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The Church
of Scotland

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The Link

The Magazine of Haggs Parish Church

Linked with Denny Old Parish Church

Winter 2019

The Waiting is Over

Since our previous minister Rev. Helen Christie retired in 2015 and Hags Parish Church linked with Denny Old Parish Church in 2016 our nominating committee has worked diligently in searching for our new minister. After a three and a half year search, with what were seen as setbacks on the way, we have found our new minister Raheel Arif. Raheel only completed his training for ministry with the Church of Scotland in August this year so was not available to be our minister until September.

At that time Falkirk Presbytery were reviewing plans to cater for a reduced number of full time ministers and were about to stop vacant churches from calling a minister until plans were decided. After Raheel preached as sole nominee and both congregations voted for him to be our minister we had just over one week to complete all procedures before final agreement at a meeting of Falkirk Presbytery otherwise we would not have been permitted to have Raheel with us.

Thank you to everyone who signed the call to Raheel and also to everyone who diligently and enthusiastically visited our members who were unable to sign the call in person but gave a mandate to have their names added to the call.

We are delighted to welcome Raheel and his family to our community and are looking ahead to a long and happy partnership. It is important that all members of Hags Parish Church, young and not so young, give support and encouragement to Raheel in this his first charge as a minister and when and where ever possible actively take part in church life as we go forward in faith together.

Murray McCheyne,
Session Clerk

Church Diary

Service times at 9.45 a.m. unless otherwise stated

1st December: 1st Sunday of Advent Rev. Raheel Arif will be preached in by Rev. Alison Meikle

8th December: 2nd Sunday of Advent - Gift Service

15th December: 3rd Sunday of Advent - Family Service including the Sunday Club

20th December: Bankier School Service (weather permitting)

22nd December: Morning Service

24th December: Watchnight Service 11.30p.m.
(Refreshments from 10.30p.m. in MacLean Hall)

25th December: Christmas Day 10 a.m. at Denny Old Parish Church

29th December: End of Year Service



Haggs and Denny Old Manse

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are privileged and honoured that God has called us His sons and daughters through Jesus Christ and has chosen us to share the good news of His love and salvation which we experience in our own lives. I feel very blessed, privileged and humbled that God has called me to proclaim and share this good news in Haggs and Denny Old Parishes. Since the time I preached as a Sole Nominee, I along with my family are overwhelmed by the welcome and love which we have received through cards and best wishes. We are also thankful to both the congregations for decorating and setting up the manse in a short period of time that enabled us to move in by end of October. We are enjoying living in the manse and are managing well to commute to Grangemouth for Humaira and children's schools. When this magazine will be published and handed out, I have had already been Inducted and Ordained into both Parishes.

I take this opportunity to introduce myself and my family briefly at this time. We are originally from Peshawar, Pakistan. I have done Master degree in Botany and Bachelor of education degree from the University of Peshawar, Pakistan and BA Theology from Highland Theological College, university of Highlands and Islands. I started to work as a Biology teacher in a Secondary School where I was then selected as Vice Principal. I accepted Jesus as my personal saviour in May 1990 and offered myself for His service. God had used me in different capacities both in the Church and society in Pakistan. In 2001, I had an opportunity to visit South Korea as member of the delegation from my diocese to see how the Spirit of God is working in South Korea. There, I saw clearly the work of the Holy Spirit in peoples' life and in churches. I felt God's call for the ministry in South Korea in a very early "Morning Prayer Service". I heard a voice from God for the ministry. My South Korean Mentor, Rev. Matthew Jung once told me on our retreat at a hill station in Pakistan that God wants you for His ministry and if I remain in Peshawar Diocese, I will send you to Scotland for theological education many years ago. Then, I got married and I thought I should work to bring up my family but God's plan was still there. How God worked out that plan and made it possible for me to come to Scotland and study and get trained for the ministry of Word and Sacrament is in front of you. It was all God's plan and purpose to serve His people on this land.

God has blessed me with a beautiful wife, Humaira and two lovely children, Rhea and Roshaan. We came to Scotland in September 2011. Even though the circumstances were very difficult but God's hand and grace was upon us which further increased my faith and trust in God.

I am very pleased and thankful to God for His call to serve Him and His people in Haggs and Denny Old for this wonderful and priceless ministry. I want to assure you that we will walk together, laugh together, and share tears together on this journey of faith under the umbrella of God's grace, love, and mercy. I believe in the ministry of all God's people and in the gifts and talents of all the believers and would encourage everyone to use your skills and talents for the work and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ as John the Baptist prepared the way for Messiah – Jesus for His first coming and now it is on us that we need to prepare ourselves and others for His second coming. I will always need your prayers and support for God's mission in Haggs and Denny Old.

Since it is an Advent and Christmas time, I would like to share with you what Paul has written in Romans 13:11,

“You must do this, because you know that the time has come for you to wake up from your sleep. For the moment when we will be saved is closer now than it was when first believed.”

Few of us like getting up in the morning, but of course we have to, and for those who need to rise early an alarm clock is essential, it being the only thing guaranteed to arouse them from their slumber in readiness for another day.

Advent offers an alarm clock of a different sort. Far more than a prelude to Christmas, it reminds us of the central themes of the gospel – of what God has done, is doing, and will yet do – and as such it serves as an annual wake – up call to hear and respond. The above words of Paul to Romans perfectly capture that sense of urgency: ‘awake, for the day of our salvation is closer than when we first came to faith’. Here, in other words, is a summons to rouse ourselves and hear again the message of Christ; to shake off our lethargy and commit ourselves afresh to his service. Take time, this Advent, to listen to what God is saying to you, and to respond.

**God bless you all
Rev. Raheel Arif**

A FOND FAREWELL

It is with very mixed feelings that I pen this article. I rejoice with yourselves and Denny Old that, after a period of years, you are now calling your new Minister, Raheel Arif. I have said to Raheel that he will find his first congregation(s) to be very warm and welcoming. I cannot ask more of you than that you make Raheel and his family as welcome as you have made Pat and myself. I rejoice too that I see the congregation ready and willing to go forward supporting Raheel as he begins his ministry in a challenging time for the wider Church.

But there is another side to that coin and it is saying goodbye to very warm people who have made Pat and myself feel that we are “family” and that is a sadness for us but it is tempered by the feeling that we still remain as part of your wider family! Over almost two years, I can



honestly say that I have seen a spirit of hope: together we have travelled a journey, sometimes tinged with sadness and with challenge but a journey where we have been striving to move forward and now a new chapter opens in the life of the congregation. We all continue on the

journey and I leave you with the closing words of Footprints reminding us all that Jesus walks the journey with us: “The Lord replied, ‘The times when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child is when I have carried you.’”

Please be as kind and caring to Raheel as you have been to me – a first congregation is always special to a minister! I wish you every blessing on the journey ahead.

As Pat and I won’t be with you at Christmas, we take the opportunity in advance to wish each and every one of you the joy and promise that comes as we remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus the Christ Child.

**Your friend and departing (*locum*) minister,
Derek**

QUIZ.

Question 1. Which Christmas gift is also known as “Oil of Lebanon?”

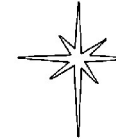
Question 2. George C Scott, Alastair Sim, Daffy Duck, Fred Flintstone and Michael Caine have all played the same role in a film or Television Production. Who?

Question 3. In which city is Kevin left alone at Christmas?

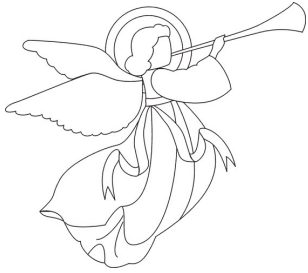
Question 4. Who wrote the song “White Christmas”?

Question 5 Which Biblical town's name means “house of bread” in Hebrew?

Answers on second last page



Why do we put angels at the top of our Christmas tree?



Angels are traditionally placed at the top of Christmas trees to represent their role in the birth of Jesus. One of the reasons given was that Saint Boniface encountered pagans going to sacrifice a child at the foot of a giant oak tree. He cut it down to prevent

this happening again and a fir tree grew in its place. He told everyone that the lovely evergreen with its branches pointing towards heaven was a holy tree, the tree of the Christ child and a symbol of His promise of eternal life.

Several angels appear in the bible story of that first Christmas.

Gabriel, the archangel of revelation informs Mary that she will be the mother of Jesus.

An angel visits Joseph in a dream to tell him he will serve as a father to Jesus on Earth.

Angels appeared in the sky over Bethlehem to announce the birth of Jesus.

It is the last part, the angels appearing high above the EARTH that gives us the explanation why angels are placed at the top of Christmas trees.



Carpet Bowls:

The Carpet Bowls is still being enjoyed by all who play. It is a pleasant afternoon which finishes off with a cup of tea or coffee. If anyone feels like joining in it is held in the Church Hall on Wednesday afternoon at 12.30. Merry Christmas to all and best wishes for 2020.

Elma Findlay

Blythswood Shoe boxes appeal.

Thank you all for the generous donation of 45 boxes from Haggs Church. These boxes may be all that a child or adult gets for Christmas.

Merry Christmas and thanks.

Moira Martin

CrossReach Christmas Angel Appeal/Lunch

A big THANK YOU on behalf of CrossReach Guardian Angel/150th Anniversary Appeal. They were delighted to receive the magnificent sum of £550.

Well done Haggs Church members

Maisie Mortimer

Christian Aid

Thank you for your generous support throughout 2019. Haggs Church has given £1,450 for the work of this charity. We look forward to your continued support in 2020.

Jean McCheyne

Teas/Coffees/Fellowship

We would like to thank everyone who has helped to provide Teas and Coffees in the Church Hall during the course of this year. It helps to provide a time of social friendship after Church. In order to keep this going through 2020, we again need your help. If you can assist in any way, please add your name to the list at the Church door or contact

Elizabeth Dunn.

Indian visit 2019

In October this year I was again fortunate enough to pay another visit to India; a country of great contrasts, always vibrant and exciting, with warm welcoming people.

As well as being privileged to visit iconic tourist sites; such as the impressive Amber Fort and City Palace in Jaipur and the awe inspiring Taj Mahal in Agra, we also spent six days in the mountainous region of Dharamsala in the foothills of the Himalayan mountain range. Here the environment was lush and green with farming as the main occupation. The air was clean and the water pure – so unlike the polluted areas around Agra and Delhi.

We spent time practising yoga and walking in the hills and countryside; visiting a tea plantation and a pottery and enjoying the excitement of being in India when they celebrated Diwali - a colourful and noisy festival similar to our New Year.

Our two most memorable days were spent visiting Norbulingka – a cultural training centre and refuge for Tibetans who have been expelled from China because of their religious beliefs. Norbulingka is not only the heart of Tibetan Culture in Dharamsala, dedicated to the preservation of traditional Tibetan arts, but also a community employing 400 refugees that provides social welfare programmes to support the workers and their families. Situated amidst beautiful gardens, pools and streams, with views of the mighty Dhauladhar Mountains in the distance, Norbulingka was a peaceful retreat from the rest of bustling India.

We then travelled onto McLeod Ganj, to visit the Dalai Lama's monastery. With the ornate temple, dominated by a large golden Buddha statue, and the bright paintings and wall hangings; this seemed more like a place for tourists to visit rather than a holy place for quiet contemplation. Most of our group were disappointed; as we had expected Dalai Lama's monastery to be more spiritually uplifting.

However, the following day we travelled to the Dongyu Gatsal Ling Buddhist Nunnery – founded in 1987 by the English nun Diane Perry, known by her Tibetan name, Tenzin Palmo. She had secluded herself in a cave 13,200 feet up in the Himalayas, cut off from the world by mountains and snow. Here she engaged in twelve years of intense Buddhist meditation – her goal to attain enlightenment as a woman. She overcame the physical and mental challenges and decided to dedicate her life to establishing a Nunnery in northern India to provide an education and empower the nuns to become teachers and leaders in the Buddhist Tibetan tradition. There are now 700 nuns in northern India supported by the project.

The Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery was beautifully kept with a peaceful temple, school and living quarters surrounded by immaculate gardens. There were no other visitors, so we felt it a very special occasion. We were also granted an hour long audience with Tenzin Palmo herself – who answered our many questions with eloquence and wisdom. I asked her 'How we can 'do our bit' to overcome the pollution in the world?' Her answer was one that I had not anticipated; she said that of course we should all work to reduce our use of plastics and be careful to preserve the world's natural resources. But she then expanded her reply by stating that we should be more concerned about the dangers of psychological pollution; particularly of young minds, caused by pornography and easy access to internet websites that influence their minds. This then leads to insecurities, self doubts and self loathing that result in mental health issues. Tenzin then said that the way to combat such psychological pollution was for us to send prayers of love out into the world; to send light into dark places.

As we enter this time of Advent perhaps we should aim to send our prayers of love out into the world too so that we can send some light into the dark places in people's lives caused by loss, illness, despair and loneliness. God Bless.

Sue Storrar

Property Report Nov. 2019

Since the last Magazine, most of our time and resources have been directed to the Manse in Singers Place. The work has been shared between the two congregations and the following is a list of the many tasks that have been completed in a very short timescale.

Manse Task List

Garden: *Haggs*

Remove trampoline
Get burgundy bin
Gutters cleaned
Windows and PVC surrounds cleaned
Powerwash decking

Utilities/Services: *Denny*

Change to energy supply contracts
IT Provision - Virgin - BT - Sky
Renew CH and Cooker maintenance contract

New Hardware: *Denny*

Washing Machine
Condensing Tumble Drier
House number to front door
Heat detector for Kitchen

Cleaning: *Haggs*

Deep clean of all rooms - Hoover, dust, clean windows - outside and inside
Light fittings and shades
All shower heads
Remove silicone from working surface
Legionella check

Electrical: *Denny (except fans)*

Check all showers
Check outside external rear light is working
Fit CO2 detector in Utility Room – above door
En suite 1 – bathroom extractor fan not working
En suite 2 – bathroom extractor fan not working

Turn on all appliances and check if working - Kitchen
Check and run dishwasher - Kitchen
Check hot water heater under sink - Kitchen
Check hob - Kitchen
Check cooker hood – Kitchen

Check microwave - Kitchen
Fit heat detector - Kitchen Fit fire blanket and fire extinguisher to wall – Kitchen

Decoration/Painting: *Haggs*

Decorate and make good walls - Utility Room
Wall repainted – Bedroom 5
Walls repainted and paper removed 2 Bedrooms
Other rooms repainted as necessary

Legal *Denny*

Advise Church of Scotland Insurance of changing situation

Plumbing: *Denny*

Blanking covers for water outlets fitted

Other: *Denny*

Repair Curtain rail support brackets fixings in bedrooms

Church:

Vestry painted

Church Hall

Entrance Hall and Kitchen redecorated.
New electricity supply installed
Exterior painting postponed until Spring 2020

The Property Committee once again thanks everyone who helped to complete all of the above. We have helped to ensure that our new Minister has come to a suite of buildings that will help to make him and his family feel welcome and at home.

Together we make a difference

Jack Dunn

Property Convenor

UNICEF Jar of Grace 2019

For Every Child In Danger

During Advent our focus is on the coming of the Jesus into our world as a poor and vulnerable child.

UNICEF makes sure that more of the world's poor and vulnerable children are fed, vaccinated, educated and protected. They have worked in over 190 countries to influence laws, policies and customs to help to protect children. They are going to continue this work until the world is a safer place for ALL our children.

UNICEF receives no UN funding and relies entirely on voluntary donations to fund the vital work of protecting children in danger, transforming their lives and building a safer world for tomorrow's children.

Measles is a dangerous, infectious disease that no child should have to face. Measles is particularly dangerous for children who live in countries with poor access to healthcare or where children might already be weak from malnutrition. Without urgent action, many more children will become ill or lose their lives to preventable diseases like measles.

So please during Advent this year say a prayer for these vulnerable children, put your loose change into a jam jar and we will send all the proceeds to UNICEF to help their vaccination programme against measles. A gift of £32.50 can help vaccinate 50 children against deadly measles, and another step closer to ending measles for good in the world.

The Jars of Grace will be collected at the end of December. Gift Aid forms are available in the church vestibule.

Thank you – Sue Storrar

Answers to the quiz.

Q. 1 Frankincense.

Q. 2.Ebenezer Scrooge.

Q.3 Chicago

Q.4 Irving Berlin

Q.5.Bethlehem

NB.Did you spot the deliberate mistake in the last quiz. Predictive text changed Abel to Able. (brothers Cain and Abel)

Baptism:

“Suffer little children to come unto me”

Callan Alexander Todd

22nd September 2019

Deaths:

‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord’

September: William Harris Longcroft

October: Euphemia (Effie) Gilmour Hags

November; Fiona Schuit Longcroft

Christmas Greetings



From Kenny and Margaret Halliday.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Betty Crosbie.

Bea Miller wishes everyone a Happy Christmas and a good New Year.

Marion and Archie Campbell wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy 2020.

Best wishes for Christmas and New Year from Gwen Hamilton and Family with lots of love.

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

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Isabel Shearer.

Carol and Brian Richmond send best wishes to all for a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year.

Blessings at Christmas and health and happiness from Lorna and David Duncan and family.

Best wishes to all at the Hags and best wishes to Rev. Arif and his family.

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

A very Happy Christmas to everyone at Hags from Evelyn Goble.

Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year to one and all from Jean and Murray McCheyne.

Wishing you and your family peace and love this Christmas, and good health and happiness in 2020 from Sue Storrar.

Maisie Mortimer wishes everyone Peace and Joy this Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and all good wishes for 2020 from Elma Findlay.

Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2020 from Ernie and Moira Martin.

