



# PFS HOPE

Prison Fellowship Scotland • Summer Newsletter 2023



How do we  
measure  
success?

Supporting  
families during  
holidays

Praying for  
PF around  
the world

## Offering hope to people in prison, their families and our communities

Prison Fellowship Scotland (PFS) is a non-denominational, faith-based Christian charity, working in all 15 prisons and the two new Community Custody Units in Scotland.

In partnership with the Scottish Prison Service, PFS provides bible study groups, Restorative Justice/Victim Awareness courses, a letter writing programme, an Angel Tree Christmas Gift programme and adventure holidays for children affected by imprisonment.

PFS puts relationships at the centre of all we do, supporting volunteers from churches in Scotland to make the Good News accessible to those in our prisons. ■

## Prison Fellowship SCOTLAND

Connect House, 42 Hollowglen Road  
Glasgow, G32 0DP

office@pfscotland.org  
0141 266 0136 | pfscotland.org

 prisonfellowshipscotland  
 pf\_scotland  
 pf\_scotland

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Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation  
Charity No. SC002222

**Photos of people in prison and/or their families are models.**



But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved."

**EPHESIANS 2:4–5**



## How do we measure success?

The Scottish Government has a commitment for Restorative Justice (RJ) services to be widely available across Scotland in 2023. This commitment is indirectly opening doors for PFS, with growing opportunities to run the Sycamore Tree course in prisons around Scotland.

Last week I was able to see this in action when I was in HMP Perth for the final session of the course. Although just a small group of six people, I was struck by how they all wanted to make changes in their lives. There was an earnestness and seriousness about the group that you don't always see. Many of them talked openly of the damage their crimes had caused and the need to see things from a victim's perspective—they had found the Sycamore Tree videos very helpful. But what was also evident was a sense of hope, a hope that things could be different in the future as they sought to make changes in their lives.

As we deliver the Sycamore Tree course and talk about Restorative Justice, I'm struck by the simplicity of these two words. Restorative Justice needs to be about justice that restores. Possibly because for a long period of my life I worked in a hot climate (not Scotland!), I have often been drawn to Isaiah 58

where we are promised that our needs will be satisfied in a sun-scorched land. Recently I read the passage again—a passage all about justice—noticing the references to rebuild and restore:

**Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings."** (ISAIAH 58:12)

Through our partnership with the Scottish Prison Service, we expect to have weekly groups in every establishment in Scotland by early August. This is something to celebrate and is testimony to the hard work of all of our volunteers but it is also a challenge and makes me realise that our work must be measured, not by the number of groups we run, but by how we are investing in restoring and rebuilding lives.

My prayer is that as we continue to partner in this work together, like the men at HMP Perth, we will be earnest, serious and hopeful about the work we do and its potential to make a real difference in the lives of those in Scotland's prisons. ■

John Nonhebel, Director,  
Prison Fellowship Scotland





SUPPORTING FAMILIES OVER...

## Christmas time

A big thank you to those of you who gave generously to enable the raising of funds and the giving of gifts to families of people in prison through the PFS Angel Tree programme last Christmas. Once again, we were able to work with all of the prisons in Scotland!

### What prisons reported...

- individually wrapped presents for 30 families, including 74 children, were handed to people in prison before the visits took place;
- people in prison were able to directly give presents to their children;
- 25 families affected by imprisonment were able to come together and enjoy the experience;
- gift bags were made for each visiting child and given to them on the day by their parent—the impact was overwhelming! Parents were over the moon with many stating it was the first time in a long while that they had been able to give their child a gift directly.



"Christmas is a difficult time—not being there for Christmas day really gets me down. The Christmas party was the highlight of the festive season for me."

(parent, HMP Grampian)



"Had an excellent day with the kids, something we would never have been able to afford on our own. Thank you for making special memories we will cherish forever."

(parent, HMP Inverness)



"Thank you, I got to spend quality time with my kids. Something I don't get often as they are in kinship care. It was really good fun."

(parent, HMP Inverness) ■

SUPPORTING FAMILIES OVER...

## Summer 2023

This summer we are once again partnering with Circle Scotland and SU Scotland to give children and young people affected by imprisonment the opportunity to enjoy a fantastic summer holiday.

For the first time, PFS is partnering with churches in the Grampian and Inverness areas to increase the reach of this project. Pray for those children and young people who will be on holiday as you read this edition of *PFS Hope*.

### Encouraging feedback from Summer 2022...



"I feel the camp helped my child come out of his shyness and be part of a team. He was more positive, he's more at ease."

(parent)



"He came back a different boy. I really thought he wouldn't settle, but he loved it and is keen to go next year."

(aunt)



"It was life changing for my child."

(parent)



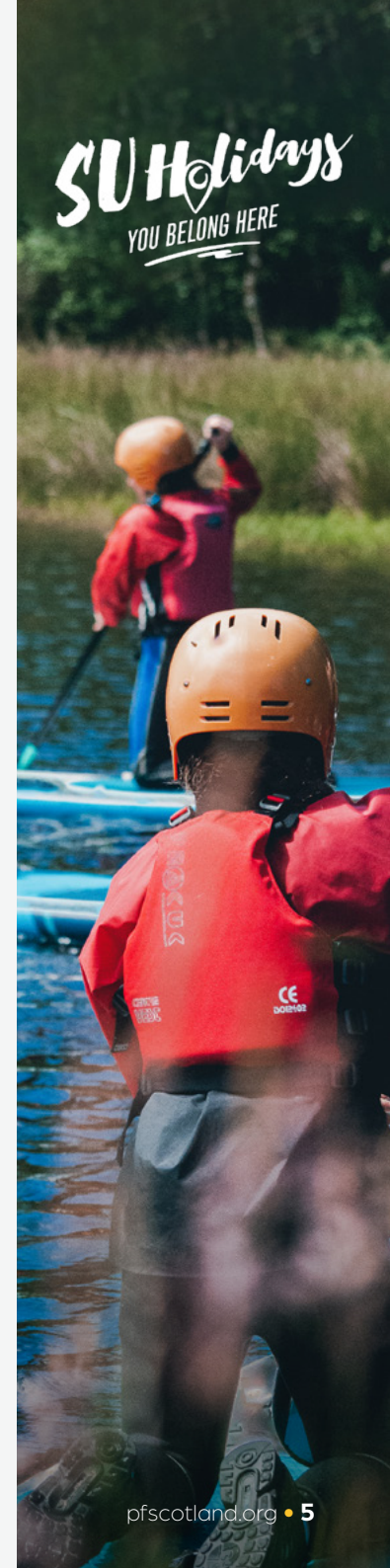
"It helped me be more calm. I wasn't angry."

(child)

"One boy developed really positive friendships with two other boys at camp. They kept in touch, met up to play football, and travelled together to the camp's reunion day at Lendrick Muir. He is already thinking of ways to earn pocket money to fund camp for himself next year as he cannot wait to return!"

(Circle Scotland worker) ■

SU Holidays  
YOU BELONG HERE







# PRISONERS WEEK LAUNCH SERVICE

**"STRENGTH FOR THE JOURNEY"**

19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2023, 3-5PM

Letham St Marks Church of Scotland  
Rannoch Road, Perth PH1 2HH

Each year Prisoners Week Scotland chooses a theme as they encourage churches to care for those affected by imprisonment whether that be supporting men and women in prison or the families of those outside.

This year the theme is *Strength for the Journey* and here's what Prisoners Week want us to think about.

**What gives us strength and resilience along the weary road? Do people come alongside us? Are there tools that can help us? Or does it just feel like the baw's burst?**

Join us this Prisoners Week as we explore where we find strength for the journey, whether inside or outside.

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION VISIT**

**PRISONERSWEEK.ORG.UK**

## JOIN PFS AND GET INVOLVED IN PRISONERS WEEK 2023

- Invite your church to sign up to the Prisoners Week Charter.
- Join PFS for hosted events.
- Share stories of the restorative work carried out in Scotland's prisons and raise awareness of the work of PFS with friends, family and on social media.
- Join us for the launch service.

There will be a marketplace with a variety of different charities and organisations, a service where you will hear some incredible stories, and refreshments at the end. The event is open to all, and it would be great to see you there! ■

## A **cry** from the **lonely**

A prayer by Sonja Macmillan

Frightened, isolated, alone.

No rest from the anguish in my soul.

Crying out in the darkest hour of the night.

Who will silence the storm?

Friends, love, safety, and security, I have none.

Will anyone care for me?

Feeling ashamed and wanting to hide.

Will anyone find me and remove my shame?

A voice whispers, **"I will."**

"I will care for you; I hear you and see the anguish of your soul. I will calm the storm; I am your friend, and I will never leave you nor forsake you. You are safe with me. I love you."

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Lord, we pray that every heart that cries out to you will hear our love response. They will know they are loved; they are not alone. That you are with them, and you are for them. ■



**Prison Fellowship Albania:** Esther Klaassen (far right) and the staff team

## Prison Fellowship Europe & Central Asia

In June PFS enjoyed a visit from Esther Klaassen, the Directing Manager of Prison Fellowship Albania. Whilst Esther was here, she was able to share prayer points for Prison Fellowship Europe and Central Asia. Please take time to pray about these important matters.

- Pray for financial support across all of Prison Fellowship. Pray that donors, churches, and individuals will be stirred to give where they can.
- Pray for groups like Prison Fellowship Armenia and Israel which have decreased in size. Pray that there will be direction and wisdom on how to manage this.
- Pray also for Prison Fellowship Israel and the religious/societal segregation.

Pray there will be a shift, and Prison Fellowships' work will be able to flourish and not be hindered.

- Pray for Prison Fellowship Albania. Pray for a stirring in donors' hearts, and that there will be growth.
- **Thank the Lord for all the volunteers, workers and groups across the world who are doing such vital work.**
- Pray for Restorative Justice across the world. With levels of domestic violence increasing pray that the ways we do restorative justice will develop and progress. That families will be able to heal and mend broken relationships. Restoration is not just possible, It's happening.
- Pray also for PF Ukraine as they continue to work through a time of war. Pray for other countries supporting them including Prison Fellowship Romania and the Czech Republic. ■



The old **HMP Cornton Vale** prison has recently been replaced with the brand-new **HMP Stirling**. Staff were recently invited for a tour of this new prison, and we look forward to volunteers being back running our Prison Fellowship group for the women in the next few weeks.

After a gap of several years, we have just completed running a Sycamore Tree course in **HMP Perth**. The feedback from the six men who completed the course was very encouraging with many of the men saying this is the most helpful course they had ever been on. They spoke about the impact of the videos that are used as part of the course curriculum.

Two other establishments we have had little opportunity in recent years are **HMP Kilmarnock**, where we have just started a Sycamore Tree course, and **HMYOI Polmont**, where we

have been invited to run Sycamore with a group of young offenders.

With these additions to our work, this means that within the next month, we will be running weekly programmes in all 15 prisons in Scotland as well as the two new **Community Custody Units in Dundee and Glasgow**. We are grateful for our partnership with Scottish Prison Service that makes this possible and for all our volunteers. ■

**Find out more about the many volunteer opportunities within Prison Fellowship Scotland. Get in touch at [office@pfscotland.org](mailto:office@pfscotland.org)**







# Giving to the work of Prison Fellowship Scotland

Prison Fellowship Scotland now works in all 15 prisons and the two new Community Custody Units in Scotland.

Our Prison Fellowship groups, Sycamore Tree course, Letter Writing programme, and the Angel Tree and Summer Holiday programmes support families of those in prison and are making a difference in the lives of people up and down the country.

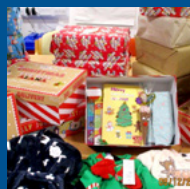
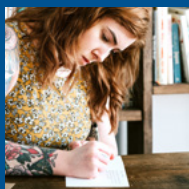
As our work grows, we are looking for more people who can give to our work and help us sustain these programmes.



*giftaid it*

## YOU CAN GIVE BY

- scanning the QR code
- donating online at [pfscotland.org/donate](https://pfscotland.org/donate)
- or by contacting us at the office for help in setting up a standing order: [office@pfscotland.org](mailto:office@pfscotland.org). (Remember if you are a UK taxpayer, you can add 25% through Gift Aid at no further cost!)



## Congratulations to Louise

We warmly congratulate Louise Purvis, founder member and current Board Member of Prison Fellowship Scotland, on receiving an MBE “for voluntary services to the prison community in Scotland.”

Louise first became aware of people in Scottish prisons when she accompanied her husband, John Purvis, who was a Member of the European Parliament, on a visit to Cornton Vale Women’s Prison. The visit had a deep impact on Louise, and she wrote to Lady Martha Bruce, the Governor, who was a Christian, to ask about starting Prison Fellowship in Scotland.

Louise had become a Christian the year before (1979) and had been asking God how she might serve him. Louise knew

Sylvia Mary Alison who had helped start Prison Fellowship in England and Wales, and her links to Chuck Colson, who with her, was the founder of PFI, Prison Fellowship International.

**Louise invited Sylvia Mary to visit her in her St Andrews home, and in June 1980, around twenty-five people gathered together to hear about the work of Prison Fellowship.**

The outcome of the meeting was the setting up of a small core group to pray and look at the possibilities of what eventually became Prison Fellowship Scotland. Louise was asked to be the coordinator for the work and the kitchen of her home in St Andrews became the first office of PFS. The rest is history! ■

Angus Creighton, Board Member



**W** For I was hungry, and  
you gave me food,  
I was thirsty and you gave  
me drink, I was a stranger  
and you welcomed me,  
I was naked and you clothed  
me, I was sick and you  
visited me, I was in prison  
and you came to me."

**MATTHEW 25:35-36**



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PFS Summer Holidays are offered  
in partnership with Circle Scotland  
and SU Scotland.

