

MARKSMAN

February & March 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

Greetings from your new minister.

I am excited to be here as minister of St Mark's Oldhall Parish Church in Ralston. I have been training for this for a long time and am keen to get started.



Thank you to everyone for the lovely manse I have moved into. It is a beautiful house and I feel privileged to live there. So much work has been done, and I thank all of you who contributed time, talents and money to give me such a lovely home.

Thank you too for the friendly welcome, the cards and flowers are brightening up the bare walls of the manse. I look forward to getting to know you all, but please be patient with me. It will take some time for me to learn your names and faces and put them together. Please keep reminding me of your name, and forgive me if I look blankly at you and don't recognise you immediately – especially if we meet in the supermarket or park!

This is an opportunity for my life and faith to dovetail in a way greater than before as I devote most of my time to God's work. I look forward to getting to know you all and to worshipping with you. I am prepared for the task of working with the Kirk Session and wider membership to discern how we best do God's work in this community, serving the people of Ralston, sharing God's love with them. I have good experience from my training placements, but I don't have all the answers. We will seek God's leading together.

Before entering ministry training, I was a General Practitioner in Moffat in Dumfries and Galloway for 23 years. I really enjoyed my work there, but became aware of God calling me into another vocation for the later part of my working life. Please don't ask me medical questions, I am no longer a doctor, but your minister. One thing that excites me about ministry is being able to talk openly about the spiritual side of people's lives, which was not really encouraged in medicine.

My home church is St Andrew's Church in Moffat, and I was ordained an elder there around 17 years ago, and I served as Session Clerk for 5 years.

I studied full-time for 2 years at Trinity College, Glasgow University and graduated in June 2018. Prior to this I had studied for a Certificate in Christian Studies (distance learning) with Aberdeen University. I also

gained my first degree at Aberdeen University and recently returned there for the Thirtieth Anniversary Reunion of my Medical class.

My placements were at Burnside Blairbeth Church in Rutherglen, the Tinto parishes (a three-way linked charge in South Lanarkshire), Cranhill Parish Church (a Priority area congregation in the east-end of Glasgow, and finally I spent my Probationary Period at Springfield Cambridge Church in Bishopbriggs. I enjoyed each of these placements, learning many different things from the very different congregations and supervising ministers.

Family – I have two daughters, Christine (24) and Mhairi (23), both are living independently. My mum, Marjorie, will in the near future be moving to live in the manse with me.

Hobbies – I have a dog, Mylo, a border collie/spaniel cross, and together we walk several miles each day – look out for us around the Parish! I also read, enjoy cross-stitch, knitting and meeting friends.

So that tells you more about me, the exciting part of the conversation is when I learn more about you, your life and family, and what God has done, and is doing in your life. I look forward to having that conversation with you.

Your minister and friend
Sonia

“Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or abandon you.”
Deuteronomy 31:6

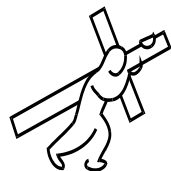
From Ian

I've enjoyed being your Locum and Interim Moderator for the past 18 months, and by the time you receive the Feb/March edition of the Marksman, your new minister Rev. Sonia Blakesley will have been ordained and inducted [*hooray!!!*] - as St Marks requires a full time minister. But Sonia cannot do what needs done on her own - she will need your help, support - especially in regard to Outreach, *as be in no doubt, churches which don't seriously address* these challenges, and avoid being pro-active and innovative simply won't be about in a few years time.





Thankfully you have begun addressing this - via the **Plant Sale: Messy Church** - and *are seriously looking into* the project of '**CAFÉ CHURCH**' as a possible tool to *help you positively reach out* into the local Ralston community.



Well, with LENT beginning on 26 Feb - and the six weeks of Lent, often used as a time for - reflection, fasting and prayer - prior to Easter, the most important festival in the Christian calendar: when we celebrate the hope we have, both for today and tomorrow, through Christ crucified and risen.



Could it be, as we again journey with Christ to Calvary: that we might not only reflect on the hope we have in Christ, but also set time aside, to think of *what response he hoped for* (and still hopes for) *from His followers*, and *ferverently prayed about*, just prior to being crucified, for you and me.



"I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me because of their message". That's the hope and vision Jesus had, that others would come to believe in Him, through the gospel message being shared.

"Go to people everywhere" (Mtt. 28:19).

I'm in no doubt, it's primarily because of this not happening as it could, many churches, though well organised in many ways, but not mission, are struggling.

Here's a story that brings out that point.

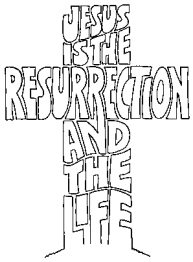
A wounded soldier was ordered to go the military hospital for treatment. When he arrived at the large and imposing building, he saw two doors; one marked "for the slightly wounded", the other, "for the seriously wounded".

He entered through the first door, and found himself going down a long hall. At the end of it, there were two more doors, one marked "*for officers*", the other, "*for non officers*". He entered the latter, and found himself going down another long hall – at the end of which were two more doors, one marked "*for party members*", the other "*for non-party members*". He took the second door, and when he opened it, he found himself back on the street.

Later he spoke to a friend saying – the people there didn't do anything for me, but you ought to see the tremendous organisation they have!

That soldier's comments, describes many churches within our denomination – *really organised; but accomplishing little* regarding mission and advancing Christ's kingdom

Does that in any way apply to St Mark's? If so, could this be *something worth reflecting on during Lent: and also not just praying about, but for God to reveal, how He can use each of us, to help advance the Kingdom, and bring others to know, "salvation is to be found in Christ alone, as there is no one else who can save us" (Acts 4:12)?*



You know Christmas, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter, are often the time when people are more open to thinking about, and responding to the Gospel message: and maybe attending church where they will hear that message preached, and discover what it is we celebrate on Easter Day.

Some of these folk, who have got out of the good habit of attending church, are more likely to attend, if you were to invite them, and bring them with you that day.



So why not - EACH ONE - BRING ONE that day?

It's as I said during a sermon , entitled, "WANTED - STRETCHER BEARERS"

The gist of which was about four men, who were commended by Jesus, for putting their faith into action - in bringing their friend to Christ.

As Jesus noted, *the effort they made, and the barrier they overcame to bring their friend to Him.* Four concerned, determined men, then - who in really caring about their friend: let nothing deter them from bringing their friend to Christ. (Mark 2:1-12)

Might this be a passage worth reflecting on during Lent, along with us thinking about, in what ways we are each putting our faith into action?

As this passage is meant to encourage us, to do the same for our friends - as when people are not brought to, or come to faith in Christ, *Scripture tells us*, they die in their sins.

Also, bear this in mind - the Lord's work has not always been accomplished by talented people or intelligent people or strong people. But it has always been

done — *by people who put their faith into action*: who believed in the power of God: who did what they could, relying on God to supply the rest.

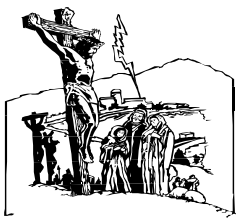
Those four men fit into that category – and their faith in action *was made visible* to Jesus and to any others who saw it. Similar still applies – as our actions can make our faith visible to the watching world.



As a visible faith is a faith that works.

Simply put - in these four men, Jesus saw faith in action and concern for others. And that raises the question - **What does Jesus see in us?**

Well, as you give thanks for what Christ has done for you: *might you care to reflect on this thought, “what I can do for Christ in return”?*



Might Jesus even be praying *for you to break down barriers, or do something* to help a friend who has wandered from the fold, and lost touch with Him? As once people get out of the habit of going to Church, many can find it difficult to take that step over the threshold once again. Jesus looks to His followers to do something about that. And calls us, to encourage one another in the journey of faith: and that is what true



followers of Christ, seek to do.

As who are going to be the inspirers for future generations - if not us?



This is the call that Jesus has placed before us: *to go* into all the world and to make disciples. May we hear again this call and rise to answer it, for our sake and for the sake of the world.

Here's something further to think about.

A minister in a country charge, while on way to church one long holiday weekend, waited in line to have his car filled with petrol . The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him.

Finally, the attendant motioned him forward to the petrol pump.

"Reverend," said the young man, "I'm so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip." The minister said, "I know what you mean.

It's the same in my business, but sadly, many leave it too late."

On a slightly lighter note, with reference to the hymn, "Far and near, hear the Call". Thankfully Sonia *heard and responded* to that Call, and wouldn't it be very encouraging for Sonia [and no doubt pleasing to Jesus] if more on St Mark's Church Roll were to live out the chorus of another hymn 'I the Lord of sea and sky'?

*Here I am Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night
I will go, Lord, If you lead me;
I will hold your people in my heart.*



Well, as you begin the journey towards Lent and Easter [*with your new minister now in situ*] and are reminded of Jesus did for us.

May all in St Mark's open themselves to where God is leading you and may God bless you and guide you, as TOGETHER you continue to work for the coming of His Kingdom.

Yours in Christ Ian W Bell

PS: I look forward to receiving an email [hopefully by June 2021]

informing me CAFÉ CHURCH now open at St Marks Oldhall



Letter from Ian

24 January 20

Elizabeth Macdonald
Session Clerk
St Marks Oldhall

Elizabeth

I write firstly to thank St Mark's Congregation for their very generous gift, and would ask you to intimate same to them, and how much I appreciated being asked to be their Interim Moderator and Locum, and the support received, none more so, than from yourself and Julie, which I'm sure Sonia will also come to value and appreciate. Sonia is (as are the Congregation) extremely fortunate to have such a diligent Session Clerk and Church Secretary.

I'm sure everyone on Thursday night thoroughly enjoyed being there for Sonia's Ordination & Induction and the Welcome Social thereafter. Likewise, I'm sure, the congregation and especially yourself, are delighted Sonia has taken up the reins and is now in situ.

I wish you, the Congregation and Sonia well for the future.

Yours in Christ

Ian

Ladies Buffet Lunch and Fashion Show

Tickets for this event are on sale and going quickly. Don't miss out – see Christine Hair or Church Office for information and tickets.

In case you missed the original intimation, the event is on Saturday 22nd February at Ralston Bowling Club. It will be an opportunity to enjoy for some lovely food followed by a fashion show. After that, there will be the opportunity to buy the quality 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 12.00pm



Peter's News

The last few months have been busy but a lot of good things have happened over that time.



TRASH is going really well just now with our numbers going up significantly since the summer holidays. We had a group of seven P7s join us so we now split the teaching time so we have a younger group and the older group (which has also grown). Before Christmas we were looking at the Sermon on the Mount and some practical skills for church life – how to pray, read your bible etc.

The young people of Trash also organised and ran the Tearfund Big Quiz 2019. We raised £273 for the work of Tearfund and the 70 people who turned up all had a good night.

Friends and Heroes is still running twice a month (2nd and last Sunday's of the month). The numbers have gone down slightly as many of those in P7 who could still come along have stopped and are coming to Trash. We are still following the same pattern of the nights with games, DVD and "other" activities.

Once we had some outreach for children and young people established the next step was a regular family outreach. We decided that we would run Messy church and started in October with a bimonthly event. In the two events that we have had so far we have had 61 different people attend. There is a large team that help to organise and run the Messy church events and I am very grateful to them for making Messy church happen.



We have also had a few of our family nights over the last couple of months. These are for the whole church family so really are for all ages. So if you want to come and run around or just relax and play dominoes there will be something for you at these events. In December we had a joint night with Trash and had a festive "whodunit" mystery night. So the church hall was full of elves and all sorts of other people.



The schools work has also been going well. The Monday LiTE group (our SU type group) has grown with a few P5s joining us. The rest of the group are all P7s who have been coming along regularly for the past two years. This year we have been looking closely at the life of Jesus – who he is, why he came to earth, why did he die? As well as answering some questions about faith – Why does God let bad things happen?

The assembly program for the school has me attending regularly to take the two assemblies. I have been looking at people who met Jesus and what we can learn from these encounters. The school also came down for their Christmas services where the P1-3 helped me tell the Christmas story correctly and the P4-7 thought about appropriate gifts.

I have also been going into the school weekly to assist some of the classes with their maths work. I offered some more time to the school and they said it would be helpful if I could support some pupils with their maths. I have been mainly helping different groups of the P7s with their learning. This has helped me get to know more of the P7s which will be beneficial for going away with them in May to Lockerbie Manor.

For 2020 I am looking forward to the continued outreach and discipleship with the young people of this church and community. And excited by what God might do here over the next few months.

God bless,
Peter

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.

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.

Report on Accounts to 31st December 2019

With the end of 2019 I wish to update you on the financial position of St Mark's. As you are all aware it has been a challenging year as far as the church finances has been concerned with the prolonged vacancy and refurbishment of the church manse. At the end of December, we had an overall deficit in the church budget of £723 which although not ideal, is smaller than once anticipated and on a background of the church's situation is acceptable. When examined the overall income was £813 less than that in 2018 (£115,208 compared with £116,022) and expenses reduced at £115,931 compared to £118,431. This led to the reduction of over deficit in the current year. However, we also raised nearly £25,000 as part of our manse refurbishment appeal and also £5,000 for our church worker fund. I think a very well done should be given to all our members for your generous giving in the last year.

However, this effort will be needed again next year (and probably again in 2021) in order to replenish our fabric fund which was reduced by over £20k to refurbish the manse and to maintain our church worker. Peter will be an essential part of the life of St Mark's and support of Sonia in the future. We shall be again encouraging everyone to be a part of the fundraising process and would encourage everyone to review their givings annually and support our fundraising team in their activities.

Best wishes, The Finance team

39th Paisley Brownies (Tuesday)

We started back again at the beginning of January, with Abi transferring up to Guides. Abi has been with us on our overnight adventures, pack holidays and outings, and although we are sorry to see her go, it's great that she's moved up to Guides. We've also lost Rebecca, who has moved on to an advanced swimming group, which unfortunately clashes with our Brownie time. So we have 18 enthusiastic Brownies as we start the term.

Our latest Skills Builder is Feel Good, and this is all about our diet, our activity, and most importantly our wellbeing. Mindfulness is so important these days, and it's good to know that at age 7, 8 and 9 the girls understand having their own space, being able to express themselves, and the ability to ask for help. The Interest Badges in this theme are Dancing, Grow your Own, and Mindfulness. The Theme Badge is Be Well, and we hope to have that one completed by Easter.

Our bulbs at Barshaw Park will be hibernating just now, but we hope when it's a little warmer and brighter at night to take a walk up to the Walled Garden at Barshaw Park to see if we can locate them.

Our new leader, Lauren, is working on her Queens Guide badge, and one of the many activities she had chosen to do is to undertake and lead a Pack Holiday. So, we are currently planning to go on Pack Holiday in April, and we'll be helping Lauren to get that all organised. A lot to do when you are also studying at university, working a part time job, and all the other challenges she's set herself for her award.

While we were enjoying our festivities at Christmas, with parties and pantomime, we tried to remember those less fortunate than ourselves. The girls and their families donated toiletries and sanitary products to the Renfrewshire Foodbank. Well done everyone who contributed.



Donna Skalley, our Rainbow Leader on Tuesdays at St Marks, put out a call for volunteers to help bag pack just prior to New Year – Hogmanay to be precise! A message round the Brownies brought forward Brownie Caitlin and her mum, Abigail, who headed up to Morrisons at Falside Road. Two and a half hours later, with Caitlin still keen to help people get their shopping packed, they were thanked for their time and effort and released to go home (to mum's relief!). However, a big well done to Caitlin for her efforts. Donna raised over £700 on the day for Guiding activity.

As you read this in print, we'll be doing our usual Valentine's cards, looking forward to Mother's Day, and activities for Easter. Always time to be creative.

Sheena Tonner, Brownie Leader

39thA Paisley Brownies – January 2020

We are happy to have resumed our meetings after the Christmas break. One of our girls reached the age to move leave Brownies and, while we will miss Emma, we wish her every success. We welcomed 4 girls who had been Rainbows and one girl who is new to Girlguiding. We hope they have fun in Brownies.

In November, several very excited Brownies met in Paisley on a very chilly morning to take place in the Santa Parade. We were part of the "Gingerbread Man" group and had colourful tabards to wear. It was fun walking through the streets waving to the hundreds of people that lined the route.



In response to the news that the Foodbank had been burgled, the brownies decided to again collect food in November. The donations were delivered to the depot at the end of November, in time for use at Christmas. A big thank you goes to all girls and their families who were very generous with their contributions.

In December, the Pack had a visit to the Paisley Arts Centre to see "The Snow Queen". The evening was enjoyed by the Brownies [and Guiders!!] who were very vociferous and joined in with the cast. Many of them were invited onto the stage to join in the fun of a song and dance! You may recognise another St Mark's "worthy" in the background that the Brownies were very excited to see!!



In December, we had the opportunity to attend a special "Girlguiding only" showing of the film "Frozen II". There were 10 Brownies and 3 leaders who joined other young Girlguiding members from across Paisley area to attend a viewing early on a Saturday morning. We all thoroughly enjoyed the film and the time spent together.

Our helpers continue to give great service to the Pack. Each week, they help the Guiders in the planning and carrying out the programme. As a result of this, Ruby has now received a Saltire Award certificate,

celebrating 25 hours of service. Well done and thank you to all our volunteers!

In the next few weeks, we have lots of plans to keep the Brownies busy. Included in this, we will be celebrating Thinking Day in February and we have been learning more about this important day in the Guiding calendar. It is hoped that many of the Brownies will be available to join in the Thinking Day Service at Church.

We are working on the Have Adventures Skill Builder and hope many of the girls will complete this soon and gain their badge,

BUSY BROWNIES!!!!!!

Christine Hair (Brown Owl)

World Mission Council - December/January 2020

Due to changes at Central Office of the Church of Scotland the World Mission Council Magazine for December/January 2020 will be the last WM magazine in its current format. At the time of typing this, it isn't known what will replace it. So for this month, enjoy the latest news from the last WM magazine entitled 'Celebrating.....'

The magazine Editorial opens with a quote from Rev Owen Derrick, who was with us for some time a few years ago. He was writing in the Twinning Report and says: " If The Church of Scotland does not commit itself to being the body of Christ in the wider world, as opposed to just on our own doorstep, then we begin to lose sight of one of the main reasons that we are the church."

You may or may not agree with that statement, but it does ask the question of us and where we see our place in the wider church world. For many years as a child I went along with my mum to our weekly Missionary meeting on a Saturday evening. Try asking your 8/9/10year old to do that now! It was an evening of film, discussion, and missionaries home 'on furlough' telling us what life was like in many countries around the world, and of the work being carried out to bring others to Christ. Many years later the church was involved in 'sending out' missionaries to Peru, Algeria, Madagascar and other places. Again, we were kept up to date with the work and life stories, linking us with believers in far flung places, and helping us find our place with them in the world.

How do we, in St Marks, link ourselves with churches, believers, missionaries and families across the world? Do we have a passion for supporting people who take the message of Christ's love to other lands, or even more up to date, who come to our land to bring the message?

The magazine is full of celebration of the World Mission team and the highlights of the last year. European highlights in Switzerland, Twinning in Germany with a church in Forfar, visits to Uruguay, and partnerships in the Czech Republic

Looking further afield to Asia and work being done in Taiwan – a Youth mission there, Korea – National Council of Churches in Korea running a global campaign for the enactment of the peace treaty, work in Pakistan to campaign against the Blasphemy Law, Women's work in Sri Lanka and the Build a House project in Nepal. I know the Guild have been involved in some of the projects mentioned above.

Further highlights come from Africa and the Caribbean, as well as the Middle East. You will need to take a magazine home and read through the various sections.

Other articles cover China, and a visit made by eight people from churches across the UK and Ireland to see how China is tackling climate issues. It makes interesting reading on what the local church is doing. China does not have a charity shop network, so the churches are running second hand markets to encourage people to buy second hand goods and reduce waste.



A group made up of 12 Muslims and Christians from across Scotland embarked on a unique visit to Ghana to explore faith relations. Reflections on that trip are in the magazine, so please take a magazine yourself and dip I to these stories and reflections.

Many thanks
Irene

HOLY LAND JULY 2021



Interested in a trip to the Holy Land?
See the places you read about in the Bible come to life
Walk where Jesus walked
An unforgettable experience!

If you would like to know more, please contact Eileen Wilkie on 07885
456466 or by e-mail: eileen.wilkie.ew@gmail.com



Office Bearers' duties during February & March

Team 2 – 2nd & 9th February

Alan Taylor, Craig Camlin, Bob Tonner, Sheena Tonner, Ron Weston, Ian Brackenridge

Team 3 – 16th & 23rd February

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

Team 4 – 1st & 8th March

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

Team 5 – 15th & 22nd March

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

Team 6 – 29th March & 5th April

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

Creche Rota for February & March

February

2 nd	Ann Fisher	Cara Gentle
9 th	Irene Boyd	Christine Hair
16 th	Christine Park	Liz Morgan
23 rd		

March

1 st	Jannice Bryson	Irene Carswell
8 th	Mari Everett	Myra McKellar
15 th	Lisa Murphy	Tracy Potts
22 nd	Isobel Higgins	Sara Wilson
29 th	Ann Fisher	Cara Gentle

Flowers in the Church February & March

February
Isobel Higgins

2nd
9th Dorothy McKay, Glasgow Road
16th Jean McGugan, Keburne Court
23rd Boys Brigade, Junior Section

March
Flower Committee

1st Wilma Browning, Atholl Crescent
8th Jean McKenzie, Allanton Avenue
15th Peter McKay & family, Glasgow Road
22nd Ann McLeod, Bathgo Avene
29th Gordon & Grace Kerr, Thornley Park Avenue

People delivering flowers during February & March

February

2nd Christian Sinclair
9th Janice Dempster
16th Bob Pollock Irene Pollock
23rd Mary Robin

March

1st Doris Grant Margaret Adams
8th Christine Love
15th Sheena Tonner
22nd Irene Pollock
29th Janice Dempster

Office Hours

Tue, Wed & Fri 11:15am – 2:45pm