

Tidings



March 2026

Easter

MINISTER

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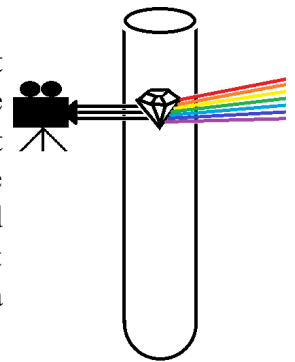
Dear friends,

“Lights, Camera, Action”

We live in a generation of multimedia and bright lights, phones that incorporate still and video cameras, and a proliferation of media that boasts action of every imaginable variety. This has infused itself into every aspect of social and religious life. To that end we see lighting, cameras, and dramatic effect finding their way into our worship as well as our screens. We also find it in the administration of the church, in Action Plans to bring the light of Christ to every soul in our community despite the attempts of some segments of society to drive spirituality underground “in camera” to a very private expression that ought in human terms to wither on the vine.

Historically, the might of Rome attempted to drive the fledgeling faith of Christianity from the face of the earth, which only drove it underground until the time was ripe for it to take the ascendancy as the state religion. Christians took to the Roman catacombs, as well as the highways and byways. It thrived under persecution, despite persecution, and perversely perhaps because of it. The light of Christ shone in the darkness (John 1:4-5).

While hardly persecution in this part of the world, more recent attempts of militant atheism to destroy faith and religious beliefs has suffered its own reverses. People need their beliefs and there are early signs that many have found renewed interest in religion and spirituality, despite mockery. It seems our youngest generations are finding the truth of this, in embracing the realisation that the philosophical and spiritual worldview is not at odds with the importance of the scientific method. It simply reveals different dimensions to our lived reality, like holding up a multi-faceted diamond to the light.



Having lived through an era that devalued our religious and spiritual beliefs and practices, to the point of attempting to embarrass us, I wonder if we might be able to face the future with a renewed sense of confidence. Not a selfish or proud confidence in ourselves, but a confidence in God, in Christ, and in our Christian beliefs. After all, Christ’s church has not gone away. His light continues to be found through her in every community and every denomination, and “the darkness has not put it out”.

We might similarly need to face and embrace this new era with its lights, cameras and action. Perhaps the light of Christ might be well served before the camera and with all the action we might muster, to the glory of God - and in the vivid hope of seeing God’s glory manifested in this life as well as the one to come. May that be a vision that stirs our lives to action.

Your Minister and friend,

Ross.



What's On

March

Sunday 1	10.45am	Morning Worship
Saturday 7	2.00pm	Link Event in 'The North' Hall
Sunday 8	10.45am	Sacrament of Holy Communion
		<i>Mothering Sunday</i>
Sunday 15	10.45am	Morning Worship
	3.00pm	Sacrament of Holy Communion (West Campus)
Sunday 22	10.45am	Morning Worship
Sunday 29		<i>Palm Sunday</i>
	10.45am	Morning Worship



Holy Week in Hamilton

Sunday 29	7.00pm	St John's Parish Church
Monday 30	7.00pm	St John's Parish Church
Tuesday 31	7.00pm	St John's Parish Church



April

Wednesday 1	7.00pm	St John's Parish Church
Thursday 2	7.00pm	St John's Parish Church
	9.00pm	St Mary's Episcopal Church
Friday 3	12.00pm	Vigil at St John's Parish Church
	7.00pm	St John's Parish Church
Saturday 4		Passion Play - Hamilton Town Centre

Easter Sunday

Sunday 5	6.30am	Dawn Service at Chatelherault
	7.00pm	Dawn Service at the Old Parish
		Afterwards, all meet for breakfast at the Old Parish
	10.45am	Easter Day Service with Communion
Sunday 12	10.45am	Morning Worship
Sunday 19	10.45am	Morning Worship
	3.00pm	Afternoon Service (West Campus)
Sunday 26	10.45am	Morning Worship



May

Sunday 3	10.45am	Morning Worship
Sunday 10	10.45am	Morning Worship
Tuesday 12	7.00pm	Meeting of the Kirk Session and wider Session
Sunday 17	10.45am	Morning Worship
	3.00pm	Afternoon Service (West Campus)
Sunday 24	10.45am	Morning Worship
Sunday 31	10.45am	Morning Worship

**** Please note some dates may be subject to change***



Can you believe this Easter marks our tenth annual Passion Play in Hamilton?! I'm not sure what I'd have said, had you asked me back in autumn 2016 as we were planning our first play, whether I thought we'd still be going in ten years. I certainly didn't imagine we would do all we have done with Drama Kirk in that time. We've continually tried to innovate and think of new ways to share scripture.

Thinking back over the Passion Plays alone, **2017's** 'Walk with Christ' by Kamala Jane Santos, was a serialised production which began by staging Palm Sunday throughout Hamilton's High Street. Actor Duncan Rennie led the cast as Jesus.

2018's 'Resurrection' used the same script, including additional scenes, for our first, full-scale, outdoor traditional play. Nicholas Elliott took on the role of Jesus, and was to become our lead actor for seven years.

In **2019**, we toured 'The People's Passion' an interactive piece by Riding Lights, to five different churches, using the tagline 'We are not spectators, we are part of the story'.

For **2020**, we joined with a number of Passion Plays UK-wide to perform the same play at the same time. This wonderful initiative from Wintershall allowed us to use their script, by Peter Hutley. Unfortunately, these plans were derailed by the pandemic. We were able to film rehearsals prior to lockdown, and over two thousand people watched our broadcast, from the safety of their homes.

With lockdown restrictions still in place, we filmed Peggy Barnell's 'With Arms Wide Open' in **2021**, a retelling of the passion from the perspective of gospel-writer Luke. Beautifully filmed by Gordon MacLeod, it uses a number of biblical scenes in flashback to tell Luke's story.

In **2022** we returned to outdoor performance in Hamilton town centre, and introduced our new script, written especially for Drama Kirk by Scottish writer Simon McCallum. This script allows us to choose which scenes to perform each year to ensure variety for our audience and performers.

2023 saw a departure from our focus on Holy Week, picking up the story in the aftermath of the crucifixion through to the ascension, in Louise Scott's 'Walk with the Word: Emmaus' performed in Chatelherault country park.

In **2024** we serialised our own script throughout Holy Week services and Drama Kirk's Alex MacLean took on the role of Jesus for the first time.

Most recently in **2025**, our concept of 'Passion Play in a Day' was born – with our cast turning up on the day to perform in the afternoon. This was also our first contemporary play, exploring how the events of Holy Week would translate to modern day.

Each year we have told slightly different aspects of the story – you'll never see the same play twice. **2026** will be no exception.

This year's play '**Everything in His Hands**' looks at Jesus sovereignty. We begin the story with His baptism, a striking scene to start the action but also an intimate family moment as Jesus reunites with his cousin, John the Baptist. We'll re-introduce Nicodemus (a character we haven't seen since 2018) and see the struggle between his heart's desire to follow Jesus and his head – filled with the wisdom of the ruling council.



Alex McLean will return as Jesus in his first full scale, outdoor traditional play. It will also be the first time we see him in the garden of Gethsemane. Was anyone eagle-eyed enough to spot it being missing the last two years??

Our performance takes place in Castle Street on Saturday 4th April at 3pm. Please get involved – either by helping behind-the-scenes or acting; or of course by helping us spread the word. A Passion Play is a real opportunity to share the Easter story. You can share it by being involved, but you can also use it as an opportunity to bring friends and family along to see Easter come to life.

A huge thanks to everyone who has been involved and who has supported Drama Kirk over the last ten years.

Liz Blackman



Boys' Brigade

We had a busy end of the year after the last Tidings was compiled, enjoying an Adventure Day at Fordell Firs, hosting the Hamilton & District Battalion for Founder's Day and remembering the fallen at the Remembrance Service.

All sections have been active in the wider Brigade, with the Company section taking part in the National Masterteam and getting through to the 2nd round in deepest darkest Scotstoun. The same team was victorious at our Battalion competition, retaining the trophy for another year! Sadly, we weren't as successful with the table tennis, but it was a good experience for the boys. We also took part in the Battalion Company and Seniors 10-pin bowling competition, winning the Team competition. Our leaders were also in action supporting a national King's Badge training course at Carronvale.

The Junior Section hosted the Battalion Tabletop Games competition, and the A-Team (cue music) came in joint first place with 1st Strathaven. The 1st/2nd also hosted the Juniors Quiz for the Battalion, and well done to the Strathaven team, who were victorious on the night.

On a week-to-week basis, the leaders of all sections are putting in a power of work to deliver a varied programme throughout the year. To name a few activities, we've had: parties, games, learning about stories from the bible, faith building, crafts, nights out under the stars, escape rooms, finding out about the Armistice, Taskmaster games, Scottish food tasting, building crazy golf courses, discovering St Andrew, helping dish out mince pies to unsuspecting members of the public, treasure hunts, Masterchef, Traitors and many, many more!

Our numbers are steadily growing, so please support the Facebook page as the more engagement we get, the more people in the local area see the good work the Company is doing.

My thanks as always goes to the parents for their continued support, the leaders for their creativity and dedication, and most of all the young people as we wouldn't have the organisation if it wasn't for them!

David Gibson

Captain

facebook.com/1st2ndhamiltonbb



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We are a couple of weeks back into Session after our Christmas break and it's been great to hear about everything the boys have been getting up to.

At the end of the last session we had our annual Christmas movie night and Christmas party where we welcomed a Very Special Guest, a certain gentleman in a red suit, who read stories to the boys and delivered presents.

This session started with a welcome back night where we all shared our



favourite things about the Christmas break, the boys also celebrated Burns' Night by making their very own, unique, tartan table mats and sampling some haggis. None of the boys had tried haggis before and I'm happy to say they all gave it a go, with a result of 3

For and 4 Against, upside to this was that it meant there was some left over which the officers "disposed of".



We have lots of exciting things planned for the upcoming months including, a keep fit night, Mother's Day, World Book Day, Easter and Pancake day to name a few, with the days getting brighter and (hopefully) drier we may even find ourselves outside.

If you know someone between P1-P3 who would like to join us on a Wednesday night, please don't hesitate to get in touch, I can be contacted through the 1st/2nd Hamilton Facebook page, the church office or just come down to (OLD PARISH) at 5:30pm on a Wednesday evening and you will be made most welcome.

Alan Young

Officer-in-charge (Wednesday)



Junior Section

What a successful first term the Wednesday Juniors had! So far we've had a look at youth mental health, ChristianAid, harvest, Noah's Ark and many more fun activities! A highlight of our last term would be our 'camping night' when we spent the night stargazing, and learning about camping safety, followed by a game of hide and seek where I may, or may not have hidden in my car (I did indeed win that round!).

Last term we also took part in the annual Junior Section board games competition, and I am thrilled to say that the Wednesday Juniors tied for first place, along with our friends from Strathaven. We are all looking forward to the competitions that we have coming up this term!

Now that we have returned following winter break we look forward to a different variety of nights, a few of which will be taken by visitors! Keep your eyes peeled in the churchyard in the coming weeks - you might just see a BB garden patch come to life!

Colin Davidson

Officer-in-charge (Wednesday)

Choir

Choir are looking forward to the forthcoming Link Service on Saturday 7th March when they will have the opportunity to share some of their favourite anthems used during the Church year. They will be joined by several young musicians from the congregation, who will perform pieces from their studies and this will give them valuable experience and confidence in performing for the exam period. I know they will have an appreciative audience to encourage them.



Just before Christmas, Secret Santa again passed to me several large boxes of chocolate as a donation and thank you to choir. I can now report that we have successfully consumed all. I am aware of the identity, but Choir are still working on their detective work!! On their behalf thank you.

The last meeting of the current session will be on Wednesday 29th April when all music should be returned for filing.

Helen C Simpson

Organist

Scottish Bible Society



A wonderful sum of £360.20 was raised for the work of the Bible Society - thank you so much for all your donations! Bibles for Bairns is still ongoing with prayers being said by volunteers who wrap them for each bairn. The World Day of Prayer involves the women of Nigeria this year- the Nigerian Sign Language Bible has been produced serving over two million deaf people living in Nigeria. Members of the Gaelic community are proofreading the Gaelic Bible ready for reprinting. Work continues - even in war torn countries!

Thanks to all for your support.

Muriel Eadie



Hamilton West Toddler Group

What a fabulous year we had at toddlers last year and we are really looking forward to the one coming up. We started last year with 15 children, lost 4 at summer to nursery but gained a new 4 when we came back in August. We are starting this year with 19 which is only one away from our capacity which is fabulous.

We have had lots of fun playing and doing crafts. In our last two terms of 2025 we had a Halloween party where the children all dressed up and dooked for apples toddler style. We did Christmas jumper day and raised £50 for Cash for Kids which was wonderful. Then to end our time in 2025 we had our Christmas Party where the Big Man in Red showed up with presents for all the children. It was such a fun day and to see the children's faces was so fun.

We can't wait to see what this year brings.



Finance and Gift Aid

At the time of writing, the 2025 accounts are being finalised and will be presented to the Trustees for approval when ready. The date of the Annual Stated Meeting when the accounts will be presented to the congregation is 26th April 2026.

The Gift Aid claim for 2025 has been submitted and paid by HMRC. The total gift aided income was **£89,626** (£73,043 for 2024) which gave us a refund of tax amounting to **£22,406** (£18,261 for 2024). The increase is due to additional income following the union with the West Parish Church on 1st January 2025.

The table below shows a breakdown of the different elements included in the return along with the previous years' figures for comparison. If you have any questions or would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Method of Giving	Total donated 2025	Total donated 2024
WFO envelopes	£5,966.20	£5,445.25
Annual cheques	£2,520.00	£960.00
Standing Orders	£79,940.00	£66,438.00
Other donations	£1,200.00	£200.00
Total	£89,626.20	£73,043.25

At present we have 163 declarations in place representing 217 members. If you pay tax and would like to contribute extra to the church at no cost to yourself, please speak to me. For every £1.00 you contribute HMRC will refund us 25p of the tax you have already paid. Also, if you stop paying tax, change your address or there are any changes in your circumstances it is important that you let me know.

Once again, many thanks to everyone for your commitment in supporting God's work in the church locally and nationally especially during this continuing difficult time.

Marilyn Henderson

Treasurer



Old Kirk Reflections

What use is faith? What comfort does it bring us?

These are questions I asked more than once, after the passing of my Dad towards the end of last year. I looked to my faith for comfort though didn't find any! I knew my Dad was out of suffering and pain and that he was at rest and back with God. My faith told me this; though it didn't give me any comfort.

God has meant there to be a time to grieve. He knows we'll have doubts and questions, but He's there for us! He patiently waits till we're ready, once again, to turn to Him, and our faith, for comfort.

As we approach this season of Easter, let us turn to our faith for that comfort we all crave. In the sure knowledge of Christ's glorious resurrection and that Almighty God has a plan for each of us, with a time for everything and that He will be there to welcome each of us, into His Kingdom, at the appointed time.

We certainly miss those we've lost; though let's believe in what our faith tells us - that, through Christ, we will meet again!

Douglas

Sunday Live!

It's been a little while since our last Sunday Live update. One was written for the previous time, but unfortunately Lynn forgot to email it in — oops! Sunday Live continues to be as busy as ever, with eight children attending regularly. We're very grateful to David for continuing to work with the older boys, while the younger children continue to enjoy learning through stories and crafts.

We hope everyone enjoyed our take on the nativity this year, Bethlehem Towers. Thank you to Liz Blackman for her help and support with this. Looking ahead, we have a busy and exciting term planned, with lots of activities and events — and hopefully even a possible trip to round off the year in June.

Here are some pictures from Remembrance Day 2025 where all our young people attended Remembrance parades across Lanarkshire representing their uniformed organisations, carrying colours and laying remembrance wreaths.

Lynn, Louise, Kirsty and Eilidh



Saffronhall Singers

Our Monday rehearsals resumed in January in Gilmour and Whitehill Parish Church in Burnbank where we are very grateful for the warm welcome and excellent facilities. We are now working on several of our older pieces, with a view to adding them to our repertoire.

At the beginning of December, we were deeply saddened to lose one of our sopranos, Barbara Catt. It was very sudden and unexpected, a real shock to all of us. We had to dig very deep on the evening of our Carols by Candlelight, but we were extremely touched to know that some of Barbara's dear friends turned up to offer their support. I am very grateful to all those choir members who were able to attend the funeral and sing for Barbara's friends and family. Our share of the proceeds from Carols by Candlelight (£430) were donated to Hamilton District Foodbank where Barbara was a faithful volunteer.

Once again, Carols by Candlelight was well received. It was lovely to see many familiar faces from our congregation and other churches in the town as well as our own friends and family. This year, we were well supported by the events' group under Yvonne Adamson and her team of helpers, who organised the refreshments in the North Hall after the concert and as ever, we were grateful to Kirsty and Eilidh McCrudden for welcoming everyone at the door and to Paul McCrudden for his technical support at the sound desk. We were also very appreciative of support from our minister, Ross, who was working on the sound system one afternoon when we went to set up for the evening rehearsal. He was able to give us some very helpful tips which made setting up so much easier. We would be very happy to host Carols by Candlelight next December if asked to do so.

A few days later, our accompanist, Lilian Barrie, lost her beloved husband of 61 years, after many months of illness. Ken was a regular supporter of our group until recently and again many of the choir were able to support Lilian at his funeral.

We were delighted to welcome a new member, Helena Hill, to our soprano section when we resumed in January. Helena, a friend and neighbour of Karen and Barbara, enjoyed our Carols by Candlelight so much, she decided to join us! New members are always very welcome.

We are now looking forward to our closing dinner at Hamilton Golf Club on 30th March before putting our music away for the summer months.

Campbell Barr



Birthday Card/Thinking Of You Card Scheme

Thank you very much to all those who contributed cards and stamps. I now have quite a few members on my list for birthday cards and also thinking of you cards. I would be grateful if everyone would continue to contribute when they can to keep the scheme reasonably self sufficient. I could also do with cards for male members. Thank you for your help. I know the cards are appreciated by those who receive them.

Maureen Taylor

Thank you!

West Country Dancers

The West Country Dancers are now well into their spring session. Our programme is varied and we started off the New Year with some old favourites, e.g. 'Lamb 'Skinnet', 'Flowers of Edinburgh', 'Stirling Castle' and 'Linton Ploughman' to name but a few. We walk through the dances first just to remind us of the steps and as long as we remember our right from our left or whether we are a lady or a gent a fun night is had by all. We meet every second Tuesday in the large hall in The West Campus, Peacock Cross at 7.30pm.

Jennifer Gibson



Worship Team

Advent was a really busy time for everyone connected with Worship, especially the Minister, with so many services, the extensive decoration of the church and the fantastic Carols by Candlelight. Over the weeks we've sung a wide variety of songs, carols and hymns, including new ones from God Welcomes All. Christmas is a time when many of us reflect back on times past singing round a piano or Christmas tree with friends and family, so appreciate when our precious favourites are sung. It's great to be so well led by our Director of Music and Choir. The Banner Group has continued to change the beautiful pulpit falls and banners, which are full of spiritual meaning and enhance our worship.

Services in the Old Parish Church and West Campus continue to involve a range of different styles and people. The Minister has provided us with much to reflect on in recent weeks and the Bible Study meets on a Thursday morning if you'd like to explore more. Drama Kirk and Sunday Live have provided us with new ways of thinking about the gospel. Sybil Fawltly as the Innkeeper was definitely a first, and those camels! Dramatic performances make us pause for thought and see the familiar stories differently. Over the period many of you have volunteered to lead bible readings or contribute your own world perspective through writing or reading prayers for others. Many thanks to the Minister, Director of Music, Choir, Local Worship Leaders, the Banner Group, Liz Blackman and Drama Kirk, and Sunday Live.

Lent is nearly with us and there is much to look forward to as we follow the Easter story. Drama Kirk are celebrating their 10th Anniversary with a new production of the Passion Play. Details about Holy Week will be circulated nearer the time.

The Worship Team is keen to encourage you to take part, so if you would like to help, please get in touch.

Rhona Arthur and Bill Craig

Joint Conveners



Flower Rota

Date	Main	Rose Bowl	Delivery
01/03/26	Mrs M Eadie		Mrs M Eadie
08/03/26	Mrs S Nicholson		Mr C Davidson
15/03/26	Mrs B Stoddart		Mrs M Latimer
22/03/26	Mrs E Reid	Mrs E Hunter	Mrs S Gosling
29/03/26	Mr F Gardiner		Mr K Brown
05/04/26	Mrs E Irvine	Mrs E Irvine	Mrs E Irvine
12/04/26	Mrs N Craig	Mrs H McGreevy	Mrs H Troop
19/04/26	Mrs D Foster		Mrs D Foster
26/04/26	Miss G Davidson	Mrs A Davidson	Miss G Davidson
03/05/26	Mr D Hogg		Mr D Hogg
10/05/26	Mrs M Hindle		Mrs M Hindle
17/05/26	Mrs A Whitehill	Mrs J Mathie	Mrs H Brown
24/05/26	Mrs K Hunter		Mrs K Hunter
31/05/26	Mr D Hogg		Mr D Hogg
07/06/26	Mrs E Irvine	Mrs E Irvine	Mrs E Irvine
14/06/26	Mrs M Wilson	Mrs M Wilson	Mrs H McGreevy

Thank you to everyone who gifts flowers, contributes to the flower fund and helps with delivery. This is very much appreciated. Dates throughout the year are still available and contributions to the flower fund always welcomed. If any dates are unsuitable and you are unable to organise a swap please contact Colin Davidson either via the office or on 07305 055924.

Andrea



On behalf of the Gibson family I would like to say how deeply grateful we were for the cards, flowers and messages received from the Congregation following the death of my mum, Jenny Wilson. Also for the support from the Fellowship Team and Andrea on the day of the funeral. Thank you to Ross for the meaningful tribute and for his guidance throughout.

Jennifer Gibson

I would like to thank those members of the congregation who asked after Archie Sunday by Sunday during his long stay in hospital. All the cards and flowers received on his passing were warmly appreciated and a great comfort.

Muriel Gilroy

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the many kind and thoughtful expressions of sympathy following my mum's recent passing. Thanks also to Ross for conducting such a comforting and uplifting service.

Yvonne Adamson



Entered into Eternal Life.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life"

God of grace and peace, in your Son Jesus Christ

You have given us new birth into a living hope.

Strengthen us now to live in the power of the resurrection

and keep us united with our loved one

from whom in death we are not divided;

for you live and reign forever and ever. Amen

10 November 2025

Laura Lawrence

21 November 2025

Nancy Naismith

28 November 2025

Fiona McKinnon

30 November 2025

Janet (Jenny) Wilson

4 December 2025

Alex Stoddart

10 December 2025

Archie Gilroy

20 December 2025

Isabel French

31 December 2025

James Cunningham

7 January 2026

Aileen Dempsey

20 January 2026

Rose Stewart

29 January 2026

George Hunter





PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
You dwell in unapproachable light,
and yet you bid us to draw near to you.
In the light of your grace
we see one another in all our incredible diversity
of thought and belief and action,
and with the measure of faith and talents
that you have granted each one.
Christ declared that you have continued working
and so must he,
but also that we would do works
far greater even than those that he might perform.
Give us a boldness to ask for your support
in the actions and activities that you would have us do,
that you might be glorified in all things,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

