

Marksman

October/November, 2026



St Mark's Church of Scotland (Oldhall), Paisley
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Scottish Charity SC011210



To the members and adherents of Sherwood Greenlaw and St Mark's (Oldhall) Church of Scotland.

On Sunday 27th September 2026 there will be a meeting for both the Congregations of Sherwood Greenlaw and St Mark's (Oldhall) to be held in their respective churches immediately after Morning Worship. The purpose of the meetings will be a congregational vote on the Basis of Union between Paisley: Sherwood Greenlaw and Paisley: St Mark's Oldhall as per the approved Presbytery Mission Plan.

In the case of Paisley: Sherwood Greenlaw, there will be a further vote on whether or not the Rev. Dr Sonia Blakesley should be appointed as the minister of the united charge. Rev. Dr Sonia Blakesley will lead worship at Sherwood Greenlaw Church on the said date.

The vote will be a paper ballot, overseen by representatives of the Presbytery of Clyde. Anyone whose name appears on the Members Roll or the Adherents Roll shall be entitled to vote. No-one else shall be entitled to vote. As per Church of Scotland policy there is no provision for a proxy vote or online voting for this meeting.

BASIS OF UNION

The congregation of Sherwood Greenlaw (SC007484) and the congregation of St Mark's (Oldhall), (SC011210) shall be united on a date to be determined by Presbytery, and that on the following terms and conditions:

1. **Name:** The name of the united charge shall be **Paisley: Barshaw Trinity** and SC011210 will be retained.
2. **Transference of Property and Funds:** The property and funds belonging to or held on behalf of each congregation shall belong to or be held on behalf of the united charge and any transference necessary shall be duly effected.
3. **Places of Worship:** The church at present used and occupied by the congregation of St Mark's (Oldhall), shall be the place of worship of the united charge. The church at present used by the congregation of Sherwood Greenlaw shall be sold, subject to the titles on which it is held, subject to the approval of the Presbytery and, if necessary, the General Trustees or the General Assembly. The free proceeds of any such sale or let shall: (a) if falling within the scope of the Church of Scotland General Trustees (Properties, Funds and Endowments) Act (Act V 2024) be credited to the benefit of the congregation in the Consolidated Fabric Fund; or (b) if not falling within the scope of the said Act, be held and applied for fabric purposes in connection with the properties of the congregation.
4. **Territorial Responsibility:** The bounds to be served by the united charge shall be designated as the bounds of the parishes of Sherwood Greenlaw and St Mark's (Oldhall), or as the Presbytery shall determine.

To the members and adherents of Sherwood Greenlaw and St Mark's (Oldhall) Church of Scotland.

5. **Kirk Session:** The elders of both Kirk Sessions shall form with the minister the Kirk Session of the united charge.
6. **Congregational Management:** The temporal affairs of the united congregation shall be administered by the Kirk Session in terms of the Unitary Constitution.
7. **Minister:** The Rev. Dr Sonia Blakesley, currently minister at St Mark's (Oldhall), shall be the minister of the united charge in terms of section 8.2 of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021).
8. **Manse:** The manse of the congregation of St Mark's (Oldhall) shall be the manse of the united charge.
9. **Ministerial Support:** The stipend of the charge shall be paid in accordance with the terms of the National Stipend Scheme.
10. **Power to Readjust:** While the articles and terms shall form the Basis of Union for the two congregations now uniting, the united charge shall be free, like other congregations, to adjust arrangements under the authority of Presbytery as need may arise.

We would encourage all members and adherents to attend and vote, if they are able, on this important decision for our churches.

Rev. Gordon Armstrong, Interim Moderator for Sherwood Greenlaw
Rev. Dr Sonia Blakesley, Minister of St Mark's (Oldhall)

10th September 2026

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel.

Philippians 1 : 27



From the Manse



Big events come along infrequently in any family's life. New babies, weddings, house moves - (not necessarily in that order!) When they occur, they are stand out moments, a special occasion apart from the activities of normal day-to-day life.

I have the delight of conducting two weddings this autumn, one for a bride I have known since she was a newborn baby, and I have had the joy of watching her and her sisters grow and develop into the young women they are today.

While I have been meeting with both of the young couples, we have been talking about their individual lives and the life together that they have been nurturing since they first met, and which they now want to cement by getting married. They have met, grown to like each other, shared interests, and then come to love each other and now want to commit their lives and their futures to each other. It is a joyous time for them and often for the family too, when two individuals become a couple, and share the highs and lows of life together.

Families are funny things, I have known times when the two mothers-in-law become best friends, and I have known times where the two families maintain a love-hate relationship with each other, neither side believing that the other's son or daughter is good enough for their own, and others merely tolerate the other for special occasions like a shared grandchild's birthday. I'm sure you have similar experiences in your own lives, and in the lives of those around you.

I've got to thinking how the union of two churches is like a marriage. Two church families coming together to make one new, bigger church family. Blending their activities, joining groups together, sharing committee work, deepening connections, one family with the other. Anticipating the future together where more can be done with the power of two working alongside each other.

On Sunday 27th September we will hold the congregational vote in which you, the congregation, along with the congregation of Sherwood Greenlaw will decide the path of our future. You will vote as to whether you want to see the union of these two churches go ahead.

This is our engagement where we commit to join together, which will later be cemented in the service of union (the marriage) which usually happens a few months later. During the engagement period the joint Kirk Sessions will map out how we think things will work, so that on the day after the union we all know what is going to happen: who is going to pay the bills; who will do the shopping; who will put the bins out.

Just as in a marriage, all these things and more need to be sorted out. We already know whose house we will be living in - ours, but SG will bring furniture and belongings and we will need to decide together who has the best tea set, and whose hymnbooks are to be kept, and where we will put it all. We will need to share out the jobs, and give out keys, and work out a new way of doing things, for this is not the people of SG moving in with St Mark's, but it will be the birth of a new congregation, the congregation of Paisley: Barshaw Trinity, which might do some of the things St Mark's did, and might look like St Mark's on the outside, but we will be a new blended church family. And that means everyone is involved, not just with the vote, but with getting on with new people, every auntie and every grandpa needs to talk to the other relatives at the family get-together, and build relationships with each other.

And, just like with a wedding, there is a gift list. We have the fruits of the spirit, gifts to us, given by God, given for us to share and to practise, gifts of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. God's grace and peace are gifts we need to share, and we do so with compassion, for people from SG are feeling hurt, experiencing loss and grief, not just over the loss of their building, but of the hopes and dreams they had for that building and their church's future.

However, as we love one another, and bear one another's burdens, and we serve each other and work together for the sake of God's mission here on earth, we will grow into deeper awareness of our unity as part of the body of Christ Jesus, who is our head, and our cornerstone.

I look forward to working with you all in the future Paisley: Barshaw Trinity,

Your friend and minister,

Sonia

Worship Matters



Sunday 27th September	Service led by Worship team, followed by Congregational meeting and vote on Union (Sonia Preaching at Sherwood Greenlaw)
Sunday 4th October	Youth Dedication Service
Sunday 11th October	Service led by Worship Team (Sonia on holiday)
Sunday 25th October	Communion
Sunday 1st November	Service of Baby Blessing
Sunday 8th November	Remembrance Service begins at 10.45am
Sunday 29th November	First Sunday of Advent
Sunday 6th December	11am Communion Service 4pm <i>Let us Remember</i> Bereavement Service

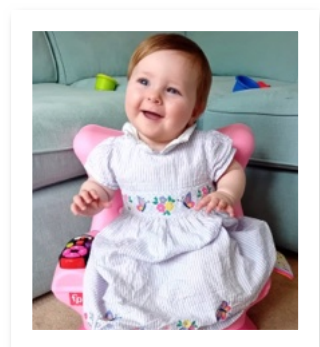
Funerals

30.7.26	Mary Brownlie, Marchbank Gardens
12.8.26	Bill Whyte, Dunchurch Road
13.8.26	Esma Higgins, Bocclair Care Home



Baptism

9.8.26	Lyla Victoria Phillips, daughter of Emma and Josh, sister of Nathaniel, all of Nutbourne, Chichester, granddaughter of John and Elaine Ritchie, of Lanfine Road.
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Kirk Session



Back Row : Stuart Burns, Gordon McLintock, Bob Pollock, Simone Smith, Myra McKellar

Third Row : Ken Dunsmore, Gavin Hair, Karin Grant, Sheena Tonner, Bob Tonner

Second Row : Graham Black, Sandy Fergusson, Christine Hair, Ruth Forrest, Andy Grant, Jack Goodall, Alan Taylor, Alistair Boyd, Mari Everett

Front row : Elizabeth Macdonald, Ann Black, Margaret Currie, Dr Colin Reid (Session Clerk), Rev. Dr Sonia Blakesley (Minister), Julie Wright, Margaret Gauldie (emeritus elder), Irene Boyd, Alasdair Campbell (emeritus elder)

Missing from the photo : Gary Allan, Nancy Hamilton, Phyllis McLean, Jen Morgan, Irene Pollock, Ron Weston, Eileen Wilkie

Kirk Session



Sunday Duty Team Rota



DATE	TEAM	LEADER	DATE	TEAM	LEADER
04/10/2026	5	Mr A. Boyd	01/11/2026	1	Mr J. Goodall
11/10/2026	6	Dr C. Reid	08/11/2026	2	Mr A. Taylor
18/10/2026	6	Dr C. Reid	15/11/2026	2	Mr A. Taylor
25/10/2026	1	Mr J. Goodall	22/11/2026	3	Mrs C. Hair
			29/11/2026	3	Mrs C. Hair



Flowers in Church

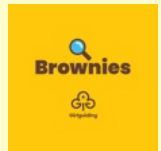
04/10/26	Guides
11/10/26	Mrs C. Sinclair
18/10/26	Mrs P. Strachan
25/10/26	Mrs C. McCulloch Love
01/11/26	Guild
08/11/26	Dr C. Reid
15/11/26	Mrs J. Forson
22/11/26	Mrs M. Currie
29/11/26	Mrs L. Morgan



Ladies Delivering Flowers

04/10/26	Mrs A. Christie
11/10/26	Miss J. Chapman
18/10/26	Mrs J. Dunsmore
25/10/26	
01/11/26	Mrs K. McLauchlan
08/11/26	Mrs I. McBride
15/11/26	Mrs K. McLauchlan
22/11/26	
29/11/26	Mrs A. Black

39th Paisley Brownies (Tuesday)



We welcomed the girls back from their summer break, and we've been joined by five Rainbows moving up to join us. We had a big number moving on to Guides and other activities, so we are down number wise this year as a unit.

Some of you may have read *The Faraway Tree* by Enid Blyton. Our Challenge Badge for this term is based on *The Lands at the Top* of the Faraway Tree.



We'll meet the characters such as Moonface, The Saucepan Man, Silky, Dame Washalot and others as we visit the Lands of Topsy-Turvy, Toys and Games, Presents, Enchantments, Celebrations and Dreams.

We are doing the *Be Well* Theme this term, and our Skills Builder will be *First Aid*. We'll also cover the elements of the *Imagination* Interest Badge, do a bit of *Mindfulness* and introduce the girls to the *Book Reviewer* Badge. We were delighted to hear that some of the girls were familiar with the Enid Blyton stories, so this is a great opportunity to share other books and have feedback from the girls.



Our new Brownies will also be working on their Pre-Promise activities, and we'll hope for them to make their Brownie Promise towards the end of October. We'll also have our new Sixers and Seconders to put in place.

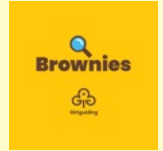
The Brownies and their families have been invited to the Rededication Service on 4th October and, looking to the end of the year, we've got the Pantomime booked already, and there is a GirlGuiding cinema visit to look forward to at ODEON cinema. This year it's Disney's **Hexed**. We also plan to take part in the *Hallowe'en Parade* in Paisley again.

Lots to keep us busy.

Sheena Tonner,

Brownie Leader

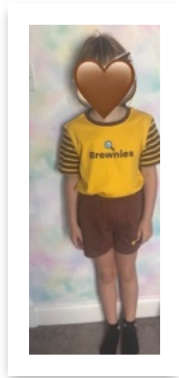
39thA Paisley Brownies



How did the beginning of another session arrive so quickly? Luckily, we know the Guide motto and this reminds us we need to 'Be Prepared'.

The Leaders had met in August and put together an outline plan for the session and added some details to keep us busy till Christmas! On the first Wednesday in September, we welcomed 8 girls who joined us from Rainbows and another Brownie who transferred from another unit. We have started with looking at the Brownie Law and Promise, just to explain/remind us all what it means to be a Brownie.

The new Girlguiding uniforms were launched in July and we have a few of the girls 'rocking' the look. We are happy that we will have a mixture of 'new and old' for a couple of years!



Everyone in the unit would like to say a BIG thank you for all the support we received when we were part of *Tesco Blue Token* charity donation scheme. When shopping in Tesco, parents and friends (including many members of St Mark's) used their tokens to vote for the Brownies.



As a result, I am delighted to say we were successful in gaining 1st place. We hope soon to receive £1500 donation towards our holiday weekend at PGL Outdoor Centre in May. This would not have been possible without the help of many!

Some of the Brownies worked on badges over the holidays. It was lovely on our first meetings of the new session that we could present the following :

Emily : ***Kitchen Creations***

Georgia : ***Holidays***

Jessica C : ***Imagination***

The following *Theme Award* was also earned:

Emily : ***Skill for My Future***

Well done to all.

The Brownies had been told about the Girlguiding Scotland *Out and About* Summer Challenge in June and some of them managed to complete this. Great effort from:

Aoife; Bronagh; Eilish; Emily and Eve.

As you can imagine, at the beginning of a session, there are usually badges to be issued to celebrate the time the girls have spent in Girlguiding. We have issued the following *Anniversary* badges:

2 year – Ava; Isabelle; Jessica C and Tilly.

3 year – Daniela; Eilidh; Jess; Mia and Skye

4 year – Anna; Beth; Charlotte Max; Charlotte McN; Emily and Georgia.

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



Last session ended successfully with great fun at our Display Evening. We celebrated each of the boy's achievements and were able to present President's Badges to two boys: Kye Gillies and David Markou. Both lads are already working towards the King's Badge with a couple of other young men in the company.



We rounded off with the Company and Senior Sections going to camp at Dalguise. A great time was had as we went climbing, abseiling and canoeing. We also enjoyed archery, fencing and axe throwing. Despite this, and some canoe capsizes, all arrived home safely.

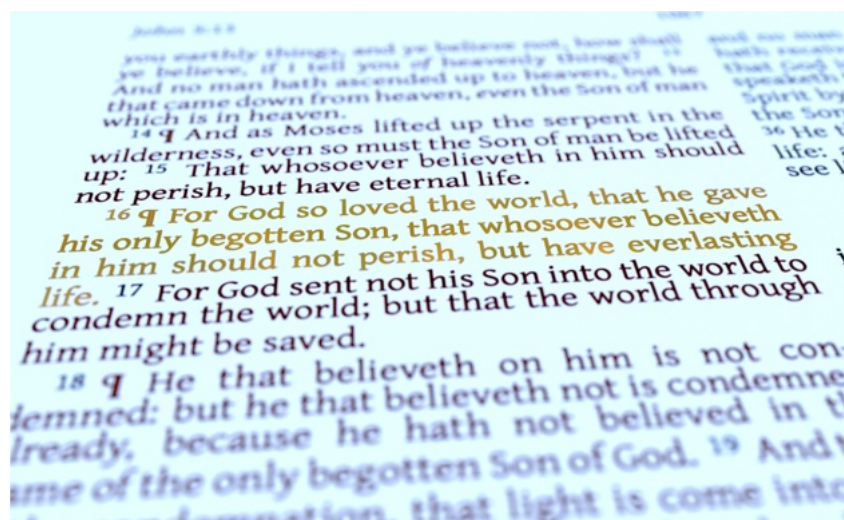


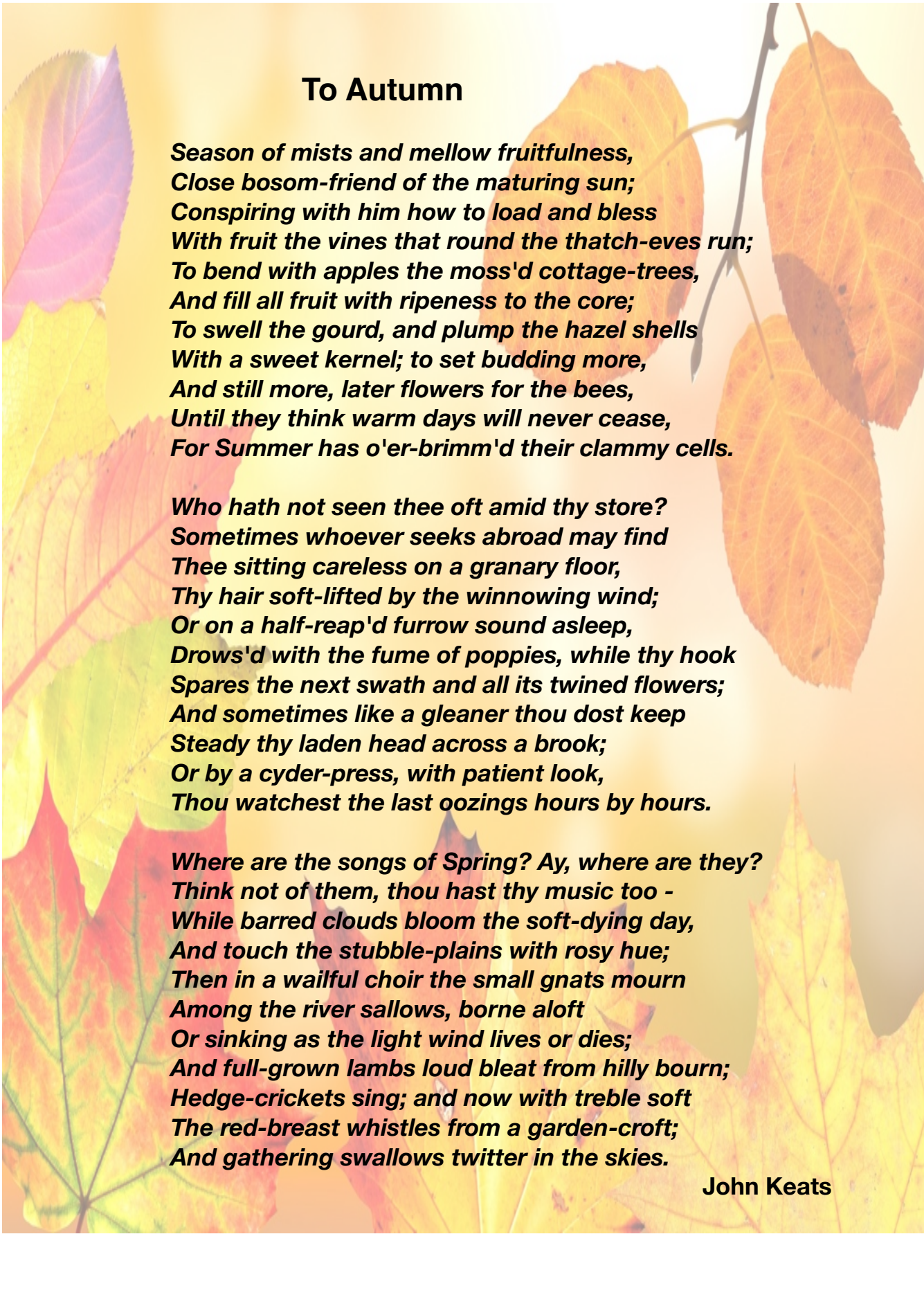
24th Paisley Boys' Brigade



Safety has been a topic early in the new session too. The Anchors and Juniors practised a fire drill and learned how to make a 999 call. A walk round the halls and church encouraged the boys to think about fire safety. I wonder if you are always aware of your nearest fire exit or when to use the different types of fire extinguisher? We expanded this to think about the importance of the emergency services that we may rely on. Talking about emergencies and rescues was a useful way to begin a discussion about the 'Greatest Rescue': Jesus dying on the cross for each of us. John 3:16 captures this well. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Jack Goodall (Company Captain)





To Autumn

*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.*

*Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozyings hours by hours.*

*Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too -
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.*

John Keats

Scam Alert: Fraudulent Websites

Communication to Session Clerks and Congregational Treasurers RE: Fake Websites

We have been made aware today of fake websites which are promoting a Church of Scotland fundraising lottery – both at a national level and also purporting to be individual churches.

These websites look very professional but are nothing to do with the Church of Scotland. Staff at the National Offices have reported this to the appropriate authorities as a matter of urgency.

A key indicator is that the web address being used misspells Scotland with two 'c's.

If any Church members have concerns about these fake websites, they can contact our Law Department via email on LAWDEPT@churchofscotland.org.uk

If you are aware of any individuals having given money to this scam, please ask them to contact Police Scotland.

For the avoidance of doubt, the **Church of Scotland does NOT run a fundraising lottery.**

Yours sincerely,

Madelaine Sproule | Depute Solicitor | Law Department | The Church of Scotland

121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN | Switchboard Tel: 0131 225 5722

Email: msproule@churchofscotland.org.uk



Celtic Blessings and Prayers.



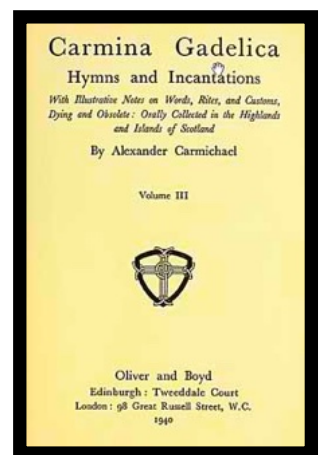
Peace

The peace of God,
The peace of men,
The peace of Columba kindly.
The peace of Mary mild, the loving,
The peace of Christ, King of tenderness,
The peace of Christ, King of tenderness.

Be upon each window, upon each door.
Upon each hole that lets in light.
Upon the four corners of my house,
Upon the four corners of my bed.

Upon each thing my eye takes in,
Upon each thing my mouth takes in.
Upon my body that is of earth
And upon my soul that came from on high.

Prayer from *Carmina Gadelica* - ancient Celtic prayers



You are the peace of all things calm
You are the place to hide from harm
You are the light that shines in dark
You are the heart's eternal spark
You are the door that's open wide
You are the guest who waits inside
You are the stranger at the door
You are the calling of the poor
You are my Lord and with me still
You are my love, keep me from ill
You are the light, the truth, the way
You are my Saviour this very day.

Celtic Oral Tradition - 1st millennium

Celtic Blessings and Prayers



God to enfold me,
God to surround me,
God in my speaking,
God in my thinking.

God in my sleeping,
God in my waking,
God in my watching,
God in my hoping.

God in my life,
God in my lips,
God in my soul,
God in my heart.

God in my sufficing,
God in my slumber,
God in mine ever-living soul,
God in mine eternity.

(Ancient Celtic Oral Traditions - Carmina Gadelica)



You've blessed me with friends and laughter and fun
With rain that's as soft as the light from the sun
You've blessed me with the stars to brighten each night
You've given me help to know wrong from right
You've given me so much, so please Lord give me too
A heart that is always Grateful to you.

Choir



Do you want to improve your physical and mental health? Do you want to lower your stress levels, feel exhilarated, improve your memory, breathe more deeply and deal with pain better? Do you want to have fun? Do you simply want to be happier?

If your answer to any one of these questions is, 'Yes', then why not consider joining the choir?

Scientific research suggests that all of these things are possible simply by singing and what better place to do this than in a choir in the company of others?

Maybe you're worried that you can't read music. Then stop worrying. You don't have to.

Sound good?

Then Dawn would love to hear from you. Speak to her in church and she'll be delighted to tell you more about the choir.

The choir meets on Thursdays in the café from 7-8 pm.

Go on. What do you have to lose?



***Are any among you in
trouble? They should pray.
Are any among you happy?
They should sing praises.***

James 5:13

Music heals the soul



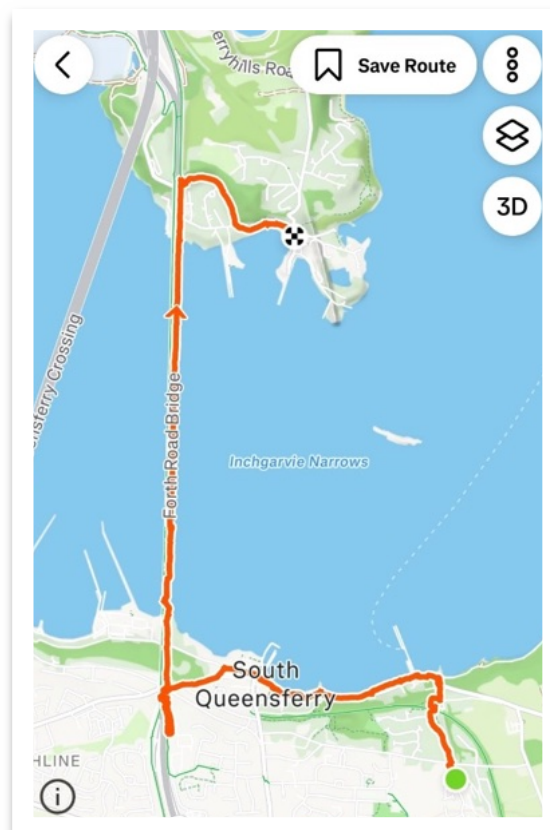
Forth Road Bridge Charity Walk



A group of walkers from the *Ladies in Faith Together* group helped to round off the summer of fundraising for *Glasgow City Mission*. They walked the 6 kilometres from South Queensferry across the Forth Road Bridge to North Queensferry on a beautifully sunny day.

The ladies enjoyed a lovely walk with stunning views along the Forth and good company, and with generous donations from friends, family and the congregation, raised a fantastic £537.90. Thank you to all those who donated, and well done to those who completed the walk.

Jen Morgan



Lest We Forget



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 –*

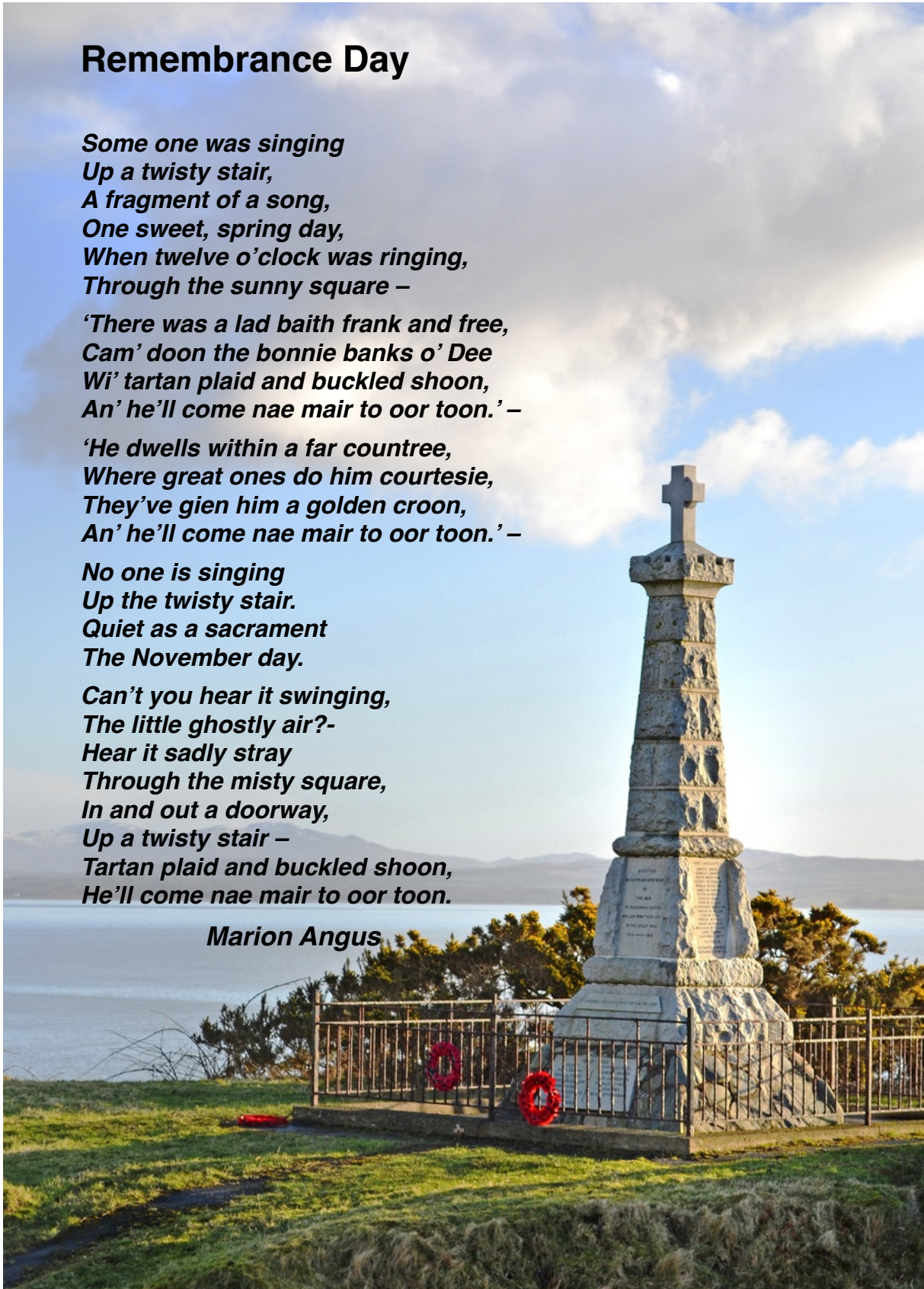
*'There was a lad baith frank and free,
Cam' doon the bonnie banks o' Dee
Wi' tartan plaid and buckled shoon,
An' he'll come nae mair to oor toon.' –*

*'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



The Guild



The Guild will be starting on Monday 5th October at 2pm and fortnightly thereafter. We look forward to meeting you all again and hopefully some new faces. All are welcome.

Irene Stirton
Secretary



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

marksman@stmarksoldhall.org.uk

Contribution deadline for the next edition: 12 noon, 19 November, 2026.