

## WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Keep up to date with what's happening in Falkirk Trinity by visiting our website at [www.falkirktrinity.org.uk](http://www.falkirktrinity.org.uk) or our social media pages on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

### Minister (Tel 07895 388644)

I will be on Study Leave from Monday 5 to Monday 12 February - during that week Charlene will provide ministerial cover: tel 07368 852152 This is the last of three single weeks of study leave. I am studying three books by the late Rev Leith Fisher, former minister here. The books study the three Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. I am reading through and exploring the Gospels afresh under Leith's guidance in the books and formulating a worship plan for the next three years, basing each year on one of the Gospels. We have already started 2024 with Matthew.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Church let me know or if I can help you in any way or you would like a chat, please get in touch: [RAllan@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:RAllan@churchofscotland.org.uk) Mobile 07895 388644 (The manse landline has been discontinued so please use the mobile number to contact me)

If you are not a member but would like to be kept in touch with our Church News, then please send an email to Nina at [office@falkirktrinity.org.uk](mailto:office@falkirktrinity.org.uk) and she will put you on our circulation list.

My reform website, including my latest blog post from last month, can be viewed <https://www.reformthechurchofscotland.org>.

### Message from Charlene

Well here we are in February the month of love, with St. Valentine's Day offers everywhere we look.

The Valentine's Day tradition of giving a box of chocolates was started in the 19th century by Richard Cadbury, a director of a British chocolate manufacturing family. With a new technique recently established at the company to create more varieties of chocolate, Cadbury pounced on the opportunity to sell the chocolates as part of the celebration.

This made me think about the book and film, Chocolat, written by Joanne Harris, the central character, Vianne Rocher, arrives in a French village and sets up a Chocolaterie, a chocolate shop situated across the square from the austere medieval-style church. Much to the dismay of the priest and the mayor, she arrives at the beginning of Lent, when they are urging their community to repent and to fast. Somehow this seems to bring out the worst in everyone and the cracks in relationships are starting to show.

In contrast, Vianne and her daughter set about their chocolatière's craft with great enthusiasm and love, cleaning and painting the little shop and creating delicacies never before seen in the village.

One by one, Vianne welcomes the reluctant but curious villagers into her shop, gives them chocolate and hears their life's stories, their problems, and their pain. And gradually, gently, as the story unfolds, she encourages them to make changes in their lives, to rebuild relationships

or move on from broken ones. She welcomes those others reject and treats them with the same love and respect. And the more the church condemns her lack of restraint or respect for the church's teachings, the more people are drawn to her and to one another.

The grumpy grandmother gets to know her grandson and appreciate his talent for drawing, the elderly man after decades musters up the courage to date his childhood sweetheart. The young woman escapes from her violent, drunken husband and a little girl makes new friends. A married couple rekindle romance, travellers are met with a smile and music and dancing are heard on the edge of the village.

Isn't this what the God of love is about: the healing of relationships, the blossoming of love, the helping out of friends in need of a home, the welcoming of outcasts and foreigners, the quashing of prejudice and discrimination?

Isn't this what a celebration of Valentine's Day should be about – our finding ways to demonstrate God's love for each person that says very clearly, 'You are worth it!' and "You are loved"

*"The love that flows through your heart purifies not only your own spirit, but the love you share with others."  
"You are precious in my eyes. I honor you and love you."  
"Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage."*

Charlene x

## Church Contact

Lost touch with the Church? Feeling lonely at times? If you do not have a Church Contact person and would like one to keep in regular touch and occasionally visit, then contact the office and arrangements can be made.

## Dates for your diary

Tue 6 Feb 7.30pm Kirk Session meeting  
Wed 14 Feb Lent begins  
Sun 3 March Communion  
Sun 24 March Palm Sunday  
Sun 31 March Easter Day



## Stamps

Many thanks to all who have saved stamps from Christmas cards and letters - special thanks to those who have cut them out nicely with a margin of 5mm (1/4 inch), which saves me hours of trimming - and 'nul points' for the ones with the edges cut off - all had to go out, what a shame! Do keep saving the stamps - sale of them supports the work of World Mission. Thank you!  
Norah.

## Falkirk Foodbank

Our monthly collection for Falkirk Foodbank will be on the first Sunday of the month – 4th February.



The café is open **Wednesdays** from 11:30am until 1:30pm. Join us for home-made soup, sandwiches and scones.



## General information

Church Office: To contact Nina at the office please phone 01324-611017 or email [office@falkirktrinity.org.uk](mailto:office@falkirktrinity.org.uk) Items for March Church News should be sent to the office by 10am on Tuesday 20 February.

Please note that the office will be closed Monday 12th— Wednesday 14th February.

## The Guild

Trinity Guild meetings resume on 7 February and continue through February and March. We meet on Wednesdays at 2 o'clock, we are very informal and friendly, and everyone is welcome! Any more details from Norah 625284, Christine 713746 or Fiona 632387.

## Worship

Every Sunday in 2024 we will have a reading from Matthew's Gospel – there will be other readings, but our focus will be on Matthew's Gospel and hopefully we can discover fresh things God is saying to us for our lives today. All the readings will be taken from the NRSVue version of the Bible which seeks to have more inclusive language. I hope you will enjoy hearing from this new version, perhaps it is something you might want to buy for yourself to read.

Sunday morning worship at Church at 10.30am. S-Kidz and Youth Station meet as usual in the halls after the first part of our Sunday service. Our Sunday morning services are live-streamed every Sunday at 10.30am: [www.falkirktrinity.org.uk](http://www.falkirktrinity.org.uk) Recorded services are available to view through our website if you cannot watch live. Needing a lift to Church? No problem, just contact the office with your details and we will endeavour to arrange a lift for you.

**Sun 4 Feb:** 10.30am Service (Wrestling with prayer)  
Matthew 7: 7-12

**Sun 11 Feb:** 10.30am Service (Charlene) (Looking in)  
Matthew 6: 1-18

**Sun 18 Feb:** 10.30am Service (Sifting and testing) (Baptism)  
Matthew 4: 1-11  
(First Sunday in Lent)

**Sun 25 Feb:** 10.30am Service (On the approach to Jerusalem)  
Matthew 20: 17-34

Wednesday Worship: 11.30am midweek 20-25 mins service at Church.

Daily reading, reflection and prayer are available online at Sanctuary First website [www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk](http://www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk) or you may wish to try <https://pray-as-you-go.org> or <https://taketime.org.uk>

## Minitreats

It is hoped that we can run an occasional Minitreat bus between March and October. Minitreats is a mini bus ride with mini treat cuppa stop. Cost is £10. We can pick up from your door or a couple of central stops. If you would like to know more please speak with Catherine Smith, Henrietta McRae or David Foggo or give the church office a phone on 611017



## Labelled with Love

Oh my goodness! We don't have any words to say how much we appreciate all the support you have given with our Christmas Meal in a Bag project. You are all amazing! To the sponsors of bags, to the people who made cash donations, and the Elves who did the shopping, it has been amazing and greatly appreciated.

We hope to provide more feedback later but one school has already come back to us saying that the families would not have much in the way of food if it hadn't been for this kindness.

We have managed to feed 230 adults and children providing a Christmas meal for the most vulnerable in our community, God bless you all.

Back by popular demand we are hosting a Movie and Lunch afternoon, tickets will be on sale on Sunday 27th January, see details below. We would love to see you there!

*Labelled with Love*

## Snowdrop Café

The Snowdrop Café meets every Monday from 1pm till 3pm. Everyone is welcome so why not come along to one or more of the activities in February?

Activities in February:

5th - an opportunity to try out Quilling

12th - hand massage will be on offer

19th - Sweet Harmony Barber Shop Chorus will provide entertainment

26th - Time to chat, play dominoes, board games or adult colouring in

Advanced notice of a speaker, Tom Gordon, on 4th March who's talk is entitled, "Issues and Incidents: Did that actually happen?"

Funny (and sometimes poignant) things that have happened in ministry over the years.

Tom is a retired Parish Minister and Hospice Chaplain. He has published several books and writes a daily 'Thought for the Day'.

If you find it difficult to get to the Snowdrop Cafe, speak to Isabel Sarle to arrange a lift.

The objective of the Snowdrop Café is simply to provide a space to make friendships, enjoy each other's company, help with isolation and form a sense of belonging. The aim is to bring people of all age groups together in an inclusive and friendly environment where all will be respected and accepted.



If you like books or like a chat you could come to **Book-chat**. Next meet Thursday 1st February at Cinema Starbucks, 7.15 for 7.30pm. Book is The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver. In 1959 a family move from the US to the Belgian Congo. The father of the family creates his own misprint of the Bible. He concludes his sermons with the Kikongo expression 'Tata Jesus is bängala with the intent of saying "Jesus is most precious". In his hurried mispronunciation, he actually says 'Jesus is poisonwood'!!

## Valentines Lunch & Movie

Saturday 10th February

1-4pm

£10 per ticket

Tickets available from Heidi, Shona, Meira or Isabel.



## Wider World



**Mary's Meals** [www.marysmeals.org.uk](http://www.marysmeals.org.uk)

Thanks to all who sent greetings to friends at Church at Christmas and donated to Mary's Meals. **Falkirk Trinity made a donation of £120 and others donated online.**

Mary's Meals serves nutritious school meals to more than 2.4 million children living in some of the world's poorest countries. The promise of a good meal attracts these hungry children into the classroom, giving them the energy to learn and hope for a better future.



Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow the founder of Mary's Meals shares some thoughts at the start of 2024 -

"Even in the darkest times there is a multitude of reasons to believe in a better future, simply because there is a multitude of children. And within each child there are many wonderful things waiting to unfold – things that can make this world better.

While children may be our source of hope for a better tomorrow, we can be their hope for today. Of the tens of millions of children who are chronically hungry, many are at risk of hunger-related illness and death. For them, unless they can be assured of food today, there is little point in talking about the future.

Nearly one in 10 people on the planet are now experiencing food insecurity. More than 20% of children under five are stunted in growth – so undernourished that they're likely to suffer permanently impaired development. And we know that many of these children are also being deprived of another vital key for unlocking their potential: education. Tens of millions of children are either missing school or are unable to concentrate in class because of hunger.

By providing a daily meal at school, Mary's Meals creates a fundamental change in the lives of children who don't have enough to eat and provides hope for today and tomorrow. And this hope feels even more important when those children are growing up in war zones and places of conflict, as many in our programme countries are. To see laughing children sit down together to eat in a safe place of learning in South Sudan, Ethiopia or Haiti is to see hope for the beginning of peace.

We can provide a meal for just 10p (thanks to the work of many thousands of volunteer cooks and our experience in sourcing locally procured food in bulk), meaning that a child can be fed for a whole school year for £19.15.

I'd like to ask you to join with us in the belief that little acts of love truly can change the world. Each of us can choose to do something. You and I, we can even stop child hunger. At the very least for one child, we can."

### **The Christian Aid Gathering**



The Gathering, Christian Aid Scotland's annual supporter event, returns for 2024 on the 27 February, at 10am. This year, we will be Gathering from across Scotland on Zoom, celebrating the difference we've made together over the last year, and getting ready for Christian Aid Week 2024 and the year ahead.

We'll be hearing directly from Christian Aid Partners working with survivor communities in Ukraine. Together we'll learn more about how Christian Aid works with partners around the world, with time to ask questions.

We're also delighted to include exciting previews of Christian Aid Week 2024, campaigning and community fundraising updates, and debuting a new video format to our opening reflection.

The Gathering is always free to attend and is open to anyone interested in the work of Christian Aid. All are welcome. Find joining instructions [here](#) and register for the event using the webform to be sent the link nearer the time.



## **What did the Wider World team get up to in 2023?**

We held a **vigil** in February for Ukraine and again in November for peace in all warring countries.

James and Emma Harley raised **£2368.75 for Kazunzu** from the Kiltwalk and, along with other fundraising including a Sunday lunch, we donated **£3817.37** to the Vine Trust for the Kazunzu project.

During **Christian Aid** week in May, we raised over **£3008** from the Book Sale, café proceeds, donation envelopes and afternoon tea events etc.

In September we donated **£1000 to Sunflower Scotland** which buys aid in Ukraine and distributes it to the frontline.

An Emergency Appeal for the **Middle East raised £468.30**

We contributed **53 boxes and £140 to Blythswood Care's Shoebox Appeal** in November.

We made a donation of **£592.02 to Water Aid** from the Jewellery Sale and Christmas crafts sale.

We donated **£815.33 to Shelter** from the Christmas crafts sale and Retiring Collection on Christmas Eve.

### **Who is in the team?**

The Wider World team consists of Helen Smith, Jean MacSween, Joyce Gallacher, Sarah Patrick and we also welcome two new team members - Alison Rodgers and Marianne Pattison.

Are you interested in helping?

If you would like to join the team or to help with specific events, please speak to any team member.

## **Lent Bible Study: A Meander through Mark's Gospel**

This series of 6 evening discussions will take a gentle look at Mark's Gospel. We'll look at the gospel's historical context, key themes, important passages, and what it all means for today. Bring your Bible (any translation)!

The group will be led by Helen Bond, Professor of Christian Origins at the University of Edinburgh.

Monday evenings throughout Lent, beginning Monday 19 February (last one on Monday 25 March), at 7-8 pm in the Archway Room, Trinity Church.

Week by week outline:

Week 1: Introductions and key themes. Mark's prologue, 1.1-15

Week 2: Who puts on the best dinner parties? Jesus and King Herod, 6.7-44

Week 3: Teaching on the way, 8.22-10.52

Week 4: The last evening, 14.1-72

Week 5: Roman trial and crucifixion, 15.1-47

Week 6: Empty tomb and heavenly glory, 16.1-8, 9.2-12



Pick up your copy of Mark's gospel from the vestibule.

## ***Sponsored Abseil in aid of Strathcarron Hospice***

Many of you will know Malcolm Strang, a much loved member of our congregation. Malcolm has made the brave decision to undertake a sponsored abseil at the Falkirk Wheel in aid of Strathcarron Hospice.

A sponsored abseil is a courageous feat for anyone but more so for Malcolm who has age-related macular degeneration! If you are able to support him in any way please visit this link:

<https://www.strathcarronhospice.net/donate/malcolms-falkirk-wheel-abseil-2024>



## ***Classic Music Live! Falkirk Concerts in Falkirk Trinity***

- 2nd February 2:00pm - Elena Fischer-Dieskau, piano.
- 23rd February 7:30pm - Resol String Quartet.
- 15th March 7:30pm - Laura Margaret Smith, soprano and Liivi Arder, piano.
- 29th March 7:30pm - Lews Banks Duo, saxophone and piano.



## ***Occasionally @St. Michael's***

**A series of recitals by local musicians**

In St. Michael's Parish Church,  
The Cross, Linlithgow



**Sunday 4th February 3pm**

### **Concert of Sacred Vocal Music**

**Toni Roy** Soprano **Dheeba Lopez** Mezzo-soprano

**Charles Gribben** Tenor **William Munnoch** Tenor **Alec Shuttleworth** Baritone

Directed by **Alexander Christie**

**Admission free, donations invited for upkeep of the church organ**

## ***Falkirk's Holocaust Memorial Day Event***

***2pm on Saturday, 27th January, 2024***

***at CSREC, Howgate Centre***

Many local communities in Scotland are holding an event to commemorate the liberation of Auschwitz on 27th January 1945. Falkirk Council Provost Robert Bissett is teaming up with Central Scotland Interfaith to mark the occasion with a short Act of Remembrance at 2pm in the Howgate Centre, to which all are invited to attend. Please gather at CSREC, close to the entrance to the new Poundland store before the start at 2pm.

This year's theme is "The Fragility of Freedom". Freedom means different things to different people. What is clear is that in every genocide that has taken place, those who are targeted for persecution have had their freedom restricted and removed, before many of them are murdered. This is often a subtle, slow process.

Today many people in western democracies take freedoms for granted – this Holocaust Memorial Day, we can reflect on how these freedoms need to be valued, and on how many people around the world face restrictions to their freedoms to live, worship, work and love freely.

On HMD 2024, we can all reflect on how freedom is fragile and vulnerable to abuse. As we come together in communities around the UK, let's pledge not to take our freedoms for granted, and consider what we can do to strengthen freedoms around the world.

Further information can be obtained from CSI's secretary, Rev Andrew Sarle on 07743 726013 or by contacting [csi@irenic.org.uk](mailto:csi@irenic.org.uk)

## ***Some prayer suggestions and reflections for the month of February...***

1. Pray for all the work of our Family Life Centre.
2. Lord, you search me and you know me.
3. Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding.
4. Ask, seek, knock.
5. How does God speak to you?
6. Pray for peace in the Middle East.
7. In everything do to others as you would have them do to you.
8. Count your blessings.
9. Have you got a moment for God?
10. Remember in prayer those getting married.
11. Turn your eyes upon Jesus.
12. Loving God, comfort those who are bereaved.
13. Lent begins tomorrow, any plans?
14. Faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love.
15. When I'm feeling down and sad, nothing much to make me glad, help me to remember, you are there for me.
16. Pray for your Church family.
17. There is a wideness in God's mercy.
18. One does not live by bread alone.
19. Do not put the Lord your God to the test.
20. Worship the Lord your God and serve only him.
21. Think of three friends and pray for them today.
22. May you know the peace of God which passes all understanding.
23. Hear Jesus speak your name.
24. Two years since Russia invaded Ukraine. Pray for peace and justice for the people of Ukraine.
25. Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?
26. Pray for refugees and asylum seekers.
27. How is it with your soul?
28. Unless the Lord build the house, those who build it labour in vain.
29. Should you look before you leap?

Contact Moira Simpson on e-mail: [moirasimpson@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:moirasimpson@blueyonder.co.uk) if you have specific items for prayer and this can be sent confidentially to our team of prayers.

***"May God's blessing surround you each day as you trust him and walk in his way."***

