

Marksman

June 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

From the Manse

Dear Friends,

Can you believe that we have made it through to June already? Nine (or is it ten?) weeks into Lockdown. I've now been your Minister-under-lockdown for as long as I was your Minister-before-lockdown! It has been a strange start to my Ministry here, however I am becoming used to the routine of twice weekly recording of services with Peter, and of making my contacts with people by phone or online via Zoom. We've also had a Kirk Session meeting via Zoom, and the prayer group meet weekly using it too. For those who don't know, (and I didn't until lockdown started), Zoom is a computer based resource where people can all connect in to a meeting and see and hear each other on a computer/phone screen – much in the same way as you see people on television. I've also had the opportunity to join in church wide webinars (like a seminar, but again everyone is on a computer and not in the same room) and in meetings with other ministers. We should indeed “Praise God, for we are fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps 139:14), and that that means we are fully able to adapt to strange and new ways of doing things. I wonder if, like me, you have been chatting to people around you in the queue outside the supermarkets, enjoying the good weather, and not complaining about the queue? Who could have imagined it?

I've been thinking a lot about what it means to worship God, remembering that we call our services ‘Worship Services’, and how we tend to think that worship is something we do together there. There is no doubt that the ritual of gathering together, to come into God's presence, and listen to his word, and to respond in word and in song is an important part of our worship of God. Something many of us are all missing at this time, along with the opportunity to have fellowship with one another whilst we are together. We might listen to ‘worship music’, and sing along, and once again we are joining in with others.

But I think that worship is so much more than that. I believe worship is how we live out our lives. It is an attitude of mind as well as an action. Jesus tells the Samaritan woman “The hour is coming and is now here, when true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth...” (John 4:21). This worship is not located in a special place. It can take

place anywhere. Christian worship is any encounter with the Triune God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I am, no doubt, influenced by my time spent on the Island of Iona. There, at the Abbey, the morning service ends with the closing responses, but not a benediction. Then staff and visitors alike leave, without sitting down and go to their chores or work. The benediction, the close of worship, does not come until the end of the evening service, and so all that is done during the day is part of our worship offering.

I believe Job worshipped God, when he trusted God to hear his tirade and his complaints when life was going so badly. David worshipped God, not just when he sang songs and danced before the Lord, but also when he wept and worried and poured his heart out to God when life was going less well. The early Christians were “worshipping God and having goodwill of all the people” Acts 2:47, long before they had churches, and St Paul worshipped God from inside a prison cell.

God wants to hear from us, and for us to keep in touch with him, telling him what is in our hearts – be it praise or petition.

So whilst I miss worshipping with you in St Mark’s, I continue to worship God in all I do each day, and I pray you do to.

Your friend and minister,

Sonia

Renfrewshire Foodbank

During this time the Foodbank is continuing to operate, and issuing more parcels than ever.

Over recent weeks I’ve been able to take donations from St Mark’s to their main base in Westway Park in Renfrew. If anyone would like to make a donation of food to them, please let me know and I will collect it from you, (or drop it off at the manse) and I’ll deliver it to them when I have enough to make it worthwhile making a trip over.

Key food items that they require at present are diluting juice, tinned potatoes, tinned tomatoes, tinned meat and fish, jam, UHT milk and soap.

“By this kind of work we must remember the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ” Acts 20:35

Thank you for continuing to think of others at this time.

Sonia

Daily Hope

This is a free phone line set up by the Church of England in response to the Covid 19 crisis. It is available everyone, and plays recordings of hymns which you can sing along to, alongside reflections based on popular hymns, and daily prayers, as well as the option to listen to a weekly Church of England service.

This is something people might like to access, particularly those without internet.



Worship Matters

Looking through the Lectionary for the weeks ahead, I plan for us to study passages from the book of Romans on a Sunday morning, and to read and learn more from the Psalms in the Word For Wednesday.

Sunday 21st June would have been the end of session and promotion service for Evolution, and instead Peter and I are planning a service where the young people play a part in the recorded service.

Sunday 28th June will still be our Communion Sunday, although this will be an online service, and there will, of course, be no Communion visits by the Elders. I hope as many of you as possible will join in this worship service, providing your own bread and wine, or biscuit and grape juice, or whatever is available to you.

I believe God will honour our intentions and bless us in our sharing.

Sonia

ACORN - Mighty oaks from little acorns grow

Last week I took part in a zoom meeting with Michael Harvey, the person behind 'Back to Church' Sunday and more recently 'Weekend of Invitation'. He told us participants (others from our presbytery) that his research points out that when asked: **'Is there somebody that God is nudging you to invite to church'** 70% of people in congregations already have a name in mind. However 80-90% of church members have **no intention of inviting anyone to church!** Clearly there is a problem here, but Michael also says he loves it when things are going wrong. For it is nothing new, as most stories in the Bible are about things going wrong and people reluctant to respond to God's call to them. So this need not be the end and it doesn't stop God's mission.

Right now, we might think we're all off the hook in terms of 'mission and evangelism' as we can't invite anyone to come to our church buildings. However, this might be a skewed way to look at it. Michael points out, as others have done, that there seems to be a greater openness in people to think and talk about faith. There are more people watching services on line than ever turned up on a Sunday morning, the word 'prayer' is being searched many times on Google and Bible sales have increased. So God is on the move.

Even though we can't meet in the church (building), the church (i.e. the people) have been scattered and we're being sown into our neighbourhoods. We may not be able to travel very far, but on our daily walks we're likely running into our neighbours more and perhaps getting to know them better on our physically distanced chats. And if we can't physically leave the house due to shielding, we're finding new ways of connecting with friends and family via phone and internet.

Michael Harvey is trying to **set up Acorn groups** across the nation; small groups where Christians commit to do the following and share with each other what is happening:

A -Ask: Ask God each day: 'Who do you want me to connect with that is outwith the church'

C- Call: listen for who God is calling/prompting/nudging you to connect with

O- Obey: make contact with this person and ask 'How are you?' Then listen well and deeply to what they tell you. Often God is in the worry/pain/hope etc.

R- Report: share with your Acorn group what you have witnessed 'Where was God today?'

N – Notice God: what was God doing **in us** as well as through us.

I would like to invite you to commit yourself to asking God who he is nudging you to connect with, and if you like to take part in an Acorn group that I would like to set up locally. This is not about being class A evangelists, knowing an answer to every question, or having an impressive story to tell. Instead this is about deliberately making ourselves available to God and his calling, listening closely and well, to the people he puts on our path. The disciples were sent on mission by Jesus returned amazed at what had happened, who knows we might be surprised to by the opportunities provided by God. God is already at work in the world, it's for us to catch up!

Please get in touch if you want to know more or are interested in this idea. *Sonia*

39thA Paisley Brownies – June 2020

It is hard to believe that the Pack has not met for 12 weeks!! Wednesday nights are certainly not the same.

Being at home rather than at the Church has not stopped the Brownies being busy. Over 5 weeks the Brownies have been challenged to try 5 different rounds of a Disney quiz. Darcy has really "rocked" this challenge and Meiyee has done a fabulous job too.

Some Brownies have been working on Interest Badges and Ellie completed the Grow your Own badge. She did lovely garden plan and investigated growing seeds.



Meiyee and Millie both completed on the Mindfulness Badge which seemed very appropriate in the current climate. Millie tried yoga with Mum and Meiyee helped her sister exercise.



Georgia completed the Dancing Badge and her Mum shared a fabulous video showing a dance that Georgia choreographed and performed!

As a result of work completed at home, all three of these girls achieved the Be Well Theme badge. Well done – good job!!

In February, Hannah B was the first Brownie in the Pack to complete the Bronze Award and now Millie and Georgia are joining her in gaining this award.

Unfortunately, we will have to wait till after lockdown to present all these badges.

At the end of May, we should have been on weekend Pack Holiday. The hoodies had been ordered so some of the girls are enjoying wearing them during lockdown.



Paisley Division Girlguiding have organised a “Virtual Sleepover” which will take place on Friday 29th May. Girls from all sections of Girlguiding will have the opportunity to “sleepover together” through the wonders of modern technology and Zoom. They will be able to share a photo their tent or den as well as carry out craft activity [which I will have delivered to them] and have a “virtual” campfire. This is a great opportunity of experiencing a “night away at home”!!! we have 15 girls taking part and are very grateful to the leadership team that have organised this.

I hope when I write the next report from the Pack that we will be able to meet in the real world and not just the virtual one.

Stay well and stay safe.

Christine Hair, Brown Owl

39th Paisley Brownies (Tuesday)

How to continue Brownies and Rainbows under lockdown – a conundrum? We may not be meeting on our normal Tuesday night, but we’ve provided the Rainbows and Brownies with packs and activities so that they can carry on their Guiding journey at home, but without any kind of pressure.

Donna Skalley, Rainbow Leader, invited the Rainbows to join in a Zoom meeting one Friday night, which I also joined in. Lovely to see them all in their Rainbow uniforms, bright as buttons, and keen to take part in scavenger activities around their houses. I also got a chance to speak to the Rainbows who will be moving up to Brownies in September. What Brownies will look like then, that's another story. The following week we followed up with a Zoom meeting for the Brownies. What we learned is that lockdown has given them an opportunity to be creative: baking, cooking, sewing, painting, designing, gardening, as well as active: camping, walking and trampolining. They've also used their Mindfulness techniques well, but were beginning to get fed up, missing school, and wanted to see their friends. We'll try to arrange another Zoom with them.

Upcoming is a Paisley Division virtual sleepover, where all the sections are invited to join in on a programme of activity from their home made campsite. I think the Brownie who has been camping in her own garden will fit right in there, but if breakfast is included, the one who has learned to cook an omelette could be an asset too.

I did go up to see the tulip bulbs the Brownies planted at Barshaw Park Walled Garden, and they were a lovely dwarf star shaped variety. In another year they will have thickened out and be quite a show. Well done girls.

Our Pack Holiday got cancelled, but we hope to be able to rebook once restrictions are lifted, and it's safe for us all to be together in confined spaces again.

We would be having our usual end of term badge ceremony, and saying goodbye to the ones moving on up to Guides. This has been an unusual term for us, but we will make sure that they get their badges, and we will catch up with everyone as the organisations get back together again in September.

Sheena Tonner, Brownie Leader

Peter's News

TRASH is still going on online through Zoom and we have been working our way through the book of Philippians. We have spent the last four weeks looking at the details in Paul's letter to the church in Philippi that he set up on one of his missionary journeys. We have had good discussions and questions as we learn more from Scriptures. We also make sure that we have a bit of fun at Trash too so most nights we will play a game or two that can be done through Zoom.

A few weeks ago at Trash we were talking about the early church supporting each other which led to a discussion about how we can support other in our church. The result from that was the young people wrote letters to some of the older people in the congregation, which were very gratefully received.

We have been running a church quiz every fortnight through Zoom and over the three that have taken place we have had more than 50 people attend. These have been good fun and it has been lovely "meeting up" with part of our church family. The next quiz will take place on the 6th June.

I have still been recording and editing the videos of the church services and have been encouraged by the number of people watching them on YouTube. For those who can't access the services online there is an ever expanding list of people getting a CD or DVD copy of the Wednesday and Sunday services. We are now looking at how we do this in the longer term when we are allowed to have worship services in the church again.

God bless and take care,

Peter

Quiz time

There are 30 books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them?

This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much, he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john-boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column.

Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fund raising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new record.

The local paper, The Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight." Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad exodus. There really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in these paragraphs waiting to be found.

Give to St Mark's whilst you shop online

Many of us are shopping more online during the current Coronavirus outbreak.

Did you know that if you shop on smile.amazon.co.uk rather than the normal Amazon website, Amazon will donate a portion of what you spend to your chosen charity. You can choose to nominate St Mark's Church of Scotland, Oldhall, Paisley as your chosen charity.

Simply go to smile.amazon.co.uk on your computer or mobile device. And select St Mark's Church of Scotland, Oldhall, Paisley, as your charitable organisation, we will then receive donations from eligible purchases when you are shopping. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.co.uk will result in a donation to the church. All you then need do is to remember after that to shop at [Smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk) instead of [Amazon.co.uk](https://amazon.co.uk).

Millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations to charities by Amazon. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for smile.amazon.co.uk donation" on their product detail pages. AmazonSmile will occasionally contact you about donation amounts disbursed to your chosen charity or about the programme.

Prayer diary June 2020

Monday 1 June

At the start of a new month, and continued lockdown, take time to think of the many ways God has been with you throughout this time. Give thanks for His many blessings towards us, as we begin to see easing of restrictions. Help us to continue to be responsible.

This is **Global Day of Parents**. Pray for parents throughout the world, many struggling to find food for their children. Continue to pray for all parents homeschooling during this lockdown.

Tuesday 2 June

Give thanks for the recent Thy **Kingdom Come event**, which has seen many countries and people signed up for prayer throughout this time. Ask God to bless and answer the many prayers offered.

Wednesday 3 June

We pray today for Sonia as she leads our service. Be with her in her preparation and bless the message she brings today.

Thursday 4 June

This is the **International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression**. We remember the words of Jesus when he said “Suffer the little children to come unto me” and we bring these young souls who live under aggressive regimes, and at local levels, aggressive family situations, to Him.

“Millions of children are caught up in conflicts in which they are not merely bystanders, but targets.”

Friday 5 June

We pray for the businesses that are beginning to open up again, for the financial situation in our country, and for our society to move away from the consumerism that was prevalent prior to lockdown.

Saturday 6 June

As lockdown restrictions are beginning to ease, we pray that at the weekend people will be sensible in their meeting up with others, taking responsibility for themselves and still aware of the needs of others.

Sunday 7 June

For our service this morning we ask that all who participate in the online service are challenged by the message Sonia brings to us.

At this point in time we are uncertain as to how or when churches will reopen for prayer, and then for worship. We ask that as we move forward You would guide those making decisions, and help us as a congregation to have patience as we wait.

Monday 8 June

We bring to you our local community and ask that Your love would be seen in the way we conduct ourselves, and in our interactions with those we meet.

Tuesday 9 June

Take time to stop 🙌 and look around at the wonders God has given us to, and enjoy the beauty of creation. Many of us have been enjoying gardens. Give thanks if you have one you have been able to get out in. Then think of those who don't have that blessing. Look for ways to be thankful ☐

Wednesday 10 June

We remember Sonia as she brings us A Word 4 Wednesday, and other ministers around the country who are making full use of technology to bring the good news. Thank God that we can still meet together, even if not in our building.

We pray for our Zoom Session meeting again this evening, for all who participate, and that Your Spirit would enable us to seek to do Your will for our church here.

Thursday 11 June

Again, let us turn our minds to those in other parts of the world, and pray for those in South America. We think of Brazil and pray that the hospitals are able to cope with the casualties of this virus. For other countries in the area, Peru, Argentina, Columbia where many are struggling with poverty and corruption.

Friday 12 June

We remember all those who have helped us during this pandemic - lorry drivers, supermarkets, farmers, garages, essential services of gas, electricity, water etc. So many things we take for granted. Stop now and give thanks.

Saturday 13 June

As this is being prepared it isn't known when the different phases of easing restrictions will come into play. Perhaps by this time our young folk will be able to get outside and play. Be especially close to them if

this is the case, and help them maintain good hygiene and social distancing. For some this will be an anxious time going back in among others. Calm their fears we pray.

Sunday 14 June

We pray for our young children and teenagers, for the leaders of Evolution and Trash, and for Peter and others involved in youth work. During this time help them as they look for ways to keep in touch. We pray that You will refresh the leaders in this lockdown period, and draw them closer to You.

Monday 15 June

Thank you for our young people and the different ways in which they have been used by you to keep in touch with our congregation. Bless them as they grow and develop their faith, and be with those who work with them.

Tuesday 16 June

Over the weeks of lockdown it has been so encouraging to have people request prayer, for themselves, or for others, and we would pray that God would continue to allow us to share in this ministry. You can send a request to Julie at stmarksoldhall.org.uk or Irene at irene.pollock03@gmail.com if you wish the prayer group to bring it to God. Even better, you can join in with the prayer group at any time.

Wednesday 17 June

As Sonia leads us this morning, pray that we will have open ears and hearts to what God is saying to us, and that we are able to put in to action what You challenge us to do.

Thursday 18 June

Think of the street you live in and pray for those who live there too. Some will be known to you, others maybe not. Ask God to bless them and open their eyes to His Word.

Pray that people will continue to follow guidance on social distancing, especially as we enter yet another week of lockdown.

Friday 19 June

Pray for those who suffer from mental health problems, for children and young folk with learning disabilities who find change very hard to cope with. We ask as things start to alter again, that they may be kept calm and that anxiety levels don't rise.

Saturday 20 June

We are all well aware of the plight of refugees throughout the world. Today is **World Refugee Day**. We remember the many camps that are 'home' to millions of people, and in the midst of the coronavirus pray for the safety and protection of the people, despite the difficulties in managing their health with little medical provision and poor sanitation.

Sunday 21 June

As we continue to meet online we pray that you will bless all who tune in, who may never go to church. We ask that You will touch hearts and lives with Your message of hope.

This would have been the End of Session Service. Hopefully the youngsters will be involved in this service online.

Monday 22 June

Pray for our governments as we are asked to do, that they might serve as You would serve, have integrity and look for the best for the people they serve.

Tuesday 23 June

International Widows' Day. We remember all who have been bereaved recently or many years ago. May the God of comfort be close to them.

Wednesday 24 June

We remember the youngsters as this would be the week schools close for their summer break. Pray for the teachers too, and for the decisions made to return to school. We ask that there would be proper discussion around this, and that safety would be paramount. We pray for parents who may now need to find different ways of having their children at school/home, and the impact this will have on them.

Thursday 25 June

We think again of the wider world, and for mission workers in various countries. For those who have had to leave due to the virus, and for those who have elected to stay and continue Your work among the people they live with. We ask for Your protection over them, and for the opportunity for those back home to return to the country You have called them to.

Friday 26 June

As we end another week, pray for relaxation and refreshing for the week ahead.

We pray for the Ralston Out of School Care too. They have continued to meet in the church during this time, and will do so during the summer break. Keep them safe and be with leaders and children as they provide this service.

Saturday 27 June

Pray for those who need to work in essential services, in the NHS, Police, Fire, Armed services etc.

Sunday 28 June

Communion service this morning. At the time of printing I am assuming it will still be online. Pray that this service will be a blessing to each of us, as we share together. May we have a deeper understanding of what it means.

Monday 29 June

Today takes us into the last week of June, and it is hard to believe almost half the year has passed already. Many plans to go on holiday have been completely scuppered, and thoughts of sun and sea have disappeared! Help us learn to be content with where we are at present, and to be grateful for holidays we may have had before, remembering that there will be many people who have not have the same opportunities and live from day to day scraping by.

Tuesday 30 June

We continue to pray for farmers as harvest time approaches, for difficulty in getting enough staff to pick the crops now foreign seasonal workers can't come here.

Office Hours

Tue, Wed & Fri 11:15am – 2:45pm