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The Church
of Scotland



THE LINK

**The Magazine of Haggs Parish Church
Spring 2011**

**The Manse
March 2011**

Hi Folks

*“I have come in order that you might have life-
life in all its fullness” John 10:10*

As I write this letter we have once more entered the season of Lent. A season for reflection as we journey with Jesus through his temptation in the desert to his final week in Jerusalem, his death on the cross, his burial, then the joy of Easter – Christ is Risen.

I have just attended a study day for Hospital chaplains on Reflective Practice. This can be used to look back on an encounter or a day or a week to reflect on our reactions and feelings and how we helped or hindered and if we could do better. A bit like Lent.

One of my colleagues told how he started his day with a time of Bible Study and reflection and one verse he used is printed above. He used it as a focus for his day asking himself during encounters with others whether what he was doing or saying was helping them to more fullness of life.

I am reminded of the Christian Aid poster- we believe in life before death

This Lent instead of giving up something, e.g. chocolate which might help lessen the fullness of your waistline, take time to reflect on Jesus' offer of life, life knowing God's love in all its fullness. This will help your quality of life. But also look for ways in which you can pass some of that life on to others reflecting the joy that Christ is Risen and that we have been given the gift of God's love and forgiveness.

May God's blessings be with you this Easter and for ever more

Helen F Christie

EDITORIAL

Elsewhere in this edition you will find a letter from Falkirk Presbytery. Please do read it. Falkirk Presbytery will have to be making decisions over the course of the next few years which will affect all of us but we will be kept informed of this challenging situation in due course.

As we approach Easter we should remember Christ's sacrifice for us and ask what we can do for Him in return. We will probably never be asked to make His ultimate sacrifice but we should ask ourselves - do we do enough? Can we do more and how can we do more? Do we tell others about Jesus, do we show others we are Christians by our acts and deeds? Can we nurture those amongst us who need our support?

Every kind action, smile or word makes a difference to someone - they may be having a bad day and feeling low - let them know you care. God is here for us all when we call and even when we don't. So make a difference to our Church by coming on a Sunday and bringing all who would listen for the word of God.

Happy Easter to you all. May you find this a spiritually uplifting time.

Jean McCheyne

CHURCH DIARY 2011

April

- 6th - 2 p.m. Service at Bankview Nursing Home.
17th Palm Sunday followed by Soup & Sandwich Lunch.
18th - 24th Holy Week.
22nd Good Friday.
24th East Sunday.
30th Christian Aid Forth Bridge Cross Walk

May

- 4th - 2 p.m. Service at Bankview Nursing Home.
15th-21st Christian Aid Week.
15th Christian Aid Service & Lunch.

June

- 1st - 2 p.m. Service at Bankview Nursing Home.
12th Pentecost Service.
19th Sunday Club Prize Giving.

July

- 6th - 2 p.m. Service at Bankview Nursing Home.
10th Sea Sunday Service

37 CLUB

The 37 club has enjoyed another successful year with up to 12 gentlemen attending regularly. Inclement weather curtailed activities prior to Christmas and in early January but we did meet, with our partners, for Christmas dinner at the Holly Bank restaurant in Stirling. Our traditional Haggis Bash was held in January with the girls of the Girls Brigade preparing and serving our meal after which they provided an excellent entertainment of recitations and songs. Other activities included a pool night in Falkirk, cards and dominoes evenings at home and an enjoyable evening when we were invited to the Guild's concert with the Falkirk Bohemians entertaining. The session will close at the end of March with the usual gentlemen's dinner. All gentlemen will be made most welcome when we meet on alternate Tuesdays from October to March.

Murray McCheyne

1st HAGGS BOYS' BRIGADE

The Anchor Boys session has been a busy one with the boys doing handicrafts, Bible stories and games. Mrs Fiona Boyd, Mrs J Dickson and Mr Robert Mullen are the officers in the section and meet on Tuesday evenings in Bankier School; from 6.00 - 7.30pm.

The Junior Section also meet at Bankier School on Tuesday evenings from 7.00 - 9.00pm. The officers in the Section are Mrs M Wales, Mr & Mrs G Moffatt, Mr J Fenney and Mr C Nelson, with David Currie doing his Queen's Badge work. The activities are Maze Marching, Games, Tumbling, and handicrafts. They take part in Battalion competitions, Maze marching, swimming, Spiritual. 5 a-side and 7 a-side football and Chess.

The Company Section meet at Bankier School on Friday evenings from 8.00 - 10.00pm. The officers in the Section are Mr C Meek, Mr A Hobbs, Mr R Carson and Mr A Laird. The boys doing their badge work and Drill on Friday evenings. They take part in all National Competitions doing well in Masterteam, and chess also taking part in Battalion competitions in Drill, Pulpit Fall, Badminton. Chess, 5 a-side football, Table Tennis, X Country, Vaulting and First Aid.

Thanks to all officers and helpers throughout the session.

E Firth (Captain)

GYM BALL CLASS

Every Tuesday 8-9pm in Church Hall.

There are spaces in this class so give Liz a call on 07813857486 the money raised is given to a charity this year most of the money has gone to the Church. Hopefully this will continue

ZUMBA

Every Monday 6-7pm

Come and join the party, its fun, different, easy & effective. Make new friends and get fit. Music is fabulous with an emphasis on fun.

PILATES

Every Monday 7.15-8.15pm in Church Hall

Do you have sore back neck or shoulders this is the class for you, small classes max 12 so if you want to book a space call me on 07813 857486.

Liz Heeps

1st HAGGS GIRLS' BRIGADE

Our session is going well and is soon finishing, although this year we are down in numbers. This is Jean and my last year in Girls Brigade after 39 years service. We have enjoyed our time but feel new blood is needed, so please if you have any spare time on a Tuesday evening please come along and help. Shirley-Ann Swan will be taking over the company once her training is complete, until then Mrs Christie will be acting Captain. We wish them all the best and every success and hope they enjoy their time with the girls as much as we have. I would like to thank anyone who posted their Xmas cards last year as we raised £70 for company funds. At our recent Chocolate Evening the magnificent sum of £300 was raised. A big thank you to all who supported us and helped in any way during the years of service. Note for your diary Parents Night will be held on Tuesday 29th March 7pm in Church Hall. Everybody is most welcome.

Liz Heeps

CARPET BOWLES

Due to the snowy weather several meetings were missed including the Christmas lunch but on 23rd Feb. we joined with the Guild at the Railway Inn, Dennyloanhead, for a belated Christmas Lunch. Thanks to Bea for arranging this event every week and putting out the equipment.

Elma Findlay

SUNDAY CLUB REPORT

We are pleased to report that we have 11 juniors and 6 senior members. We start our Sunday Club meetings with a prayer then gather the collection whilst singing "Hear the pennies dropping". We then separate into two groups to carry on with different activities that follow the same theme as the Church service. The younger members enjoy a variety of arts and crafts. The seniors focus on Bible studies and take part in open discussions. We have decided to continue to support the Vine Trust with our weekly collection. Our leader is Shona Laird, who also teaches the seniors. Moira Martin is leader for the juniors with helpers Libby, Pauline, Nan and Laura. We close with a prayer.

Shona Laird & Moira Martin

GUILD REPORT

On October 10th at the dedication service in Church Mrs Nan Ure was presented with her 40 years service award, Congratulations Nan! On October 11th Rev. Phyllis Wilson came to speak to the Guild about the Summer Rally in St Helen's Bonnybridge. Mrs Jane Allan spoke about Crossreach on October 25th. The Zetland Entertainers came on 8th November and entertained with song. Guild week was from 21st - 26th November. November 22nd Mrs Monica MacDonald came to speak on the Charity "A Place of Restoration". From then until mid January the Guild had no meetings due to inclement weather. On Jan. 24th the video of the Guild Rally in Dundee was enjoyed by the members.

Jan 28th was a Scots night in the Church Hall. "The Bohemian Entertainers" performed and the 37 Club members were our guests. This was an enjoyable evening. On February 7th we had a speaker from Driving Force explaining their work. February 21st a Beetle Drive was held in the church Hall with plenty of noise and great hilarity and afterwards a cup of tea. This event raised £167.00 which was given to Driving Force. The belated Christmas Lunch was held on 23rd February at the Railway Inn, Dennyloanhead, and since everything had had to be held over the carpet bowlers joined with the Guild for this event. A very pleasant afternoon was enjoyed by all. Although small in numbers we are an active and friendly group.

Elma Findlay

PRAISE BAND

Due to the weather the "Big Sing" was cancelled much to our disappointment. We are now rehearsing for the Guild Concert on 18th March. The rehearsals are progressing well and are enjoyed by all participants. If you are coming to the concert you may wish to dress 1940's style!

Elma Findlay

UNICEF Jar of Grace

Thanks to everyone who thought of others less fortunate than themselves during the Advent period. A donation of £70.00 was sent to UNICEF to contribute towards the education and medical needs of children in under privileged countries in the world.

Sue Storrar

CHRISTIAN AID 2010 - 2011

This year has seen many natural disasters in the world, such as floods, earthquakes and forest fires. Also man-made disasters and wars continue to wreck havoc on the lives of many people in the world. The need for donations through Christian Aid to respond to these calamities is therefore as great as ever. Christian Aid does not, however, only respond with aid to help poor, sick and displaced people but also gives them equipment, advice and support to rebuild their lives and regain their dignity. The work for Christian Aid in Haggs Parish has continued through the past year even though the number of volunteers has declined. The grand sum of £2,978.64 was raised from a 'Big Sing', Lunches, the Forth Bridge Sponsored walk, Door-to-door collection and retiral collections. We trust that we can rely on your continued support in the coming year to sustain Haggs' contribution to this valuable outreach work done in God's name. Also if you feel called to become more actively involved in the Christian Aid fund-raising then please contact Sue Storrar or Jean McCheyne. Thanks again for your support,

Sue Storrar & Jean McCheyne

THANK YOU

Many thanks for all of your good wishes, cards and prayers during my recent illness. Your kindness is much appreciated.
Jean Cowan.

MINISTER'S REPORT MARCH 2011

Once more in 2010 we have continued our mission to serve God through Christ in this parish through our worship in Haggs Parish Church, the Archibald Russell Centre, Bankview Nursing Home and our different groups which are open to the community

Our Statistical Return at 31 December 2010 records that our membership stands at 272. During the year we shared in 6 baptisms, 2 of which were adults, 1 thanksgiving service, and the admission of 2 new members through profession of faith. I also conducted 26 wedding ceremonies and there were 26 funerals during the year of which 7 were for our own members. Two stalwart members of our Church worship team have now moved on to their eternal rest, our organist Mrs Lesley Meek and

our Church Officer Mr Tom Mortimer. Their presence has been sadly missed and we give thanks for all that they have willingly contributed.

The inclement weather at the end of 2010 played havoc with our finances with many being unable to attend Church but we have managed to finish the year in the black through using our reserve fund. This highlights the continuing need for your generosity in your offerings and the donations from our organisations. Once more we have been helped by the money claimed back from HMRC through gift aid and also that our organists continued to forego payment for playing at our Sunday worship. Once more I express my grateful thanks to our treasurer Marion Campbell for her hard work in keeping our accounts in order and to Murray McCheyne for his work with our gift aid and also the submission to OSCAR.

Our two main fundraising events during the year were our Haggs Talent Concert organised by Jack Dunn and his team of entertainers and our contribution to the Open Day at the Archibald Russell Centre organised by Carol Richmond and her helpers, thank you all not only for the money raised but for the fun enjoyed at the events. Then quietly during the year there has been the contribution from the teas and coffees served after church which also gives a time of fellowship thanks to Elizabeth Dunn and her teams of volunteers

Over the year our worship has included, for the first time, Souper Sunday for the HIV Aids Project and we have continued to support our other charities in our worship services for the Homeless, Christian Aid week, Sea Sunday, the Vine Trust at Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, the Shoe Box Appeal and our Christmas Gift Service. The annual service for prayers for Christian Unity was held in St Luke's and we once more shared our Holy Week services with Bonnybridge St Helen's. We have continued to celebrate our formal services of Holy Communion in March and October with informal Communion services in most other months either in Haggs Parish Church or in the Archibald Russell Centre. Our annual Remembrance Parade was held at the Longcroft War Memorial where wreaths were laid by the Boys and Girls Brigade, the Scouts, local councillors and the police after the two minute silence. This is an opportunity for our community to remember and it followed by our morning worship. Many of our late November and December activities were hampered by the weather and we had to cancel our Memorial Service and The Big Sing but the Christmas Eve Services were well attended despite the weather.

As part of our outreach to the community I am chaplain to the Primary Schools and I took part in several services during the year either in Church or at school. I was also invited to contribute to parts of the religious education. I am also chaplain to Bankview Nursing Home and we now have a service on the first Wednesday of the month which is well attended by the residents. It is being expanded to include services of Communion from March 2011.

On reading the reports from the different organisations I can see that they have been busy over the year. It is through them that we reach out into our community especially through the dedicated work of our officers and leaders in the Boys Brigade, the Girls Brigade and the Sunday Club. I know that it is more than just the time spent with the youngsters, there is all the preparation in the background. I believe that they deserve our thanks but also our prayers, support and encouragement. I have a special thanks to be noted this year as the Girls Brigade are losing two of their mainstays in Elizabeth Heeps and Jean Proffit who have given dedicated service over 39 years. Please hold them in your prayers and give thanks for the influence for good that they have passed on over the years. Also please hold Shirley Ann Swan in your prayers as she undergoes training to enable her to lead the company and consider giving a helping hand

For the older members of our community we have our Guild, 37 Club, Carpet Bowls and various forms of keep-fit, our Choir and our Praise Band who have all played their part in the continuing life of the church here in Haggs. My thanks to you all.

Once more we come to the part where we remember all those who work in the background to keep the buildings in good repair. Thanks to our Property Committee Colin Meek and Ernie Martin who are ably helped by Andy Gilmour. A special thanks this year to Peter Hoggan for clearing the carpark. Then there was Tommy Mortimer still sadly missed..

Then there are thanks due to our church cleaners and to our flower providers and arrangers with a special thanks to Moira Martin who has relinquished the role of Flower Convener. We still miss Lesley from her seat at the organ but Drew Christie has taken over the provision of our music supported by our Choir and occasionally by the Praise Group. Thanks also to Ernie Martin for taking on the mantle of Church Officer.

Then the Church could not function without help of our elders and Congregational Board members. Thank you all for your support

especially my acting Session Clerks Murray McCheyne and Sue Storrar and Drew Christie as Clerk to the Board. May I note a special thanks to Jack Dunn who has stood down from the post of acting Session Clerk. Finally may I once again thank you all as members of this congregation for your continuing support. As mentioned in the Session Clerk's report we have another challenging year ahead in the current financial climate but also as we look towards the future of the church as a whole.

1st. Haggs Junior Section

After all the disruptions with the bad weather, we have settled down to our programme in the Junior Section. We have approximately 25 boys attending each week, a lot more than last session when we averaged 10 boys. We were 4th in the Spiritual competition, where the boys, as always, were a credit to us and were 3rd in the Battalion chess competition, which the boys thoroughly enjoyed. This gave them a chance to mix with our older Company Section boys, who actually won the competition. We have started training for the figure marching competition and our junior team were 2nd in the Battalion Swimming Gala. We were delighted when the boys won the Battalion football league and were nearly winners of the 5 a side, but "pipped at the post" on penalties. We will attend the Battalion event, TurnaBBout, in Falkirk town hall, on March 4th, with all other sections of the Company, and are in the process of making a banner to take with us. This modern service, including puppets and a religious rock band, has proved a great success over the past four years, with around 600 officers and boys from the Battalion attending. We have also had a hot dog night, iced cakes, learned about characters in the Bible, practiced our physical training and tumbling and played lots of games. Because of the renovations proposed at Bankier Primary School, we are having a smaller parents' night this year. We propose to have a joint evening, on a Tuesday, with the anchor boys, which we hope to organise for sometime in May

Thank you all, as always, for your continuing support.

Morag Wales.

**PRESBYTERY OF FALKIRK MINISTRIES COMMITTEE -
Presbytery Plan Sub-Committee.
2nd February 2011**

To all who seek to serve and follow the Lord Jesus Christ within Falkirk Presbytery.

Over the last year Presbytery has been wrestling with how to deal with the decision by the General Assembly to cap the number of Ministries it will pay for across Scotland which means a reduction of 6 within Falkirk Presbytery.

At the Presbytery meeting on the 25th January the following was affirmed:

1. That, simply allowing the first churches that became vacant of ministry to make up the required reduction was not the right way to proceed as it was completely random and could result in strong and strategically located churches being left without ministry for no other reason than timing.

2. That it was inappropriate for Presbytery simply to compile a "hit list" of charges to be closed, linked, merged or otherwise adjusted to reduce the number of ministries in the area. It was acknowledged that such a top-down approach is a cause of great resentment and pain for the churches involved. Furthermore, it moves the work of ministry on to someone else's desk without taking the opportunity to spread the load.

3. A new approach needed to be found of allocating the increasingly scarce resource of ministry looking at each defined area as a whole and allowing the local churches to be fully involved in the discussion and in planning a way forward for the whole area.

To achieve this challenging aim Presbytery has resolved to divide Falkirk Presbytery into its main geographic areas and consult with each area about the challenges and opportunities it faces and the ministry needs for that area. Clearly there will be a difference between the numbers of ministries of all kinds that we would like to have and that we can afford and so we need to plan together about how we can bridge the gap creatively. We will have to look at the issues of parish boundaries in an attempt to level work demands; we will have to consider whether every church building is needed; most importantly we need to plan more effectively for the mission of the church within our communities. This will mean that congregations will be asked to work more co-operatively and collaboratively than perhaps they have done until now, to share resources, to share the work of being a missionary people of God and this will mean planning and praying together and encouraging one another. This will mean moving away from only thinking about our own congregation to thinking about our

whole area and working with Christians of all denominations in sharing the gospel. It will also mean looking at ways of locally co-ordinating the work of the congregations more effectively at an area level. It is also likely that there will be a need to share ministry resources more effectively.

There are strange similarities between the church's position and that of the national economy at the moment. Ministry is in deficit and we need to balance the books, and this means cutting back on the number we pay for. On the other hand the only way out of this cycle of decline is growth, but the only way we will grow is to go beyond our four walls and share the gospel with the wider community and not expect them to simply walk through our doors. By working with others, to develop a sense of the "big Church" akin to the "big society" that is being talked about, not simply leaving it to someone else but to be a part of the Church's renewal and future.

The big question is, "what happens next?" Presbytery has agreed to prioritise those areas where there is a vacancy and in the order in which they occurred and so consultation will begin in the Denny area, then move to Bo'ness and then to the centre of Falkirk. Beyond that we will attend to areas as vacancies occur subsequently and if there are none we will simply move through the other areas. It is fair to say that there will be no congregation unaffected by the changes that we are being required to make. But we would encourage everyone not to sit back and wait for events but rather to think and reflect on the church's work in your wider area, not just your parish and pray. Pray for insight into God's will and purpose through these events and difficult times; pray to understand and discern God's purpose for your congregation; pray for a Godly vision for the future of what His church is being called to be in all its parts to make the Body of Christ and our individual part within that body; pray for openness to hear again the call of the Great Commission to go and make disciples, to go and rediscover what it means to be the church. We would encourage congregational prayer groups to have this matter on their prayer agenda and for congregations who don't have a prayer group, perhaps this is an opportunity to come together and start one praying for the church and your community.

This short letter does not cover all the details of what was discussed or the detailed arguments considered and so it has been arranged that the report will be available on the Presbytery website (<http://www.falkirkpresbytery.org/> - clicking on the Presbytery Plan button in the right-hand side menu and then clicking the link under

Presbytery Plan 2010+) for those who would like to read it for themselves and perhaps, for those without access to the internet congregations could make internal arrangements to make a few copies available.

Presbytery has also approved the production of a short DVD to explain in more detail what the situation is and what we are seeking to do to face this challenge. A couple of copies of the DVD will be given to each congregation for circulation as soon as they are available.

The Committee hope you can accept that this is an honest attempt to share decision making with every congregation and that the only decision that has already been taken is one that has been placed upon us regarding the overall level of ministry that is available to us for the work of God's church in Falkirk Presbytery and this level was set by the General Assembly.

Yours in Christ,

Stuart Sharp (on behalf of the planning sub-committee)

Christian Aid Week

Poverty is an outrage against humanity. It robs people of dignity, freedom and hope, of power over their own lives. Christian Aid has a vision - an end to poverty - and we believe that vision can become a reality.

In the run-up to Christian Aid Week 2011, we will be sharing our vision at road shows in different places around Scotland. Our local event takes place at Denny Westpark church on Friday 18th March 2011 from 7-9 p.m. when you can learn more about the work of Christian Aid to eradicate poverty, through fundraising, campaigning and prayer. Christian Aid Week will begin on Sunday 15th May with a service followed by a lunch. Door-to-door collecting will take place this year from 16th - 21st May. We are relying on our regular collectors from the church and local community but also looking for anyone else who could offer a couple of hours during the week to do some collecting. If you are unable to help with the collection then please include our work of Christian Aid in your prayers. The Christian Aid Forth Bridge Cross Walk will take place on Saturday 30th April.

Please contact Sue Storrar or Jean McCheyne if you can help with our Christian Aid mission work or would like a sponsor form for the Bridge Walk (or would like to sponsor someone who is walking)

Sue Storrar

SESSION CLERK'S REPORT

March 2011

The position of Session Clerk remains vacant. Jack Dunn has stood down as a Clerk Pro-tem and the role of Session Clerk continues to be filled by Murray McCheyne and Sue Storrar, both acting as Clerk Pro-tem. In this capacity they support the minister at Kirk Session meetings, selected services and at other times as required throughout the Church calendar. This situation works adequately although it would be ideal if a permanent appointment could be made.

Our roll at the 31st December 2010 was 272 with 65 on the Supplementary roll. Seven members died and two new members were added by profession of faith during 2010. We have maintained this level of membership for a number years and it is now very encouraging to see new faces attending regularly on Sunday mornings.

There are twenty eight Elders on the Kirk Session and, in conjunction with our minister, they plan and lead the work of our church life not only for Sunday worship but also in the care of our membership and service to the local community.

2011 will be another challenging year as we look to maintain our existing membership and hopefully add to it. We also need to consider the shape and operation of our church in relation to the Church of Scotland plans for ministries in the future.

Murray McCheyne (Session Clerk, pro-tem)

Baptism

‘Suffer little children to come unto me’

Dec.12 Jasmine Jennifer Ross

Marriage

‘Whom God has joined together’

Dec.27 Lindsay Marshall to Christopher Clancy

Fri. 4 Joanna Rice to Graham Chaplin

Deaths

‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord’

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|-------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Dec. | Mrs Anna Howieson | Banknock |
| | Mrs Janice Hamilton | “ |
| | John Winning | Haggs |
| Jan. | Alexander Skullen | Banknock |
| | Mrs Barbara Paterson | Coneypark |
| | Mrs Margaret Young | “ |
| | Michael Martin | Dennyloanhead |
| | Mrs Eunice Easton | “ |
| Feb. | Robert McAlpine | Banknock |
| | John Whyte | “ |
| | Mrs Nan Fowler | “ |
| | George Anderson | Longcroft |
| | Mrs Mary Long | Banknock |