poor and destitute and homeless in Glasgow.



A Local Christian Bookshop

Galilee Books,
36 Battlefield Rd,
G42 9QH
07475 546945
Info@galileebooks.co.uk



Galilee Books opened last year, and it is run by Miriam who used to work at Wesley Owen/Faith Mission in Glasgow, and her husband, Malcolm.

They have a wide selection of Christian books and study material for all stages of Christian life. They support churches with a 10% discount on orders of more than 5 books/bible study guides. They also sell Christian cards, bookmarks, plaques, and other keepsakes.

They will also supply a book stall for specific events which I'd like to use at some point.

I hope to get over there sometime to see them, but thought I'd share the info with you all. We have missed having a Christian Bookshop in Glasgow and it would be good to support this one. You can follow them on Facebook too.

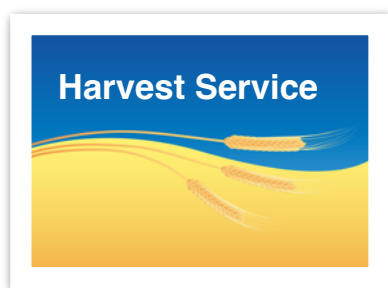
Sonia

Guild



The Guild will be starting on Monday 6 October 2025 at 2.00pm. I look forward to seeing you then and if you haven't been before come along. We have a varied programme and you can be guaranteed a warm welcome.

Irene Stirton
Guild Secretary



Thank you for your generous giving to the Foodbank at the Harvest Service. A remarkable 275Kg of food and £453 in cash were donated.

2nd East Rainbows



I am pleased to announce that I will be restarting the 2nd East Rainbows which resume after the October school holidays on Tuesday 21 October, meeting in the Small Hall from 6 pm till 7 pm.

Rainbows welcome all girls from 4 to 7 years old for play, learning and tons of fun in a colourful, safe space.

I already have some girls on the list for starting, but if you know anyone looking to start their daughter, please ask them to register on *Girlguiding* and I will get in contact.

I will be having a meeting for parents and new Rainbows on Tuesday 7th October at 6pm so

they can meet me together with Neala and Rhian who will be helping me.

I have over 30 years of leader experience within the 39th Paisley Guides and also have helped run the 2nd East Rainbows previously.

As with every organisation, we are always keen to welcome new volunteers so if you or someone you know might be interested in getting involved in any of our units that meet at St Mark's, please register on *Girlguiding* to volunteer.

Yours in Guiding,
Karen Sheils

39th Paisley Brownies (Tuesday)

We welcomed the girls back from their summer break, and have been joined by six Rainbows moving up to join us, as well as one girl who is joining Girl Guiding for the first time. We are a healthy number for the year, and we know that we'll have three girls continuing on their Guiding journey come the New Year.

We have chosen a Challenge Badge around *The Countryside Code*, alongside our Explore Skills Builders, and will be introducing some of the new Interest Badges which dovetail neatly with both the Challenge and the Skills Builder.



We have access to lots of free resources about the Countryside, and are delighted that these also feature *Shaun the Sheep*, which will also make it interesting for the girls.

Our new Brownies will also be working on their Pre-Promise activities, and we hope they will make their Brownie Promise towards the end of October.

The Brownies and their families have been invited to the Rededication Service on 5th October and, looking to the end of the year, we have the Pantomime booked already. There is also a GirlGuiding cinema visit to look forward to at ODEON cinema. This year it is *Zootropolis 2*. We also plan to take part in the Hallowe'en Parade in Paisley again.

Lots to keep us busy.

Sheena Tonner,
Brownie Leader

39thA Paisley Brownies

Wednesday evening madness has returned! We have welcomed 7 new starts and the hall is noisy with 33 Brownies with lots of energy! We have been spending the first few weeks in several 'getting to know you' activities and looking at the Brownie Promise and Law. We hope to welcome some parents to join us in October as the new Brownies will be making their Promise.

Next month, we plan to begin working on *Reflect* and *Network* Skill Builders as part of *Know Myself* theme.

Our session started with an exciting adventure as 24 of the Brownies and 4 leaders joined 4500 Girlguiding members from across Scotland at *Roar and Explore* in Blair Drummond Safari Park.

The weather was rather mixed and we got wet a couple of times, but it did not dampen the Brownies' spirits. Apologies to parents for sending them home with dirty feet as they ran about the inflatables in bare feet!



At the end of every meeting, there seems to be more badges to be given to the Brownies. The first few weeks back have been no different.

Eve and Tilly completed Girlguiding Scotland *Summer Challenge* and received the *Up in the Air* badge.

Eve also completed the *Painting* badge.

We have also had several Anniversary badges issued.

Anniversary Badge

- 1 year : Bella D
- 2 year : Bella H, Eilidh, Jess, Daniela, Leah, Mia and Summer
- 3 year : Alexa-Rae, Anna, Beth, Charlotte Max, Charlotte McN, Emily and Georgia
- 4 year : Esme, Maisie and Tilly
- 5 year : Charlotte L

Plans are in hand to keep us busy till Christmas and this includes a trip to the Pantomime. 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

24th Paisley Boys' Brigade

We have just celebrated harvest in both the Church and the Company. The Anchors made delicious looking scarecrow biscuits which I am sure were popular with parents if they got that far. Meanwhile, the Juniors enjoyed munching through delicious, locally grown apples while we discussed the importance of appreciating things we take for granted, like food and the people involved in getting it to us, including farmers and shop assistants.

Harvest and the changing seasons brings to mind how the company itself continues to evolve. We were delighted to welcome a healthy number of new P1 boys to the Anchors. They will undoubtedly bring a freshness to the section and keep the leaders on their toes. It is reassuring to see numbers coming in at the younger age range as we see others moving on through the different sections with some moving from Anchors to Juniors and others moving up to the Company Sections from the Juniors. Mr Houston and the Company staff made sure there was continuity through the summer break this year with a few informal fun activities. They had a movie night in the large hall and enjoyed pizza and a few challenging games on other occasions. The boys promoted to the Company Section are therefore already well embedded in the section even just a few weeks in.



At the older end of the age range, Ben Macfadyen was awarded his President's Badge by the Accord Chief Executive and now joins Callum Potts and Fraser MacGregor working towards their King's Badges. Angus McCartney will be formally presented with his King's Badge at a Civic Reception in late September, but he is already wearing the officer's white shirt uniform as he takes on more responsibility within the company. Seems like just yesterday he was an Anchor Boy.



The new boys joining and others progressing highlights just how much change we all experience and at a time of significant change for both St Mark's and the 24th Paisley Company it is good to remember that we still have a constant. God remains constant. Jesus himself tells us this (*Matthew 28:20*) : "And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." That's a real encouragement.

Jack Goodall (Company Captain)



Safeguarding



Hi, I'm Eileen.

I am the Safeguarding Co-ordinator for St Mark's Church and my role is to ensure that everyone who comes along to the church and everyone who works or volunteers in the church stays safe.

We, as a church, therefore follow the practices of the Church of Scotland contained in the statement below:

(Relating to the protection of children and young people and vulnerable adults in the Church. Adopted by the General Assembly, May 1997.)

"The Church of Scotland has a deep concern for the wholeness and well-being of each individual. It seeks to safeguard the welfare of all people, regardless of age, who come into contact with the church and its organisations. It is the responsibility of each individual within the fellowship of the church to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people and the vulnerable."

St Mark's Church has a Zero Tolerance Policy to any form of abuse. Consequently, it is my responsibility to ensure that those who work with children and vulnerable adults are part of the *Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG)* Scheme. This involves assisting volunteers/paid workers to complete the correct paperwork, at the end of which they receive a PVG Certificate and are added to our Safeguarding Register.

I also keep the Safeguarding Register up to date and organise any relevant training sessions.

Please feel free to contact me on the email address below if you have any questions or concerns:

Safeguarding@stmarksoldhall.org.uk

Eileen Wilkie

Prayer Diary



		NOVEMBER, 2025
Sat	1	Give thanks for our National Health Service despite many difficulties and cutbacks. We are blessed to be able to access medical care when so many areas of the world are faced without such provision.
Sun	2	We pray for Sonia as she has prepared for our service today, and ask that you bless her and her family. May we come with hearts ready to hear your word for us.
Mon	3	Netherdale Drive, Newtyle Road and Newnham Road are our streets for prayer.
Tue	4	Pray for Peter as he seeks to know the ways to develop mission and discipleship within St Mark's.
Wed	5	Mid week worship service this morning at 11:00a.m. Prayer Group on Zoom and in church this evening.
Thu	6	Give thanks for the Christian Education Team who seek to develop and disciple us in our walk with you.
Fri	7	We continue to keep our Café in our prayers and remember Meena and the volunteers that help to serve the community.
Sat	8	Bible Study this morning on Zoom.
Sun	9	Remembrance Sunday. Be with Sonia as she leads this service today. World Toilet Day – remember that you can speak to Dawn re twinning a toilet.
Mon	10	Keep Oldhall Road, Ossian Road and Penilee Road in your prayers this week coming.
Tue	11	We bring the Guild to you in prayer again this week and ask that you will continue to be with all who come along. Remember the Leaders of 39 th and 39 th A Brownies each week and that the girls enjoy coming along and taking part in activities.
Wed	12	Mid week worship service this morning at 11:00a.m. Prayer Group on Zoom and in church this evening, followed by Bible Study in church.
Thu	13	We pray for our Elders and ask that you would bless them, encourage them in their faith and help them support and strengthen the faith of those in their care.
Fri	14	Pray for Sonia today and tomorrow as she chairs the Church of Scotland Annual Safeguarding Conference.
Sat	15	Remember those who are in our emergency services, for their safety in difficult situations. Pray for the Safeguarding Conference today.

Prayer Diary



		NOVEMBER, 2025
Sun	16	Today is our Safeguarding Service. Be with Sonia and all who participate in worship. Also pray for the other churches who use our buildings on Sunday afternoons, that you will bless their work and all who attend.
Mon	17	It's Ralston Avenue, Roffey Park Road and Rosshall Avenue for our weekly prayers.
Tue	18	There are many folks in our community who are lonely or alone and we pray your blessing on them. Help us play our part in getting alongside them where we see that need.
Wed	19	Mid week worship service this morning at 11:00a.m. Prayer Group on Zoom and in church this evening.
Thu	20	World Children's Day. Pray for Dawn and the Choir, for their time together at practices, and as they help lead worship on Sundays. We pray that they would be conscious of your Spirit helping us to worship as we ought. The Haven meets this afternoon in the café.
Fri	21	We pray for joint working with Sherwood Greenlaw Boys' Brigade that you would help them find positive ways of coming together.
Sat	22	Bible Study this morning on Zoom.
Sun	23	Joint Service at Sherwood Greenlaw this morning, led by Sonia. Pray for all who meet together and bless our time together.
Mon	24	Rotherwick Drive, School Road and Southwold Road are our streets for prayer this week.
Tue	25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
Wed	26	Mid week worship service this morning at 11:00 a.m. Prayer Group on Zoom and in church this evening, followed by Bible Study in church.
Thu	27	Give thanks for the time given and work done by Stuart editing the <i>Marksman</i> and for all who contribute.
Fri	28	Remember Sonia on Street Pastors Patrol this evening, that she and her colleagues will be kept safe and that they can show your love to those they meet.
Sat	29	Pray for all involved in Messy Church this afternoon.
Sun	30	This is the First Day of Advent as we look forward to celebrating the coming of our Lord and Saviour. Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare

Social Committee



Harvest Bring and Share Lunch



THANK
YOU

We enjoyed another fantastic *Bring and Share Lunch* after our *Harvest Service*. It is always a pleasure to spend time together in fellowship while sharing a meal.



Ralston Community Games

A big thank you to all who contributed to our baking stall at the *Ralston Community Games*. Through your generosity, we were able to raise a fantastic amount of money (£550) for church funds. Also thank you for a sterling job done by our volunteers in the tea room who kept the visitors to the games fed and watered.



SAVE THE DATE

06.12.2025

TREEMENDOUS
CHRISTMAS TREE
EVENT



ANNUAL TREEMENDOUS CHRISTMAS TREE
DECORATION EVENT.

BAKING, CRAFTS AND COMMUNITY GROUP
STALLS, TEAS/COFFEE AND CAKE.

The Pomegranate



The pomegranate which ripens between August and November is a fruit with lots of symbolic associations across different cultures and at different times in history. It has represented many things, including abundance and fertility, even death and new beginnings.

In ancient Greece and Rome, it was associated with the goddesses of love and marriage. In the Persephone myth, for example, the pomegranate seeds she eats in the Underworld bind her to Hades and symbolise her transition from the world of the living to that of the dead. Here, the association is therefore also with power, protection, marriage, regeneration and even deception.

The pomegranate has been held sacred in many of the world's major religions and some ancient cultures - for example Sumerian - believed that eating the seeds allowed souls to become immortal.

It appears in both Jewish and Christian traditions, with some believing it to be the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, or even associating it with 613 seeds representing the 613 commandments in the Torah and so Jewish families will often eat them during Rosh Hashanah (New Year). It is mentioned in the Song of Songs (6:7): "Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate."

The heavenly paradise of the Koran describes four gardens with shade, springs, and fruits—including the pomegranate.

Legend holds that each pomegranate contains one seed that has come down from paradise. Pomegranates have had a special role as a fertility symbol in weddings among the Bedouins of the Middle East. A fine specimen is secured and split open by the groom as he and his bride open the flap of their tent or enter the door of their house. Abundant seeds ensure that the couple who eat it will have many children.

In Iran the fruit is eaten on the Winter Solstice (Yalda) to celebrate light's triumph over darkness and is therefore associated with renewal and hope. It is also one of the three blessed fruits in Buddhism.

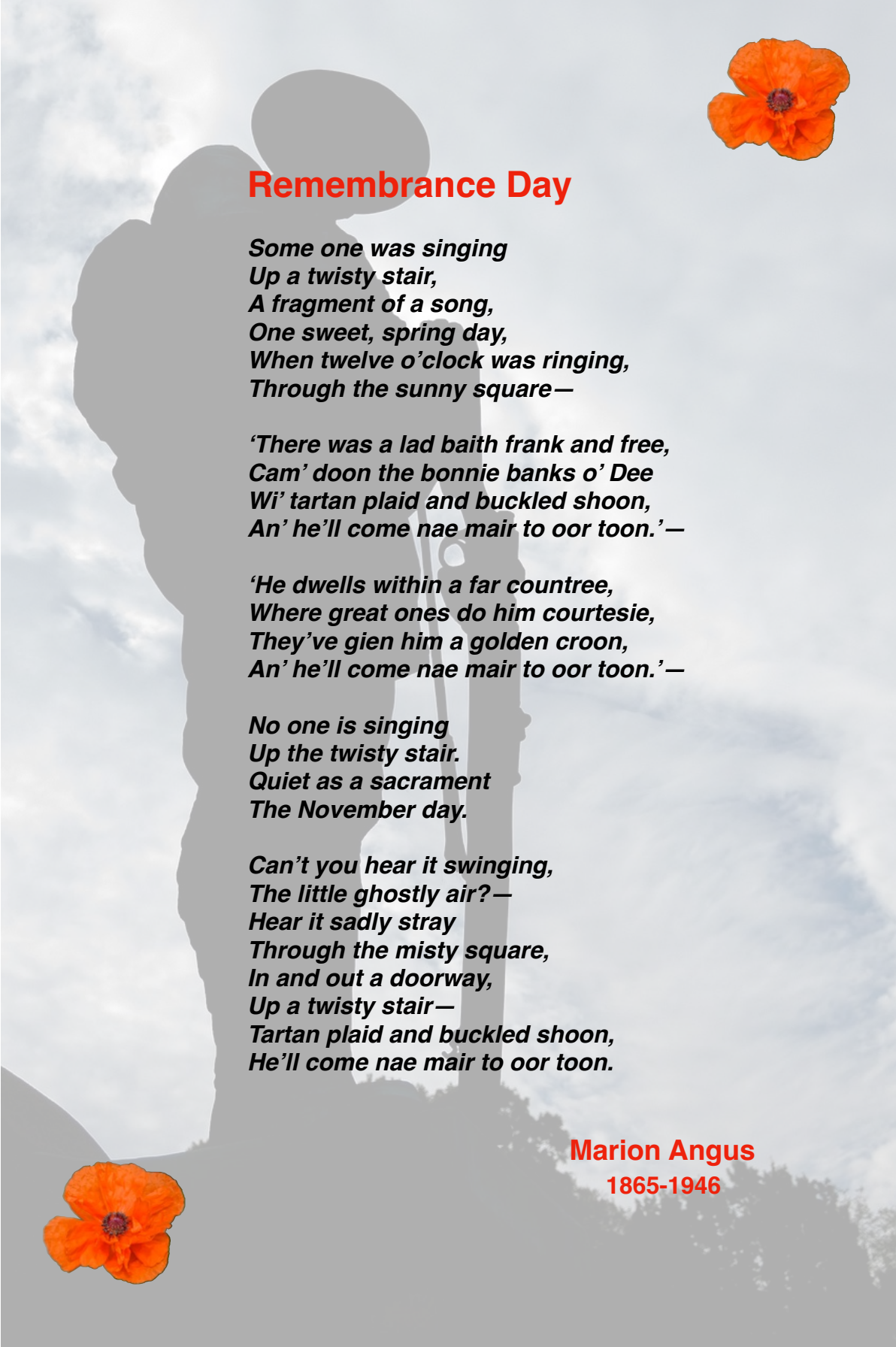
It features in lots of religious artworks, often in depictions of the resurrection of Jesus.

It also has been revered for its medicinal properties and preparations of different parts of the plant have been used to treat a variety of conditions. It is rich in antioxidants, has anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial properties and some studies have also shown that it may even have anti-cancer effects, particularly against prostate and breast cancers. It has been used to help protect against heart disease, reducing plaque build-up in arteries, improving blood flow and lowering blood pressure. Additionally, it has been used to improve digestive health for example in the treatment of diarrhoea and has helped support urinary health.

No wonder then that it features in the official coat of arms of the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Physicians (London).

***Sweet be their sleep now wherever they're lying
Far though they be from the hills of their home.***

from *Lament for the Lads* by Neil Munro (1864-1930)



Remembrance Day

***Some one was singing
Up a twisty stair,
A fragment of a song,
One sweet, spring day,
When twelve o'clock was ringing,
Through the sunny square—***

***'There was a lad baith frank and free,
Cam' doon the bonnie banks o' Dee
Wi' tartan plaid and buckled shoon,
An' he'll come nae mair to oor toon.'*—**

***'He dwells within a far countree,
Where great ones do him courtesie,
They've gien him a golden croon,
An' he'll come nae mair to oor toon.'*—**

***No one is singing
Up the twisty stair.
Quiet as a sacrament
The November day.***

***Can't you hear it swinging,
The little ghostly air?—
Hear it sadly stray
Through the misty square,
In and out a doorway,
Up a twisty stair—
Tartan plaid and buckled shoon,
He'll come nae mair to oor toon.***

**Marion Angus
1865-1946**

Ralston Seniors Club

A new health & well-being club for senior residents is now up and running in Ralston – thanks to a new funding source, the support of local councillors and of St Mark's Church and the drive and determination of a dedicated group of volunteers.

The *Ralston Seniors Club (RSC)* will meet every Friday from 11:15 - 14:00 at St Mark's Church when it will offer a chair Zumba fitness class then a light lunch followed by entertainment. It will replace the popular *ROAR* Club which operated successfully in the Ralston area for 14 years.

Alan Smith, Chairman of *RSC*, explains: "Funding for the Ralston *ROAR* Club was withdrawn at the end of July – despite the club having once been described by *ROAR* as its 'jewel in the crown'.

"Rather than allow the club to stop completely, our members and volunteers embarked on a campaign to secure alternative funding, to enable the health and wellbeing club to continue independently.

"Funding has now been secured from the Paisley East Local Partnership, for which we are indebted to the support of Paisley North East & Ralston councillors Neill Graham, Graeme Clark and Jennifer Adam.

"We must also thank St Mark's Church who have embraced our club and are determined that it should thrive as part of its local community outreach."

The official launch on Friday 15th August saw 23 members take part in a chair Zumba class before enjoying a soup and sandwich lunch followed by musical entertainment.



There was also a cake-cutting event performed by Cath Shaw, one of the oldest members of the club and St Mark's Minister, the Rev. Sonia Blakesley.

Alan continues: "Our members and volunteers were devastated when we were informed of *ROAR*'s decision. The previous club meant so much to so many older people in the Ralston area. Our new club will offer support, well-being, enjoyment and inspiration; a weekly opportunity where friendship, fun and good health meet."

Membership is by application only and is open to all local residents over the age of 65. A nominal charge is payable each week on attendance.

Alan concludes: "It is no surprise that the majority of our current membership are previous members – such was the popularity of the club; but we already have one new member and one new volunteer. Volunteers are the life-blood of our club and we would encourage anyone interested to get in touch and come along and join us."

For all membership and volunteer enquiries, contact 07721 911 234 or : ralstonseniorsclub@stmarksoldhall.org.uk



Ralston Seniors Club

Where friendship, fun and good health meet.

Every Friday at St Mark's Church

11.15am – 2.00pm

Fitness
Support



Enjoyment
Inspiration

Health and Wellbeing

Membership Enquiries

Phone: [07721 911 234](tel:07721911234)

Email: ralstonseniorsclub@stmarksoldhall.org.uk

and leave your contact details.



*Take care of your body. It's the
only place you have to live.*

Jim Rohn 1930-2009

W E L L B E I N G

The greatest wealth is health.

Virgil 70-19 BC



The Haven

Drop-In Café

(for anyone living with dementia, including their families and friends)
in

Ralston Community Café
2 - 4 p.m.



Future Dates

Thursday 23 October

Thursday 20 November



Flowers in Church

05.10.25	Guides
12.10.25	Mrs C. Sinclair
19.10.25	Mrs P. Strachan
26.10.25	Mrs McCulloch Love
02.11.25	Guild
09.11.25	Dr Colin Reid
16.11.25	Mrs J. Forson
23.10.25	Mrs M. Currie
30.11.25	Mrs L. Morgan



Ladies Delivering Flowers

05.10.25	Mrs A. Christie	
12.10.25	Miss J. Chapman	
19.10.25	Mrs J. Dunsmore	
26.10.25		
02.11.25	Mrs K. McLauchlan	
09.11.25	Mrs I. McBride	
16.11.25	Mrs K. McLauchlan	
23.10.25	Mrs M. Adam	
30.11.25	Mrs A. Black	

Coin Collection

I would be grateful if you would please continue to donate to church funds the small change which weighs down your pockets and purses. This is usually 1p, 2p and 5p coins, but you can even donate your £1 coins if you wish!

Collect these in any bag, tin or box and leave in the church vestibule or church office, marked as 'Coin Collection'.

Thank you.

Margaret Adams



Please send articles for the *Marksman* to the editor at :

marksman@stmarksoldhall.org.uk

Contribution deadline for the next edition : 12 noon, 20 November, 2025.