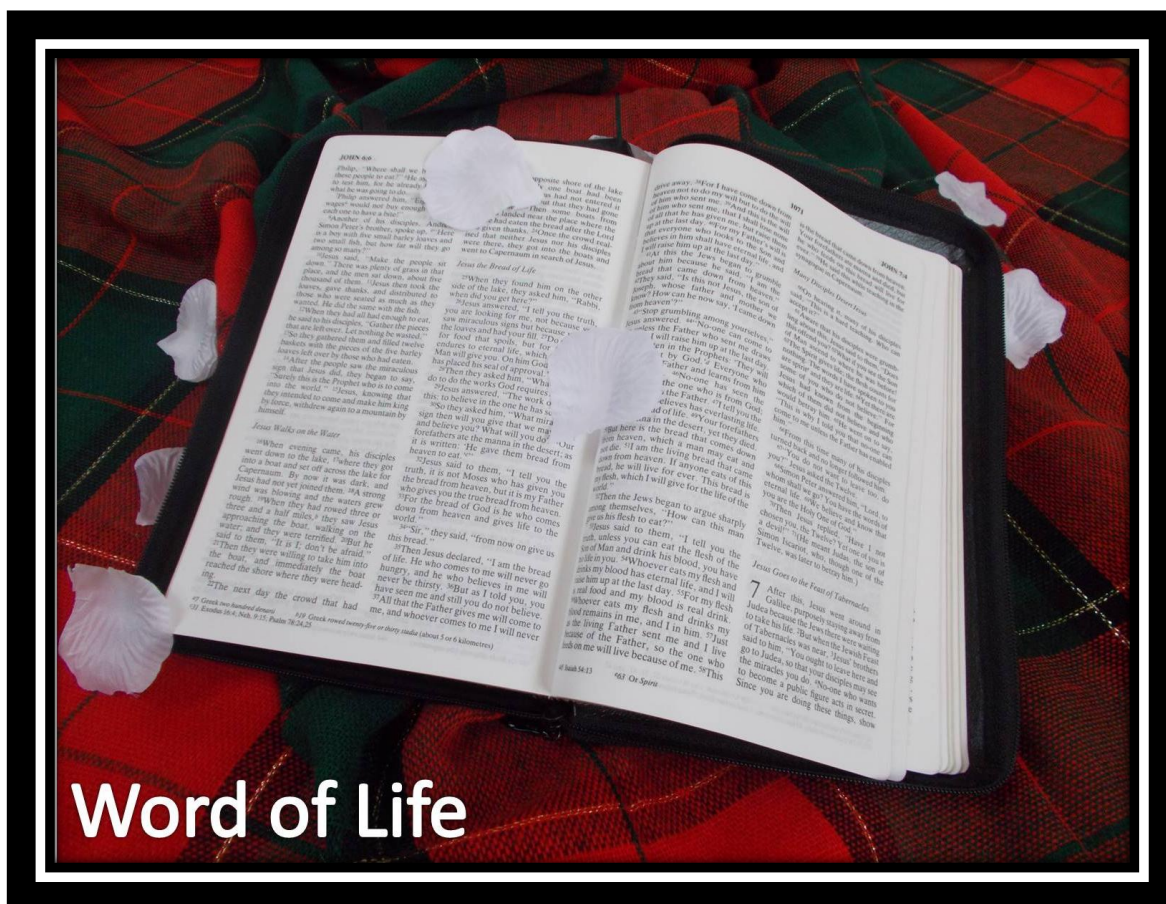




## Connecting the people of St. Mark's Issue 3 2017

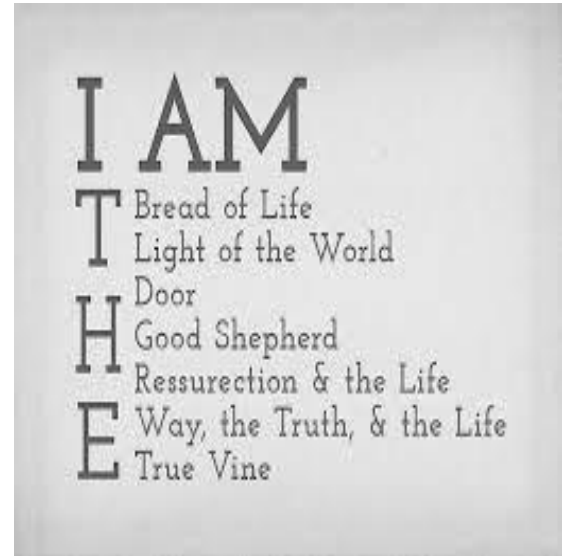


### Inside this Issue:

View from the Manse 1	Seaside Rock 5	The Colour Yellow 8
New Manse 10	Chance to Thrive 11	Super Group News 20

# View from the Manse

Jesus answered,  
 "I am the way,  
 and the truth  
 and the LIFE..."  
 (John 14:6 NIV)



Good day to you,

Have you ever been lost - I have been thinking these past few days about the times when I've been lost; from the time when I was very young in a supermarket to the times when, even with the help of SATNAV, things haven't quite worked out the way I thought.

What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the WAY..."?

These past few months at St Mark's@ Sainsbury's we've been discovering together some of the many "I am" sayings of Jesus as you'll know from my previous letter in the Easter edition of the "Link Magazine."

Think, if you will, with me of all the signs that exist in our streets and roads. Maybe the next time you're out walking you can mentally record all the information signs that exist. There are signs for drivers, for pedestrians and for cyclists. All of the signs are there for a purpose and on many occasions the purpose is to help us to get to our chosen destination.

Some signs involve taking a long-term view. For example "City Centre 2½ miles →". Others give you a clue and then, further on another clue, then another until you've finally reached your chosen destination.

Over these past 9+ years of Ministry in St Mark's we have journeyed together along the road that we've believed God has been leading us along. Some of you may know by now that in April, I informed the Kirk Session and those who were present that Sunday morning that Lesley and I will be moving on from St Mark's for me to take up a new role in Paisley.

The role I'll be taking up is that of a "Pioneer Minister" in the North end of Paisley which includes the Ferguslie Park area. It would take too long to describe all that this entails however, both of us are sure that this is where God is calling us next.

I am, however, in no doubt that my time with you has helped in no small measure to form and make me into the person I am today.

I've often found myself, as I'm sure you have, wondering and praying that some of the circumstances I/we have faced would change. However, in such times I believe Jesus is often also interested in our hearts and how we respond to our circumstances. Yes, sometimes Jesus changes our circumstances and sometimes not.

Nevertheless, He will always remain the same, yesterday, today and forever. He is now and always will be the Good Shepherd who "guides me along the right paths for His name's sake" (Psalm 23:3b NIV)

Jesus said, "I am the way..." and often in life He can help us to discover the way of doing things, the way to behave towards others, the way to get to the place we are to go to by following instructions and should we get lost along the way receiving His direction will get us back on the right road.

As Lesley and I move to Paisley, sometime after the 16th July (my last day at St Mark's), I will be looking back with thankfulness and celebration but I'd not be human if I didn't have some sorrow. However, my joys remain in this my first charge and in you, the people I've met and walked this road with; people in the Church family and in the communities of Cornton and Raploch.

So let me, if I may, encourage you all to look to Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, the One we can trust to help us to do the right things by following His example as recorded in His word, the bible. Through following Him I believe that we'll not only get to where He is leading us but also we'll learn to enjoy hearing the Shepherd's voice, knowing His presence with us and enjoying the journey along the way.

As I'm sure you'll appreciate, there are too many people to mention in this letter who have been a help, support and encouragement to Lesley and me over these years.

We thank God for each of you and it is our honest prayer that as our paths diverge you will know God's protection to keep you strong, His presence with you to guide you and His amazing love and provision for all that lies ahead on your journey with Him.

Here is part of a prayer that I found recently:

4

*O Jesus,  
You are the Way, the Truth, the Life.  
God's way to us, our way to God.  
God's truth for our world  
about our lives, God's life,  
which brings our living alive.  
Seeing You, listening to You,  
knowing You,  
following You joins us to God.  
We come through You to God,  
who is to us as a Father  
and all-loving Creator.  
Be the way, the truth,  
and the life in us and through us.*

*Amen.*

I join with Lesley in assuring you of our love and prayers for the next step on your adventure with Jesus. May the Lord bless and keep you each moment of each day.



Minister, 26th May 2017



Music & Travel Tour Consultants Ltd. presents

**Bloomington & Skaneateles**  
**Church Choirs**  
from Illinois and New York, USA

Musical Director: J. Scott Ferguson  
Organ: Doris Simpson Hill

**St Mark's Parish Church**  
Drip Road, Stirling

**Thursday 15 June, 7pm**  
A concert of sacred choral works and organ music

In aid of St Mark's Church Restoration Fund  
Free parking is available in the  
Community Car Park opposite the church





The excitement is mounting as we prepare for our eighth annual holiday club for primary aged children. This year, the club is called “Seaside Rock” and follows the story of Peter and his friend Jesus. There will be games, crafts, stories, drama, singing and lots, lots more.

The club is open to all children who are in P1 – P6 before the end of June 2017 and will take place from **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July to Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July from 1.30 to 3.30 p.m. each day** with our special **"On the Beach" Service on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> July at 2 p.m. in the large hall.**

The holiday club, in partnership with Scripture Union Scotland, is part of our outreach to young people in the parish and each year we generally have between 30 and 50 children who come along. We are blessed by the support of Scripture Union in terms of advice, training and Safeguarding (child protection) matters.

We are so thankful to the many other Christian folks from other local Churches in Stirling and beyond who faithfully come along and help to make this event a possibility for us each year. This will be the third year we will also be providing an after club meal for each child before they go home. We are so thankful that these meals have been in the past and this year funded by you the folks of St Mark's, other kind donations and through monies from Stirling Council as well as a Trust that is affiliated with SU Scotland.

Please spread the word to families you know **(there are still spaces available)** and there is a REGISTRATION DAY held on **Friday 23rd June from 3 to 4 p.m.** in the side aisle of the Church.

Will you please join us in praying along the following lines over the next few weeks:

Prayer for the Club: Ask that God would be present in all our preparations.

Prayer for Leaders: Ask for guidance and wisdom.

Prayer for Children: Ask that they be open to God's Word and discover that God loves them.

Prayer for Everyone: Ask that we'll all have fun and build relationships with children and parents.

*Stewart*

Holiday Club Team Leader - 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017



**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July to Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July**  
**St. Mark's Church Halls**  
**1.30 p.m. – 3.30 p.m. Daily**

**Make sure your place is booked**  
**Bring a parent or carer with you to our**  
**Registration Hour**  
**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> June**  
**3 p.m. – 4 p.m.**  
**At St. Mark's Church**

**A week-long Holiday Club for Children in P1 – P6**

St. Mark's Parish Church of Scotland: Stirling is a Registered Scottish Charity (Charity Number SC005432)

# CHILD REGISTRATION FORM

First Name   
 Surname   
 Male ☐ Female ☐  
 Date of Birth   
 Address   
  
  
 Post Code   
 Tel: ( inc. STD Code)   
 Mobile   
(Parent/ Guardian)  
 Email:   
 School   
 Class at June this year: Primary   
 Emergency Contact Name   
  
 Tel. No.   
 The child may be collected by:



GP's Name   
 GP's Tel. No   
 Any known allergies or health problems

ANY QUERIES  
 Please 'phone  
 01786 609237.

## Parental Consent

I confirm that the above details are correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. In the event of illness or accident, I give permission for any necessary medical treatment to be given by the nominated first-aider. In an emergency and if I can't be contacted, I am willing for my child to receive hospital treatment, including anaesthetic if necessary. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

Signature of Parent /Guardian

Title

First Name

Surname

I give permission for my child to return home unaccompanied.

☐

I give permission for my child's information to be held on computer.

☐

I **do not wish** my child's photo/video to be taken.

☐

Please print registration form and complete.

Children should bring completed form with them on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the club.



## **THE COLOUR YELLOW.**

I recently visited the Primark store in Stirling and bought a yellow T-shirt. It was yellow because this is the colour that the 2017 Holiday Club team has chosen as the colour each adult team member shall wear.



However I must admit that I don't like yellow. Yellow can bring back some rather unpleasant memories for me. When I was about six years old something happened to me that in these days was a common enough medical procedure. I got my tonsils whipped out. Actually, not whipped out: rather hauled out. This resulted in the muscles in my neck being badly damaged and I had to wear a plaster collar for almost three months, perhaps more. I don't quite remember. But I do remember being plagued by a very devout neighbour who kept insisting that my "collar" was a sign from the Lord. One day I would be a minister. It was to be a long time before that prophecy was fulfilled!

However what has all this to do with the colour yellow? Well you see, yellow was the colour of the little pill that the nurses tried to sedate me with: prior to my being wheeled into the operating theatre. But would I cooperate? No way!

I was already annoyed at having been put into a large cot with the sides up. I felt humiliated: age six and put in a cot! Therefore I fought back in the only way I could think of. I kept spitting that nasty yellow pill out, right down the side of the cot. Eventually a nurse powdered a pill up and offered it to me in a teaspoon of jam.

I knew it was a trick but decided that enough was enough and surrendered: perhaps too late, for I was still quite alert when wheeled into the theatre.

This is why I have never been fond of the colour yellow. For quite some time the sight of any yellow object would make me almost physically sick. Custard was no treat! It was so bad that I once I stopped dead in my tracks, traumatised at the sight of the first spring primroses in our garden.

I have got over all this now and shall wear my yellow T-shirt at holiday club without complaint and thank God for all the colours in the rainbow- and even some that aren't.

*Alan McKenzie.*

# "New Manse"



The Property Committee and the Congregational Board are glad to report that St Mark's Parish Church now has a NEW MANSE as of the 12th May 17.

The new address of the Manse is:

10 Laidlaw Street, Stirling FK8 1ZS and is situated at the Highland Gate Barratt site (old market). The house is a two storey detached house with the appropriate number of rooms as laid down by the central offices of the Church.

Some of us went to see the manse on Friday 19th May and had the joy of looking around, having tea and cake in the new kitchen.

This new manse will be of great benefit to St Mark's Church for many years and the Kirk Session and Congregational Board wish to record their sincere thanks to everybody in the wider Church of Scotland who has made this possible for our Church.





## Celebrate!

Just in case you're wondering, St Mark's Chance to Thrive hasn't stalled – we've just been involved in many, many other things.

I'm glad however to write to you in this issue of the Link magazine to tell you where we are at present.

Our local team are due to meet on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June to discuss where things are at so far. At this meeting, we'll have our mentor Robin Watson and the Co-ordinator of the wider programme Fred Vincent joining us to talk over a few things.

So far, our group have landed on one particular matter that we'd like to see move forward and that is the next phase of our building project.

This is a least an architect's image of the phase we've landed on as a Church:



(Copyright © 2016 Page \ Park Architects)

In order for this to begin to happen, we need to start fundraising and to bring together various documents. This is what we'll no doubt be speaking about at our next local meeting on the 13th June.

There is no doubt in the minds and hearts of many that over these past years since we've been going through the Chance to Thrive process that it is a cause for much

## CELEBRATION

At a recent meeting between Jean (Deacon) and myself, we both discussed the last nine plus years of team working with the help of a friend who has worked with us over the years.



Here are just some of the things we touched on for which I believe we ALL have cause for celebration:

1. When the community see both Jean and myself going about our daily routines there is no sense of dysfunction between who we are and our portrayal of St Mark's - that means that people feel they are hearing the same thing from us both and from the Church.
2. There is always an open door at St Mark's - whether it be for people needing our services through funeral care, weddings, school chaplaincy which we both take part in and the service that the Church family offers to the wider community.
3. The perception of St Mark's in the community is that we are a Church who want to be involved in the projects and activities in our communities.
4. We've been described by someone who heard of all that we are doing, have done and want to do as people who are "punching above our weight." What they were saying, it seemed to me, was that given how things seem to the human eye in terms of resources and people, we as a Church family are doing what we do with heart and a desire to see our community and Church transformed and full of life.

So please keep your eyes open for more information and if you'd like to know any more about this next stage in our journey then please contact an Elder.



Minister – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017

**ON SATURDAY** - At the General Assembly 2017, the Moderator's baton was formally passed to the Rev. Dr. Derek Browning. Dr Browning was presented with a jar of Jelly Babies at the start of the proceedings which was refilled throughout the week by the Youth Assembly Reps.

**The Council of Assembly** reported what we have known for some time that membership is falling and also that financial support is, *for the first time*, also beginning to fall. Nevertheless, the decline in membership was seen as more of a challenge than a disaster but it does mean that the Church cannot launch into new projects without careful consideration. So for the church to continue its good work, we need to work together.

**ON SUNDAY - Heart & Soul 2017:** 60 congregations, committees, Councils and organisations displayed their work and witness including the Deacons. The Moderator was there with the Lord High Commissioner, the Princess Royal, who took a deep interest in the life and work of the Church, chatting to folks along the way and stopping at the Diaconate Stall.

**ON MONDAY - CROSSREACH**, the social care arm of the church shared with the Assembly their sadness that, though the Scottish Government has made funding available to allow all care and support staff to be paid the Scottish Living Wage, it is not yet possible to pay this to *all* CrossReach's employees.

**PANEL OF Review and Reform** said Members of congregations say they want a minister of Word and Sacrament in every charge. However, the Panel is clear that Ministry of Word & Sacrament should not necessarily *equal* paid ministry.

This might mean elders serving in their own congregation, given some theological training before they start and in post, and allowed to serve as Ministers for a certain time, in a specific situation.

**On TUESDAY the NEWS came from Manchester:** The Moderator called the Assembly to stand for a minute of silence before his prayer for those involved. The words of Carl Sandberg were quoted often throughout the Assembly as we discussed the response of the church to this and similar events:

*The single clenched fist, lifted and ready,  
Or the open, asking hand, held out and waiting. Choose.*

**ON WEDNESDAY- The Moderator had a birthday!**

Once this was announced, the Assembly immediately sang – Happy Birthday! The Moderator said in response, “You are very naughty Commissioners – but thank you!”

**PRIORITY AREAS : Chance to Thrive** – At a lunch event, our own David Russell did us proud. He gave 4 presentations of 10 minutes within an hour on what has been happening here at St. Mark’s. Those listening went away seriously impressed by what they had heard. Several congregations and organisations were making similar presentations.

**During the Safeguarding Report:** Professor June Andrews of Stirling University was invited to address the Assembly. Her work is in the field of dementia. She told the Assembly that one of the factors in the treatment of dementia is to help the patient maintain their faith and religion and the church has a vital role in this.

**ON THURSDAY – came the Report of the Theological Forum.** I’m indebted to the Rev. Douglas Aitken as I’m going to share with you some of his podcast on the Report.

“The Forum brought to the Assembly its document, *An Approach to the Theology of Same-Sex Marriage*. The first section of the document outlines the Forum’s understanding of Scripture. It then goes on to consider different kinds of argument: arguments about rights, arguments that drew analogies with other situations, and arguments about justice.

The Forum has come to the conclusion that there is insufficient argument in theology to deny Church marriage to same-sex couples providing there is legal protection for those who in conscience would not be able to preside at same-sex marriages.

Professor Torrance, closing the debate, said that theology is progressing all the time and referred back to the ordination of women 50 years ago. On the vote, 269 voted for the Forum’s position and 191 for the counter-motion.” From the Podcast by The Rev. Douglas Aitken.

**On FRIDAY** - Finally, and in the midst of the closing formalities, before Her Grace spoke, a Pathe News video was shown of the Princess’ first visit to the assembly aged 18 when she accompanied the Queen and Prince Philip. This was much appreciated by everyone but perhaps not entirely by the Princess in question!

Throughout the week, we heard from Commissioners & Delegates who came from across Scotland and its isles and across the world. We spoke to members of Congregations and Councils who are doing amazing things where they are and where they work. We saw for ourselves the work that the Church as a whole is doing. We sang the Psalms and Hymns that our parents and grandparents sang. We watched and listened as South Morningside Primary School sang and read for us in our worship.

And in all this.....we were the church together – some of us sustained by Jelly Babies!

*Jean Porter*



# Photos from the General Assembly

17



HRH, the Princess Royal



African Choir at Heart & Soul



David Russell represents St. Mark's



D is for Deacon ( spot ours?)



Huge Turnout for Heart & Soul's Closing Worship



Ministries Council Report



South Morningside Primary Choir



# DATES FOR THE DIARY

18

JUNE	Time	EVENT	VENUE	Additional Info
13	5.30 p.m. 7 – 9 p.m.	<i>St. Mark's @ Sainsburys CHANCE TO THRIVE LOCAL MEETING</i>	Sainsburys  Side Aisle	Training room off cafe
15	7 p.m.	<i>U.S. CHOIRS CONCERT in aid of buildings fund</i>	Church	See poster for more details
20	5.30 p.m.	<i>St. Mark's Home Group</i>	Session Room	
23	3 – 4 p.m.	<i>Pre-Registration Hour for Holiday Club</i>	Side Aisle	
25	10.50 a.m.  6 p.m.	<i>Morning Worship Service Communion Evening Service</i>	St. Mark's  Side Aisle	Rev. Stuart Davidson
30	2 – 4 p.m.	<i>Holiday Club Set Up</i>	Church Halls	
JULY 2	10.50 a.m. 6 p.m.	<i>Morning Worship Evening Service</i>	St. Mark's Church Hall	Rev. Stuart Davidson
3 - 7	1.30 – 3.30 p.m.	<i>SEASIDE ROCK Holiday Club</i>	Church Halls	Open to P1 – P6
9	11a.m. 2 p.m. (1.30 p.m for lunch)	<i>SERVICE BEACH SERVICE NO Evening Service</i>	St. Mark's Church Halls	Kids, remember to bring adult with you!
12	7.30 p.m.	<i>Final Presentation from Page &amp; Park</i>	Church Halls	
16	10.50 a.m.	<i>Morning Worship Followed by Stuart's Farewell Lunch &amp; Fellowship</i>	St. Mark's	Rev Stuart Davidson
23	10.50a.m.	<i>Morning Worship</i>	St. Mark's	Jean Porter
30	10.50a.m.	<i>Morning Worship</i>	St. Mark's	Jean Porter
31 - 7		<i>PASTORAL COVER</i>	St. Mark's	Rev. Alistair Cowper (APS)
AUG 6	10.50a.m.	<i>Morning Worship</i>	St. Mark's	Rev. Alan McKenzie
8 - 14		<i>PASTORAL COVER</i>	St. Mark's	Rev. Alan McKenzie
13	10.50a.m.	<i>Morning Worship</i>	St. Mark's	Rev. Gordon Mathew
20	10.50a.m.	<i>Morning Worship</i>	St. Mark's	Jean Porter
27	10.50a.m.	<i>Morning Worship</i>	St. Mark's	Jean Porter

Firstly, thank you all for your interest in my last blog. My friends at Canine Partners have had a few enquiries about fostering, so from all of us, THANK YOU!

Now to me: I am still working very? hard with my training. I have been on the bus and train few time and hopefully will be going to Edinburgh in a week or two. I've been in Falkirk and visited family, also seeing all my friends at the church, shops, Tesco and Sainsburys.

My Puppy Parent tells me it is all good training for when I go to England for my Advanced Training.

Speaking of Advanced training: I had a small word with Cookie. He told me that the training is very good and that the trainers are wonderful. They helped his to pass and to be placed with his Partner. She is a lovely lady called Janet and some of the things that he has learned to do for her include:

- Opening & closing doors
- Unloading the Washing machine
- Closing the garden gate
- Getting the post
- Closing the fridge, freezer, dishwasher & washing machine doors

John says if I work hard, I will be able to do the very same.

The thought of it is making me tired so I will have to go and have a lie down.

See you all very soon.

The Loveable Pippa

Hi to all.

Well now, what do I say? Where do I begin? Thanks to those who prayed for our good weather for our Closing treat. All prayers were answered. We were blessed with the perfect day.

We had our Open Night on 31th of May, where the parents and families of the children attending Super Group were invited to spend a typical Wednesday evening, the way our Super Troopers do. The evening began with a Welcome which was followed by taking part in our favourite games. There was a lot of arms stretching and waving, knees bending and straightening, twirling round in circles, growling and finally freezing and that was only game 1.

Curious? Ask a team member for information.

Stuart was next with the life lesson, this is what some of the children call the “God bit”, which was enjoyed by all. Game 2 however involved, chairs in a circle with children and parents sitting on seats. A dice was passed around the circle and when a number 6 was thrown.....? Why not ask any leader or helper for more details, or even a demonstration (if you dare).

We sang one of the songs which is a favourite with all the children, “Great ,Great Brill Brill” (which adults enjoy too). Everyone had the opportunity to join us for crafts and refreshments. At the end of a full and enjoyable evening, our Deaconess, Jean was asked to close in prayer.

Exactly one week later, we had our closing treat to Briarlands Farm where everyone had a superb time. The highlight of the evening was a tractor and trailer ride: children and adults had an extremely bumpy but enjoyable ride around the farm and saw exactly what goes on daily in farm life. There is a vast amount of activities for both children and adults to take part in such as huge bouncy pillows (even better than trampolines), a tractor to climb in and on, various sand pits, climbing frames, zip wires, animals to pet, three mazes to escape, archery, football golf (I didn't understand it, either), and football. There were more activities' but too many to remember.



Those of us who had already had the tractor ride stayed to set up the picnic for the return of the hungry mob. We had more than enough food accompanied by juices, tea and coffee. To say we all enjoyed it, would be an understatement. My greatest highlight of all was the behaviour of the children, they were all excellent. Thanks to my whole team. I couldn't have done it without you. Well done, Super Troopers! I am so proud. See you all soon. Bring on the Holiday Club. Yippee!

*Lynne*

# Characters from the Bible

N	K	Q	K	A	H	G	P	N	H	O	J	E
B	H	A	R	A	S	P	H	T	F	Q	C	V
Q	A	M	E	N	T	S	A	M	S	O	N	G
S	G	L	O	N	X	X	R	N	E	F	B	D
L	A	O	A	A	V	E	A	W	D	T	X	I
I	R	W	L	K	T	A	O	S	Y	R	D	F
S	W	A	U	E	R	D	H	L	E	L	E	N
R	J	V	P	L	E	A	E	O	X	S	V	W
A	D	H	A	I	R	A	H	C	E	Z	O	F
E	R	B	L	N	J	S	Y	A	Y	R	A	M
L	R	O	J	A	M	U	R	B	B	R	K	Z
A	E	A	K	X	B	Q	K	P	I	B	B	C
D	M	Z	D	J	B	A	Z	Z	F	C	O	Q
F	N	O	R	A	A	N	N	U	U	Q	N	J
G	Q	W	S	A	O	B	L	O	R	S	V	D

**AARON**  
**AMOS**  
**ANDREW**  
**ANNA**  
**BALAK**  
**BOAZ**  
**EZRA**

**HAGAR**  
**ISRAEL**  
**JAEEL**  
**JOB**  
**JOHN**  
**LABAN**  
**LEAH**

**MARY**  
**MOSES**  
**PETER**  
**PHARAOH**  
**RAHAB**  
**SAMSON**  
**SARAH**

**Not sure who they are?**

**Why not visit your Bible and discover them for yourself..**

**ZECHARIAH**



# Office Bearers

**MINISTER:** Rev. Stuart Davidson 01786 609237

**Deaconess:** Mrs Jean Porter D.C.S. 0772 931 6321

**Session Clerk:** Mr David Russell 01786 470159

**Clerk to the Congregational Board:** Mr. John Murie 0758 391 4619

**Gift Aid Convener:** VACANT

**Hall Convener:** Mr. John Murie 0758 391 4619

**Safeguarding:** Mrs Lynne Swanston 0791 862 6177

---

Please email any articles, news or celebration articles for inclusion in the next exciting issue of **the link** to [stmarksstirling1@gmail.com](mailto:stmarksstirling1@gmail.com)

Copies of the latest edition of **the link** are available on the church website [www.stmarksstirling.org.uk](http://www.stmarksstirling.org.uk)

For the latest news: follow us on Twitter or visit our Facebook page.

There are links from our website weekly news page.

## CHURCH WEBSITE:

[www.stmarksstirling.org.uk](http://www.stmarksstirling.org.uk)

## CHURCH EMAIL ADDRESS:

[stmarksstirling1@gmail.com](mailto:stmarksstirling1@gmail.com)

## CHURCH OFFICE

( not permanently manned)

01786 470733

