



# Prison Fellowship

S C O T L A N D

*Offering Hope to People in Prison, their Families and our Communities.*



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# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022

# Meet our new PFS Chair

My relationship with Prison Fellowship started in 2006. During a very dark period in my life through challenges at work, I was invited to the Prayer Breakfast in Washington. It was an incredible trip where I met some amazing people.

Ever since I graduated as a social worker in 1995, I have always appreciated the books of Charles Colson. While staying at the Hilton in Washington in January 2006, I found myself in the elevator with Charles Colson and his wife. I took the chance to thank him for his writing. In classic Colson style, he immediately deflected the focus from himself and said *'I'm just trying to do what the Lord has called me to do.'* He invited me to a Prison Fellowship seminar the following day.

Looking back, the seminar probably changed my life. I had never heard somebody with a clearer vision for how the gospel could transform society. He

stood up and said, 'ideas have consequences and America is reaping the consequences of a society that thinks it can survive without God and his laws.' Later in 2006 I joined Bethany Christian Trust and have been working in Christian work ever since. I am now the Programme Manager for Safe Families in Scotland.

Nearly 17 years later I could never have imagined taking over from Kenneth Mackenzie as Chair of Prison Fellowship Scotland. Kenneth has been a fantastic servant to PFS providing great leadership and vision for over 20 years.

It is an honour to be asked to take over as Chair of this great organisation and I hope and pray I can do as good a job as Kenneth has done for so many years.

I believe that Prison Fellowship can have a huge impact in bringing the good news of the

gospel to Scottish jails. As a Board we are passionate about supporting John and the PFS staff as they engage with SPS, work with churches and recruit and support volunteers who are the lifeblood of the work we do.

**Good governance, a strong vision and great communication are so important as we seek to build a sustainable and successful organisation.**

Thank you for your support and please don't hesitate to get in touch through the PFS office if you wish to contact the PFS Board. ■



**Andy Murray,**  
PFS Chair  
Prison Fellowship Scotland

# Prayer

During this time of serious crisis and conflict in Eastern Europe it is good to be reminded that the two countries most affected, The Ukraine and Russia, are members of our PF Europe family.

Let us pray for the safety of our brothers and sisters in both countries, especially PF volunteers, those in prison, whether staff or prisoners, and their families.

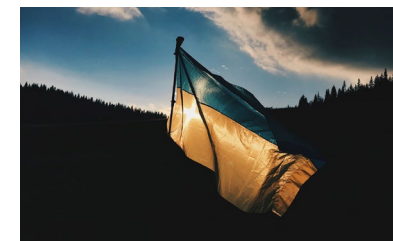
**Pray especially for Ukraine dealing with the consequences of this war.**

At times of crisis it can be difficult to find the right words to pray. Many Christians find it helpful to use prayers that have been written by others.

A prayer by German dissident pastor and martyr, **Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945)** written in prison shortly before he was executed, has helped many:

**Angus Creighton,**  
PFS Board Member  
Prison Fellowship Scotland

“Lord Jesus Christ,  
You were poor,  
And in distress, a  
captive and forsaken as  
I am.  
You know all man's  
troubles:  
You abide with me  
When all men fail me:  
It is Your will that I  
should know you  
And turn to you,  
Lord, I hear Your call  
and follow;  
Help me.”



# Letter Writing

**“I would just like to say thanks again for your letters and your thoughtful words and prayers, it means a lot to me.”**

**“I liked hearing about your family business as it brings back memories of what I once had with my family.”**

**“I always think of you and how good you make me feel when I get a letter. The letters always bring a smile to my face, and I am always very grateful that I can write to someone who also enjoys India and is a fantastic person and has a great heart to write to a prisoner.”**

In the middle of 2021, when I joined PFS, I had the privilege of taking over running the Letter Writing programme, ‘A Time to Write’. This project had begun a few months earlier as a way of helping to alleviate the loneliness and isolation that so many in prison were experiencing during the height of



the pandemic. The programme has proved to be especially valuable as it continued amidst the restrictions of lockdown with no interruption, unlike most of our other in-prison activities. Having always loved writing and receiving letters myself, I was so excited to lead this new initiative. Letters are so much more personal than

a text or an email and require more thought and consideration before you put pen to paper. I have read over 300 letters over the past nine months, and it has been really special to see the letter-writing relationships building gradually over time. People in prison often open up about their lives more rapidly than you would expect, writing about their children; their hobbies; what they have read; but also, their fears, challenges and hopes for the future.

One man speaks frequently of wanting to live in a small cottage in the countryside. His desire keeps coming back to me as it is so simple. Whether they voice a hope for renewed contact with children, or that they will be able to have a flat when they are released, their openness through hastily scribbled words is wonderful. As I read the letters, it has helped me to see the person as God sees them, with all their nuances and

complexities, but also ultimately, as people loved abundantly. This helps to break down any negative preconceptions you may have about people in prison.

**As PFS move through 2022 we are in the process of expanding our letter writing programme to more prisons across Scotland.**

With this growth, we will have an increased need for volunteers. We would love to recruit 30 new letter writers over the next year to join our programme; we are particularly in need of male letter writers, so if you would like to commit to writing a letter once a month to someone in prison, please email me at [letter.writing@pfscotland.org](mailto:letter.writing@pfscotland.org) to find out more! ■



**Zoe Walker**  
Letter Writing Project Manager  
Prison Fellowship Scotland

# SUMMER HOLIDAYS!



Working in collaboration with **Circle Scotland** and **SU Scotland**, every summer we help provide holidays for children affected by imprisonment. The really significant thing about these holidays is that children, along with their parents get to choose the holiday they want to go to and the children come as equals with the other children, with no stigma, and the opportunity to make new friends, experience adventure activities and explore faith in a safe space.

**One parent said: "they came back this year on such a high from the people, the activities they got to do and the amazing experience they had. It would never have been possible if it wasn't for Prison Fellowship and Circle Scotland!"**

Scan the QR Code to donate to our Summer Holidays project



**Billy Paul**  
Trustee, Volunteer & Former Director  
Prison Fellowship Scotland



Please give generously supporting this important work:  
<https://www.pfscotland.org/summer-camps>



# New Openings & Opportunities

Projects Manager **David York** reflects on his work in helping get new Prison Fellowship and Sycamore groups up and running.

A few weeks ago I was invited by the Chaplain of HMP Kilmarnock to speak at the weekly services he is running in the prison. There were about 25 men across three different groups and it was great being able to share my testimony and our plans for getting a regular PF group running in the next few months. Although it's a normal part of my job to help get these PF groups running in prisons around Scotland this group at Kilmarnock is especially exciting for me as it was in HMP Kilmarnock that I first made a decision to follow Christ – and to now be helping to give other men this opportunity is really special.

But we are also excited by new opportunities in other prisons around Scotland. By the end of

the summer we hope to have groups running for both men and women in HMYOI Polmont and also be actively working to get the Perth group restarted after Covid. With existing PF groups running most weeks in Inverness, Castle Huntly, Shotts and Barlinnie we will soon be in more than half of Scottish Prisons – giving men and women a place to explore faith and learn more about all that Christ has done for them. We have also been partnering with Prison Alpha to run an Alpha group in Barlinnie where a group of men are discovering every week more about God's love.

Sycamore is also growing; we have regular groups in Edinburgh, Low Moss and Castle Huntly and are in

discussion with another 5 prisons about getting groups running. Although the Sycamore Tree course is based around the topic of restorative justice we also get to talk about other important themes.

In a recent course up at Castle Huntly one of the men taking part said it was the first time he had ever really thought about the subject of forgiveness and about how he could forgive himself for the mistakes he has made. It is a huge privilege to lead these discussions. Please look out for an opportunity to receive training as a Sycamore facilitator and help grow this work. ■



**David York**  
Projects Manager  
Prison Fellowship Scotland



# PRAYER

## Important things to pray for:

Discussions are in progress for **PF Groups** to start in HMP Perth, HMP Kilmarnock, HMP Edinburgh and HMYOI Polmont, but with staff shortages across the prison estate there have been many delays, please pray that everything will fall into place for these groups to start.

The SPS are keen for men and women across the estate to have the opportunity to attend a **Sycamore Tree** course. Pray that this course will soon be running in more of the prisons in Scotland.

The **Letter Writing Programme** has been great success – pray for more volunteers to get involved as we talk to more prisons about expanding the course.

## Prison Fellowship Scotland's NEW BOOK



*Prison Fellowship Scotland's new book tells the story of Prison Fellowship Scotland over 40 years and all the lives that have been impacted by our work.*

**To order your copy, please contact:**

[office@pfscotland.org](mailto:office@pfscotland.org)

[www.pfscotland.org](http://www.pfscotland.org)

*Available from the office for just £5*



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## PRISONERS WEEK SCOTLAND

20th – 26th November 2022



**Look out for more information and resources for your Church to engage with work in prisons.**