

The Church  
of Scotland



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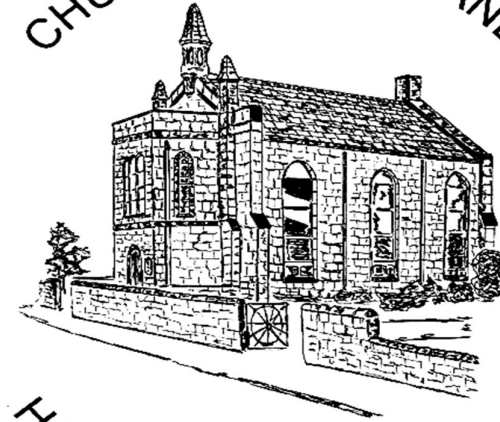
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CHURCH of SCOTLAND



HAGGS PARISH CHURCH

## The Link

The Magazine of Haggs Parish Church

Linked with Denny Old Parish Church

Winter 2023



## Prepared For What?

***A voice proclaims: 'Prepare the Lord's way in the desert, make ready there a straight highway along which our God can come.'... Proclaim the word; be prepared for whatever the season; patiently correct, admonish and encourage and teach one another. (Isaiah 40:3; 2 Timothy 4:2)***

'Here's one I prepared earlier' – words made famous by the children's TV programme Blue Peter. The catchphrase became so familiar that, even today, its very mention is guaranteed to raise a smile.

Of course, the importance of being prepared can scarcely be overemphasised. Imagine being operated on by an untrained surgeon, or entering a marathon without months of training, or sitting an exam without first revising. In countless areas of life, if we're not prepared then we or others will suffer the consequences. Hence, another catchphrase, immortalised as the Boy Scout motto: 'Be prepared'.

That, in nutshell, is the message of Advent. When you will receive your church magazine it will be a time of Advent which is a time of waiting and preparation. But prepared for what?

Despite what the hustle and bustle associated with this time of year may tell you, these weeks are not just about getting ready for Christmas – writing cards, buying presents, stocking up with food, hanging decorations and so forth.

Rather, they're about ensuring we're ready to meet Jesus should he come again, about honouring and serving him in our lives, about hearing his call and glimpsing his presence in the world around us.

Just as the surgeon goes on learning, the athlete goes on training, the student goes on revising and the preacher goes on studying, so you or discipleship involves ongoing development. It calls for faithfulness in prayer and worship, in reflecting on the message and meaning of Christ, in consecrating our time and gifts to God, in examining ourselves to ensure we are still walking to walk the Christian way.

Whoever we are, none of us is as ready as we like to think. Therefore, Advent offers us the opportunity to take stock, to reflect and to respond because the message of Christmas is,

***"A CHILD IS BORN TO US! A SON IS GIVEN TO US! AND HE WILL BE OUR RULER. AND HE WILL BE CALLED, 'WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR,' 'MIGHTY GOD,' 'ETERNAL FATHER,' 'PRINCE OF PEACE.'***

I take this opportunity to wish you a thought – filled (not too hectic) Advent season, a Merry Christmas, and every blessing for the New Year, when it comes.

Blessings, Rev. Raheel Arif

Minister: Denny Old & Higgs

## UNICEF JAR OF GRACE

During the season of Advent, we will again be collecting spare change in jars for the work of UNICEF. This organization works primarily with children around the world who are caught up in humanitarian crisis. A gift from you could help to provide a child with the essentials they need to survive, including vital vaccines, emergency food or a shelter kit. Or it could help to fund their education and psychological support programmes – ensuring children can recover from distressing experiences and start to rebuild their lives.

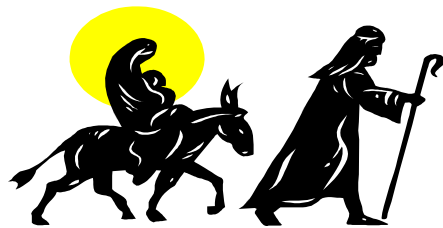
Your donations, however small, will be collected on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 by Sue Storrar.

With thanks.

## A Day To Remember

Everybody has important dates in their lives - births, marriages, anniversaries etc. but an important date for myself this year was on 24<sup>th</sup> May for that was the day I was baptized and became a member of Hagsgs Parish Church. A Church that has played an important part in the lives of Elizabeth and myself. Elizabeth's dad, Willie, was the beadle of the church and her Mum, Jean, was an active member. Elizabeth and I were married here, and both our children were baptized here and so at the age of 68 I knew I wanted to be a part of the Church as well. My thanks to Raheel, Sue, Jean and Elizabeth for making the 24<sup>th</sup> May a day to remember.

Robert Heeps



## Deaths

*'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord'*

**September** – Betsy Stewart, Bankview Care Home

Margaret Thomson, Dunipace

Agnes Tonner, Banknock

## Snowdrop Café

The Snowdrop Cafes (and there are a few in the area) are places to meet up and socialize over a cup of tea/coffee, a biscuit and sometimes a cake. It was originally a Strathcarron Hospice befriending idea to encourage social interaction for those people who felt lonely or isolated but they have now been opened up to the wider community. Any donation is welcome and put back into the café. We have recently been able to make donations to Strathcarron Hospice and to Hagsgs Church who give us the use of the hall free of charge. It is led by Rumbie Musa, who is in Zimbabwe at present, and the ladies attending are keeping it ticking over until she returns. Advice and support is given by Strathcarron Compassionate Communities team – our contact is Jayne Lamond who is very helpful. While we mostly blather, banter and laugh we very often have speakers, e.g. Dial a Journey and Local Energy Advice Partnership – also a very interesting gentleman who told us about his life and who made jewellery out of silver spoons. Any money he makes is donated to the Hospice. We have also played Bingo and Dominoes. Along with the ladies of the Church we recently had a McMillan Lunch fund raiser. For those inclined there is often a 20-minute exercise session led by Annabelle. Several things are planned for future meetings and if you feel like joining us – Hagsgs Church – Mondays 1.00 – 3.00p.m.

Marion Dickson



## Peace on Earth

It's that time of year again when Christmas cards are bought, and Christmas songs are played in shops with the theme of 'Peace on Earth'. Yet every time we turn on the news all we see and hear is war, destruction and fighting between different factions in the world. It is heartbreaking and disturbing to see the levels of violence that are being inflicted on innocent people caught up in the hostilities. Many people are deliberately turning off the news as they are finding it too graphic and horrific.

How different the pictures are of the Holy Land depicted on Christmas cards from the images of Palestine today. Extremists from both Israel and Palestine have been intolerant towards each other for many years and have destroyed so many lives. Today less than 2% of the people in this region are Christians, as most have left due to lack of freedom and persecution.

Martin Luther King wrote from his prison cell in 1963 "Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself... So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or love? Will we be extremists of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime – the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, the other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness."

The world is now in dire need of creative extremists, people who will put love, truth and goodness above power, money and hate. It is difficult to know what we can do to help. We can continue to generously support aid organizations, such as, Christian Aid and UNICEF in the impartial work they do in these areas of suffering and conflict, and we can also keep praying for peace:

*Love that came down,*

*Filling all with hope,*

*Grant us faith enough*

*To be passionate for peace for all. Amen.*

I wish you all 'Peace on Earth' this Christmas and for the coming year.

(Sue Storrar – Session Clerk at Haggs Parish Church)

## PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN UPDATE

Following the Presbytery meeting on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September an amendment was accepted which allows for a period of further consultation, therefore there will be a pause to proceedings with the draft Presbytery Mission Plan.

The Mission Plan Action Group is to communicate to Kirk Sessions the precise rationale behind its decisions for each local situation where it has departed from the proposals made within clusters.

We are being encouraged to continue conversations with other congregations, working towards the essence of the Mission Planning objectives (i.e. reducing the number of church buildings), which should be the basis for discussion.

Congregations who are happy and keen to move to unite or adjust in other ways CANNOT do so until the Mission Plan is approved. However, we are being encouraged to continue with any joint events, worship and projects within our local area.

Haggs Kirk Session will therefore continue to work with other churches in our local cluster to move towards a union with Denny Old Church and will aim to ensure that a local Church of Scotland presence can be maintained in the Haggs area for mission work in the community (maybe based in either the Church hall or a local Community Centre).

The problems with declining church rolls, reduced numbers of available ministers, and too many old church buildings have not gone away.

Increased costs to pay our minister, and to heat and maintain our buildings in 2024 will make it increasingly difficult for us to balance our books.

We appreciate the small number of loyal and generous members who attend services and events to support the work we do in our local area, the wider community and world.

We will keep our members updated with any further developments and will continue to develop closer working relationships with our friends at Denny Old through shared worship, activities and a joint magazine.

Blessings from Haggs Kirk Session

## CrossReach

Thank you to everyone for supporting CrossReach. We sold £411 worth of Christmas cards, Calendars and Care Gifts. Also, the special tea/coffee after Church raised another £239 on CrossReach Sunday. Many thanks.

Maisie Mortimer

## Welcoming Light



Some years ago, on a visit to Dublin, I listened to the tour guide telling me about the history of the city as the bus made its way to Phoenix Park. It was there that Mary Robinson, the first female Prime Minister lived. The guide pointed out that there was a light that was left on in the downstairs window. Mary wanted to show that there would always be a lamp burning to welcome home the millions who had emigrated to other countries. This reminded me of the lamps in the windows of fishing communities waiting for a safe return to harbour of their fishermen. This year why not visit your Church. There you will find a warm welcome light just for you.

Have a peaceful and joyous Christmas.

Moira Martin

## Christian Aid

On 16<sup>th</sup> September a few Haggs and Denny Old Church members gathered with other Churches at the Kelpies for our “Kelpie Canter” – a most enjoyable sponsored walk around the Kelpies and the surrounding park. It was quite well attended and even our Moderator of the Church of Scotland’s dog, Delilah was there. £900 was sent to C.A. in Edinburgh as a result of everyone’s generosity. Many thanks.

Jean McCheyne CA Treasurer for Haggs Church

## Boys Brigade

This year marked the 90<sup>th</sup> year of Haggs Boys Brigade and to mark the occasion there was a lunch in the Church Hall and a celebration cake. Former BB Officers were invited – Lesley and Duncan Milligan, Marion Dickson, Alison Mackie, Robert and Marie Wardrope, Morag Wales and Ernie Firth to name a few. Jack and Elizabeth Dunn came back for the occasion too as they had been Elders over the years for the BB. Lunch had been provided by the ‘usual ladies’ who always manage to make a tasty spread. I am sure we wish the current BB Officers our best wishes for the dedicated service they give to the boys in this area.



## Zumba

Zumba classes held in the Church Hall on Mondays 6 p.m.

Zumba for the older adult every Friday morning 11-12 noon. All ages and abilities will be most welcome. For more info contact Liz on 07813857486

## **Christmas Greetings**



Happy Christmas and a good New Year comes from Kenny Halliday to all at Haggs Church.

A peaceful Christmas and prosperous and happy New Year to one and all, Jean McCheyne

Best wishes for a happy and peaceful Christmas to everyone from Maisie Mortimer

Elma Findlay wishes all a Happy Christmas and healthy New Year

Archie and Marion Campbell send to all our friends at Haggs and Denny Old good wishes for a Blessed Christmas and a healthy, Happy New Year.

Wishing all my friends at Haggs Church a very happy Christmas and a healthy New Year, blessings from Sue Storrar

Elizabeth and Jack Dunn wish all their Haggs Church friends a happy Christmas and healthy New Year.

Greetings from Evelyn Goble – have a happy Christmas and good New Year

Bea Miller and family wis everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Nan and Allan Young send Christmas greetings to everybody for a merry Christmas and Happy, Healthy New Year

Best wishes for a merry Christmas and Happy New Year come from Winnie Kemp.

Elizabeth and Robert Heeps wish everyone a merry Christmas and happy New Year.

With best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a healthy and peaceful New Year from Ruth Gallacher and family

## **Christmas Greetings**



Wishing you peace and love throughout the Christmas Season and the coming year, Jean Proffit

Best wishes from Moira and Ernie for Christmas and a Happy New Year

## **Diary Dates**

**2<sup>nd</sup> December** – Community Centre Christmas Fayre 10 – 3p.m. where our church will have a Christmas Craft and Bottle stalls. Please come along and support us.

**3<sup>rd</sup> December** – Joint Communion Service with Denny Old at Denny 10.30 a.m.

**10<sup>th</sup> December** – Haggs Church Gift Service 9.45 a.m. (Gifts will go to Home Start).

**24<sup>th</sup> December** – Haggs Church Service 9.45 a.m.

Christmas Eve Watchnight service at 11.30 p.m. with Lorna Duncan, retiral offering for Christian Aid appeal.

**25<sup>th</sup> December** –Christmas Day Service at Haggs Church 10.30 a.m. joint service with Denny Old.

**31<sup>st</sup> December** – Haggs Church 9.45 a.m.

**January 2024** – all joint services at Denny Old Church at 10.30 a.m.

**February 2024** - all joint services with Denny Old at 10.30a.m. at Haggs Church.

**3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024** – joint Communion Services at Haggs Church 10.30.