



The Link

The Magazine of Haggs Parish Church

Linked with Denny Old Parish Church

Spring 2023

‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’ (Matthew 3:2 NIV)

In 2020, there was the pandemic. In 2022, the invasion of Ukraine. And now, a tragedy of an earthquake on an almost unthinkable scale in Turkey and Syria.

It wouldn't be possible to summarise the turmoil of the last few years. But I don't think it would be too hard to summarise how we are all feeling:

Tired.

It can be a weary thing, to live in such relentlessly tumultuous times. But the seasons continue to turn, and we find ourselves in the season of Lent once more. It is a time to examine our spiritual lives – to lean over and look into that dark pool of weariness and see what might be held within.

Have the last few years changed the way we see the world? The way we see God?

Because, for me at least, it is certainly difficult to look at a world of war and broken earth and bodies being pulled from rubble and remain hopeful.

When John the Baptist was preparing the way for Jesus, his call that resounded around the wilderness was: ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ (Matthew 3:2)



Minister: Rev. Raheel Arif
Tel: 01324 819149

Session Clerk: Mrs. Sue Storrar
2 Cumbernauld Road
Longcroft
FK4 1QJ
Tel: 01324 840757

Presbytery Elder : Mr. B. Richmond
1 Hazel Rd
Banknock
Tel. 01324 840761

Beadle : Mrs Sharon Fenney
01786 470817

Web site: www.haggschurch.org.uk

[email: haggschurch1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:haggschurch1@yahoo.co.uk)

Scottish Charity Number: SCO14536

1st Hags Boys Brigade

The Junior and Company section visited Stirling Observatory on Friday 3rd of February we were unable to see anything as it was too cloudy but the boys & girls and officers enjoyed learning how the telescope worked and learned all about the planets. We all went to the Battalion annual Turnabout service at the Zetland Parish Church on Friday 3rd of March. The boys, girls and officers had a good time. Anchor Boys meet every Tuesday they have Arts & Crafts and play games every week and a good time. The Junior & Company Section meet every Friday with an average of 4/5 Boys/Girls attending in the Junior Section and between 2/ 4 boys/girls attending the Company Section. We start with an opening Service including Raising the flag, a Talk & Prayer then we split and do Badge work, come back together and do PT and play games then we have the tuck shop. We have a closing Service including intimation, lowering the flag, a prayer then dismiss the boys/girls. We hope to go to Girvan for our annual weekend camp for the first time for 3 years because of covid.

John Fenney, Captain

Deaths

'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord'

February : Mr. Alex Little, Longcroft

It is a call that Jesus himself repeated at the start of his own ministry (Matthew 4:17).

The word 'repent' here is, in the original Greek, metanoëó. It literally means to change the way you think. To shift your mind, purpose or inner self.

Is change possible? Can our circumstances change? Can we ourselves change? Can this fragile and fearful world change?

Jesus believed in change. He called us to it. 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.' Or, to paraphrase: 'Things don't have to be this way; Spirit is here – God is on the move.'

In our weariness it can be all too tempting to say, 'this is just the way things are'. Despair sees only closed doors, but faith is open to the possible.

There is much going on in the world that might bring us to despair. The challenge to us this Lent is to see things with a different and more daring vision. For the kingdom of heaven is near. A better world is possible and is breaking through in countless ways every day.

This Lent, let us repent. Let us believe that things can be different. And let us re-commit ourselves to being part of that change.

Rev. Raheel Arif

Minister, Denny Old & Hags Parishes

Holy Week Services – all at 7.30 p.m.

Monday 3rd April Denny Baptist Church

Tuesday 4th April Bonnybridge St Helens Church

Wednesday 5th April Westpark Church Denny

Thursday 6th April Dunipace Church

Friday 7th April Hags Parish Church

The Walk of Witness is on Friday 7th April and will start at Dunipace Church at 10.30 a.m.

Easter Sunday at 8.30 a.m. there will be a gathering at Denny Cross followed by breakfast in Westpark Church at 9.00 a.m.

Easter Sunday 9th April there will be a family service at 11.15 a.m. in Hags Parish Church. All will be made most welcome and there will be an Easter egg hunt for children.

Bunny Drive

We are holding a Bunny Drive and raffle in the Church Hall on **Wednesday 5th April at 2 p.m.** Tickets available priced £3.00 for adults and £1.00 for children. There will be a prize for the winner and refreshments will be served. Come along and have some fun!

Disappointment:

Have you ever been disappointed in a gift? A horrible brown jumper that a great auntie has knitted that you would not be seen dead in or an Easter egg without chocolate buttons inside? I wonder what the disciples thought when Jesus was crucified. Well that's it then or what do we do now?

They did not give up. Like many they got up and continued doing what Jesus would have wanted them to do. Great aunties brown jumper was ripped out and three pairs of knitted gloves were sent to the appeal in Turkey. The missing bag of sweets – I didn't need them anyway – too much sugar. There is always an answer.

Moira Martin

The Snowdrop Café

The Snowdrop Café has started meeting in Hags Church Hall on Mondays from 1-3p.m. It is run by two lovely ladies Rumbie and Jane under the auspices of Strathcarron Hospice for people in our local community who would like to meet and talk over a cup of soup, tea or coffee. It has been running here since December 2022 and each week new faces appear and are made most welcome. The idea of the meeting is to give support and a place to go where you will receive a warm welcome. There are reading materials available to help one through difficult times and a listening ear. There will be the opportunity to take up new craft activities should you wish with guidance from some people who really know what they are doing! I have found this a great place to be on a Monday afternoon and would encourage others to come along and find out for themselves how easy it is to forget your troubles (if you have any) for a few hours in the company of friends, old and new that you never knew you had!

Jean McCheyne

- Basis for processing information
- Storage and security of personal information
- Getting a copy of your personal information
- Inaccuracies and Objections
- How to contact us
- How to complain

Please be assured that the congregation will only share your personal information where this is necessary for church purposes. Information will not be shared with any third party outwith the Church of Scotland without your consent unless we are obliged or permitted to do so by law.

We will strive to ensure that personal information is accurate and held in a secure and confidential environment.

If you have any concerns about this policy then please contact Sue Storrar at susan.storrar@yahoo.com.

Christian Aid

This year Christian Aid week is 14th May to 20th May. Envelopes will be available in Church, there will not be a door-to-door collection again this year, but hopefully we will have a soup and sandwich lunch (date to be advised). In October after our sponsored canal bank walk we were able to send £1151 to help with the work of Christian Aid.

Recently we have sent over £230 from Watchnight Service collection and £422 was sent which was the retiring offering from the recent 5 Churches service held in Haggs Church – to the Turkey/Syria earthquake appeal.

Thanks to you all – your generosity seems to know no bounds even in these financially hard times.

What is Real Love?

Love is like nothing on earth. It isn't what you fall in.
It's what pulls you out of what you fall in.

Love isn't a good feeling. Love is doing good
when you're feeling bad.

Love means taking the knocks and coming back
to try to make things better.

And the funny thing is that, after all, love does feel good.
People say love is weak, but love is tougher than hate.
Hating's easy, most of us have a gift for it.

Love is the strongest weapon known to humankind.
Other weapons blow people up.
Only love puts them back together again.

And everything that seems real, that looks smart,
that feels good, has a sell-by date.
But love has no sell-by date. Love is Long Life.
Love is the ultimate preservative.

I don't know too much about love, but I know a man who does,
up there on the cross, loving us to death.

Love is the key to the door of the place
he's prepared for you in the kingdom of God.

Godfrey Rust, www.wordsout.co.uk. (submitted by Lorna Duncan)

The meaning of church at this time of change.

The global pandemic impacted individuals, communities and churches more than we could ever have imagined. The benefit of on-line services has been felt across the world, with many unchurched individuals attending from the comfort of their own homes. It gave a safe place for people to explore faith, while also allowing those less mobile to connect.

But for many of us we craved for proximity again, gathering with other folk in a physical community of faith within our church family. Church isn't a building. It isn't a Sunday service. It is a family sharing the highs and lows of life with Jesus together.

The five churches in our area: Denny Old, Dunipace, Denny Westpark, Bonnybridge St Helen's and Haggs have come together to form a Cluster. Representatives from each of these churches are working together with the ministers and Presbytery to explore how we can best move forward collaboratively to further God's mission in our area.

Change is never easy. We all want to hold onto our own buildings and traditions, but we are hoping and praying that any future changes will build upon each congregation's strengths and talents to increase the work of mission in this area.

The shared congregational services held recently at Bonnybridge St Helen's and Haggs churches have illustrated the strength of faith when we worship together and has been inspirational to all who attended.

More shared services have been organized during the coming year and we look forward to worshipping together with other congregations during Holy Week.

Please keep supporting Haggs Church during this time of change; attending services and community activities, giving financial support and praying for increased mission in our parish in the future.

Easter Blessings to you all,

Sue Storrar

(Session Clerk)

Yoga 4 All

The yoga group meeting on Thursday evenings from 7.00 – 8.15pm and is open to all who want to join in gentle stretches to help with mobility and balance, breath work to calm the emotions, and meditative relaxation activities to help to still the mind.

All levels of abilities are catered for, with adaptations and adjustments suggested for anyone with specific physical or emotional difficulties.

Please come along and join this friendly group. More details are available from Sue Storrar on 07709263588.

(The group will restart after the Easter holidays on Thursday 13th April)

Data Protection Policy

In line with recent advice from the Church of Scotland the Data Protection Policy for Haggs Parish Church has been audited and updated. The full Privacy Notice is now displayed on the noticeboard in the church vestibule which gives details on:

- How we use information
- Disclosure of information