

# Haggs Parish Church of Scotland



## History

**1840 - 2020**

Scottish Charity Number: SC01453

# HAGGS PARISH CHURCH

1840 - 2020

Haggs Parish Church lies at the western end of Falkirk Presbytery, its Parish boundary linking with that of Glasgow Presbytery. In 1838 most of the people living in Haggs were nominal members of the established Church of Scotland but their nearest place of worship was Denny Parish Church, about three miles away. The minister of that church, the Rev. John Dempster was determined that Haggs should have its own place of worship. On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1839 a petition from William Forbes of Callender and the Rev. John Dempster was presented to the Presbytery of Stirling. It sought permission to build a church in Haggs as a Chapel of Ease, dependent on Denny Parish Church, since, at that time Haggs was part of the Parish of Denny. Permission was given and plans and estimates for the building and its furnishings were approved in October 1839. Its Deed of Constitution of 1840 authorised William Forbes of Callender and the Rev. John Dempster, Minister of Denny to establish a church in Haggs. On the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1840, the new church was opened.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1841, Stirling Presbytery met in the new church to ordain the Rev. Colin McCulloch to be minister of the Church and Parish of Haggs, functioning as a Chapel of Ease, attached to the Parish of Denny. Four elders of Denny Parish Church; Robert Sneddon, John Gray, John Cousland and David Shaw, were installed as members of the first Haggs Kirk Session. Mr Alexander Ure, a teacher in Haggs Parish School, was appointed as Session Clerk. In 1844 the Rev. McCulloch left to become the minister of Denny Parish Church. This happened because, following the Disruption of 1843, the Rev. Dempster became the first Free Church minister in Denny.

The fourth minister was the Rev. Thomas Logan who was ordained in March 1860. He was a young and active minister who wished to see Haggs become an independent church. Sadly he died in August 1864. He had expressed a desire to be buried at Haggs and in 1864 he was buried in the porch of the Church. A memorial stone was mounted on the wall of the vestibule. The stone was later removed and can be seen today on the wall outside to the left of the vestibule when entering.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1875 the Church and Parish of Haggs was established. This meant that Haggs was disjointed from Denny and given equal status. Endowments were set up to provide a stipend of £100 per annum. At that time there were 235 Communicants and an average income for the previous five years of £49 for seat rents and almost £37 for

offerings. This gave a total income of about £86 per annum. The value of the Church and manse was put at £1,972 and the annual cost of maintenance at £4.10/-.

Perhaps the most notable ministry at Hags was that of the Rev. Alexander Robertson. He was ordained and inducted to the parish on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 1877 and continued there as minister till his death on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1919. During that time the number of members on the Church Roll rose to 509 and the number who attended Communion services rose from 170 to 207. In 1881 he asked to have

an organ installed in the Church but that request was refused due to lack of funds. Eight years later Mr A H Boyle of Banknock House offered to give a gift of an American organ if the Kirk Session cared to accept it. This was done after consultation with the Presbytery. In 1891 Mr Robertson formed a Band of Hope in the village of Hags.

Moving into the 1900's we learn of the minister reporting to the Kirk Session on his meeting with the local Electricity Company concerning the supply of electricity to the church. A quote for £48.00 for installing lighting "inclusive of globes, shades and two radiators" was accepted from a Glasgow firm.

In April 1903, the Rev. John Livingstone of Banton Parish Church opened a Sunday School in the Banknock School. There were 70 children present and at that time Mr Livingstone intended to start a Sunday service there. The Sunday School closed in 1961 due to lack of numbers, owing to most of the population moving east.

The Church was closed temporarily in 1913 for renovation, during which time the services were held in in the Russell Memorial Hall. The building underwent extensive alterations and redecoration. Probably before this time the pulpit was placed centrally on the north wall with pews on each side of a central raised chancel. The present arrangement came into being in 1928 when the Communion Table was dedicated, the elders' chairs being dedicated a year later. At that same time a pipe organ, costing £13.50 was purchased and installed. It served the congregation until 1963 when it, in turn was replaced.

In 1943 we learn of a soldier on active service in North Africa applying for membership at Hags. He was accepted after the Session's approval of a covering letter from his Padre confirming his attendance at communion classes. In those days new members were given a six month probationary period and failure to maintain a good standard of Christian life could have serious consequences.

In 1945 the subject of women being ordained to the eldership was first raised and was rejected. It would be a further 33 years before the first lady elders were ordained. They were Miss J Leishman, Miss E Shearer and Mrs S Swan.

In the late 1940's, the Church established a Sunday School in Allandale Bowling Club and it was run by Mr Willie Weir.

In February 1955, Haggs Parish Church bought the Russell Memorial Hall to be used as a Church Hall. It was erected in 1893 by the people of the district in memory of Mr James Russell of Longcroft, who had left £100 and a free site beside the church for its erection. The hall long continued to be the centre of all social activities in the district. During the Second World War it was taken over by the War Department who allowed it to fall into disrepair. In the end it passed into the hands of the Russell family which put it in order again and it once more became the centre of social affairs. Mr J Russell Jnr could not continue to afford its upkeep and so the church bought it. It required quite a lot of work to make it suitable for the church's purposes and at times was used as classrooms for Longcroft school

After two years of consideration, a Woman's Guild was founded in 1952. In 1970 the MacLean Hall was built and dedicated to the memory of Dr. Ian MacLean who had been an elder for 20 years and whose father had been headmaster of Longcroft school. The 37 Club, a fellowship for men, was established in 1985, the name coming from the street address of the Church.

Mrs Susan Swan, one of our elders, led a group of young people through the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. In 1979 her son Bruce won the Gold award. This was the first of many to come to Haggs and was the first in the Church of Scotland.

During the period 1978 to 1991 Haggs was linked to the charge at Dennyloanhead, during which the minister had to share his time between two congregations, Kirk Sessions and Congregational Boards. The link was dissolved in 1991 and Haggs was once again allowed to call its own minister as an independent congregation.

In 2011 the Churches in the Denny area were instructed by Falkirk Presbytery to agree a plan which would result in the number of ministers in the area reducing from five to four. After much debate and discussion and taking into consideration retirements and transfers, it was agreed in 2014 that Haggs would form a linkage with Denny Old, this becoming effective in 2015, the year of our anniversary. We had therefore gone full circle in 175 years.

Since Colin McCulloch in 1841 we have had twenty ministers, including Helen Christie, our first woman minister, who joined us on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 1998. Our current minister is Raheel Arif who, with his wife and family, joined us in November 2019.

The Haggs Parish Church of today is a vibrant and active community of faith. We still use the original buildings and the maintenance costs are a bit more than Mr Paul's £4.50 per annum.

The Parish covers an area of approximately six square miles serving a population of roughly five thousand five hundred in the Communities of Coneypark, Banknock, Haggs, Longcroft, Dennyloanhead, Allandale and Head of Muir.

We have regular services of worship and a number of youth and adult organisations.

All affairs of the Church, including property and finance are taken care of by the Minister and Kirk Session.

A warm welcome is extended to all who enter our buildings and we encourage everyone to come along and share our services and join our organisations. Haggs church is alive and well and we look forward to welcoming you.

## **Ministers of Haggs 1841 – 2019**

- 1841 Colin McCulloch
- 1841 John Young
- 1857 John Anderson
- 1860 Thomas Logan
- 1865 Alexander McGregor
- 1866 William Hunter
- 1872 Alexander Guthrie
- 1875 William Gall
- 1877 Alexander Robertson
- 1919 Robert Drew McKenzie
- 1922 John Sneddon
- 1925 John Jackson
- 1950 William M Mechie
- 1962 Jack Robertson
- 1967 Richard M Findlay
- 1976 John Holland
- 1983 Roger A F Dean
- 1992 Stuart Fulton
- 1998 Helen F Christie
- 2019 Raheel Arif

## Elders in Haggs Parish Church 2020

Mrs M Campbell	Ordained	30 <sup>th</sup> April	1995
Mrs L Duncan	Admitted	1 <sup>st</sup> November	1992
Mrs E Dunn	Ordained	8 <sup>th</sup> March	1987
Mr J Dunn	Admitted	26 <sup>th</sup> November	1978
Mr J Fenney	Ordained	29 <sup>th</sup> January	2006
Mrs S Fenney	Ordained	6 <sup>th</sup> October	2019
Mr E Firth	Admitted	8 <sup>th</sup> May	1988
Mrs R Gallacher	Ordained	23 <sup>rd</sup> November	1997
Mrs G Hamilton	Ordained	23 <sup>rd</sup> November	1997
Mrs S Laird	Ordained	29 <sup>th</sup> January	2006
Mr E Martin	Ordained	30 <sup>th</sup> April	1995
Mrs M Martin	Ordained	18 <sup>th</sup> March	1984
Ms C Meek	Ordained	9 <sup>th</sup> December	2012
Mrs B Miller	Ordained	3 <sup>rd</sup> March	2019
Mr M McCheyne	Ordained	17 <sup>th</sup> October	1976
Mrs J McCheyne	Ordained	23 <sup>rd</sup> November	1997
Mrs M McIlwraith	Ordained	10 <sup>th</sup> September	2000
Mrs M Mortimer	Ordained	18 <sup>th</sup> May	1980
Mrs J Profitt	Ordained	30 <sup>th</sup> April	1995
Mr B Richmond	Ordained	29 <sup>th</sup> January	2006
Mrs C Richmond	Ordained	9 <sup>th</sup> December	2012
Mrs S Storrar	Ordained	23 <sup>rd</sup> November	2007
Mrs S Swan	Ordained	28 <sup>th</sup> May	1978
Mrs M Walls	Ordained	8 <sup>th</sup> March	1987
Mrs N Young	Ordained	23 <sup>rd</sup> November	1997

## OFFICE BEARERS

<b>Minister:</b>	<b>Rev R Arif</b>	<b>01324 819149</b>
<b>Session Clerk:</b>	<b>Mr M McCheyne (Pro-tem)</b>	<b>01324 840137</b>
	<b>Mrs S Storrar (Pro-tem)</b>	<b>01324 840757</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Mrs M Campbell</b>	<b>01324 840002</b>

## **Schools:**

**Haggs Church School** was in existence in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and pre-dates the Church. It was built under the auspices of the Education Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It was a little to the west of the Church and on the opposite side of the road. It can be seen on the 1850 map of the area. There was a house and garden beside it for the teacher. One of the teachers was Mr Ure from Stenhousemuir who became the first Session Clerk. The school was closed in 1876 and the pupils transferred to the new Longcroft School. A carved stone from the school can be seen outside the MacLean Hall with the words **Church School, Haggs, 1839** inscribed on it.

**Banknock School** was opened by the Kilsyth Landward School Board at Hollandbush in January 1900. It was situated a little to the east of the Hollandbush Inn on the opposite side of the road near a row of miner's houses called the Pink Row. By 1902 the school had more children than the accommodation could handle. A new school was built to the west of the Hollandbush Inn and was completed in January 1903. It was closed in June 1964, after an existence of over 60 years and the pupils transferred to Longcroft School. The buildings were leased in 1965 to a firm manufacturing washing machines.

**Longcroft School** was originally situated near Anderson Terrace, Longcroft. By 1860 it was felt that there was a need for a new school. It was decided that the existing school and Banknock School would be replaced by a single new school to serve the district. This new school was built opposite the Russell Memorial Hall at Haggs and was opened in March 1876. It was extended in 1891 with a further extension being built in 1894. In January 1895 there were 441 names on the roll. For a time the Russell Memorial Hall was used as an extension to the school. A new infant department was built and opened in late 1912. Further additions were made in 1924 and 1926. In 1947 Longcroft became a Junior Secondary School. This was closed in June 1959, when the Secondary section was moved to the new Denny High School. In August 1964 the pupils of Banknock School came to

Longcroft, which was now only a Primary School. It remained open until June 1965 at which time the new Bankier School was opened.

**Bankier School** was opened in 1965 and stands on the site of the old Bankier House. The school celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 2015, the same year as the Church celebrates its one hundred and seventy fifth anniversary.

## **References:**

The Vale of Bonny	Rev. J Waugh
Deed of Constitution	1840
Deed of Disjunction and Erection	1875
Minute Books of Kirk Session and Congregational Board 125 <sup>th</sup> and 150 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Publications	
Maps and Statistical Accounts from Falkirk Archives	