

Marksman

June/July, 2022



St Mark's 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

As I sit at my desk to write this, the sun is shining brightly, the sky is blue, and there are only a few small cumulus clouds drifting above Ralston Golf Course. However, the clouds are moving quickly because the wind is blowing and it is not as warm as I think it should be for the end of May. It reminds me that God's love is shining warmly whether we feel it warm or not. Life, like the cumulus clouds, sometimes gets in the way and blocks us from the warmth of the sun for a while ; at other times the clouds gather and build into a major nimbostratus clouds, and we know we need to dash inside before the next downpour. Yet, even as we shelter inside, we know the sun is still shining somewhere - even if not in Ralston or Oldhall.

Recently, I've been on retreat for three days, and during that time was reminded of the writings of Julian of Norwich, whom I first "encountered" almost 20 years ago. She lived during the Middle Ages, born around 1372, when the Black Death was spreading across Europe at terrifying speed, leaving in its wake a staggering death toll and economic disaster - somewhat reminiscent of the Covid pandemic in our own time. Julian was an anchoress, and lived much of her life in seclusion, in a sealed room attached to St. Julian's Church in the city of Norwich, where she sought to devote herself entirely to prayer and union with God. Little is known about Julian's real name or background. Her decision to become an anchoress followed a severe illness when she was 30 years old, characterised by a high fever, difficulty breathing and the sense of being paralysed. But it was while fighting this illness that Julian began to experience the first of her many visions.

The first occurred whilst she was being given the Last Rites, and as the priest brings a cross to her, the cross begins to glow. She sees Christ standing right in front of her and, despite being quite startled, she fixes her gaze directly on the suffering Christ, although she was tempted to look away from his suffering. By fixing her eyes on the cross, Julian perceived that "glory comes through suffering, in particular the suffering of Christ, and not in spite of it."

Julian would continue to experience religious visions or "shewings" throughout her life, writing detailed accounts of each. These descriptions were eventually compiled into *Revelations of Divine Love*, the earliest surviving English-language book written by a woman.

The Friends of Julian of Norwich, a spiritual community in Norwich dedicated to the mystic, report that "Julian learned that God is not an angry judge; but, like a mother, has joyfully given us birth through the pain of the cross." Julian herself wrote in *Revelations of Divine Love*: "As truly as God is our Father, so truly God is our Mother; and that shewed He in all."

Julian's theology reflects Eastern Orthodox traditions more than it does Western forms of Christianity. Specifically, Julian holds that God is present in everything that exists: all that was made is good, and therefore nothing God made is evil.

Julian writes about the inner relationship of the persons of the Holy Trinity. She was "heavily trinitarian" and believed that all three parts of the Trinity were involved in creation, incarnation and salvation. And In Julian's view, God is not remote from humanity, but experiences all the suffering of his creation.

"God suffers in your suffering.... [Julian] says no.... God suffers with and in us.... God did it quintessentially on the cross itself, where all the pain [of humanity was] taken on."

The idea of solitude strengthening one's faith is integral to the view of anchorites and anchoresses, who represent a unique form of monasticism with deep roots in Christian history. Going back to the early figure of Anthony the Great, known as the Father of All Monks, Christians have viewed solitude as a way to better focus on sensing the presence of God. Unlike monks and nuns who live together in a secluded community, or hermits who may wander from place to place, anchorites and anchoresses do not go anywhere. Instead, they are sealed up in a cell attached to a church, where they can engage in prayerful solitude that seeks to embody the values of poverty, chastity, obedience and stability.

While Julian lived in her cell, Norwich at the time was a bustling centre of commerce, and St. Julian's Church was right in the heart of the city. As a result, Julian could speak through her window to local residents, often offering advice on their spiritual problems. It was through her own prayerful solitude that Julian experienced her visions and developed her theology. Julian wrote what Christ told her in a vision: "All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."

These words are reassuring for us to hang onto as we emerge from the pandemic and try to establish the 'new normal' whilst the war in Ukraine and an economic crisis are dominating our news headlines. We may not be able or even want to spend our days in solitude, but it is good to take some time alone with God each day, to talk with him, to read his Word and give him the chance to speak to us.

I hope that many of you will be able to travel and visit family and friends this summer, and maybe even venture abroad to seek some more guaranteed sunshine.

I wish you well, and may you know God goes with you,

Your friend and minister,

Sonia

Ref: Anglican Journal: "Julian of Norwich, a 'Theologian for our Time'" Matt Puddister May 7, 2020

Worship Matters

Pentecost Sunday	5th June
Safeguarding Sunday	12th June
Promotion Sunday	19th June
Communion	26th June
Sonia will be on holiday 18th - 31st July.	



The services on Sundays 24th and 31st July will be led by members of the Worship Team.

Mid-week services have now stopped for the summer and will restart in October.

Funerals

12th April Doreen Gough, Kinpurnie Road
12th May Nana Poustie, Tylney Road
16th May Jim Rose, Howard Street, Paisley
17th May John McKay, Motehill Road, Gallowhill
30th May Mary Campbell, Woodend Drive



Also the death of Ruth Clunie, of Nazareth House on 15th May, at the age of 103 yrs. (There will be no funeral service since Ruth has donated her body to Glasgow University.)



Flowers in Church

05.06.22	Mr & Mrs Pollock
12.06.22	Mr & Mrs W Whyte
19.06.22	Mrs A Roberts
26.06.22	Isobel Higgins
03.07.22	Mrs Winnie Keith
10.07.22	Mrs L Campbell Mrs E Macdonald
17.07.22	Mrs A Black
24.07.22	Miss June Chapman
31.07.22	Mrs A McLachlan

Ladies Delivering Flowers

05.06.22	Mrs D McKay	Mrs C Whiteman
12.06.22	Mrs M Scobie	
19.06.22	Mrs D Grant	Mrs M Adam
26.06.22	Mrs K McLauchlan	
03.07.22	Mrs M Currie	Mrs E Boyd
10.07.22	Mrs I Ritchie	
17.07.22	Mrs I McBride	
24.07.22	Mrs E Macdonald	Mrs W Keith
31.07.22	Mrs C Sinclair	



Our grateful thanks go to Jackson Lifts for the work they have recently carried out on the church lift to restore it to working order. This is much appreciated by our church members, and the wider community.

Bill Strachan has intimated his intention to retire as Roll Keeper. Our thanks go to Bill for his many years of dedicated service in this important role. His duties will now be taken over by Fiona, in the Church office.

Renfrewshire Foodbank

We continue to collect groceries, toiletries and cleaning products for the Foodbank.

However, we currently have a wee church mouse helping him/herself to foodbank donations so we would be grateful if you would only donate foodstuff in tins or glass, (or toiletries and cleaning products), until we catch up with the wee fellow (or miss).



Thank you.

Green Team



Reminder - Recycling Ink Cartridges

St Mark's *Green Team* is looking at ways that our Church and congregation can become more eco-friendly and sustainable. As part of this initiative, we are going to be collecting used ink cartridges for recycling. This will reduce the number of cartridges going to landfill and will give the cartridge "another life"!! It has the added advantage of raising some funds for the Church too.

If you [or any family and friends] have a printer at home, please bring your empty cartridges along to Church. There will be collection boxes available at the doors for you to deposit the cartridges. The Corner Shop have also agreed to take pass on any cartridges that are handed in to them.

Please help if you can.

Peter's News

Holiday Club

During the Easter holidays we had a very successful holiday club. We had a total of sixty-three children come along during the week, with at least forty there each day. We looked at the story of Joseph and characteristics of God that were shown in Joseph's story : God is a planner, helper, provider, forgiver and King.

The children that came along did the usual holiday club things like songs, games, stories, challenges, crafts and quizzes. It was great seeing so many young people in the church enjoying themselves.

On the Saturday following the holiday club we held a family event which was a treasure hunt around Ralston and then back to the church for a BBQ tea. We had more than sixty people taking part and the large hall was packed with people having food together.

There was a large team of people that helped make the holiday club happen. I would like to thank everyone who helped in any way for putting the holiday club on.



Messy Church

Our monthly *Messy Church* events have been going well the past few months. We have been looking at some of the Old Testament characters as we worked towards looking at Joseph at the holiday club. *Messy Church* is on the last Saturday of the month and at the moment runs from 2 until 3. I am hopeful that we might get some people who came to holiday club coming along to *Messy Church* on the 28th May.

Now that there are fewer Covid restrictions, we need to decide how we run *Messy Church* going forward. We can keep it at the 2pm to 3pm with some snacks or back to how it ran when it first started and run from 4pm to 6pm and provide a meal.

Schools

The week before Holiday Club I was able to go away with the P7s on their residential trip to Lockerbie Manor. It was an action-packed week with long days and lots of different things for the young people to do. They did paddle-boarding, canoeing, kayaking, mountain-biking, climbing, abseiling, archery, rifle shooting, high ropes and other outdoor activities. It was really good getting to know some of the P7s and catching up with some of the teachers whom I had not spoken to since the start of the pandemic.

In early May I was back in the school taking the assemblies at the school. I have taken a few online assemblies or end of term services, but this was the first time I was back in the school building for them. I spoke about the importance of having good examples to follow and how Jesus is the best example to follow. The school will be coming down to the church for their end of term services. It will be lovely to welcome all the school children and some of their family to the church for these services.



TRASH

Trash is still doing really well with about a dozen young people coming along regularly. In the run up to holiday club the young people helped to create some of the decorations for holiday club. We then had a few weeks off during Easter and are back into our normal routine. A number of the young people have been sitting exams over the past few weeks and I thank everyone who has been praying for them during this time.

We are going to work our way through the book of Romans over the next few months and try and help the young people understand how best to study and learn from the bible.

CDs and DVDs



All the services are still recorded and CDs and DVDs of these are still being made. If you are aware of anyone who might appreciate a copy of the service being delivered then please do let me know.

Thank you for all your support of this work here at St Mark's and in the wider community. Thank you to everybody who helps run these activities and to all who are praying for these things.

God bless,

Peter

Prayer Guide



		JUNE, 2022
		NO MID WEEK SERVICES THIS MONTH. THEY RESUME IN OCTOBER.
Wed	1	As we enter the 6 th month of this year, give thanks for all that has gone on in the past months. This is Global Day of Parents – we thank you for our parents, for those who are parents and we pray for those who have struggled with their parents or been estranged. Help us to remember that you are our loving Father.
Thu	2	We pray for our local community this week.
Fri	3	Be with all who work in positions of care, with young people, with the elderly or with those who are less able.
Sat	4	International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression – in the current situation in Ukraine, and in other areas in the world where there are many fleeing persecution, we bring before you the children caught up in these situations and pray your protection on them.
Sun	5	Pray for Sonia today as she leads us in worship this PENTECOST Sunday. Give thanks that we are able to have freedom to meet together to praise you. ThyKingdomCome prayer event finishes today. Thanks to all who took a Prayer Journal and hopefully you found it helpful and encouraging as you prayed for people. We ask that God will answer the prayers of many over this time. This is also World Environment Day.
Mon	6	Our community prayers this week are for Springfield Avenue, Strathmore Avenue and Tylney Road. Remember all the ADULTS who live in these streets.
Tue	7	Brownies 39 finish this evening for summer break. They are having a Jubilee Party and their final badge awards.
Wed	8	39A Brownies finish tonight. Pray for both lots of Brownies and their leaders for the summer break. Give thanks that they have been able to meet throughout this past session.
Thu	9	Bring our country of Scotland before God in prayer.
Fri	10	Pray for all those who help with those suffering with addictions of any kind, May they find ways to support and help people to free themselves from these, and may they know God's help and strength.
Sat	11	Bible Study this morning on Zoom. We are still looking at Psalms.
Sun	12	SAFEGUARDING Sunday.
Mon	13	Woodend Drive, and all those who live out-with the District are in our prayers this week. Pray for all the BABIES who live here.
Tue	14	We ask that you are with the ladies of the Guild during their break. Help them keep in touch with each other and be with them as they plan for next session.
Wed	15	Prayer Group meets on Zoom and in the manse and Bible Study is in the manse after that.
Thu	16	We ask God to be with all the nations in the United Kingdom, and pray for wisdom in our leaders.
Fri	17	For all our emergency services we ask a blessing on them as they work tirelessly to help, support and rescue others. Be with their families too.
Sat	18	As we approach the better days of summer (hopefully!) thank God for the changing seasons and enjoy the blessings he gives. Be with those who are suffering from the effects of climate change throughout the world.

		JUNE, 2022
Sun	19	Pray that as you come to church this morning you will look forward to meeting with the risen Christ. We are privileged to be able to meet in freedom.
Mon	20	We bring the people in Allanton Avenue, Alton Road and Atholl Crescent to you in prayer this week. Take time to pray for the CHILDREN in these streets, World Refugee Day today. We pray for all refugees throughout our world.
Tue	21	Pray for our local community businesses as they serve the people here.
Wed	22	Prayer Group this evening on Zoom and in the manse at 7:00pm.
Thu	23	Church Afternoon Tea today. Pray for the pastoral committee as they hold this, and give thanks for all who will be able to attend, some of whom may not have been out for a while. May they enjoy their time together. Pray for the Kirk Session meeting this evening, that all business discussed will be in your will.
Fri	24	We remember all the young lads involved in the BB and ask that you are with them.
Sat	25	Our last Bible Study this session.
Sun	26	COMMUNION Sunday. We ask that you will make yourself known to us as we celebrate and worship today.
Mon	27	Auchmannoch Avenue, Balfron Road and Barshaw Road are our streets for prayer. It's the DADS to pray for this week especially.
Tue	28	Schools break up for the summer holidays. We pray that staff and pupils have a good rest and will be able to return to more normal working in August.
Wed	29	Prayer Group on Zoom and in the manse, followed by the final Bible Study of the session.
Thu	30	Prayer is needed for the nations in the world where there is hunger, poverty, war, natural disasters or corruption. We ask God to be with those in need.



Report from the Kirk Session

Over recent months the Kirk Session has been discussing the life of the church, and considering what we do and what we might do better. One of the things that have come up is communication so we are going to try to use the Marksman to tell you more of what we are discussing.

Clyde Presbytery - Along with most other churches in our Presbytery we have completed and submitted a Mission Audit report. These will be used to plan the future church landscape of our Presbytery. A number of churches across our Presbytery will be subject to closure or unions. As future facing, we need to be active in our church life (worship, discipleship, etc) and in the community.

The Kirk Session discussed two key questions :

1. What Church is about? - Worship, Mission, Fellowship, Discipleship, Learning and Praying,
2. What is important to us? - People, Worship, Fellowship, People, Music, our Church worker, (not meaning to imply that any of the 'what church is about' is not important).

The recent plant sale raised around £1900 for church funds and was a great opportunity to meet people and chat - with those of our church family and the wider community.

We know people are wondering about what is happening with the idea of a Church café. We have not forgotten about it. We have been applying for grants for the work, but have not yet found any large donors, although, as mentioned in an earlier edition of the *Marksman*, MacAsphalt have already built the ramp entrance to the café for us. However, we have received a £2000 grant from Arnold Clark to help set up the new café, and this, along with some other donations, will be used to buy a barista-style coffee machine and equip a new café. In the short - medium term the coffee machine will be housed in the Corrie Drive vestibule and this will be set up (at times) as a café, possibly with spill-out onto the paved area outside - if the sun is shining. This will be used for the Dementia-friendly café, but we hope to open it on other occasions. The first Sunday will be Sunday 12th June (order your coffee on arrival at church) and on Wednesday mornings throughout the summer. We will also be starting actively to fund raise for the building costs of the bigger venture.

Property - Andy has been working on our lighting with the assistance of Hamilton Electricals. Several of the lights in the halls, corridors and in the church have been or are going to be replaced with more energy efficient lighting in the next couple of months. The lift has been repaired and is now in full working order - please ask for instructions about operating it if you think you might need to use it - and a significant repair has been carried out on the church roof. Presbytery have also carried out an assessment on our church and halls.

Church finances - Offerings are consistent with last year and hall rental income has increased again - after being almost nothing last year. However, expenditure is rising too - our Ministry and Mission payments to the national church have risen again (we were given a reduction last year) as well as increasing heating and lighting costs - an important reason for improving the efficiency of our lighting.

Finally we are delighted to see many more 'old faces' returning to church. Please continue to apply 'Covid sense' by keeping a little distance, using hand gel, and staying home if you are unwell. Windows will continue to be open for services to allow increased ventilation.

The Kirk Session are pleased to have new elders increasing its numbers but it welcomes and values the contributions made by many other members in many areas of church life. Together we will continue in our mission to "Love God, Love Others and Serve the World".



39th Paisley Brownies (Tuesday)



The Brownies have been focussing on First Aid Skills, and we've been encouraging the girls to do their *Growing Your Own* Interest Badge.

For our *Skillsbuilder*, they have learned how to check levels of responsiveness, put someone into the recovery position, contact Emergency Services for help, and we've even had a chat about the defibrillator at the side door.

Before Easter the girls all scattered cress seeds on damp kitchen roll, and watched these germinate and grow over the holidays. We then made plant containers out of toilet rolls, where they planted sunflower seeds, and these are happily growing at home.

We also received some Calendula (Marigold) seeds from RHS, as part of their *Grow Well* campaign in 2022, and we've been talking about the benefits of gardening for our wellbeing. The girls all received seeds to take home and grow in pots or scatter in their gardens. We've also been designing our Dream Gardens – look out for a spate of tree houses, inflatable slides and swimming pools springing up in Ralston!



Our Pack Holiday at South Newton with the Sherwood Greenlaw Brownies was a great success. Our theme was *Mary Poppins*, which gave us great scope to make and fly kites; make bird feeders ; do a bit of bird spotting and have an afternoon tea party (not on the ceiling!) - although the girls did do a bit of wall climbing at the site. We were fortunate with the weather, and the girls all had a great time,. They went home with a plethora of crafts they had done over the weekend.



We were also lucky with the sunny weather for *Renchox*, our County event at the camp site, where the girls enjoyed a *Willy Wonka* style afternoon, visiting three different zones for activities.

There were circus challenges, a cardboard tunnel to crawl through, swingball and croquet in Smartie Land; a giant inflatable slide, and a tea-cup ride in Tutti Frutti Land; and lots of crafting activities in Dolly Mixture Land. The girls received a bag and badge as a memento of the day, and enjoyed an ice-cream, slush puppy and candy floss.



Our final evening will be just after the Jubilee Weekend, so we will finish with a Jubilee Party, along with the Rainbows, and presentation of badges for our current efforts. We've no Brownies due to go to Guides this year, but we're expecting some to move up from Rainbows to join us, hopefully swelling our numbers for next term.

Sheena Tonner, Brownie Leader

39thA Paisley Brownies

And so another session is drawing to a close!! How quickly it has flown by and we have been so appreciative that we are back to face-to-face meetings!! Thank you to St Mark's for supporting us to achieve this.

At the end of March, we had a couple of evenings that were dedicated to craft activities. For Mother's Day, the Brownies decorated trinket boxes and even popped a couple of *Heroes* sweeties inside for Mum. They also chose a card to make from a selection of different types. I am sure the Mums were delighted to receive the little gift, made with love.

The following week, we had Easter-based craft. The Brownies made an Easter-based fridge magnet. We were also very lucky to get a visit from the Easter bunny who hid eggs for all of the Brownies and the Leaders too!!! We were all so busy on these evenings that I forgot to take any photos to share with you. Since the Easter break, we have continued our efforts to cover a variety of activities from all 6 of the programme themes. As a result of this, we have been able to present to

- Grier, her *Be Well* Theme badge ;
- Daisy Mac, Jenny and Phoebe, their *Express Myself* Theme badges ;
- Jessica L and Ruyi, who have succeeded in completing 2 themes, their Bronze award ;
- One of the Brownies who managed to complete 4 themes, the Silver award – well done Darcy!!

The Brownies are encouraged to work on Interest Badges at home and the following badges have been awarded :

- *Grow your Own* – Jenny
- *Painting* – Daisy Mac

We finally finished all the postcards that had been an on-going challenge given to the Brownies. It was lovely to see the bright pictures that the Brownies had drawn and the little bits of information they had written. I have sent them off to 4 different Nursing Homes to encourage conversation amongst the Residents. I am sure they will appreciate the efforts of the Brownies.



On 14th May, 16 girls joined Brownies and Rainbows from across the County at a fun event at the County Campsite, South Newton. The sun shone on us and we had a great afternoon! The theme for the event was *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and a huge effort had been made to decorate the site. On arrival, each girl got a special bag and *Golden Ticket* badge. During the afternoon, as well as lots of fun activities, each girl even got an ice cream cone, a slushie and candy floss. There was a huge inflatable slide and tea-cup ride. Faces were painted and assorted craft activities were available.



Our final adventure for the session involves 15 Brownies and 4 Leaders spending the weekend at the PGL outdoor centre at Dalguse at the end of May. We are looking forward to having fun, adventurous times together and I will share some photos in the next *Marksman*.

For the last meeting of the session we are planning an evening celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. There will be lots of red, white and blue that night!! After our celebrations, the parents will be invited to join us for the final badge presentation of the session. We have 7 girls who are of age to move on in their Guiding journey and we hope many of them will move on to Guides.

And soon our plans for the new session will start to take shape!!!! If you have any new neighbours with girls in the family, please encourage them to come along and enjoy the fun and friendship that Girlguiding offers. Adult volunteers will, of course, be very welcome too!! Interest should be registered at : www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus

Christine Hair

Brown Owl

24th Paisley Company Boys' Brigade

There seem to have been a significant number of food-related activities across all the sections in recent months. That may say something about the staff.

The Anchors queued up for ice cream, having survived a blindfolded taste test first. An ice cream-themed night seemed like a great idea although a USA-themed night also involved food : doughnuts. It was handy to have Nathan, one of the Company Section boys and an actual American on hand, to keep order.



Charlie Porter, of the Juniors, was rightly proud of his Red Nose Chocolate Krispies. Not looking so good were the Earth Biscuits produced by the Company Section. I am told they tasted better than they looked. The Company Section did produce some delicious chicken dishes and crêpes on another occasion so that made up for these.



The Seniors also got the chance to cook for themselves on their Queen's Badge Expedition. We were certainly ready for food after an exhausting hike in warm conditions.



It was not so warm at night and marshmallows (more food) toasted on the campfire went down very well. For some of these young men, the expedition was the final requirement in achieving their Queen's Badge. Six of the Company (Lewis Martin, Jack Young, Euan Houston, Nathan George, Reece Fisher, and Harry Carswell) should receive their award formally at a Civic Reception in September, whilst another five should complete their award next session. This represents a wonderful achievement at any time but, given the restrictions of the pandemic, it is quite remarkable what they have accomplished over the last few years.

The Queen's Badge is the Brigade's highest award and is named for the Queen, our Patron. We will mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee at the end of our session this year and it is a good time for us to reflect on her example of commitment and service which she always says is underpinned by her own strong Christian Faith. Well summed up for us as a BB company by her quote:

“For me, the life of Jesus Christ is an inspiration and an anchor in my life”.

Our aim as a BB company is to strive to make that something that more young people can say of their own lives.

Jack Goodall
(Company Captain)



Prayer Guide

The Prayer Groups will be taking a break throughout July and August and will resume again in September. The groups will still receive a weekly prayer guide and if you have a specific item for prayer, please let Sonia, Irene or Bob know and it can be included.

JULY, 2022		
Fri	1	We pray for those who are refugees and fleeing their native lands due to difficult situations. May you help us show compassion through our prayers and our giving.
Sat	2	As people begin to go on holiday (assuming life continues to be more normal) we pray that you will restore and refresh them. Help them to be able to take time out of the mundane day-to-day activities and enjoy space to relax
Sun	3	Lord help us as we journey with you and help our lives show your love to others.
Mon	4	Remember all those who live in Bathgo Avenue, Blair Road and Buchlyvie Road this week. For any ELDERLY folk living here, we remember them.
Tue	5	We pray for all those who are in jail and ask that you help them to turn to you and to change their ways.
Wed	6	During this time when many things have stopped for a break, take time to stop and reflect on the past few months and give God thanks for all he has done in your life and the life of the church.
Thu	7	So many people have jobs that aren't well paid, or are ones where they seem invisible. Help us to remember to thank those who work in menial jobs that make our lives easier. Take time to stop and thank someone today for the service they provide.
Fri	8	We continue to pray for the work with the young people in our church and community. Be with those who are now heading to university or college, or starting off in their life of work. Help them to know that you are with them each step of the way.
Sat	9	We pray for all those in our congregation who can't get out to meet with others. Help those who feel lonely or depressed. Help us find ways to bring your love to them.
Sun	10	As Sonia leads us today we ask that you would bless her and her family too.
Mon	11	Bring all those who live in Crookston Drive, Dalfoil Court and Darvel Crescent before God in prayer this week. Especially pray for FAMILIES.
Tue	12	International Youth Day. Give thanks for the young people in our church, for their faithful attendance, for their work in the church and for their future plans. Pray they will seek to follow you throughout their lives.
Wed	13	Pray for the Property committee, the Green team, the Finance Team, the Pastoral team and Worship Team in their work here at St Mark's.
Thu	14	Give thanks for the choice of food we are afforded in this country, despite there being some things we want, but can't get. Remember the many in our world who are desperate for a bowl of rice, a piece of bread, or a drink of clean water.
Fri	15	Remember all those in the NHS and in Caring professions. We pray that Governments will provide enough jobs to take away the strains and stresses put on many in these areas of work. Pray, too, for fair pay for many who are struggling to make ends meet.
Sat	16	Thank God for leisure time to relax, enjoy his world and keep active. Pray for people who don't have that luxury, or don't have enough money to join gyms, or other clubs.

Prayer Guide



		JULY, 2022
Sun	17	Be with Sonia as she brings your word to us today. Help us be receptive to what you want to teach us.
Mon	18	It's the turn of Drummond Drive, Duchray Drive and Dunchurch Road for our prayers. Bring all GRANDPARENTS to God in prayer this week. Sonia is on holiday from today until the 31 st July. Give her a good rest and relaxation at this time.
Tue	19	Pray for the persecuted church throughout the world, for people who have found themselves imprisoned for their faith or for those who have lost their lives standing up for you. Give them courage.
Wed	20	Remember that even though the Prayer Group is on a break, prayer is something we can all take part in. If you haven't seen it as a vital part of your christian life, why not try. I think there are still some <i>Try Praying</i> booklets outside the church. If not, please ask Sonia about them.
Thu	21	We pray for organisations like Tearfund, SCIAF, UNICEF, etc, who are working to bring aid and help people to have dignity again by supporting them to start up cooperatives, or grow small businesses.
Fri	22	We have so many freedoms in this country that we often take for granted. Today is the International Day of Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence based on religion or belief.
Sat	23	We pray for our World, for climate change, for environmental issues and ask that you would help us become more aware of how we can play our part to change things.
Sun	24	Be with Andy Grant as he leads us in worship this morning. Be with him as he brings your message to us today.
Mon	25	Pray for those living in Gartartan Road, Gartmore Road and Glasgow Road this week. There will be people who are HURTING this week. Pray God would help them.
Tue	26	For local, national, international governments we ask that you would raise up people of honesty and integrity, who seek to know your wisdom as they lead and that they work for the benefit of those they represent.
Wed	27	We pray for Probationer ministers, and students throughout Scotland. May they find the place you have in your plans for them.
Thu	28	Think of someone who has influenced your life in a positive way and give thanks for them today. Perhaps you may want to let them know and encourage them.
Fri	29	We bring before you all those in our fellowship who are unwell, in hospital, bereaved, lonely, distressed or waiting diagnosis. May they very much be aware of you by their side, comforting, upholding, strengthening and caring for them.
Sat	30	Remembering the countries where many people have disappeared, we pray for the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, and for their families who are left.
Sun	31	We pray for Eileen Wilkie as she leads worship this morning and ask that you would bless her and us as we meet together, in person or online.

From Paisley to Poland



Rebecca and Olek Kowalski recently made a trip to Poland to help Ukrainian refugees. Here is Rebecca's account of their travels.

Firstly, we would like to say how delighted we were with all the support and assistance from friends, family, neighbours and workmates and St Mark's. All of the contributions, whether goods for the car, monetary donations, prayers or best wishes are hugely appreciated and helped fuel the journey – and it needed a lot of fuel!

We have been told we are kind-hearted, amazing and all sorts of other superlatives, which we really don't think we deserve. We would just say we felt obliged to do something and were willing to wing it. One thing we realised was that, by giving people the opportunity to contribute to or be part of our trip in some way, we were helping them cope with their own frustrations and sadness about events in Ukraine, as well as our own.

Due to everyone's generosity and interest in our trip, we really wanted to share with you what you helped us achieve. We also wanted to highlight how it is possible to help in case anyone else had the notion to do something similar. We are considering a return trip, with less winging it this time!

Firstly, we did spend a fair chunk of our 9 days away getting there and getting back. We set off on Friday afternoon, crossed the channel and found literally the last hotel room available in Dunkirk at about 1.00 a.m. on Saturday morning. We thought we had lost the passports, but they reappeared in the morning and a couple of pastries and a coffee from the boulangerie lifted our spirits before we hit the road across Europe. The weather was lovely and the roads clear and we made it to Wroclaw in Poland by Sunday evening, with a stopover in Leipzig on the way. Leipzig is not designed for car drivers which complicated things a little but having finally found somewhere to abandon the car, one of the first things we encountered was an open-air concert in the main square in aid of Ukraine, which was uplifting.

Arrival in Wroclaw was one of the most stressful parts of the drive ; we were both tired and the satnav could not cope with the roadworks everywhere (new tram lines). We drove past our much-needed bed for the night umpteen times before finding a way to get to it.

On Monday, we were finally able to get down to business, driving to a refugee centre in Chelm on the Polish border on the advice of Max, a London cabbie who had recently returned from an aid mission there. We just happened to read about him somewhere and managed to track him down via LinkedIn. He was a great source of useful information and support. There's quite a collaborative community building of people who take it upon themselves to drive to Poland to help the refugees.

The drive to Chelm was a little slower : A-roads and a lot of traffic, including quite a few trucks of young Polish soldiers. As soon as we got there though, things happened fast. We went to the centre Max the cabbie had directed us to and registered with the army reserves in charge there, male and female, old and young, all friendly and speaking some degree of English. They were amused by the fact Olek has a Polish name and a Polish Dad but speaks school boy Polish with a slight Geordie twang. We explained that we hoped to be able to help drive refugees places, whether in Poland or potentially further afield or do anything else we could to help. They were actually quite prepared to let us roll up our sleeves and help out around the centre, which was



situated on a disused Tesco hypermarket. There were camp beds and cubicles for maybe 200 refugees to sleep, bathrooms and a play area for the kids. It was designed to provide a temporary safe space before moving on to a more permanent place. It wasn't too busy that day: a few families ; Mums trying to get babies to sleep; small children amusing themselves; adults sleeping. It was one of the days when the safe corridors for civilians were not being honoured by the Russians. Nevertheless, as soon as we had explained what we could do, a mother and daughter were identified who needed our help: Mum Natasha and her teenage daughter needing to get to accommodation they had been offered in a remote part of the Polish countryside. Train travel is free for the Ukrainians in Poland, but the journey would have taken about 7 hours with 4 changes, and the drive was 2 to 3 hours.

We still had all the Paisley provisions in the car at that point so we drove to the aid warehouse which was round the corner and made the quickest handover of goods possible, reserving some of the children's treats, toys and juices for the kids we had seen running round in the centre. Supplies offloaded, we scooted back, made Natasha and her daughter as comfortable as possible and set out across Polish country.

It was quite an experience. Natasha was very polite about my extremely rusty Russian and putting on an incredibly brave face. She had initially said it was not family whose place they were headed to but a friend. However, as we talked more, it became a friend of a friend of a friend. Having read some terrible tales of people trafficking, we were taking great care to avoid any cause for concern and be on the look-out for any suspicious circumstances. Olek insisted I explain to our passengers that we were stopping and say why at every point. I was therefore a little anxious when we arrived at the address Natasha had given us.

It was very remote, down a track on the outskirts of a tiny village. A very large almost mansion like house, but very dilapidated, surrounded by a few smaller houses, at least one of them clearly uninhabited. We had no idea which of these buildings was the right place. Natasha banged on the nearest door and managed to have a two-language conversation with the Polish woman who answered. She directed us to the big house. At the door, I noticed it had a plaque in English on the wall , which said the building had once belonged to a rich and philanthropic family who had donated it to the community. It made me think of the Paisley and the Coats family. The door was opened by a man who didn't seem to be expecting Natasha but ushered her in to the large dark hallway. People trafficker alert again and I decided I needed to check the place out before we left these two women in the middle of nowhere. Inside, after speaking to a woman who phoned another woman, Natasha and the existing occupants of the house seemed at ease and she and her daughter were shown to a bright room with twin beds and clean towels. They seemed happy and there was nothing left for me to do but wish them luck and say farewell. It was short, peculiar and a very strange relationship and I left with no idea whether I had done all I could have or should have done.

It was again late by the time we got back to a town and we stayed in Lublin that night, making plans for how best to use another day ahead at the border. Whilst en route, I had been messaging a Ukrainian working in Scotland via a Facebook group - Homes for Ukraine Scotland – and he said that he was in contact with a distribution centre in Chelm that was distributing goods to be driven across the border to people in Ukraine. He told me that that the most urgent need was for pressure bandages. Not sure when we could source those, I contacted a Polish friend, currently resident in Edinburgh, who is originally from Lublin and asked him. It turned out his aunty was a senior manager in a local hospital and before I knew it, we had hopes of accessing a large supply of bandages and medicines for the injured in Ukraine.

In the end it didn't work out, but we did get a message to some people back in the UK we knew were preparing to bring aid over soon and tell them to ensure they included medical supplies. We still made it to the distribution centre on Tuesday with a big supply of long-life food and found an almost empty warehouse, everything seemed to be sent to where it was urgently needed almost as soon as it arrived. It made us feel like we were in the right place at the right time and providing valuable support.

From there, we returned to the refugee centre in Chelm and were matched with another family who needed an urgent lift to Warsaw to catch a train to Berlin, where they had a cousin. Grandmother, her two daughters, perhaps early 30s, each with a child aged around 8. An elderly couple from the same village. We couldn't take them all in our car and so agreed to take one Mum and daughter, with the rest of the party going with a Polish volunteer driver, Lukas. Lukas worked for a company who let their staff take one day off a week to use the company cars to drive refugees. He spoke excellent English and not long into the journey, he phoned to say that he had checked the train times and we weren't going to get to Warsaw in time for the last train to Berlin that day. He suggested that we take the family to a safe place he knew they could stay that night, near to the train station, and they could get a train first thing the next day. Olek went into major protective mode and had me check if the story stacked up, train times, location of safe place, distance from train station. All while Mum and child slept in the back seat of the car, oblivious to our worries.

The safe place turned out to me a great example of the kindness and resourcefulness of ordinary Polish people, a community living in an apartment block that had converted the communal gym and launderette space into a clean and comfortable living area. We were greeted by a woman who assured us that the family would be safe and showed us round the facilities. We checked that our passengers were comfortable and understood their next step of the journey. It was again hard to leave them, not quite as we had foreseen things, but they didn't seem to want any fuss. We may have felt unsettled by the change in plans, but for them, having to spend a night on a camp bed in a hastily spruced up space was far less of an inconvenience than having to flee their homes and country.

After dropping them off, it was too late to head all the way back to the border so we stayed in Warsaw that night. Olek enjoyed watching Poland win their World Cup qualifier. It seemed the least they deserved after all the good deeds we had seen from Polish people over the last couple of days.

At this point, in a different town unexpectedly and with one and a half days remaining before we had to head home, we were keen to make the most of the time remaining. There was a lot of messaging that night, with contacts in Poland and back on the UK who might know someone who needed our help. We were still hoping to be able to take someone with us when we made the long drive back across Europe. Unfortunately, it was a well-known problem being experienced by a few UK volunteers in the country, that there was a lack of Ukrainian refugees able to head to the UK. Very few of them had managed to secure visas and over 50% of families were also wondering how on earth they would bring their pets with them or their cars. We came close to arranging to bring 2 women and 4 cats to Ireland but there were not enough tickets for the ferry that weekend. We watched a video filmed by an English man who had gone right to the border crossing and was lamenting the fact that most nations in Europe had official welcoming parties, facilities and information centres for the refugees arriving in Poland, but that at the UK spot there was just a Union Jack on the wall and 3 empty chairs. There appeared to be a hugely frustrating divide between all the people in the UK so keen to help and house refugees and no official channels to ease their route to the UK.



But there was nothing we could do to fix that at that point but we did find we could do an awful lot at the final stop of our journey in Krakow. A cousin there connected us to an aid centre for Ukrainian refugees settling in the city - I believe over 150k new inhabitants increasing the population by about 20%. The Polish volunteers there were friendly, cheerful and spoke perfect English. They told us they were running out of food for the refugees queued outside. We offloaded the groceries we'd just bought and rushed back to the supermarket several times with their shopping list consisting of toiletries, store cupboard food stuffs and cleaning products.. The basics needed I guess to function and feel clean and respectable in new accommodation amongst new people. It was impossible to keep up with the demand and by the time we got back to the centre, the things bought in the previous shop had gone, but I think through those supermarket sweeps we offered a little help to a lot of people.

Our motivation for the trip was the same compassion and shock everyone feels. It was perhaps heightened for me by fact I spent one of the happiest times of my life among Ukrainians. We were also frustrated and remain frustrated at the lack of government action.

I am taking away from this a feeling of awe at the dignity and strength of the Ukrainian mothers and children we drove through Poland. Composed, polite, calm but alert for their children. Not knowing where they are going, but accepting they have to put one foot in front of the other. As brave I think, as a mother, as staying to fight.

I also learned, from the volunteers of various nationalities and the amazingly generous and resourceful Polish people that there are good Samaritans in more of us than we would think.

I think we did our bit to help but returned feeling sad that we couldn't stay longer and do more. Both petrol and supermarket goods are much cheaper in Poland than here and we haven't managed to spend all the money donated as a result. We have befriended several other people planning aid missions over the next few weeks and are considering helping them logically and/or financially. We have been particularly impressed by an Ayrshire lady, Demelza Sully, who was in regular contact with us whilst we were in Poland and has helped several Ukrainian families get from Poland to Ireland. [Ukrainian refugees thank Scottish 'angel' for driving them to safety - STV News](#). Demelza is planning a return trip and has enlisted the help of a translator this time round.

We will no doubt go back ourselves at some point but prefer to disburse surplus funds to others who can use it to help the refugees on the ground sooner than we can. I continue to work on resurrecting my Russian and perhaps soon we will have a number of Ukrainian refugees living amongst us in our community and there will be an opportunity to support them locally.

In the meantime, there's a huge amount of things people can do to help in Poland and will be for some time. You don't have to drive the whole way. Plane, train or automobile, owned, hired or borrowed, Poland is welcoming, the Ukrainians are appreciative, and a little bit of your time, money and effort goes a long way.





Please send articles for the *Marksman* to the editor at :
marksman@stmarksoldhall.org.uk

Contribution deadline for Aug/Sep edition : **12 noon, 21 July, 2022.**