



The Link

The Magazine of Haggs Parish Church

Winter 2015



Dear Friends

It has been a real joy to share worship with you these last weeks and to begin to get to know you, and it's great to have the opportunity to send all of you – those I've got to know and those I've still to make acquaintance with - Christmas wishes in your magazine.

Next Sunday – 29 November – will be the first Sunday in Advent and we'll be lighting the first of the Advent candles and singing the first verse of our Advent carol, and hopefully some of our young people will be there to light that first candle – and not just the first but subsequent candles too.

I heard about one young boy who was with his granny in church. He was one of those bright, inquisitive children who want to know about everything, and his granny was valiantly trying to explain things to him. He was especially excited when two of the children went forward and lit two of the Advent candles and then went back to their seats, and he asked loudly "Granny, who's going to blow the candles out?" Obviously his experience of candles was blowing out the candles on his birthday cake.

One of the descriptions of Jesus that we find in the Gospels is Light. John says in chapter 1:4

"In Him (Jesus) was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not overcome it."

As we look around our world today I'm sure we could be forgiven for saying – "It's not for the want of trying." Just days ago there were the horrifying occurrences in Paris, Lebanon, and Mali. Our hearts have gone out to those who've lost their loved ones, the many horrifically injured, not to mention the emergency services which have to deal with the casualties. It can seem as if all the powers of the world are trying to put out the light that Jesus brought. The NIV translation of John 1:4,5 says "but the darkness has not understood it." The Light looks like a threat – it frightens

because it shows up the things we'd rather keep hidden. The world at large doesn't understand that the truth is different – it's the Light that brings life, freedom and an end to fear.

I pray that in the weeks that remain in the run up to Christmas you may know calm rather than the rush and bustle that Christmas can bring; that you may know peace of mind and heart as you meditate on the wonder of Christmas; that you may experience the joy of Christmas even in this world of uncertainty because your eyes are fixed on the Light, the Light that can never be overcome.

My husband joins me in wishing all of you a very blessed Christmas and a peaceful and happy New Year.

Sandra Mathers
Locum Minister

Editorial Comment

Since the start of the early morning services it is encouraging to see so many early risers! Read on to learn about the goings on in our clubs and groups.

Jean McCheyne

Sunday morning Tea and Coffee

During the course of this year we have, once again enjoyed the fellowship of teas and coffees after Church. This time of coming together has become a regular part of our Sunday worship and we would like to thank everyone who comes along for a few minutes of friendship and fellowship.

We would also like to thank everyone who has given their time on a Sunday morning to prepare the hall and provide the teas and coffees.

Elizabeth Dunn

Crossreach Christmas Cards

Thank you to everyone who bought cards and calendars in support of Crossreach Church of Scotland Charity. We sold over £500 worth, so well done!

Maisie Mortimer

Our Guild

The Guild commenced on 5th October after the summer recess. Our opening meeting was visited by the Guild Convener of the Presbyterial Council in Falkirk. She had already been advised that Hags Guild would not be continuing after December 2015. She expressed her sorrow at this situation

I have convened meetings since 2007 and feel that I cannot continue. Maisie, as our Treasurer is also retiring.

Unfortunately there is no-one in the Guild or indeed the congregation who is willing to take on the commitment.

I would like to thank Maisie for all her work in handling our finances over the years. Elma is also retiring, she took care of all the press releases.

Morag Wales gave us a most interesting talk about her work with the Boys Brigade on the 19th October.

Members of the Guild are joining with the ladies of the Carpet Bowling for a Christmas lunch. This will be on 16th December at 12.30 in the Castlecary Hotel.

I hope that the fellowship and friendship we have enjoyed will continue in the future.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Health and Happiness in 2016.

Bea Miller



Christmas Greetings

Mrs Ure and Gary would like to thank everyone for their kindness and would like to wish all their friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Margaret Millar wishes all her friends a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Healthy New Year

A Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year from Maisie Mortimer to everyone.

Merry Christmas and a very peaceful and healthy New Year to everyone from Fiona Schuit

Nan and Allan Young wish everybody a very Merry Christmas and good New Year.

Archie and Marion Campbell wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a healthy, Happy New Year.

Bob and Bea Miller wish all their friends a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Sending you peace joy and love at Christmas & we hope you have a Happy New Year. Love from Carol & Brian Richmond



Christmas Greetings

Best Wishes for a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Healthy year ahead from Isabel Shearer.

Seasons greetings from Jean and Murray McCheyne and may 2016 be a happy and healthy year for everyone.

Elizabeth and Jack Dunn wish everyone at Hags a very happy Christmas and a Peaceful & Happy New Year.

Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year to all, from Elma Findlay.

Gwen Hamilton and family wishes everyone all good wishes for Christmas and New Year and good health.

Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year from Evelyn Goble.

A Merry Christmas to all our friends, Moira and Ernest Martin.

Wishing you and your families peace and joy this Christmas time. Best wishes from Sue Storrar

Carpet Bowls

Carpet bowling continues on Wednesday afternoon at 12.30 p.m. in the Church Hall.

On the 4th November we celebrated Bea's 80th birthday with afternoon tea and had a most enjoyable time with members and friends.

May I wish everyone a Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year from the members.

Elma Findlay

Praise Band

The Praise Band will be leading the singing on 6th December with Christmas music.

On 13th December there is a musical event in Bonnybridge St. Helen's Church in which we are taking part. At both these events there is a mixture of old and new items.

On behalf of the Praise Band we wish you all best wishes for Christmas 2015.

Elma Findlay

Church Diary

December 2015

6th – UNICEF 'Elevenses Cafe' + Praise Band

13th – Gift Service (with BB & GB)

20th – Christmas theme

24th – Watch night Service at 11.30pm in Haggs Church (10.30 Mince Pies in McLean Hall)

25th – Christmas morning service at 10.30 a.m. on Denny Old Parish Church

27th – Lessons and Carols

January 2016

3rd – Informal Communion

UNICEF'S 'Jar of Grace'

During the season of Advent this year we are again inviting the congregation to participate in the UNICEF 'Jar of Grace' appeal. UNICEF is a non-religious, apolitical organisation that works to protect the world's children.

While the scale of the need can feel overwhelming, we have a responsibility to look after and protect the most vulnerable and at risk. UNICEF goes the extra mile to protect children in the most far flung corners of the world and will not stop until every child has been reached. By taking part in the 'Jar of Grace' you will have joined this fight. By living out your gospel imperative to protect children, you can help UNICEF achieve its mission. You can help protect the world's children.

'Jar of Grace' is simple. Every meal time as you say grace, or at a time that suits you, take a moment to think about the children caught up in conflicts or disasters around the world who desperately need our help. Put a few coins into a jar to help UNICEF's work for children in danger.

Thank you for your support.

(Sue Storrar will collect in the jars at the end of December to send a donation to UNICEF)

RECYCLING

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the clothes/handbag collection this year and many thanks to those who have participated in the Haggs 'library'. Approximately £100 has been donated to the church funds. Well done everyone!

Carol Richmond

1st Hags Boys Brigade

The Anchor Boys

The Anchor Boys have settled down with regular attendance of 8 boys, their activities includes games, craftwork, bible stories. The boys had a Halloween party, are going to Combat City for their Christmas outing and an Anchor Boys fun day in January. The officers this session are Bobby Kelly, Fiona Reid and Jack Rankine, a company section boy.

The Junior Section

The Junior Section (attendance is 14 boys attending most evenings) took part in the Alan Douglas competition, and are practicing for the Maze Marching and 5 a-side football on Saturday mornings. Activities on evenings are marching, craftwork, tumbling, games and tuck shop. We went to the Science Centre on Friday 13th/14th November spent, an overnight stay with 400 boys, saw two shows, one about our planet and another about our body. The boys then tried different experiments and finished the evening with a small service and supper, then sleep (Ha Ha). The boys are also going to the Combat City on the 12th December.

The boys and officers would like to thank all in the church for your support over the past year and we wish you all a Merry and Happy Christmas.

Ernie Firth, Captain

Company Section

This year we are again small in numbers with just 11 boys on the roll. The session is now well underway and although we lost a number of our seniors at the end of last year, we are still taking part in as many National and Battalion Competitions as possible, to give all boys the experience of meeting with other Companies. We have to date entered the National Chess, Masterteam and T/T competitions. The Battalion T/T League is underway and we managed a very good 3rd place in the

Vaulting. Unfortunately we did not manage to compete in the Badminton.

This year we have attended the Church Services at Harvest with only three boys attending which was disappointing, however six attended the Remembrance Day Parade which was more encouraging. The Gift Service is coming up in December and we hope to have a good attendance in Church that Sunday. The hope this year is that we will have one boy attaining his Presidents Badge and two boys with their Queens Badge by the 2016 Parent's Night.

Colin Meek

Journey to the 'Land of Happiness'

Recently I was fortunate enough to travel to Bhutan, a tiny country high in the Himalayas surrounded by India, Tibet and China, that is known as the 'Land of Happiness'. Bhutan only opened its borders to foreign tourists in the 1960's and joined the global community. Issues of sustainable development, education and health care, and environmental and cultural preservation are at the forefront of policy making by the Bhutanese government. The Buddhist religion is practised by 75% of the population and Buddhism forms the base of Bhutan's legal system and permeates everyday life. Bhutan is one of the few places on earth where compassion is favoured over capitalism and wellbeing is measured alongside productivity. This unique approach is summed up in the concept of Gross National Happiness being seen as more important than Gross National Wealth.

As a committed Christian, I had felt some apprehensions about being so immersed in the Buddhist faith prior to my visit to Bhutan. However, although Buddhism places a central role in the country it has not been made the official state religion. All Bhutanese citizens have freedom of religion and I discovered that, as a Christian, I would be made welcome in the country as long as I did not attempt to convert others to Christianity.

I had the privilege, whilst on this trip, to visit many Buddhist temples, including one situated within the largest Buddha statue in the world – a magnificent golden image set high up on the hills which could be seen for miles around. I showed due respect by removing my shoes and hat before entering the temples and was invited to join services and blessings led by the monks. I did feel uncomfortable, however, participating in the prayers at the Buddhist altars and therefore I chose to say the Lord's Prayer quietly to myself. I also took with me a Gideon's Bible to enable me to read the daily message from God's Word to give me spiritual balance.

My journey to the beautiful country of Bhutan was therefore a physical, emotional and spiritual journey. The fluttering prayer flags and prayer wheels often powered by mountain streams in remote corners of the country reminded me that our faith is everywhere. Sometimes we need to take a break from the consumerism and rat-race that surrounds us to ponder on the wonders of the world God created and to feel thankful for all our blessings.

Sue Storrar

Deaths

'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord'

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