



Image courtesy of shutterstock.com

For God So loved the World that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16



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PROSPECT ONLINE

Magazine of Stepps Parish Church

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**Watch us on YouTube each Sunday
at 11.00 am.**

Follow us on Facebook.

www.steppsparishchurch.org

At the heart of our
community celebrating faith
and life to the full.

To submit an item for Prospect please
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Sunday Services

Morning Worship at 11am

(Services will be reduced and limited in numbers until further notice)

We are now allowed to resume public worship. This is welcome news and as such we will re-open for worship on Sunday the 28th of March - Palm Sunday. In-person worship is restricted to a maximum attendance of 50 people, which includes worshippers of all ages, the minister, musician, ushers, and volunteers stewarding the service.

A maximum safe limit has been set within the sanctuary to 36 people to be covid-compliant with our risk assessment considering the 2m physical distancing rule. Covid-19 continues to be a concern and as such congregations are asked to ensure that people do not remain in or around the premises to talk and 'catch up' after the service. We are all strongly encouraged to return home after the service and reduce transmissibility of the virus by avoiding crowded spaces.

An additional 12 seats are available as an overpill area to watch the weekly service from our large hall

Please continue to follow the website for information about our Easter Services. We look forward to welcoming you all back with us once again. For those who are unable to return with us at this time we will continue to stream our weekly Sunday services on our Stepps Parish Church YouTube channel

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI7mTSz5OI-vW_qMKKjcXAw



Charity No: SC014212

Pastoral Letter by Rev Gordon MacRae

Dear Friends,



As I write this letter I am also preparing for Holy Week, the six days, beginning on Palm Sunday, when Jesus was in Jerusalem, when he taught and argued, had a Last Supper with his dearest friends, was betrayed, arrested and crucified.

Holy Week. Why is this week called Holy?

Why is the land in which these events took place called the Holy Land?

Why are people sometimes called Holy?

Why is the Church Holy?

The word holy can be understood in very many ways. It is usually applied to a word to identify it as 'of God' or define it as blessed by God. So Holy Week is such because Jesus made it holy by what he did in those last days. Those he met felt God's real presence when he was with them, those who would have him killed because they thought themselves holy and saw him as a threat to their false holiness. The week is forever Holy for what Jesus did for us all in his Crucifixion and Rising. The Holy Land is holy because Jesus walked, lived, died and rose from the dead within the bounds of that land. It is not the land that is holy. Many things have occurred, across the centuries, right up to the present day, that would make the land itself far from Holy.

Israel / Palestine is holy because Jesus blessed it with his presence.

The word *holy* comes from the same root as the word *whole* and they both come from the word *heal*. Now there is a fact that might make us think!

To be whole, to be unbroken, to be healed is to be holy.

Something, someone is holy because they are made whole, healed, saved by God.

So I ask you to think again..... who is holy, what is holy?

A place is holy, a day or week is holy, a person is holy when they have been in the presence of God and that presence makes them complete, healed and whole.

God saw that the world was broken. God had given God's Word through the prophets and shown God's Power in many miraculous and wondrous happenings. God then sent his only Son to be with us, God's Word and God's Power made flesh. In His last week on earth Jesus showed the full extent of God's Love in His death on the cross. By His wounds, in His death we are made whole. In his broken body the world is healed. All that humanity had destroyed was made whole.

The whole of creation was made holy.

Another way of understanding holy is someone who is healed and made whole by God's Love, someone of God.

So what is holy?

All that is of God, all that is blessed by God, all those who know God and know they are blessed by his love. And the bottom line?

That means

YOU are Holy.

Good Eh?

Love

Gordon

Session Clerk Letter

Dear Friends,

After a long 12 weeks of closure we once again look forward to welcoming some of you back among us this Palm Sunday as finally we are granted the permission to re-open for worship. The timing could not be more poignant for us as Christians. Jesus's victorious entry into Jerusalem echoes the joy we all feel as we once again open our doors with the hope and expectation of better days ahead. While this joyful occasion is to be celebrated we all know only too well that Palm Sunday also marks the start of Holy week where we recall the events leading up to Jesus' arrest, crucifixion and death and the pain that he endured for us all. We are pleased that although still limited in terms of numbers we can share this most Holy of festivals with a wider congregation and not be apart as we were last year or reaching out to you via Zoom. The joyful expectation of Easter Sunday morning is truly something for us all to celebrate this year. Through the resurrection we believe that life has triumphed



over death, good over evil, hope over despair.

Can there be no greater message for us to take comfort from after a year of turmoil, interruption, separation and great sadness for many.

As Christians we especially rejoice this year knowing that *Jesus Has Risen* and saved us all. Let us give thanks to God for all that he has forsaken for us and that through Jesus's resurrection all things have been made new once again.

May this renewal inspire us all to do what we can to bring about a change for the better not only in our lives in our church but also in our world.

As we once again celebrate coming together in Jesus's name, let us praise him for all his glory.

Christ is risen. He is risen Indeed.
Alleluia!

Lorraine.

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SAINTS

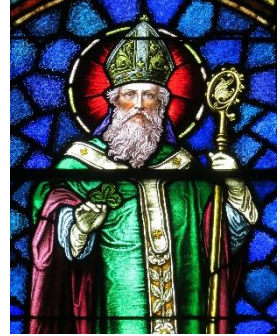
A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SAINTS

Whilst in our faith we do not venerate saints, we do recognise them as outstanding Christians who we respect and honour. They are the heroes of our faith whose godly lives deserve to be remembered. This time we look at two patron saints whose national days are celebrated around this time of year:

SAINT PATRICK

St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in Britain—not Ireland—to wealthy parents near the end of the fourth century. He is believed to have died on March 17, around 460 A.D.

Although his father was a Christian deacon, it has been suggested that he probably took on the role because of tax incentives and there is no evidence that Patrick came from a particularly religious family.



At the age of 16, Patrick was taken prisoner by a group of Irish raiders who were attacking his family's estate. They transported him to Ireland where he spent six years in captivity. During this time, he worked as a shepherd, outdoors and away from people. Lonely and afraid, he turned to his religion for solace, becoming a devout Christian.

After more than six years as a prisoner, Patrick escaped. According to his writing, a voice—which he believed to be God's—spoke to him in a dream, telling him it was time to leave Ireland.

To do so, Patrick walked nearly 200 miles from County Mayo, where it is believed he was held, to the Irish coast. After escaping to Britain, Patrick reported that he experienced a second revelation—an angel in a dream tells him to return to Ireland as a missionary. Soon after, Patrick began religious training, a course of study that lasted more than 15 years.

After his ordination as a priest, he was sent to Ireland with a dual mission: to minister to Christians already living in Ireland and to begin to convert the Irish.

Familiar with the Irish language and culture, Patrick chose to incorporate traditional ritual into his lessons of Christianity instead of attempting to eradicate native Irish beliefs. For instance, he used bonfires to celebrate Easter since the Irish were used to honouring their gods with fire. He also superimposed a sun, a powerful Irish symbol, onto the Christian cross to create what is now called a Celtic cross, so that veneration of the symbol would seem more natural to the Irish.

Although there were a small number of Christians on the island when Patrick arrived, most Irish practiced a nature-based pagan religion. The Irish culture centred around a rich tradition of oral legend and myth. When this is considered, it is no surprise that the story of Patrick's life became exaggerated over the centuries—spinning exciting tales to remember history has always been a part of the Irish way of life.

He may be known as the patron saint of Ireland, but Patrick was never actually canonized. This is simply due to the era he lived in. During the first millennium, there was no formal canonization process. After becoming a priest and helping to spread Christianity throughout Ireland, Patrick was likely proclaimed a saint by popular acclaim.

SAINT GEORGE

St. George, the patron saint of England, whose feast day is celebrated on 23rd April, flourished during the 3rd century and died around 303 A.D. at Lydda, Palestine (now Lod, Israel) as an early Christian martyr who during the Middle Ages became an ideal of martial valour and selflessness.



Nothing of George's life or deeds can be established, but tradition holds that he was a Roman soldier and was tortured and decapitated under Diocletian's persecution of Christians in 303. His remains were taken to Lydda (now Lod, Israel), the homeland of his mother, and were later transferred to the church that was built in his name there. Various relics reportedly are housed in both Western and Eastern churches worldwide. St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, for example, is said to have once held two fingers, part of the heart, and part of the skull of the saint.

Legends about him as a warrior-saint, dating from the 6th century, became popular and increasingly extravagant including the story of his rescuing a Libyan king's daughter from a dragon and then slaying the monster in return for a promise by the king's subjects to be baptised. George's slaying of the dragon may be a Christian version of the legend of Perseus, who was said to have rescued Andromeda from a sea monster near Lydda. It is a theme much represented in art, the saint frequently being depicted as a youth wearing knight's armour with a scarlet cross.

George was known in England by at least the 8th century. Returning Crusaders likely popularised his cult but he was probably not recognized as England's patron saint until the late 14th century.



The Boys' Brigade offers a range of activities and opportunities for boys from Primary 1 all the way up to age 18, including sports and recreation, skills training, and community work, all of which builds into the BB award scheme. Our staff are all experienced and trained in youth work, and subject to the PVG scheme. New recruits are very welcome.

The BB are now permitted to resume outdoor activities:

- Anchor Boys: Meet on Monday 6-7pm at Stepps Hockey Park.
- Junior Section: Meet each Monday from 6-7pm at Stepps Hockey park.
- Company section: Meet each Monday from 6-7pm at Hogganfield Loch.

Sections will remain in separate bubbles and be socially distanced. All boys are asked to dress appropriately for the weather. Please bring your own water or juice/snacks.

We will continue to have a blended approach with #BBatHome activities and Zoom meetings if conditions prevent us from meeting outdoors.

If anyone is interested in joining the Boys Brigade or would perhaps like to make some enquiries about enrolment – Colin Goodall our captain for the 190th can be contacted on the company email which is captain190thglasgow@hotmail.com and would be delighted to respond to any enquiries. You can also follow our 190th Glasgow Boys Brigade Company on their Facebook Page.

Colin Goodall.

Captain

Tel. 07828 032807



Palm Sunday Arrangement- Chancel Area.

Church of Scotland to mark Holy Week with prayers and events

This Holy Week everyone is invited to take part in a series of specially created online events including daily reflections with the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and a spirit-filled Easter service.

Hamilton-based theatre group Drama Kirk have also filmed a new version of their annual Passion Play, which will be available to watch on the Church of Scotland website.

Beginning on Palm Sunday (28 March) and continuing until Easter Sunday, each morning at 8am on the Church of Scotland website and Facebook page there will be a Bible reading, contemplative music, prayer and a short reflection from Rev Dr Martin Fair and others from across the breadth of the church.

The morning reflections will also be able to be listened to on the phone by dialling 0333 340 9200 (calls will be charged at a local rate).

Dr Fair said: 'We've been working our way towards Easter and I very much hope that these resources will enable people to finish the journey with a special Holy Week experience for us all to share in.

"Though some churches will be open by then, others will remain closed but either way, we want to celebrate Easter in a positive and meaningful way."

The week will culminate in a full online church service on Easter Sunday (4 April), which will be available on Easter Sunday from 9am again on the Church of Scotland website.

Join us for our Holy week Services



Last Supper - stained glass - Chartres Cathedral. *Image Courtesy of Women for Faith & Family*

Maundy Thursday 1st April, 2021

Large Hall @ 7.30pm where we will celebrate the Christian Seder- Based on the Passover Meal which Jesus shared with his friends in the Upper Room.

Good Friday Service 2nd April, 2021 in the Sanctuary @7.30pm.

Easter Sunday 4th April, 2021 @ 11.00 am Family Service. **All welcome.**



This year's Passion Play - **'With Arms Wide Open'** will be presented on Saturday 3rd April 2021 at 2pm. Carefully filmed following coronavirus safety guidelines, the roles of Jesus and Luke are played by professional actors, and the play, which has never been performed in Scotland before, will be free to view via the Church of Scotland website.

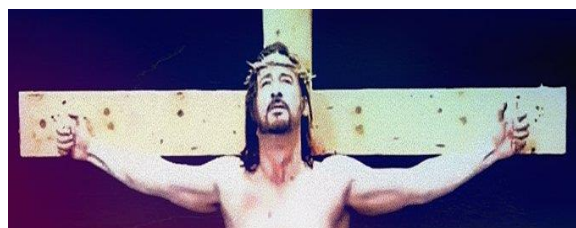
Director Liz Blackman said: "We needed a script for this year that was quite different to anything we had performed in the past - something short, which could easily be adapted to social distancing, with a small number of people in each scene.



Drama Kirk is dedicated to bringing the Gospel to life through drama. We

do this by putting on performances and hosting interactive bible studies throughout the year for everyone - those of any faith and none.

DramaKirk is based in Hamilton, however, many followers come from the surrounding areas.



Drama Kirk's 2021 Passion Play tells the Easter story from the perspective of Gospel writer Luke, putting Jesus' story together years after his death and hearing from the disciples what their encounters had meant for them. It also includes a series of flashbacks to that final, fatal week.

Filmed during lockdown, the 30 minute film will bring Easter to life!

With Arms Wide Open by Peggy Barr

Luke's Story of the Passion Saturday
3rd April@2pm

www.youtube.com/HamiltonOld

www.dramakirk.org

Holy Week

The seven words from the Cross

Traditionally in my youth, church services were held every weekday evening in Holy Week, each one based on five of the seven Words from the Cross, and the Holy Week hymns were sung. The following are the Seven Words from the Cross and a selection of favourite Holy Week hymns with their links, so that if you are online you can paste the link in blue into your browser and listen to the hymns each day.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"

Hymn: O Sacred Head Sore Wounded

[O Sacred Head, Sore Wounded - J. S. Bach - Hatfield College Chapel Choir - YouTube](#)

"Today you will be with me in Paradise"

Hymn: Take up your Cross

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZsaIHQB7aM>

"Woman behold, Thy Son, Behold, Thy Mother"

Hymn: And can it be

["And Can It Be That I Should Gain" - 200 Voice Mass Choir - Classic Hymns "Ancient of Days" - - YouTube](#)

"My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken me?"

Hymn: When I survey the wondrous cross

[When I survey the wondrous cross - Ely Cathedral Choir - Bing video](#)

"I thirst"

Hymn: In the Cross of Christ I glory

[In the Cross of Christ I Glory - YouTube](#)

"It is finished"

Hymn: There is a green hill

[There Is A Green Hill Far Away - King's College, Cambridge. - YouTube](#)

"Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit"

Hymn: Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiUWCwSfzSY>

And for Easter Sunday –

This Joyful Eastertide!

[this joyful eastertide - Google Search](#)



Dear Supporters,

Lodging House Mission is open Monday to Friday 8am - 2pm for donations to be dropped off. We have a very limited team in the building and so we advise you call ahead if you are planning to visit. Our Day centre remains closed to the public, but we continue to support our clients and those of our partner agencies with parcels of emergency food, toiletries and clothing. We are making plans and preparing our premises in the hope that we may be able to open later this year.

We would like to pass on our heartfelt thank you to everyone who has paid tribute to our manager Stephen, a man who dedicated his life to helping Glasgow's homeless and marginalised population.



Stephen Mitchell, manager of Lodging House Mission, passed away on February 7th aged 60, after a short battle with Covid. A two-minute silence was observed at noon on Ash Wednesday (the time of his funeral) to remember Stephen, who has been described as a 'dedicated and caring champion for the homeless and marginalised people of Glasgow'.

For over thirty years, Stephen worked tirelessly to help those most in need firstly through the Wayside Day Centre (later known as The Marie Trust) and then the Lodging House Mission, where he became manager in 2018.

When LHM had to close its day centre in March 2020 Stephen continued to work on with a small team of dedicated volunteers to continue to meet the Missions aim to - reduce the harm

caused by the experience of homelessness and poverty. He completely reorganised the ways of working and serving, to best assist the most vulnerable in the city. Stephen was generous with the provisions he had at his disposal, never losing sight that what was given by God was, for the benefit of others and not to promote ourselves.

Vincent O'Donnell, Wayside Day Centre manager commented "Stephen was always ready with the daft joke or witty aside; always looking to lighten the load of those who came his way. Always looking for the opportunity to make life a little better for other people. And many were the people whose lives were better for having met him." Colleague, Martin Johnston added "Stephen spoke openly of his faith and his family. 'God bless you!' would commonly be his words on parting." Although Stephen was only with us a short time at Lodging House Mission, we have been blessed to have worked with him.

We ask for your prayers for God's strength as our team continue to recover from Covid-19 related symptoms and for those who remain on furlough. Please pray for protection for the team they continue to provide essential help during this pandemic to those in most need. We pray for Stephen's family; wife Eileen and their four children James, Jonathan, Isaac and Rebecca as those who miss Stephen the most continue to adjust to his loss. As it prepares to close its doors for another year, we offer our thanksgiving to God for the provision and dedication of the team who have offered support through the Glasgow Overnight Welcome Centre. Please keep in mind all those living in temporary accommodation during this pandemic, concerned about their future.

May God bless you as you have blessed the least of these brothers and sisters of Christ.
(Matthew 25:40)

Deacon Claire Herbert – Chaplain LHM

Prince William has been appointed as the Lord High Commissioner to the 2021 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

His Royal Highness was appointed by Her Majesty The Queen as her personal representative at the annual event in Edinburgh which opens on Saturday 22 May and will be streamed online due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Only a small number of people will be in the Assembly Hall - those running the proceedings, those reporting to the Assembly and those livestreaming and recording the event.

Commissioners and other attendees will join the event remotely from across Scotland and around the world.

Prince William, who is known as the Earl of Strathearn in Scotland, was supposed to be Lord High Commissioner at the General Assembly in May last year but the event was cancelled and held online over two days in October.

Honoured

Commissioners to the General Assembly examine the work and laws of the Church and make decisions that affect its future.

The Lord High Commissioner is the Sovereign's personal representative to the annual General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Her Majesty The Queen came in person in 1969 and 2002.

Previous members of the Royal Family to be appointed to the role of Lord High Commissioner include HRH Prince Charles.

HRH The Duke of Cambridge



HRH The Earl of Wessex and most recently HRH The Princess Royal in 2017.

Rev Dr George Whyte, the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, said: "We are honoured that her Majesty has once again appointed Prince William as Lord High Commissioner.

"We look forward to welcoming His Royal Highness to the General Assembly."

The Moderator Designate for 2021-22 is Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness QC (Jim Wallace) who will chair proceedings and become the Church's ambassador at home and abroad.

He will succeed Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair.

PRAYER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE



Let Us Pray

Almighty God you are the author of life, we see so much of your goodness all around us. From the seas to the mountains, the plants and animals, and the way you bring life and peace to stormy seas and dry deserts. We pray that in this time of climate crisis and ecological emergency, you may help us to rediscover your love of creation.

God, in your mercy hear our prayer.

God, you use ordinary and unexpected people to carry out your ways, showing that it's your power that works through us. We thank you for contemporary prophets who are challenging us to act on climate change; for indigenous people and their invaluable knowledge of the land, for scientists dedicating their careers to warning us about changes to the planet, and for young people striking for their future. We pray that those in power will hear these prophetic voices. Help them to see beyond short term political priorities and give them wisdom and courage when they face difficult decisions.

God, in your mercy hear our prayer.

God of second chances, we recognise the damage we have done to the earth and the injustice we see in society every day, fuelled by worship of profit and possessions. We pray for the coming of a better world with justice, kindness and humility at its heart. We ask that you guide us to be co-creators of this new world. Give us confidence to follow the prophetic voices and to stand against injustice to people and to the planet.

God, in your mercy hear our prayer. Amen

Thank You



Looking good in the Sunshine.

Many thanks to our friends from the 3rd Steps Rainbow Company for kindly looking after our church planters and re-filling them for us before we reopened on Sunday the 28th March. I'm sure you will all agree that the Church grounds are looking stunning even if the weather doesn't always remember its Spring.



Newly filled planters



Cherry Blossom blooms in the back garden.



Spring Crocus border