

MARKSMAN

December 2019 & January 2020



St Marks Church of Scotland (Oldhall), Paisley

334 Glasgow Road, Paisley, PA1 3DL

Office Telephone – 0141 882 2755

Email: office@stmarksoldhall.org.uk

www.stmarksoldhall.org.uk

Scottish Charity SC011210



*Christmas is coming' The Church is glad to sing.
And let the Advent Candles Brightly burn in a ring*

The first is for God's promise to put the wrong things right,
and bring to earth's darkness the hope of love and light. *Chorus*

The second for the prophets, who said that Christ would come
with good news for many and angry words for some. *Chorus*

The third is for the Baptist, who cried, '**Prepare the way.**
Be ready for Jesus both this and every day.' *Chorus*

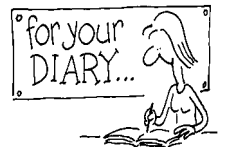
The fourth is for the Virgin, who mothered God's own son
and sang how God's justice was meant for everyone. *Chorus*



The above is a hymn we will sing during Advent as each candle is lit; and I think it very appropriate the third verse is sung on 8 December as Christmas has come early this year for St Mark's - as due to the diligence of your Nominating Committee, thankfully we are in the position of having a Sole-Nominee, Dr. Sonia Blakesley, who will preach for this vacant charge of St Mark's Oldhall, on Sunday 8th December – so I hope there



will be an excellent turn out that day – both to encourage Sonia and, for the vote at the end of the service.



Well, *a lot of preparation* has been going on behind the scenes, in anticipation of getting a new incumbent for St Marks. For instance, we have moved to a Unitary Constitution, and are in process of revamping Committees within the Kirk Session that we might be better organised to fulfil various remits – *as be in no doubt*, should Sonia be successfully elected on the 8th, she cannot do what's required today on her own;

She will require the total support of the Kirk Session and Congregation, as with the severe challenges facing the church nationally, **only those congregations who are active in mission and thinking outside the box:** *who are seeking to reach beyond their walls in new ways – who are prepared to work at fulfilling the remit given by Jesus – and who*



That fact was made abundantly clear at the November Presbytery – as some churches will dissolve; some were put under Guardianship and quite a number will shortly be linked.

St Marks have avoided that for the present, and can possibly avoid that for some time, were you to become more vibrant – *be more innovative and proactive; find new ways re outreach*, and reaching people where they are – *after all*, doesn't

Scripture reveal, Jesus mostly met people where they were?

That's partly the thinking behind "**the worst kept secret in Ralston**" and the **Presentation** [see centre pages] made to the Kirk Session and Congregation on 1st December the First Sunday in Advent – as without expanding on a recent Church of Scotland Conference "**Are Churches in the right place, and fit for the purpose today**"- though that might have been the case 30 years ago – **is it still the case?**



What is your vision for St Mark's under a new ministry?
 Will, your new minister, have the tools needed for today, or be faced with having to manage decline? Could what's contained in the Presentation prove to be an excellent tool to assist outreach and be a great asset for St Mark's?
 These things are being explored along with approaching grant giving bodies re possible funding.

Should all this prove positive and feasible, you could find yourself, in time having an asset similar to what St John's Church in Largs has [Home from Home], or Westburn Church in Greenock; or Robert Allan's church in Falkirk, or my former church Erskine [The Hub],
 [look up websites]



For there can be no denying we live in a 'café culture', and 'Church Café' if used and organised properly with side door ministries, can be an excellent way of drawing alongside; getting folk over the doorstep, and meeting people where they are – on a regular basis.



So if there is the will [to try and replicate *on a regular weekly basis* what was achieved by the very successful Plant Sale where countless people from the Ralston Community attended same] **the way will be found.**



As we need to promote St Mark's more – particularly the Gospel – and what's been spoken of, may help us to do that better.



Well, on 1st Sunday in Advent we sung [tongue in cheek prior to the Presentation] another song “**It is no secret what God can do**” – *question is –*

What might God be seeking to do through you working alongside your new minister? *As you have a clear choice facing you – GRASP the VISION and empowered by the Spirit, rise to the challenge – or do nothing and slowly fade away.*

Well, as yet we don't know the outcome of the vote, and whether Sonia will accept – but if all proves positive, we can get on *with preparing* not just for Christmas, but prayerfully for Sonia's ordination and induction [*subject to Presbytery arrangements*] hopefully before end of January 2020 - meanwhile you'll have to put up with me a little while longer.



So I look forward to seeing as many as possible being present for the Election & Vote on 8th December and to celebrating another Christmas with you in a few week's time, where we have the opportunity to bring along a friend.



Wishing you a blessed Christmas and blessed future ministry

Yours in Christ

Ian W Bell (Interim Mod. & Locum)

Nominating Committee update

The Nominating Committee are delighted that Dr Sonia Blakesley has accepted our invitation to preach as Sole Nominee.

Dr Blakesley is a newly qualified Minister who is completing her final placement at Springfield Cambridge Church in Bishopbriggs. Before being called to the Ministry, she was a GP in Moffat and an elder and Session Clerk of St Andrew's Church in the town.

The Committee are particularly impressed by the way Dr Blakesley articulates her calling to the Ministry and to St Mark's in particular. We firmly believe that she is the person that God has in mind to come to St Mark's and to help us take our Church forward.

Her hobbies include walking, reading, cross stitch and knitting and enjoys motorhoming with her dog Mylo.

My thanks go to all members of the Nominating Committee for the way they have carried out their responsibilities with dedication, enthusiasm and good humour. The Congregation can be assured that they left no stone unturned in their commitment to seeking out God's will for our Church.

The Committee would also like to thank the Congregation for their prayers and practical support over the past few months, to the Rev Ian Bell for his guidance and to Simone, our very able Clerk.

I am sure that you will join us in praying for Sonia as she prepares for preaching as Sole Nominee.

Mari Everett, Convenor of the Nominating Committee.

Finance Update

It has been a busy time for the Church as far our finances go. The good news is that the manse refurbishment has been completed and has come in on budget at £50k. This sum was obtained through grants from Presbytery, the generous donations from the congregation of nearly £21k, reclamation of gift aid on that amount and the transfer of the balance from our fabric fund. Unfortunately, the latter will have to be replenished over the next couple of years to try and bring some stability to our long-term finances.

The Church worker fund was topped up with a specific appeal which enabled us to keep our Church Worker, Peter, who has been invaluable during our vacancy, and who will be a mainstay in the life of St Marks for years to come. Again, we will need to seek a more sustainable way of funding this post in future years.

The day to day running of the Church funds currently shows a deficit £5394 between our income and expenditure. This is largely due to the costs of filling the vacancy, which ironically costs more than having our full - time minister! The finance committee are hopeful that this deficit will narrow during the last two months of the year, but it is still likely we shall end with a small deficit at the end of the year once again.

Can I thank all who have reassessed their giving's this year and encourage everyone to make this an annual New Year resolution. We also wish to thank everyone who has participated in the fundraising efforts of the home baking team. This has been a profitable (and enjoyable) way of raising money for the Church. I would also recommend everyone read the article about easy fundraising elsewhere in the Marksman as way to raise funds whilst Christmas shopping. We shall give a further update on our financial position at the end of the year along with some new stewardship ideas for 2021.

The Finance Team

World Mission Council - November 2019

It is a few months since I contributed an article for the World Mission Council – various reasons for this, but I hope you've missed it!

I have cleared the older magazines from the book stands in the side foyer, and have put in the last couple that came in since May.

The October magazine is the current one I have, and the December one will probably come through the door just after the Marksman has been printed! Hopefully you will bear with me and the retrospective information.

I quote from the covering letter first off.

"Did you know Olive trees live for an average of 500 years and some for as many as 1500? The olive tree is seen as a symbol of peace. Yet have we ever thought why? It is because in time of war, due to their very slow growth, they do not require cultivation and continue to thrive and bear fruit into peacetime.

Today in Palestine, a land of turmoil, the ancient olive trees have great significance. People talk of the trees being part of the family."



The WMC has been asked by the General Assembly to be part of creating an oasis of peace by building something beautiful. Rev John McCulloch is working together with the Nassau family at the Tent of Nations in Bethlehem to create the Olive Grove Chapel.

Is there any way you – and me – can think of to pray, reflect and maybe donate to this project?

Our world is in such turmoil at present with so many people being displaced, facing natural disasters and living in war torn countries, it is imperative that we pray that God will be seen in those who bear His name. "This vine covered structure which will be surrounded by olive trees will be a place for contemplation and worship to be used by locals and pilgrims from around the world."

World Aids Day is on 1 December and we pray for those affected this.

If you want to delve deeper into what's happening around the world, you can go to

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/worldmission/getinvolved/reportsandresources>

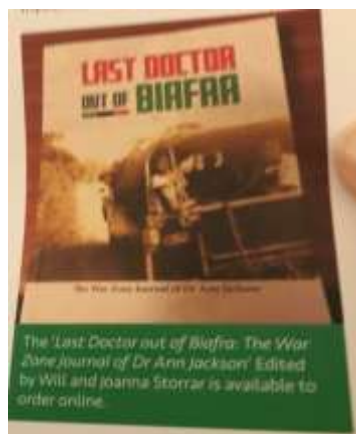
On the subject of trees, the magazine is entitled Mustard Seed Stories and looks at different people and their stories of how their small faith grew and the results of that impacting on others. A lovely story of Sangi, the Church's Women's Secretary in Myanmar, and how she is helping women find their voice, develop their faith and take up opportunities of training and employment is one of the articles.



Dr Ann Jackson, 82, from Carluke who spent many years as a medical missionary in Nigeria, spurred on by an interest in Mary Slessor's story when she was a youngster. She later went to Malawi and then Glasgow.

She worked as a GP in England and then back in Carluke. An Elder in St Johns, she also prayed for those needing healing and currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Christian Healing Centre in Crossford.

A personal journal of hers has now been published, titled Last Doctor out of Biafra, and is available online.



A reflection on having faith as small as a mustard seed from the WMC Convenor, Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, allows us to think about our own personal journey and the ways we can make connections with people around the world to find inspiration and encouragement to help grow our faith, and in turn, perhaps help others to do the same.

There is more to read about other folks' stories, so please feel free to take a magazine home, and return it for others after.

Many thanks, Irene

Bible studies 2020

The Bible Study groups are finishing on 30 November, but start up again in the new year.

Proposed dates for next Bible Studies 2020

11 January 2020

25 January

8 February

22 February

Possibly do 15 or 29 Feb ??? Ladies Lunch/Fashion Show

7 March

21 March

4 April

18 April

A final decision on what we will be studying has still to be made, but why not think about coming along to join us at the new session. Don't worry if you think you can't make every session. The booklet allows you to do your own study at home, and that way you can keep up with where we are.

It's been a good session this time round, looking at Heroes of the Faith, and discovering that God uses us just as we are. Many of our 'heroes' were full of flaws, yet God used them in their situations and uses them still to help us in ours! Amazing!

Sessions start at 10:15 with a cuppa and a chat, and then 10:30 – 11:30 for the study. We have been very good at stopping on time!

Make it your new year's resolution to give it a go.

Bake Sale

On the first Sunday of each month we will be holding a bake sale in the side vestibule in aid of church funds.

If you would like to put your name down on the rota to contribute then please speak to Liz Morgan, Sheena Tonner or Christine Hair.

Churches are closing all over Britain. Congregations are dwindling. Folk are no longer in the habit of going to church so unless we change, we are only managing our inevitable closure. Or are we?

Look around you, there is no secret that that our congregation is shrinking too. The worst kept secret is that there is a plan to change that. Change is never easy though and St Marks needs you now more than ever before in order to make that change in our community.

Three weeks ago, was remembrance Sunday when we remembered those that didn't grow old.



Today we have a community with those that did grow old, but our school is also at bursting point and those that care for the young ones like the old ones all need somewhere to go.

St Marks since 1938 has been feeding folk and providing a place to meet. Today we live in a café culture.

Ralston's Worst Kept Secret is that with your support we plan to open a café at St Marks.

There are lots of church cafes over Scotland. These places provide a destination. A place to meet. A place to chat. A gateway into the church as well as raising the funds churches need today to survive.

Imagine your favourite café. A warm welcome place.

A place you were welcomed into.

A place you enjoyed good food in, met friends in and where you had fun.

A place you felt safe in, could wait for the kids in, a coffee on the way to the chemist, shop or hairdresser or whilst waiting on the bus.

A place in the heart of the community.

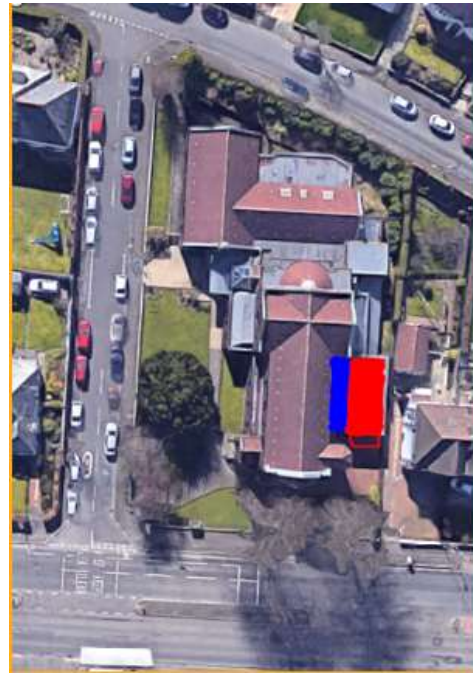
A place you recommend. **That place is St Marks Café**

Below Teas and coffees at the 2019 Geocache Treasure Hunt





Above Artists Impression using the session room



There are lots of business models. Some are run entirely voluntary. Some employ a manager, cook or staff to assist when busy. All raise church funds

The plan is to bridge the gap between the sanctuary and use the session room. Install toilets, kitchen servery, bifold picture window onto Glasgow Road with a raised seated patio out front and build a link from the community though the café into the church

Building works have been costed (£62,500) plus kitchen fit out and the vital coffee machine, to total £80,000. Grant funding will be sought for funding with no expected cost to the congregation

Planning Permission is only required for the visual changes (doors windows, toilets) as Churches are allowed cafes without needing to change the use.



Church cafes you may have been to, seen or know: - **Wellington Church** on Uni Ave, **St Stephens** on Bath St, **The Tron** at Nelson Mandela Place, **North Berwick Parish Church**, **Falkland Church**, **The Mossy Paisley**, **Blend Paisley**, **Erskine Parish Church** and lots of others

39th Paisley Brownies (Tuesday)

We started back in September with two Rainbows moving up to join us, and we are delighted that Grier Ann and Annarosa have both now made their Promise as Brownies. We currently have 20 really enthusiastic girls in the unit.

As we had so many Brownies who had achieved the Painting and Performing Badges, we decided to do a Skill Builder around Communication, and that would then give them the Theme Badge in that area too.

Communication covers so many aspects of what we do to communicate with each other, from facial expression and voice tone, to clarity of diction. Sounds a bit boring, but we weave a little Brownie magic into the mix, and we've had poetry recitals projecting our voices to the back of the sanctuary – made sock puppets and put on a puppet show, played detectives and created profiles of our friends, and even had a Halloween story about an angry witch with a snarly cat, who really only wanted someone to be her friend.

Everyone has now achieved their Skill Builder, and the majority of the Brownies now have the Express Myself theme badge.

We had a group of girls, complete with mums, dads, and little baby sisters up at Barshaw Park Walled Garden, where we spent a Saturday morning planting dwarf tulips which will give an array of colour in the garden next year. We plan to pop up and visit them, and see if we can recognise the clusters of bulbs that the girls planted. Well done to Friends of Barshaw Park for arranging that for us.

Christmas is coming fast, and about half of the pack will be accompanying Santa around the streets of Paisley prior to the Christmas Lights Switch On, and a further group of about 14 Brownies will be visiting the Odeon at Braehead with me to watch Frozen 2. This is a special showing for Girl Guiding, so a really great opportunity to be in the midst of lots of other Brownies.

We have a new leader, Lauren, who is a student at the university in Paisley, and she is currently completing her Queens Guide badge. She's still got bits and pieces to do, but we will try to give her every opportunity while she is with us.

Our final activity for the year is a visit with the Tuesday Rainbows to see

the Snow Queen at Paisley Arts Centre. A little later than we normally go, due to a mix up with the booking, but it gives us time to also spend time with the Rainbows leading up to that. And time to fit in a party!

We wish all the congregation at St Marks a very happy Christmas.

Sheena Tonner, Brownie Leader

EVOLUTION

We are well into our preparations for our nativity service, A Rhyming Nativity, which will take place on Sunday 22nd December. Readings are being practised, songs are being sung and more importantly negotiations are taking place around what costumes everyone wants. Hopefully we'll have sufficient shepherds, wise men and angels and more importantly Mary and Joseph! This year we are planning some congregational participation so come prepared. As in previous years the service involves all our young people from the very youngest to our older teenagers. Please come and support us all and join in our celebration as we tell the Christmas story.

Our annual gift service will take place on Sunday 15th December and once again we will be supporting Paisley women's refuge. Please ensure that all gifts are marked with an age and whether it is suitable for a boy or girl. Gifts for mothers are also especially welcome.

There are a relatively small group of leaders who ensure that Evolution runs throughout the year 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 for all our young people.

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.

39thA Paisley Brownies – December 2019

The Pack session is in full swing and we have already enjoyed many different activities. We currently have 23 girls and are looking forward to be joined by more girls in the New Year.



We started the session with several activities planned to help the new girls find out more about Brownies and work towards



making their promise. The girls all decided that they wanted to make their Promise and we were happy to organise this. In October, we welcomed the parents of the girls who watched them make their Promise. Our visiting elders, Mrs Karin Grant and Mrs Ann Black also joined us for this evening and helped the girls make "Promise Butterflies".

Some of the Brownies completed a challenge to design a Christmas card for Girlguiding. We have sent off their completed designs and we wait to hear if they have been successful. The Brownie enjoyed planning their cards and WE think they did a great job.

In October, 6 of the Brownies and 2 Leaders had an adventure in Blackpool. We left Paisley on Saturday morning with girls from several other units across Paisley. We were dropped off at Blackpool Tower



where we were spending the night. In the afternoon, we visited Madam Tussaud's, Sea Life Centre and Crazy Golf before we met back at the Tower for tea in Harry Ramsden's. In the evening, we all attended the circus. After everyone else left, we were able to get settled for the night in the circus ring!! After breakfast, we were scheduled to go up the tower but it was too windy so we got to visit the Ballroom and then had a

(very) bracing walk along the promenade!! It was a very tired but excited group that arrived in Paisley in time for tea.



While these girls were away, some of the others attended the Dedication Service. As always our flag bearer did a great job – well done Millie S!!!

At the end of October, we spent 2 meetings at the YMCA. Along with the 1st East Rainbows, the girls had fun nights completing Digital Learning challenges. If you



don't know what this might involve, ask Peter because he kindly joined in the fun!! Thanks for coming along Peter and we hope you are not now "hooked" on Minecraft!!!

Our future plans involve -

- A pantomime visit in December to see a performance of "The Snow Queen" at Paisley Arts Centre. I will tell you about that in the next article - oh yes I will!!!!!!
- In November, some of the Brownies are taking part in the Santa Parade in Paisley on the day that Christmas lights are being switched on. I look forward to sharing some photos in Church after this event.
- In December, there is a showing of the new Disney film "Frozen II" for Girlguiding members. Many of the Brownies have expressed an interest in attending and we are lucky enough to be allocated tickets to see the heroine Elsa save her kingdom.
- Already we are planning our Pack Holiday in May. Several Brownies have already expressed an interest in spending the weekend with the Brownies at PGL at Dalguise.

Our Leaders continue to do a great job and I am glad that we have been able to recognise their commitment with Government produced Saltire Awards. At the Dedication Service, Nicola was awarded her certificate to recognise the completion of 100 hours volunteering. What an appropriate service for this to be presented!! We have welcomed another Guide helper and Ruby has been presented with her certificate for 10 hours service, Well done girls and thank you from us all. Merry Christmas to you all!!

Christine Hair
(Brown Owl)

Easy fundraising Opportunities

Dear All,

As you may have noticed Christmas is nearly upon us once again. May I take this opportunity to remind everyone that if they do any Christmas shopping online to use the Easy fundraising website to go to their favourite shops. This way St Marks will benefit from contributions generated by your purchases - at no cost to yourself! Simply go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk and pick St Marks Oldhall Paisley as the charity.

For those who use Amazon for shopping it's the same procedure or you can go to www.smileamazon.co.uk and pick St Marks Church of Scotland (Oldhall):Paisley as your chosen charity.

Online giving has raised nearly £500 in the past year for St Marks. To the small number of contributors, a big thanks you – imagine how much we could raise if everyone used this form of giving!

Merry Christmas

The Finance Team

Tuesday Singers' BIG SING

It's that time of year!

The Tuesday Singers are practising hard for their BIG SING event on SATURDAY 14TH DECEMBER. The evening starts at 7:30pm and we look forward to seeing you there.

Join in with some Christmas Carols and enjoy the new Christmas music the Singers have been learning.

Donation tickets of £5 will be available soon from Irene and Julie in the office. Posters will also be available or displaying. Just ask for one.

Proceeds are divided evenly between church funds and our chosen charity for this year, which is 'Dementia Dogs' with Alzheimer Scotland.

Put the date in your diary, and bring a friend along on the night.

See you there, Irene

Car run

Need a lift to help you to attend Sunday morning worship? We're here to help. Perhaps you have a friend or neighbour who already does this, if so that's great, but if ever they are unable to do that we will try our best to accommodate you.

Please contact Myra 561-1965 if you or anyone you know would like to use this service provided by our Church family.

Ladies Buffet Lunch and Fashion Show



I am organising a fund-raiser for the Church at Ralston Bowling Club. On Saturday 22nd February, there will be an opportunity to joining for some lovely food followed by a fashion show. After that, there will be the opportunity to buy the clothes shown at discount prices.



I will be happy to receive any donations for a raffle that will be held on the day.



The cost of the ticket will be £17.50 which will include a glass of bubbly on arrival at 12.30pm. Tickets will be on sale in the New Year. Why not organise a group of friends to join you for a fun afternoon?

Any questions and prize donations will be welcomed by Christine Hair



Church Register

Deaths

09.9.19	Mrs Nan Gill, Kinburnie Road
11.09.19	Mrs Nan Deans, Elderslie Care Home
16.09.19	Mrs Rachel Reid, Bathgo Avenue

New Members

15.11.19	Mrs Jane Cobb, Strathcarron Drive
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Office Bearers' duties during December & January

Team 3 – 1st December

Donald Macdonald, Richard Rutherford, Jack Goodall, Gary Allan, Simone Smith, Christine Hair, Gavin Hair

Team 4 – 8th & 15th December

Graham Black, Gordon Forrest, Mari Everett, Ann Black, Eileen Wilkie, Rena Brown, Margaret Currie

Team 5 – 22nd & 29th December

Alastair Boyd, Irene Boyd, Douglas Keith, Ken Dunsmore, Dorothy McKay, Jennifer Morgan

Team 6 – 5th & 12th January

Colin Reid, Stuart Burns, Joe Reid, Phyllis McLean, Karin Grant, Andy Grant

Team 1 – 19th & 26th January

Alasdair Campbell, Gordon McLintock, Karen Sheils, Don Grant, Lesley Campbell, Greta Whyte, Margaret Gauldie

Creche Rota for December

1 st	Isobel Higgins	Sara Wilson
8 th	Ann Fisher	Cara Gentle
15 th	Irene Boyd	Christine Hair
22 nd	Nativity	
29 th	Christine Park	Liz Morgan

Flowers in the Church December & January

December Flower Committee

1 st	Liz Morgan, Ralston Avenue
8 th	Graham & Ann Black, Roffey Park Road
15 th	Nana Poustie, Tylney Road
22 nd	Reba McNeil, Auchmannoch Avenue
29 th	

January Flower Committee

5 th	Alex & Nanette Dryburgh, Dunchurch Road
12 th	Bob & Sheena Tonner, Duchray Drive
19 th	Anne Munro, Penilee Road & Elizabeth Macdonald, Glasgow Road
26 th	Isobel Ritchie, Auchmannoch Avenue

People delivering flowers during December & January

December

1 st	Mrs A Black	
8 th	Mrs K McLauchlan	
15 th	Mrs M Scobie	Mrs C Smith
22 nd	Mrs M Robin	
29 th	Mrs K McLauchlan	

January

5 th	Mrs M Currie	Mrs E Boyd
12 th	Mrs I Ritchie	
19 th		
26 th	Mrs E Macdonald	Mrs W Keith

Office Hours

Tue, Wed & Fri 11:15am – 2:45pm