

Contact



EK South Parish Church

June 2024

A prayer



Lord,

Help me to take this journey one step at a time,

I can't walk very far, but I want to run ahead.

I want to have all this behind me,
but I know I have so much in front of me.

Give me the resilience to pace this race.

Help me to keep in rhythm with the recovery you have planned,

Rather than the one I want.

When my plans collide with your purposes,
Help me to submit my pain to your promises
And to leave my frustrations at your feet.

I know you are enough, Lord, but sometimes I feel
Like I need more.

I am sorry when that is the case, but I can only be honest
In the presence of your open arms.

So I throw myself into your embrace and trust you to
Trace your mercy through all the moments of my days.

Amen

I don't know where this prayer came from, nor what circumstances the person who wrote it is in, but I feel sure we can identify with at least some of it (if not all) in our own circumstances.

Elizabeth Crawford

The Voice of the Lord

In the TV programme “The Voice”, three judges are turned away from the singers so that they are not influenced by looks or style; instead the focus is purely upon the voice. If they like what they hear, then they press the button and the chair spins around so that they can then see the vocalist with their own eyes. In Psalm 29 the voice of the Lord is described in a breath-taking manner as that which is creative, powerful and majestic. It is His voice that shakes the earth and splits the cedars. Here we are reminded of the big picture of an all-powerful God. We also know that there are times when He speaks with a still, small voice of calm, providing peace that holds us together when things are falling apart.

During the past few months, following the closure of the South Parish Church building I am sure that you have heard many voices both externally and internally; voices of anger, frustration, betrayal, sadness and loss – this is to be expected given what you have had to go through. As I have met with the Congregational Board and Kirk Session I have been surprised and greatly encouraged to meet a group of people who have chosen not to focus on those voices but instead to look to the Lord with a sense of positivity and calmness, recognising the ongoing mission that He still calls you to. With that in mind be comforted by the closing words of Psalm 29 which say “The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever. The Lord gives strength to His people, the Lord blesses His people with peace.”



May you be blessed with His peace as you find new worshipping homes in Claremont, Mossneuk or other places and as you continue to serve Him and engage in mission in the Murray.

Rev. Calum Stark, Interim Moderator

Getting to Know You

Fiona McEwan talking to Sandra MacKenzie

The first thing you notice in conversation with Fiona McEwan, our Session Clerk, is what a practical person she is. And as the conversation continues you recognise that she is a very caring person.

Fiona was born in Bellshill Maternity Hospital and was brought up by her parents in East Kilbride. She started off life in West Mains and attended Kirktonholme Primary School. In 1969 her parents moved to St Leonards and Fiona now lives in the house that was her parents'.

Fiona's secondary education was at Claremont, now Calderglen, and she left school at the age of 17. After a year of travelling into college in Glasgow she moved into Glasgow. She studied Catering and Hotel Keeping and once she graduated she was always travelling – Oban, Newquay and Strathpeffer not to mention Nice and Gibraltar.

She came back to Scotland and while she was working in a hotel in Greenock she met her husband. She moved back to East Kilbride because she was offered a one bedroom flat in Greenhills. When she was expecting her first baby, William, she was offered a two bedroom flat in Whitehills and then when she had her second child, a daughter, Donna, she was offered a three bedroom flat in Whitehills. Those were the days!

Fiona was divorced when her children were quite small and she faced life as a single parent with two children in nappies.

William had been baptised in The South Parish and when Donna was born she thought, "I really need to start going to church if I want to have Donna baptised!"

Fiona started going to The Young Women's Group and looks back fondly on those days.

“I met so many lovely people who have remained my friends to this day. I went on two church holidays with the children, one to Douglas and one near Aviemore. The South Parish was a really big church and so busy but I go to know a lot of them. The church became a really big part of my life.”

Once William and Donna were settled in Primary School Fiona was able to take up part time work. She got a part time job in an equestrian centre and began running a café there at weekends. She moved on to running a café for office staff in Jeansters in Rutherglen.

Fiona also moved on in her personal life. She went to a neighbour’s party where she was introduced by a friend to Glenn and they have been together now for thirty two years.

During the 90s Fiona was working as a cleaner for some people in Thornton-hall. One of them was a woman in a wheelchair and Fiona became a part time personal assistant for her. “It made me realise that I wanted to work in the caring profession,” said Fiona, “and I started a course two evenings a week at night school.”

In 1999 William and Donna were at secondary school which made working a lot easier and Fiona began working three shifts a week in Canderavon Home in Stonehouse. “I loved it,” said Fiona, “and it became my working life.”

Fiona moved on to working in a home in Airdrie for ten months and then to Muirpark in Viewpark. In 2017 she started in the John Mann Day Service in Bellshill and retired from there last year.

And of course Fiona has continued her work in The South Parish Church. She joined the badminton club and the rambling club and ended up running it.

Fiona also became a Church Elder during the 90s and still has three people she visits in her area in Whitehills. One man hasn’t come to church for years but welcomes his visits from Fiona. Ruth Houston, who many of you will remember, is no longer able to come to church, and the third member is Alfie, our greenfingered gardener.

So how did she become our Session Clerk?

“I read the email Archie sent out asking for someone to take over, I knew that someone had to do it because Archie had enough to do as Treasurer. And I didn’t have a reason NOT to do it,” laughed Fiona, “and here I am.”

That sentence absolutely illustrates Fiona’s practical but above all caring side.

“The church building closing was a really big thing.” said Fiona. “It was quite chaotic for a time but it has started to settle down.”

Fiona talks with great pride about her family. William and his Japanese wife Mai live in Inverkeithing. “William had started going to a class on Japanese at Edinburgh University and someone organised a party which Mai came along to. That was the start and they got married in 2021,” said Fiona. Last year Fiona and Glenn went with William and Mai on holiday to Japan. “We visited so many wonderful places,” reminisced Fiona. “We went to Tokyo, Lusaka, Kyoto and Hiroshima. Hiroshima was a very sobering experience. You came away wanting to join CND. And the people were all so friendly and helpful.” Fiona has been learning Japanese as well and is looking to join a class at Glasgow University. She has been using the Duolingo App until now but feels she needs something more.

Her daughter Donna is a clinical support worker at Hairmyres Hospital. She is obviously following in her mum’s caring footsteps. Glenn has a daughter in Aberfeldy who is a farmer’s wife.

So what now?

Fiona wants to see our two new churches being effective in their communities and she is totally committed to helping develop mission in The Murray. And maybe become a grandma?.....

Sandra MacKenzie

Presbytery Matters

At the Presbytery meeting of April 27th Presbytery approved the Draft Mission Plan. This was then sent to the General Assembly's Faith Action Programme Leadership Team for their consideration. At the Presbytery meeting on Saturday 1 June, the convener of the Mission Plan Action Group officially informed Presbytery that the Presbytery Plan has been approved. This then triggered the 14 day window in which Kirk Sessions can request a review. After this, we then move from the planning to the implementation phase of the plan.

In the report of the Planning and Implementation Committee, the convener of this group intimated that they hoped to be in touch with the first tranche of clusters by the end of June to consult with them straight away, with a view to having their plans ready to implement by around August time. He stressed that any requested reviews would not hold up the implementation process for those first clusters, so long as the outcome of any review would have no bearing on the cluster.



The Resourcing Mission Team noted that Mossneuk Church was awarded £1,627.17 from the Small Grants Fund Scheme to establish a café to work with Refugees and Asylum Seekers within East Kilbride. It was further noted that there still remains £28,372.83 available until 31 August 2024. Congregations should speak to the Mission Officer should they wish to make an application.

Wendy Kerr





As we come into the summer months, I would just like to summarise what has been taking place regarding both the Sunday School and the Pastoral Care Group.

These have been difficult times for the South Parish family since our church building has closed. It is so very sad to see the fencing round our church keeping us out and I know many of us feel deeply saddened every time we pass it.

However, the church (and our South Parish Church Family) is not just a building – it is the people who make up this part of God’s family. We have been blessed in the warm welcome those of us now attending Claremont have received. I can’t speak for Mossneuk personally as we have been attending the Claremont services but I’m sure Mossneuk would welcome any of us as well.

Although the number fluctuates, there can be up to around 30 South Parish members attending Claremont and it is lovely to meet together for tea and coffee after the service, enjoying the fellowship we have always shared. It is also good to share refreshments and get to know our brothers and sisters in the Claremont congregation.

Barrie is happy to be part of the Praise Band rota at Claremont, enjoying his turn at helping to lead the praise, as is Fiona on her clarinet as well.

I was also asked to become part of the Claremont Sunday School teaching rota to which I have agreed and am delighted to be among the children of the church again but still, when it is not my turn on the rota, to be able to worship in the sanctuary.

The following is just a summary of where we are with both the Sunday School and the Pastoral Care Group.

Sunday School

It really is lovely to see how well our South Parish children have integrated with those of Claremont. Quite naturally they found it a bit strange at first but, I'm delighted to say that, over the weeks our four children have blossomed and appear to be very much at home in their new surroundings. We give thanks to God for this transition.

Elizabeth Crawford

Pastoral Care Group

We have managed to keep our pastoral care going strong for those in our South Parish congregation during the bleak Covid years and beyond. Much of this care is given by many in the congregation – not just those of us whose names you see. Many visits, phone calls, lifts to and from hospital appointments, letters speaking words of comfort and cards, have done so much for our housebound and frail elderly members. It really shows God's love in action!

Sadly, quite a few of our older members have passed away over the past months. I will just mention the latest one (at the time of writing) and that was Mary Irwin who passed away in hospital on 30th May after being taken into hospital after suffering a stroke. Mary reached the grand age of 99 and, apart from short spells in hospital, was able to stay in her own home until the end.

It is so sad to see the number of our church family diminishing in this way. We know they are now safe with their Saviour and all pain has passed and suffering over. We must keep remembering their families in our prayers. We have seen others moving into care homes due to their frailty. Many have settled in well and are happy but, as we all know, there is no place like home, and others take a bit longer to settle. If we all continue to keep in touch, visiting when we can, and of course remembering them in prayer, we can show the love that Jesus did during his ministry here on earth.

Elizabeth and Barrie (on behalf of the Pastoral Care Group)

Murray Mission

As recorded in the Mission Planning proposals for our cluster with Claremont and Mossneuk Parish Churches, there will continue to be a focus on mission in the Murray area. Meanwhile, at the latest South Parish Kirk Session meeting, it was agreed that it would be good to form a Murray Mission Steering Group, with the remit of co-ordinating our activities and liaising with our partners in the area.

Group members would not need to be elders and would not be required to be active in all our various outreach activities. They should, however, be willing to be part of discussions on how we engage missionally with the people of The Murray area and be interested in forging and maintaining connections within the community.

If this sounds like something that you would be interested in, or would like to have a chat about, then please contact Fiona McEwan, Andrew Brown or Wendy Kerr.

South Parish congregation have already partnered with Connected EK. This has enabled them to source funding for activities within the Murray area. So far, we have been able to use some of this to give towards the running costs of our toddler group and food bank café at St Mark's Church.

We have had a partnership agreement with the other congregations within the Murray area known as 'Murray Churches Partnership' since September 2016. With the Righead United Reformed Church and the South Parish Church no longer having a building within The Murray area, the agreement was updated in 2023 and the partnership is now known as 'Christian Together in The Murray'. There is a copy of the new partnership agreement on our church website in the 'About us' section.

Wendy Kerr

Christians Together in the Murray: Prayer of Commitment

God who makes all things new, as your people in the Murray,
fill us with faith, hope and love which is your gift to all people;
enable us to live as citizens of your Kingdom, sharing that life with the community
in which we are set;

keep us faithful to the Gospel and to each other as we seek to be an expression
of the unity which Christ wills for the Church.

In the name of Jesus Christ, your Son and our Saviour. Amen.

South Parish Musings

The fact that the church closed so suddenly came as a great shock to all of us; in fact, it seemed like bereavement.

I came to East Kilbride before the South Parish was in existence. My family used to walk down to the West Kirk on Sundays, moving to the South Parish after it had been built. It started off as a hall church and eventually the sanctuary was built. It is a lovely building and a fine place in which to worship over the years. Latterly, however, it was only being used for a couple of hours a week for the regular Sunday services.

In the Sunday School, and occasionally in church, we would sing the song “I am the church.” The first verse reminds us –

The church is not a building,
the church is not a steeple,
the church is not a resting place,
the church is a people.

As we move on to a new phase in our Christian life, it is important to remember that – **the church is a people**. As I look back, I think of the many people in the church who were great influences on me over the years – they were ministers, deaconesses, Sunday School and Bible Class teachers, BB leaders, fellow members, elders, friends and so on. They were people who lived out their Christian calling, offering wisdom, advice, comfort, friendship and encouragement when they were needed.

At the moment we are still in a state of transition and we don't have a clear idea as to what will happen. It is important that the church has a presence in the Murray. We need to take things one day at a time, trusting that in His time God will build His church.



I finish with a quotation from Corrie ten Boom :

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to
a known God.”

Barrie Crawford

Leadership

As the General Election and USA Presidential Election approach, I came across this quotation from ex-USA President, Dwight D. Eisenhower –



“In order to be a leader a man must have followers. And to have followers, a man must have their confidence. Hence the supreme quality of a leader is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, on a football field, in an army, or in an office. If a man’s associates find him guilty of phoniness, if they find that he lacks forthright integrity, he will fail. His teachings and actions must square with each other. The first great need, therefore, is integrity and high purpose.”

Barrie Crawford



Bible Study

We are grateful to our friends at Claremont for giving us use of a room to continue our Wednesday evening study group. Over the last few weeks we have been watching videos which have helped us discuss the historical, geographical and political situation in the times in which Jesus lived, the early church started to flourish and the New Testament came into being. We have all been challenged to use our new knowledge to help us understand Jesus’ life and teachings and the meanings his followers attached to his death and resurrection, and to find new meanings for our own lives. Feel free to join us at 7pm on Wednesdays as we begin to look at Paul and the early church

Claire Johnston



Douglas Johnston writes: The Ways and Means team had a day out at the Johnstons’ house on Saturday 8th June.

Thanks to Rena Nimmo for all the hard work she has put in over the years for the Church.



Well, a lot has happened since the sudden closure of the South Parish Church building in February. We have a lot of people to thank, who have enabled our group to continue. First of all, we thank the congregation of St Mark's Episcopal Church, who straight away handed us the keys to their church, allowing us to meet in their hall the following week and from then on. Thank you to the congregation of Claremont Parish Church and more specifically their toddler group, who handed over a substantial number of toys for us to use as we had no access to our own. We also wish to thank the congregation of Old Parish Church, who allowed us to use their hall for a couple of weeks while St Mark's had their hall floor repaired.

We are grateful to all of our group members, who have been patient with us as we have figured out our new normal. There are a few regrets, such as the loss of our large hall and storage room, which has meant that we have had to limit the size of the group and start a waiting list. But we are thankful that we have been able to keep our group going in The Murray. This is no small part because of your prayers for us and we are truly grateful to you and to God for answering those prayers.

The Summer outing is on 12th June and we will be going to soft play and Amazonia at Strathclyde Park. Some of us adults (no names, Wendy!) will have to put our big girl pants on, as there will be an animal handling session and we definitely don't want to be passing any creepy crawly phobia to the wee ones.

Then we will have our last session before the summer break on 19th June, which will be tinged with sadness as we wish farewell to those of our group who are moving on to new ventures. If you have a few hours to spare on a Wednesday morning and would like to consider joining our team of volunteers then please speak to one of us.

*The Smarteenies team,
Wendy, Claire, Pauline, Elizabeth, Ishbel, Joan & Stephanie*

Rambling Through the Years

The Rambling Club came into being in about 1995 (when we were all more than a bit younger) and mostly consisted of families with children looking for an active day out. The first outing was to climb Tinto and other earlier trips included Peebles, Ben Lomond and Callendar. There was a high and a low walk, Bill would go on the high and Linda on the low. Their dog Bracken tried to go back and forward following one then the other before becoming exhausted and settling for one of them.

The children enjoyed each others' company and got to see a bit of the countryside. We started off using cars and progressed to the 'Sunshine Bus' which Nicky drove and had to hand back at the end of the day. On one occasion, one of the children was sick on the bus on a particularly winding road and we had to stop at a golf club, who obliged with a mop and bucket to clean it up before continuing to our destination.

If there was a church coffee morning in the area we were visiting, we would have tea or coffee there and an abundance of home baking to keep our energy levels up.



As the children grew older, they had their own activities to attend on a Saturday, so the families fell away. The club was then taken over by David and Kathleen who recruited a lot of recently retired walkers into the club and it flourished. David had a wealth of knowledge of the flora and fauna of the countryside and of the history of the different areas

and we enjoyed the extra dimension he brought to the walks.

After Kathleen and David retired from the club, Margaret took over. She researched her walks diligently and despite having to use public transport, often went back a second time to do a 'reccy' if she was not satisfied with

her first trip. Margaret handed the reins over to myself and Pat but continued to walk with us for many years.

Pat really brought out the social side of the club, organising meals out, trips to the theatre and remembering special birthdays and anniversaries. We also started going for our annual weekend away in August or September and many good memories were made then. Another of our members, Jean, suggested we have a barbecue walk in June and this has become an



annual event. On one occasion, just as we had finished our walk and were about to start the barbecue, the heavens opened and a strong wind came in from the sea. The bandstand we had earmarked in case of rain was useless. However, Andy saved the day as he had the keys for the church in his pocket and he opened up the hall when we got back and we had the food in there and cooked in the kitchen.

One of our oldest members is now 92 and no longer walks with us but she tells me that the Rambling Club changed her life. She joined when she retired and apart from keeping her fit, she made loads of friends whom she still sees regularly and has visited beautiful parts of Scotland she would otherwise never have seen. And that's what it's all about: fresh air, fitness, fun and fellowship. A few of our members are in their eighties and are still walking up to seven miles, so there's your proof that it works!

Fiona McEwan

Church Information

Interim Moderator:	Rev. Calum Stark	01357 671557
	CStark@churchofscotland.org.uk	
Church Officer	Andy Wilson	01355 234903
Session Clerk	Fiona McEwan	07985 595167
Ass Session Clerk	Eleanor Woodburn	01355 237928
Magazine Editor	Claire Johnston	e.claire.johnston@btinternet.com

Congregational Activities

Sunday Worship **10:30a.m.** at Claremont Parish Church

10:00a.m. at Mossneuk Parish Church

Wednesday 9:15am Smarteenies toddler group

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Telford Road

(last session 19th June, restarts mid August)

Wednesday 7:00pm Bible Study

Primrose Room, Claremont Parish Church

Thursday 11:00am to 12 noon Food bank & Café

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Telford Road

Boys' Brigade & Girls' Brigade– restarting in August, check website for details for next session

www.eastkilbridesouthparish.org.uk



Church of Scotland

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