Tidings



Christmas

December 2026

MINISTER

Rev Ross Blackman BSc MBA BD(Hons)
Parish Halls, Strathmore Road, Hamilton ML3 6AQ Tel: 01698 640185

SESSION CLERK

Mrs Andrea Davidson

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST

Mrs Helen C Simpson Bed (Music) Hons
138 Kylepark Drive, Uddingston, G71 7DD Tel: 07768 655162

CONVENER OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mrs Amanda Strachan

TREASURER

Mrs Marilyn Henderson
67 Sycamore Drive, Hamilton, ML3 7HF Tel: 01698 427892
Email: finance@hamiltonold.co.uk

PROPERTY CONVENER

Miss Gillian Davidson

PROJECT MANAGER
Mr Alastair Simpson

VICE CONVENERS
HALLS - Miss Gillian Davidson
CHURCH - Mr George Foster
MANSE - Mr Alistair Buttery
WEST CAMPUS - David Gibson

SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

Mrs Penny Simpson
Dr Sally van der Meer

CHURCH SECRETARY

Mrs Andrea Davidson
Parish Halls, Strathmore Road, Hamilton, ML3 6AQ Tel: 01698 281905
Tuesday - Friday 9am - 1pm

CHURCH OFFICER

Mr Colin Davidson

ROLL KEEPER

Mr Colin Gibson

Scottish Charity SC010855
office@hamiltonold.co.uk
www.hamiltonoldparishchurch.org

Dear Friends,

"Time and chance"

I am incredibly fond of the 3,000 year old text we find in scripture that is known as Ecclesiastes. Within its chapters, we find the author, possibly wise King Solomon, extolling the search for God and the search for wisdom. He takes many a wrong step, but praises God.

He examines life and death and all the significant things with which we fill our time. He tries them all. So often I find myself invited to read chapter 3 at funerals, and it carries no less meaning after the 100th reading than it ever did at the first. It unashamedly considers the challenges and vagaries of life, and doesn't shy away from admitting ignorance. However, it does identify that life is fleeting and change is inevitable. Sometimes that change is sudden and unexpected and, consequently, we can find our breath taken away. As it says elsewhere:

"*Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all.*" (Eccl.9:11)

Especially at times of significant change, most especially during a bereavement, it is not unusual to find us considering or voicing sentiments that suggest that God takes us or our loved ones. From our side of things, it can appear unforeseen and unforeseeable. Does God cut our lives short, like the Greek Fates, or does he simply know what's going to happen?

It seems obvious that God has a different perspective to us, given that we're informed that he's eternal, but what does that mean? What is eternity? It would seem that time is virtually meaningless if you have always been and always shall be. Similarly if you know the end from the beginning, perhaps eternity is forwards, backwards, timeless, and/or some other direction.

While Isaiah reports, "*I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose'*" (Isa.46:9-10) is that because he directs all matters, including those to evil ends, or simply that he sees all of time laid out before him? I suspect the latter.

We have a magnificent, mysterious God, but also someone who is for us in all that we experience. Perhaps we can take heart that while we succumb to chance, nothing surprises him. He stands with us in every experience, in this life and the one to come. One thing that I am certain of is that many of our questions simply will not be answered in this life. That likely sits uneasily. Yet, there is some consolation in believing that our questions ought to be answered in the time to come, where chance is no more. I, for one, find some comfort in that belief and hope that you might too.

Your Minister and friend,

Ross.



What's On



November		
Sunday 22	10.45am	Sacrament of Holy Communion
Sunday 29	10.45am	Morning Worship – First Sunday in Advent
December		
Friday 4	7.30pm	Carols by Candlelight
Sunday 6	10.45am	Morning Worship – Second Sunday in Advent
		Lessons & Carols
Thursday 10	7.00pm	Hamilton College Lessons & Carols
Sunday 13	10.45am	Morning Worship – Third Sunday in Advent
Sunday 20	10.45am	Morning Worship – Fourth Sunday in Advent
Sunday 20	3.00pm	Afternoon Service at 'The West'
Thursday 24	3.00pm	Christmas Eve Family Service
Thursday 24	11.15pm	Watchnight Service
Friday 25	10.30am	Christmas Day Family Service
Sunday 27	10.45am	Morning Worship
January		
Sunday 3	10.45am	Morning Worship
Saturday 9	10.00am	Elders' Conference
Sunday 10	10.45am	Morning Worship
Sunday 17	10.45am	Morning Worship
Sunday 17	3.00pm	Afternoon Service at 'The West'
Sunday 24	10.45am	Morning Worship
Sunday 31	10.45am	Morning Worship
February		
Sunday 7	10.45am	Morning Worship
Sunday 14	10.45am	Morning Worship
Sunday 21	10.45am	Morning Worship
Sunday 21	3.00pm	Afternoon Service at 'The West'
Sunday 28	10.45am	Morning Worship







Please note some dates may be subject to change

Choir

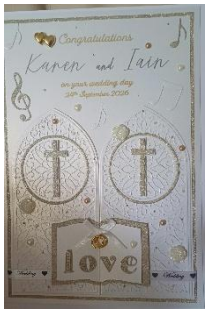
The new session of choir is now underway and started with our dinner get together in the Moorings Motherwell at the end of August. We enjoyed a very pleasant evening and we were able to have two presentations at the end of the evening.



Zoey Gibson was the recipient of a furry friend to take with her as she starts her course in Edinburgh. Now known as "Soprano", it will hopefully remind her of the friendship and best wishes she takes with her from the Choir.



We were also able to celebrate the marriage of Karen Rollins and Iain Morris, which took place on 24th September in The Old Parish. They take with them Congratulations from their friends in Choir, wishing them every blessing in the years ahead.



On a very sad note we lost one member from the Bass section with the sudden death of David Young in October. David very willingly joined the ranks in choir at the start of the Union with the former North Church and has remained a faithful committed member throughout these years, always available for any extra services where Choir were asked to be involved. He stalwartly and positively dealt with the health difficulties he had to cope with over many many months, and the numerous hospital visits he had to make for monitoring. We were all deeply shocked at his very sudden passing. David took on many little responsibilities in choir from arriving early each Wednesday evening to helping me set up the hall and clavinova for our rehearsal. It was during that time that he shared his knowledge and love of classic cars, and I learned much about the auto trade and an education on car parts!! He was a mine of information on Vintage cars, and enjoyed many weekends at gatherings of car clubs. I give thanks for knowing and sharing part of life's journey with this unassuming gentleman.

In August 2025, Sowne of Organe visited the West Church for an organ recital. This group present detailed surveys of historic organs in Scotland and advocate for their conservation. Each survey includes technical and historical overviews, extensive photographs and recordings of repertoire identifying significant examples of instruments comprehensively preserved in their original state. The Hill organ is an example of this and the full report can be viewed at www.sowneoforgane.com where you will find the reports and technical summary details of its specification. The historical background makes interesting reading with an original cost of £500 (in 1902) not including the oak casework. Donated by the sisters of a local businessman Alexander Kirkpatrick - Henrietta was married to Rev. Thomas MB Paterson, Minister at the West for 46 years.



The Hill Organ has both National and local significance and is a valuable historic asset for Scotland, as much as for Hamilton. With renovation work underway at the West building, consideration has been given to the maintenance of this instrument dating back 124 years. The component parts are original having provided continuous reliable service over this time other than routine maintenance. The current work being undertaken will re leather the internal pedal board actions.

Our final mid week meeting will be on Wednesday 16th December when all anthem material to date should be returned for filing. The new session will start on Wednesday 13th Jan at 7.00pm.

Helen C Simpson

DRAMA KIRK

Bringing the Gospel to Life

Never have we had such a busy autumn in Drama Kirk. It's wonderful, lots of creative celebration of scripture and missional opportunities, but it is busy… so we need support more than ever. Let me tell you what's in store.

Gospel in a Day

'Gospel in a Day' will celebrate the gospel – and our tenth birthday - in Drama Kirk-style, staging the scriptures. Focusing on the gospel of Luke, we will start at the beginning and work through scene by scene, until we complete the gospel and continue to Pentecost, the birth of the church.

This will take in the entirety of Jesus' life and ministry, therefore covering areas of scripture we haven't considered before through drama. Preparing for this has been eye opening. I knew there was a gap between the nativity scenes we present at Christmas and the passion narrative, but I don't think I'd realised how huge it was. When I sat down and broke Luke into scenes, I initially arrived at a grand total of 94 scenes, so this will not be a small undertaking.

As well as finding (or writing) a script for each scene, we've ensured it won't get boring! Each scene will be presented in a different style, including drama, comedy and music. We'll draw on a variety of scripts we've used over the last decade, including the five different passion plays we've presented, dramatised walks, Bob Hartman's Rhyming Bible and an array of sketches. It promises to be a lovely trip down memory lane. We'll also introduce new material, with many scenes specially written for the occasion. Never thought you'd see DCI Taggart in the Gospels? Think again!

Please do support us with this. It will be a long day, and we will need your encouragement. It takes place on Saturday 14th November. We will start at 10am (funnily enough, with Christmas) and I think we'll finish around teatime. You are welcome to come and go as you please, with refreshments available in the church halls throughout the day.

I always say to join us, and see the Gospel come to life. Well, this time you'll see even more of the Gospel, including bits you've never seen before, in ways you'll never see again!

Advent

After our Passion Play in the Regent Centre, we had made good connections with the centre manager. I was therefore delighted to get a call asking us to take over the BHS doorway for the whole of advent and bring a little bit of the Christmas story to life. What a wonderful opportunity to ensure the town centre narrative won't just be about Santa.

We'll take the space and build a nativity scene – stable, manger etc. We are also planning to buy mannequins and dress them in nativity costumes. Students from Hamilton Grammar art department are going to paint the faces for us, so a lovely opportunity to work with the school. I can't wait to see what the kids come up with!

We'll be doing this work in partnership with St Johns and look forward to working together. If you would like to help build the set on the day please let us know – or if you'd like to help dress the mannequins, I'm sure Marilyn would be delighted to hear from you.

Our Town, Our Christmas

So, with the offer of a space in the town centre for Advent, my mind naturally turned to how we might use the space for performance... I got in touch with BID who normally organise the town centre Christmas entertainment and was very surprised at the result. Not only were they happy for us to perform, they want us to run the town centre entertainment for the whole day on Saturday 19th December! So we'll be taking to the stage from 11 till 4 that day with a great programme of church and community entertainment, including music from a number of schools, messy church and a joint church choir.

The Drama Kirk involvement includes a performance of Mike Clayton's 'Christmas on Canvas', all of Bob Hartman's Christmas Rhyming Bibles and a staging of Angela Yardy's 'Simplest Nativity Play Ever' where we will give church Sunday Schools and any children who would like to join, an opportunity to meet for an hour of rehearsal before performing.

The Drama Kirk involvement will be:-

11am	Rhyming Bible: A Woman Called Mary
11:45am	Rhyming Bible: Joseph, Don't Worry
1pm	Simplest Nativity Ever
2pm	Christmas on Canvas
2:45pm	Rhyming Bible: It begins in Bethlehem
3:30pm	Rhyming Bible: Clip clop beat

School Nativity

As well as performing in the town centre, we have a crew taking 'Christmas on Canvas' into Woodside Primary School. We will have two performances on Tuesday 15th of December. The response in previous years has been absolutely wonderful, and we are delighted to have this opportunity again.



'Christmas on Canvas' was our first nativity as Drama Kirk in 2017. We performed in the town centre reindeer parade, local nursing homes and the World AIDS Day service at St Johns. It is one of my favourite nativities, and I am really pleased to get back to it.

So, like I say, overwhelmingly busy. I am very grateful to everyone involved for their time and talent. If you're speaking to one of the Drama Kirk regulars, please do give them some encouragement – and keep us all in your prayers that we would have the energy for everything God has placed in our path.





Old Kirk Reflections

From my ramblings in the past, I'm fairly sure many of will be aware of how I enjoy a book - especially a good autobiography. I revel in learning about peoples' pasts and what type of lives they led.

Would it surprise you that our very own church is in the middle of a book - albeit a book with stone pages. When the Old Kirk was built and many local worthies interred in the churchyard, it was very common to have, other than their name, other details about their lives such as where they were from and what they did for a living. A fascinating glimpse into history.

It's often so easy to overlook asking older generations about their backstory and these memories die with them. The bible however, places high value on parents and elders recounting historical deeds and personal acts of God to children.

Let's all commit, and draw out from those who are still with us, following the writings in Psalm 78:3-4; "things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders he has done."

Douglas

Scottish Bible Society

Following the hottest summer on record in many places making the weather unpredictable with wild fires, glacial flooding, etc. many countries are facing water and food shortages. Please keep them in your prayers and ask that God would provide them with what they need. Thank God for Scotland's temperate climate which can be a blessing and safe haven to others and that governments will make good decisions for the needy which are pleasing to God.

At this harvest time when seeds are sown the Bible Society are sowing seeds of God's Word through the Bible all over the world! Please keep them in your prayers!

Muriel Eadie

SCOTTISH BIBLE SOCIETY

Fellowship

Over the weekend of 5th and 6th of September HOPC once again took part in the Doors Open Day Festival. We were delighted to welcome over 65 visitors on Saturday and a further 17 on Sunday, all enjoying tours of the Church, grounds and a selection of the Banner Group's creations. Many stayed on to enjoy refreshments in the North Hall afterwards. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped with set up, baking and guided tours.

The Monday Fellowship Group started up again on the 14th of September with an interesting talk from Rev Maggie McArthur entitled "A tale of three Parishes". We meet every second Monday at 13.30pm with a variety of speakers and activities. This session will conclude on the 14th of December with a Festive Afternoon Tea.

Our Congregational Christmas lunch is planned for Sunday 13th of December. A three course lunch will be served in the North Hall following the service. The cost this year is £20, £10 for children 12 years and under. Members of the Fellowship/Special Events committee will be on hand to take names, payment and menu selection following the services on Sunday 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd of November.

We hope you will continue to support these events.

Yvonne Adamson/Iain McLean



Worship Team

Children and young people have been very much at the heart of worship since the last copy of Tidings. We have welcomed the Holiday Club, held a Back to School service and celebrated Harvest with a glorious display of food. You may also have noticed our young Beadles and Organist too! It's good to see their enthusiastic participation in Drama Kirk and all-age addresses.

Regular Sunday morning worship, sacraments and monthly Sunday afternoon services are well-supported and the choir has continued to provide strong leadership for our praise. This is helping as we include new hymns from God Welcomes All. Members of the Congregation have come forward to write their own Prayers of Intercession or read those written by others and we are grateful to them and the Bible Readers who take part in services. We have been joined by Amy Ward, who is our new candidate in training for Ministry.The Worship Team would also like to express its thanks to the Minister, Director of Music, Local Worship Leaders and Choir.

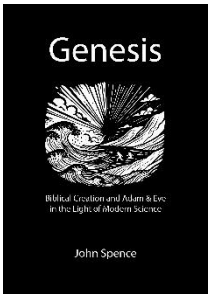
Our services have benefited greatly from Drama Kirk's special contribution and appreciate the leadership and hours of practice which it takes for even short pieces. It's a busy autumn period for them with a 10th Anniversary event and the Advent period fast approaching. Our sincere thanks to Liz Blackman and all the members of the Drama Kirk team, on the stage or behind the scenes.

Finally, you may have noticed some of the banners changing as we move through the church and calendar year. The Harvest Banner is very colourful and some of you may have seen the wonderful Wedding Banner out at the end of September. There are more up in the North Hall if you take a moment to look up! Thanks to the team who create and care for these.

If you feel you'd like to take part or help with any of the many ways to be more involved in Worship, please get in touch.

Rhona Arthur and Bill Craig

New Book



This is some information regarding a small book due to be published, hopefully in November. The title is **Genesis: Biblical Creation and Adam & Eve in the light of modern science.** It is intended for folks with no theological training but for anyone who is interested in matters of Faith and Science. It has only two Chapters. The first summarises various approaches as to how to read the creation narratives in early Genesis. The second summarises how different authors have tackled questions related to Adam (and Eve); were they the first humans, were they real people and is everyone descended from them? Some comments are provided to assist readers to come to their own conclusions.

If you are interested or if you know anyone, especially a young person, who may have issues with faith and science then you can have a copy free by contacting the Minister. First come first served while stocks last.

John Spence

Sunday Live!

Thank you to all who donated to Harvest Appeal and to Helen Troop for collecting on our behalf.

Lynn & Louise

Wednesday Anchors



The Wednesday Anchors have had a great start to our session, we welcomed 3 new boys this year and they are all fitting in great with our older boys.

So far we've covered a wide range of topics from the 10 Commandments and God's Creation to discussing our favourite Super Heroes as well as looking at some of the worlds Real Life Super Heroes.



The boys have been enjoying lots of games, many of which are being picked by the boys' themselves, there was also a very fun (and messy) night where the Anchors made Oobleck with the help of Stuart Davidson who is joining us as a helper this year, as he works towards his King's Badge within the Company.



As we move towards the end of the year the Anchors will be looking at Bonfire Safety as well as preparing for our Remembrance Service, but we also have lots of exciting things planned such as our Halloween and Christmas parties as well as our ever popular Christmas movie night.

Wednesday Anchors is open to boys P1-P3 and if you know someone who would like to join us, please don't hesitate to get in contact with myself or the church office.

Alan Young
Wednesday Anchors, Officer-in-Charge



Thank You

We are getting in touch with Hamilton Old Parish Church family with a big thank you for all the love and joy showered us on the occasion of our recent wedding!

We have been overwhelmed by all the messages and the beautiful cards and gifts – including the generous donations given to our nominated charities: Search for Truth Charitable Trust and The Beatson Cancer Charity. Our enormous thanks to you all!

We also want to note our massive thanks to Minister Ross, Director of Music Helen, Session Clerk, Andrea for their significant input in the lead up to and on the day; noting, too, the great help from Penny and Sally at rehearsal and on the door; and Colin's helping hands with flowers re-arranging!

Organising a wedding with just 4 weeks to plan it can't be done alone!

There has been so much to appreciate.

We could not end this message without commenting on such an amazing turnout on the day by so many of you wanting to stand alongside us with your love and support – starting with the number waiting outside the door for the arrival of the Bride and to catch a first glimpse and capture some (amazing!) photographs and videos – for which, thank you for sharing.

It was simply wonderful to experience the joy, especially poignant when there has been so much tough news… not least in the days since the wedding.

Our hearts go out to all the families and loved ones affected by the sudden losses, with ongoing prayerful remembrance.

With our love,

Karen & Iain (Morris)

Flower Rota

Date	Main	Rose Bowl	Delivery
06/12/26	Mrs M Henderson	Mrs N Barr	Mrs M Henderson
13/12/26	Mrs E Reid		Mrs H McGreevy
20/12/26	Mrs H Troop		Mrs H Troop
27/12/26	Mrs M MacLean		Mrs M MacLean
03/01/27	Flower Fund		Mr C Davidson
10/01/27	Mr A Blue	Mrs F Young	Mrs S Craig
17/01/27	Mrs E Irvine	Mrs E Irvine	Mrs E Irvine
24/01/27	Mrs L McIntosh	Mrs M Henderson	Mrs M Henderson
31/01/27	Mrs A Hunter		Mr E Baird
07/02/27	Flower Fund		Mrs H Brown
14/02/27	Mrs E Goodwin	Mrs J Mathie	Mrs L Clayton
21/02/27	Mrs A Davidson	Miss G Davidson	Mrs A Davidson
28/02/27	Mrs M Eadie	Mrs M McCartney	Mrs S Samson
07/03/27	Mrs B Stoddart	Mrs M Wilson	Mrs S Gosling
14/03/27	Mrs S Nicholson	Mrs E Bannatyne	Mr C Davidson

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 available and contributions to the flower fund are always welcomed, along with any assistance to deliver the flowers. 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





Thank You

The Young family would like to offer their heartfelt thanks to everyone for the cards, prayers, and thoughtful messages received following the sudden passing of David.

Thank you to all who attended the service; the generous donations collected were split equally between the British Heart Foundation and Diabetes UK.



PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Our days are short

so, help us to count them

and make them worthy of the grace you pour into them.

We have all manner of talents,

developed under your mighty hand,

so, give us the strength and inspiration

to use them well

for the furtherance of your kingdom.

While we yet have breath,

may we be given wings like eagles

and an indefatigable spirit.

All our days,

may we praise you, Lord!

Amen.















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

1 September 2026
Margaret Shearer

3 September 2026
Mrs Margaret Thomson

23 September 2026
Mr James Stevenson-Hamilton

26 September 2026
Mrs Ina Jardine

30 September 2026
Mrs Avril Cunningham

1 October 2026
Mr David Young

11 October 2026
Mrs Irene Tullis

Weddings

"That they be the one"

24 September 2026
Karen Rollins to Iain Morris

Baptisms

"Let the children come to me"

1 November 2026
Shelley Jane Kerr
Emily Elizabeth Kerr
Lucas James Watt

Wishing you a Merry Christmas



and a Happy New Year