



## Contacts

<b>Minister</b>	Rev Jenny Adams	830276
<b>Session Clerk</b>	Shona Rowand	850693
<b>Clerk to the Board</b>	Mrs Linda Paiton	541656
<b>Roll Keeper</b>	Mrs Christine Smith	812106
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mrs Lesley McPherson	830172

<b>Sub Treasurers:</b>		
<b>Duffus</b>	Mrs Sheila Duncan	830238
<b>Spynie</b>	Ms Aileen Buchanan	860329
<b>Hopeman</b>	Mrs Margaret Munro	830422

<b>Property Convenors:</b>		
<b>Duffus</b>	Mr Ron Duncan	830238
<b>Spynie</b>	Mr Michael Rowand	850693
<b>Hopeman</b>	Mr John Chesney	830852
<b>Manse</b>	Mr John Chesney	830852

<b>Organists:</b>		
<b>Duffus</b>	Mr Chris Thompson	830195
<b>Spynie</b>	Mr Kenneth Bews	850663
<b>Hopeman</b>	Miss Eilidh MacLean	

<b>Contact Persons</b>		
<b>Men's Group</b>	Mr Ron Duncan	830238
<b>Safeguarding</b>	Mrs Christine Smith	812106
<b>Social Committee</b>	Mrs Heather Laing	830141
<b>Sunday School</b>	Mr David Adams	830276
<b>Guild</b>	Mrs Kathleen Young	830491
<b>Webmaster</b>	Mr John Clark	830251
<b>Magazine</b>	Mrs Georgina Black	830473
<b>Christian Aid</b>	Mrs Heather Mitchell	830713

<b>Emails</b>	
<b>Minister</b>	Jadams@churchofscotland.org.uk
<b>Session Clerk</b>	srowanddsh@gmail.com
<b>Clerk to the Board</b>	lpaiton70@gmail.com.
<b>Magazine Editor</b>	blackg@gordonstoun.org.uk
<b>Church website:</b>	
<b>www.duffusparish.co.uk</b>	



## Dear Friends,

We have two areas of focus in the congregation at the moment: Resource for Mission, and the Year of Young People.

Resource for Mission is our building improvement project, with its fundraising. Work has already been done in Spynie & Hopeman to improve accessibility and a wall. Architects' drawings are the first step to providing a better toilet and kitchen in Duffus. You'll read more elsewhere about the work and the fundraising.

We are using the Year of Young People as a springboard to consider the missing generations in the Church. We're trying to listen, recognising that the Church no longer seems to meet the spiritual needs of many people. You can read about what we've heard later in the magazine.

I believe both projects can help this congregation grow and change – as long as they are about reaching out beyond the walls of our buildings and the roll of our congregation. These are not just about keeping things going as they used to be, plugging the gaps, or making us feel better. These must be done for others – for those who are excluded by inaccessible spaces or obscure language, for those whose physical, mental or spiritual needs aren't met by our current places, patterns and activities. Our buildings are a resource for mission if they help people gather - all people, of all ages and stages - and having been gathered and transformed by God's love, to be sent back out to live and love in ordinary and extraordinary ways.

At Easter we hear how God's love brings life from death, and hope from despair. So change is possible for God's Church, the body of Christ – we can find new life. Following Jesus, may we listen, learn and reach out in love, and so be made new.

With love & prayers,  
Rev Jenny



## News from the Session Clerk

Dear Friends

It seems like no time at all since I sat to write my last letter to you. Here we are in March already and haven't we been fortunate with the weather? So many people around the country have endured a very harsh start to the year.

Here at Duffus, Spynie & Hopeman we are working to make our church buildings, 'Fit for Purpose' & a 'Resource for Mission' and you will find a letter enclosed with this magazine explaining what is happening & what you might be able to do to help. Please take time to read this letter, it is vitally important that you at least know what is going on and know what you might be able to do to help.

Last month in Spynie Hall we held our first Cafe Church where everyone who attended said they enjoyed the experience. It was great to be joined together round tables enjoying tea & coffee. It was a lovely way to worship together. I'm really looking forward to repeating the experience in Duffus on the 1st of July.

This year is the year of young people & although my body has other ideas, my mind & I still consider myself a young person. I don't feel any older than I did when I left school, hopefully I'm a bit wiser though. I'm sure that most folk feel much the same. It would be lovely to see more young people in Kirk & if anyone has any thoughts or ideas they think might help please share them with others.

Your Session are, as always, working hard on your behalf and if you have any concerns or worries, your elder is only a phone call away and will happily do their best to help you. It's what we are there for. Things never seem so bad when you've talked them over with a friend.

Things are often quite busy in the Rowand House and this forthcoming week is no exception. There seems to be an endless list of things to do & quite a few of them involve getting the boys into town & even more tricky, into shops. A visit to the barbers has to slot in there too. Our teenage boys don't 'do' shopping. Well unless it involves food!

**Shona Rowand, Session Clerk**



## Resource for Mission

As you are aware the congregational board and kirk session held many discussions during 2017 with the regards to our three church buildings and how best to upgrade them and make them fit and more welcoming for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This was to be completed in the two phases.



### Phase 1

#### Duffus

To create an accessible disabled toilet in line with current building regulations with adequate access from the hall for wheelchairs and easy egress via the rear door onto a ramp and hard path to the east side of the church in an emergency. A new kitchen to be fitted. Improve the light in the hall by the removal of the notice boards on the leaded glass partitions between the hall and the sanctuary.

#### Spynie

Remove the raised platform and one pew facing the east door, widen the kitchen door to allow greater wheelchair access to the disabled toilet. In line with this create a hard path from the vestry door to the hard standing in front of the church and there to the car park. Investigate the severe decay in the plaster work west wall which at present renders the gallery unusable.

#### Hopeman

Replace the flooring in Hopeman Church hall. Improve visibility and light in the church entrance by placing glass panels in the doors. Explore the options for a complete replacement of the heating system in the sanctuary.

With these objectives in mind a steering group was formed consisting of myself, Marilyn Chesney Janice Craib, Ron Duncan, Michael Rowand and David Munro. The group met on the tenth of January to discuss the feasibility of phase 1 and to seek estimates for the proposals.

#### Spynie

Work began in Spynie at the beginning of February with the removal of the decayed plaster on the west wall, part of the ceiling and adjoining north and south walls. The damage was deeper rooted than at first suspected and required the window to be renovated and splits in the stones being sealed. It is a job that will entail drying time between procedures and cannot be hurried. The good news is the roof timbers are in good condition.

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The platform has been removed for Health and Safety reasons but this allows greater flexibility in the front of the sanctuary. The pew facing the east door has been removed to allow easier access. This has necessitated the re-carpeting of the entrance area and in line with this we have removed the two pews at the west end of the sanctuary. It is hoped that these will not have to re-instated and can be replaced with individual upholstered chairs the re-carpeting of the area will not take place until all the plastering work is completed and the church cleaned. The afore mentioned hard path is under investigation and estimates are being gathered

#### Duffus

The drawings of the proposed alterations to the toilet, kitchen and access ramp were displayed in Duffus church hall on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> March for the congregation to see, opinions were favourable. The kitchen upgrade will follow the defining of the toilet area. The notice boards in the hall will be removed when space is created for their replacement

#### Hopeman

The greatest and most expensive challenge is replacing the entire heating system for the sanctuary. The present system is over forty years old and not up to the job. Roof insulation of which there is none at present in the sanctuary is also being pursued. The floor covering in the hall has been replaced and the glass panels have been installed in the door at the entrance to the church. Hand rails have been installed in the stairways although not part of phase one it was thought these were essential for Health and Safety reasons. This is an ongoing programme and will be followed by a second phase in the future. The committee will endeavour to keep the congregation informed as to the proposals and actions taken.

#### John Chesney

## Social Committee

We NEED YOUR SUPPORT and SUGGESTIONS!

The various events we have held recently have not been well attended.

We would really appreciate your thoughts and ideas on things YOU would like us to do in the future.

Please contact **Heather Laing** or any member of the Social Committee with your ideas - so we can plan for the future together.



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## Guild News

The final session of 2017-18 was held in Duffus Church on 9<sup>th</sup> January, when Rev J, Adams lead us in a Bible study "Go in Love". She read I Corinthians: 13 from three version of the Bible: King James, Good News and The Message. There then followed a discussion on which we preferred. The Good News version came first, as we were in agreement that to replace 'charity' with 'love' sounded better and easier to relate to.

Ron Duncan came along to our meeting in Hopeman on 6<sup>th</sup> February. The subject of his talk was picking articles from 'Life and Work' that caught his attention; he explained why he thought them interesting, giving us food for thought.

On 6<sup>th</sup> March, we met again in Hopeman. This time we had no visiting speaker, just the five of ourselves, and we read from the 'Go in Love' theme dialogues on different kinds of love.

The World Day of Prayer was postponed owing to the very snowy weather. We hope to reschedule before the session ends on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March. Three of us hope to visit Burghead for a question and answer night, with a band of 'experts'.

AGM to be arranged for April, when our treasurer knows her off duty.

Kathie Young  
(Contact person)

## Millennium Youth Fund

In this year of "Young People 2018" I am delighted to report on two successful applications from the Millennium Youth Fund administered by your church.

**Erin McCulley of Northfield, Duffus will represent Hopeman Scout Group and Moray District at the World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia, USA in July/ August 2019 and will be away from home for 14 nights. Erin has a huge amount of sponsorship to raise and we are delighted to help.**

**Laura Campbell of School Road, Hopeman will also represent Hopeman and Moray Scouts at the Blair Atholl Jamborette at Blair Castle in July of this year. Again, we are delighted to help out as Laura will also be away from home for 11 Nights.**

Both girls will be delighted to come and report to us at a normal Sunday service following their great adventures.

We have managed to keep the fund in existence recently by holding musical concerts in Duffus Church using the talents of our own young musicians along with the Choir/musicians from Gordonstoun School.

Our most recent event was, as always such a joy to listen to, followed by an abundance of Cheese and Wine/Fruit Juice. The church also looked spectacular in and out thanks to the lighting skills of Michael Thomson ably assisted by his father Chris. Unfortunately, only 23 adults managed to attend which meant that if the ladies who organised the refreshments had taken their expenses, we would have made no contribution to the Fund at all. This bothers me greatly under the present situation whereby the Fund raising committee are tasked with raising a huge amount of money to pay for all the Church improvements which we have all approved of. Please, please try and support the many fundraising events which are planned for the coming months. There is a huge amount of time and work going into this project and your support is essential. Remember, it is all about making us more comfortable in our places of worship.

Ron Duncan

**DUFFUS, SPYNIE AND HOPEMAN PARISH CHURCH  
MILLENNIUM YOUTH FUND**

**INDIVIDUAL GRANT - ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES**

- 1 Applicant must be in full-time education at Lossiemouth High / Elgin Academy, and resident within the boundaries of Duffus, Spynie and Hopeman Parish Church.
- 2 The applicant must have been selected to represent their school/organisation, the area or country, prior to the submission of an Individual Grant Application.
- 3 Normally Grant consideration is given only to the costs borne by the individual concerned. (In some cases the costs to the individual are subsidised by the group/organisation promoting the competition/event. Contributions and /or awards from local schools/Parent Teacher Association, Management Committees, etc. are not, however, normally taken into account when considering an Individual Grant Application.)
- 4 Where individuals in orchestras, theatrical groups, etc. are involved, the individuals will normally have passed an "audition" which will thereafter entitle them to Individual Grant consideration.
- 5 The individual must normally be involved in travel outwith the Moray area. Competitions/events within Moray will not normally qualify for individual grant consideration.

**MESSY CHURCH REPORT**

We've had 2 sessions of Messy Church since the Christmas magazine and as I sit and type this I'm still feeling delighted that Sunday's Messy Church in Hopeman went so well in spite of some of our key volunteers not being there. There was an excellent turn out in spite of the cold, miserable weather - or maybe because of it! – and it was lovely to see so many families enjoying themselves.



We only offered 4 activities as they each took a little bit of time. For Mothers' Day they made cards and arranged little posies of artificial flowers in china teacups to take home for their mums. Thank you to all who donated cups and saucers. The Bible story was about Jesus visiting Martha and Mary and Lazarus, so the other activities reflected the character of Martha who was always busy and always worrying. Susan had made a big cardboard honeycomb and they made busy bees using little pompoms to put in it. The fourth activity had them making worry dolls in the Guatemalan tradition using wooden pegs, wool and pipe cleaners. I think everyone was very pleased with the results of all their efforts. I certainly was.

After their game, led as always by Carmen, they sat down and listened really well as Chris told them the story and played the "Don't Worry, be Happy" song. Then after we had sung "He's Got the Whole World in his Hands" it was time to enjoy a lovely meal together, prepared and served by Katy and her family. We were in Duffus in January and that too was a lovely, well attended afternoon. The story was about Jesus changing Zaccheus so the activities were all about change. They made spatter painted butterflies which were then attached to a height chart, they were turned into superheroes or angels just using bits of fabric and dressing up things like halos and crowns. There were activities about the changing colours of the trees, New Year promises and happy/sad faces drawn on paper plates. They also changed plain cupcakes into highly decorated ones which they later ate for pudding after their bangers and mash and beans. Apologies, mums and dads if they were hyped up on all that sugar!

As usual they enjoyed a game with Carmen and the Celebration with Jenny telling the story and Chris and Michael providing the music. As always a huge thank you to everyone who has helped in any way, preparing and leading activities, being there to help wherever needed, cooking and serving the food, doing the publicity, donating items requested. Above all thank you to all the families who bring their children. It is such a delight to see you all. The next date for your diaries is Sunday 6 May in Duffus Village Hall.

## Pictures from Messy Church



## A BIG THANK YOU

To all who supported the **EARTH TIMES ECO CLOTHES SWISH AND FAIR TRADE COFFEE MORNING** in February.

We sold £186 pounds of Fair Trade Goods and in addition donations of £155.45 were sent to Traidcraft's Fair Trade Exchange to further help small producers.

## Refuel 18

- WHAT IS REFUEL? -

### A FAMILY FRIENDLY CHRISTIAN FESTIVAL

Filling Station Scotland is inviting Christians from all over the UK and abroad to come together for a summer family festival upon the wonderful grounds of Gordon Castle Estate, on the banks of the River Spey, in the Scottish Highlands from

Monday 23rd July to Saturday 28th July 2018.

With worship leaders and guest speakers coming from all over the world, refuel18 is ready to welcome families, churches, youth groups, home groups, campers, clampers, motorhomes, caravans for a week of Encounter, fun and inspiration in His name. We went to Refuel last year can really recommend it, you can go as a day visitor and there are lots of different Speaker's and tents from different Christian Charities well worth going. One of the Speaker's this year is Jackie Pullinger who started her Ministry in the Old Walled City in Hong Kong and whose story is in the book "Chasing the Dragon" about her work with drug addicts. Also Speaking is Canadian Bruxy Cavey who we heard last year, Sandy Millar from Holy Trinity Brompton and Andy Baxter a British Christian Apologist. Want to know a bit ask Francis and Heather or go on line to <http://refuelscotland.org.uk>.



## Charity Shop Appeal

We would ask that you consider gathering items that we might be able to sell in the Lossiemouth Charity Shop in July.

We are allowed to sell anything apart from electrical items. We will be looking for clothing, shoes, toys, brick a brac, books, DVDs, bedding, curtains etc. The list is endless.

We will be organising collections nearer the time & we will also be drawing up a rota of people to work in the shop. If you think you might be able to help in anyway please let a member of the Fundraising Group know.

Thank you. Shona Rowand.

## “Not sure” – “I don’t know” - Questions

At the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, we are frequently reminded that whatever discussion is going on, “questions are always in order.”



Listening to those within the congregation and those connected more loosely, many people (of all ages) honestly say that they’re not sure what they believe about God. I’m a minister with degrees in divinity and theology, and would also honestly say that I’m not always sure what I believe about God. God is a mystery. We are limited by human language and perception in trying to think and talk about God. Different circumstances of life also pose some very big questions about a God of love.

So questions are definitely always in order. What are your questions?

In January we read the story of Nathanael meeting Jesus for the first time through his friend Philip (see John 1:43-51). Nathanael asked questions about Jesus – how could God’s chosen one come from a wee place like Nazareth? Nathanael also asked questions of Jesus – how do you know me? Nathanael is in a long tradition of questioning God – read most of the Psalms, for example.

Following Nathanael’s example, I asked the congregation to suggest their questions. What questions do you have about God? What questions do you want to ask God? We’ve now got a starter list, and over this year I’ve promised we’ll explore them. I can’t promise to answer them – but we’ll offer the questions to God, we’ll try and offer some different approaches to them, we’ll find some possible responses

Here are the questions we have so far:

- #1 Why are there so many groups of people who call themselves Christian?
- #2 What year was Church created?
- #3 Why have we lost some generations?
- #4 Where does the Church see itself in 10 years?
- #5 Where is God?
- #6 Why do we fail to connect with the wider population?
- #7 Are the coughs/flu/s everyone’s suffering the modern day plague?
- #8 Why did God pick Jesus (that person, that time/place)?
- #9 In Genesis, why did God say human beings will resemble “us”?
- #10 How did we get to Christianity when Jesus was a devout Jew?
- #11 Where was God in the Holocaust?
- #12 What does God do?
- #13 Why are there so many different religions, and they all think they are right?
- #14 What happens at the end if you have not been baptised/christened?

**What would you like to add to the list? Let Rev Jenny know – or add to the lists on noticeboards in the churches/halls on Sunday mornings.**

## The dualling of the A96 - a Christian Response



Making the assumption, that it will be built, and therefore as Christians what issues arise, and what to pray for?

The main issue that seems to be on the agenda is the choice of route. It is understandable that many would say “I don’t mind as long as it is not in my back yard” which of course leads to “NIMBYISM”. As Christians we need to be concerned about the bigger picture and not restrict our vision to only our own backyard. So I will ignore the actual choice of route!

Cost is the primary issue, as neither we nor our government should be wasting money on a more expensive option, unless it is justifiable. The potentially greatest extra costs would be due to compulsory purchases of buildings; and/or routes requiring bridges, deep cuttings or other large scale earth moving, raised sections or extra work on the foundations due to soft ground. All of which may be required whichever route is chosen.

Secondly, there is quality, and this is where we possibly can have most input? The road needs to be robust, and environmentally friendly. The entry and exit points need to link into the existing road network without too many new link roads having to be built. We can’t have heavy traffic funneled down a narrow country lane. The distance between the entry/exit points needs to be sensible, i.e. regular spacing and not two within a mile then none for 20 miles! Building of roads can entail changes in the surface drainage especially when building across flat areas which were previously marsh, lake or sea beds. There is also subterranean water flow, especially in sandy areas, or in where alluvial deposits alternate clay and sand. I expect this to be valid for most routes. And of course not only normal drainage but also when in flood!

Roads can also block or cross migratory routes, leading to high levels of road kills; this can also have devastating effects on certain animals if their already small range is bisected by the road. This most likely to happen if small woods are bisected by the new road.

As all these different factors need to be considered (there are sure to more factors than those mentioned). The choice of route will be very difficult, especially as we all consider all the factors differently! In addition we never have all the required information to hand.

I therefore propose that the best we can do is pray, as God is the only one who knows all the facts and factors involved. This raises the question of how then do we pray?



## Prayer for the duelling of the A96

*Father, we pray that all the Civil engineers and other professionals involved in planning the dualling of the A96, have all the relevant information they require to make the best choice of route, in line with your will for this area. We pray that no undue influence is granted to pressure groups or individuals who selfishly try to divert the route for their own benefit.*

*We pray that all safeguards are put into place to protect the environment along the route, to protect both the wildlife as well as the local inhabitants; also that the edges including embankments and cuttings are sympathetically landscaped and replanted to enhance the local wildlife, as well as reducing the visual impact.*

*We pray that all those, who lose land or homes to the chosen route, are properly compensated, either with land, homes, or otherwise financially.*

*We pray that disruption during and after completion are minimised, and where necessary sound barriers are installed, both temporary as well as permanent.*

*We pray that all materials used are of a high quality and ideally locally sourced. We pray that all work is carried out safely and to a high standard, and that those working on site have a positive work ethic, and good working relationships with each other.*

*When completed we pray that the new road is an asset to our local area as well as Scotland, and that the road will be safe, and that passing motorists will enjoy our local scenery. Amen*

Francis Mitchell

## Year of Young People

In 2018 the Scottish Government and the Church of Scotland will have a special focus on the Year of Young People. We seek to celebrate young people's achievements, value their contributions to communities, and create new opportunities for them to shine locally, nationally and globally. To help us focus on this a group is meeting to explore our work with young people, and also our engagement with all generations through intergenerational work. Contact Rev Jenny if you'd like to join the group.

We are very aware that there are few people involved in congregational life under 50, the generations who are parents of young people. The shape of church life doesn't fit the rhythms of many lives these days, and our styles of learning and worship may not help people engage with their spiritual lives and questions.

Therefore, we need to listen, to learn from those willing to share their experience and thoughts about the Church and about God. We've done this by beginning with the young people we have connections with – through our Sunday school and through local Guiding and Scouting groups. We then extended this to the community, by asking the same questions of those who came to the Guiding and Scouting service on Founder's Day/World Thinking Day in Hopeman, and of our regular congregation in Duffus that same day.

We asked 2 questions of everyone:

What do you think about Church?

What do you think about God?

The answers are mixed – encouraging and challenging, very honest and open. The role of the church in the community, and the church as a community of support and love, is affirmed. But there are also questions, particularly about God (which is totally understandable). What would your answers be?

Here's the answers we received as art – as wordclouds (with thanks to [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)) – which help us see the main response:

Young People: What do you think about Church?

## DUFFUS, SPYNIE & HOPEMAN CHURCH

### FUNDRAISING BREAKFAST



### SPYNIE HALL

Saturday 14th April  
7am-noon.

Donation at the door.....Thank You .

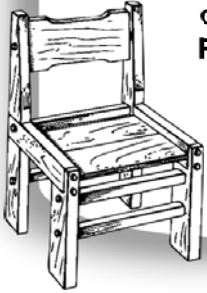




## Church Hall Lets

If you'd like to hire our Kirk Hall at Duffus or Hopeman for a morning, afternoon, or evening, the price is £5.00 (juniors) & £15.00 (adults) per session, including the use of a basic kitchen and toilet facilities.

For more information please contact  
Mrs J Craib 830139



# Hopeman

## Kirk



Hopeman Kirk flower, coffee & cleaning rotas need volunteers – can you help?

Please contact: Janice on 830139

## FUNDRAISING EVENTS



**APRIL 14<sup>th</sup> BIG BREAKFAST** You are all invited to Breakfast at Spynie Hall. You might like a bowl of cereal, a bacon roll or a full Scottish Breakfast. Take your pick! Come along & bring your family & friends. Enjoy fellowship & help us raise money at the same time. Donation after your breakfast

**MAY 19<sup>th</sup> MORAY CHURCHES QUIZ** Teams of 6-8 from any church within Moray can enter our quiz. Churches can enter more than 1 team if they wish. Entry will be £50 per team with all monies going to our appeal. Please consider forming a team or encourage your friends & neighbours to do so.

**JULY 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> LOSSIE CHARITY SHOP** we will run the charity shop for 1 week & all profits will go to the appeal.

**SEPT 30<sup>th</sup> SONGS OF PRAISE with Elgin Strathspey & Reel.** We will enjoy lovely songs of praise service in Duffus Kirk. After the service we will serve teas & delicious home bakes. Invitations will be sent to all kirks in Moray Presbytery & other local churches too

**OCTOBER MORAY PRESBYTERY BAKE OFF (date to be confirmed)** we hope to hold this event at Gordonstoun School with local church ministers competing for the champions title. Tickets will be on sale for this event later in the year.

On sale at the moment is the 1st of our '**World Puzzles**'. Elsie Watson is co-ordinating the sale of the current puzzle - World Wide Mountains. If you think you might be able to help with the sale of these. Please contact Elsie on 01343 543914.

If you have any fundraising ideas or would like to join the group, then please get in touch. There will be other events happening throughout the next year, please support them when you can. It is very important that you tell others about these events too, the more people who know about them, the more people who will come along.

## In Memoriam

Alex Hannah of 2, Church Rd, Duffus  
– funeral 12th December 2017

Jean Young of 8, Millfield Drive, Hopeman  
– 10th January 2018

Douglas Ogilvie of 68, Bain Avenue, Elgin  
– 19th January 2018

Jim Anderson of 13, Dunbar Lane, Duffus  
– 23rd February 2018

*We remember them with love,  
give thanks for their lives,  
entrust them to God's loving arms,  
and hold their families and friends in our thoughts and prayers.*



### You are invited to communion

#### Communion

We will celebrate communion in our services on Easter Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> April, Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May and 3<sup>rd</sup> June. *Holy Communion - The Lord's Supper - The Eucharist* - call it what you will, communion is one of the two sacraments we celebrate, a symbolic act begun by Jesus and passed on to us to continue. There is a lot of meaning wrapped up in the bread and wine we share.

We remember Jesus, his last meal before he died, the giving of his body and blood on the cross, and the new relationship with God in which we now share. We share a feast with the whole church family, which is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet to come. In doing so we are nourished by God, and together we celebrate Jesus' resurrection and the gift of new life. We give thanks for all that God has done and is still doing for us and all people. In communion we look back, we look forward, and we look around to the present gifts of God and the people with whom we share. We build the church, God's community, together as we serve one another.

And all of this through bread and wine (grape juice in our case, so that no-one is excluded). God uses such basic stuff, that we can touch and taste and see, to help share so many things that are hard to understand. Through our senses, through the visible and tangible, God's invisible grace and love can touch our lives in a different way.

You are all invited to every communion. And it's not me or your elder who's inviting you, for the table we gather at is the Lord's table. **To all, of any age, who love God even a little, and want to love him more, Jesus says "Come, take, eat."**

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## God's creation and Job

One of my favorite verses in Job is where there is quite a long dialogue between Job and his friends, some of which includes aspects of God's creation. I particularly like how Eliphaz has a description of how he sees God blessing. This includes "You will have no fear of wild beasts, for you will have a pact with the rocks in the field, and the beasts of the field will be your allies." (Job 5:22b and 23). This is a beautiful image of being at one with God's creation around us. As a drystone dyker, and lover of wildlife, I consider this to be like paradise!

Interestingly the book of Job is where God seems to say more about his creation than any other book, apart from Genesis. There are four chapters in answer to Job in which God presents many aspects of his creation, as a challenge to Job. Even though some of these questions can now be answered, many still remain a mystery, with God alone knowing the answers. Even though some verses may seem very poetic such as "Who closed the sea behind doors, when it gushed out of the womb." (Job 38:8), it still leaves us with the real question of where did all the water which forms the seas originally come from? A question today's scientists are apparently trying to work out, including a theory that much of the water came from within the earth - in spite of Job being told this thousands of years ago!

I like the way it describes how God looks after his creation, such as in Job 38:41 "Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God?" Not only does this tell of God's care for his created wildlife, but also indicates that they cry out to him and that he hears them. As this verse is at the end of chapter 38, as this verse is at the end of the chapter does it belong with the poetic verses earlier in this chapter, or is it a bridging verse to chapter 39. Chapter 39 is mainly about wildlife, relating to birds and animals unique features, whether wild goats, horses or hawks. I like verse 8, where God asks 'who set the wild donkey free?' It's a sort of chicken and egg question of old! Which came first, the wild donkey or the domestic donkey?

Chapters 40 and 41, describe some incredible beasts, which do not seem to quite fit with any presently living animal, and sound as if they would be more at home in a Harry Potter novel. The second animal (Job 41:1) called a leviathan sounds more like a dragon, than a hippo or other animal still in existence. It seems that the book of Job is quite old and seems to predate the foundation of Israel, so it is possible that these descriptions are of animals long extinct. It is more than coincidental that many different cultures have ancient tales of dragons, maybe God did originally include them in his creation?

**In Summary** - next time you read Job, maybe just read from Chapter 38 to the end, enjoying the poetic writing and wonderful descriptions of God's creative power as found in his world.

**Prayer:** Father help us to read afresh some of your books of the Old Testament and wonder at the wisdom and inspiration we can find there - Amen.  
Francis Mitchell



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## Eco-congregation Silver Award

The congregation of Duffus, Spynie & Hopeman has just been awarded the Eco-Congregation Silver Award. Congratulations!



This recognises a wide-ranging variety of action across the congregation's spiritual life, practical work and global living – all of which we hope to continue to develop. There are lots of recommendations to follow, including having a definite action plan. There are also special commendation of Eco team, our articles in this church magazine, our links to the schools and youth organisations, and our involvement in Eco-congregation in Moray and Scotland.

You'll hear more in future magazines. But meantime –  
**CONGRATULATIONS AND WELL DONE!**

## Café Church

In 2018 we are holding 3 Café Church services in our local community halls. These will have everyone sitting around tables, with a cuppa and a chance to talk more easily to those around us. This is hopefully a more comfortable environment for those who are not so familiar with our traditional church buildings and services. It will hopefully also allow us all to learn in different ways – from listening to one another, sharing experience and questions, and using different media - as we explore our faith and life in 2018.

We had our first café church in Spynie Hall on 4<sup>th</sup> February. Thanks to Shona and Carol the hall was warm and welcoming, with bunting, a good cuppa and fine pieces. We sang – including the song written especially for the Year of Young People, we prayed, we listened to the Bible, and we watched 2 short videos. Everyone also got the chance to talk and listen to those around their table – we have so much experience and faith to share.

Feedback has been very positive; people got the chance to get to know one another better, and learnt from one another. There are some practical questions about table sizes and acoustics. Our next café church will be in Duffus Village Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> July at 10.30am – why not join in? Perhaps it will also be an easier service to invite a friend or neighbour to?



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## June 2018 (cont.)

<b>Mon 18<sup>th</sup></b>	Congregational Board meeting, Duffus Kirk Hall 7.30pm
<b>Sun 24<sup>th</sup></b>	Children's and Young People's service, Hopeman Kirk 10.30am followed by congregational picnic, Hopeman Kirk Hall & garden
	Prayers for peace in Israel & Palestine, Spynie Kirk 4pm
<b>Mon 25<sup>th</sup></b>	Monday morning group, Hopeman Kirk Vestry 10.30am-12noon
<b>Thur 28<sup>th</sup></b>	Spynie soup & sweet lunch, Spynie Hall 12noon-2pm

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## Holy Week and Easter:



Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> March is **Palm Sunday**, and we gather for family worship in Hopeman Kirk at 10am and Spynie Kirk at 11.30am

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup>**, Hopeman Kirk open for reflection 10am – 12noon. Music, aids for prayer, and a labyrinth.

**Maundy Thursday 29<sup>th</sup>** – communion service in Spynie Kirk 7pm

**Good Friday 30<sup>th</sup>** – reflective service in Hopeman Kirk 7pm

### **Easter Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> April**

Sunrise communion service, Lossie East beach 6.30am

Biblical garden service, Elgin 6.30am

Early service, St. Peter's Kirk on Duffus-Gordonstoun road, 7.30am  
(with bacon rolls in Duffus hall afterwards)

All-age communion celebration, Duffus Kirk 10.30am. Bring a flower to help transform the cross.

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## April 2018 (cont.)

- Sun 29<sup>th</sup>** Family Service & Sunday school, Hopeman Kirk 10am  
Family Service, Spynie Kirk 11.30am
- Mon 30<sup>th</sup>** Monday morning group, Hopeman Kirk Vestry 10.30am-12noon

## May 2018

- Tue 1<sup>st</sup>** Moray Presbytery Mission Development Meeting on "Hub ministries". St. Andrew's Lhanbryde Church Hall 7pm
- Sun 6<sup>th</sup>** Family communion service, Hopeman Kirk 10.30am followed by congregation's Annual Stated Meeting (also food collection for Moray Food Bank)  
Messy Church, Duffus Village Hall 4-6pm
- Thur 10<sup>th</sup>** Sitting down service, Hopeman Kirk Hall 2 for 2.20pm
- Sun 13<sup>th</sup>** Family Service & Sunday school, Hopeman Kirk 10am  
Family Service, Duffus Kirk 11.30am
- Mon 14<sup>th</sup>** Monday morning group, Hopeman Kirk Vestry 10.30am-12noon  
Kirk Session meeting, 7pm
- Sun 20<sup>th</sup>** Family Service & Sunday school, Hopeman Kirk 10am  
Family Service, Spynie Kirk 11.30am
- Thu 24<sup>th</sup>** Prayers for peace in Israel & Palestine, Spynie Kirk 4pm
- Sun 27<sup>th</sup>** Family Service & Sunday school, Hopeman Kirk 10am  
Family Service, Duffus Kirk 11.30am
- Mon 28<sup>th</sup>** Monday morning group, Hopeman Kirk Vestry 10.30am-12noon
- Thur 31<sup>st</sup>** Spynie soup & sweet lunch, Spynie Hall 12noon-2pm

## June 2018

- Sun 3<sup>rd</sup>** Family communion service, Spynie Kirk 10.30am (also food collection for Moray Food Bank)
- Sun 10<sup>th</sup>** Family Service & Sunday school, Hopeman Kirk 10am  
Family Service, Duffus Kirk 11.30am
- Mon 11<sup>th</sup>** Monday morning group, Hopeman Kirk Vestry 10.30am-12noon
- Thur 14<sup>th</sup>** Sitting down service, Hopeman Kirk Hall 2 for 2.20pm
- Sun 17<sup>th</sup>** Family Service & Sunday school, Hopeman Kirk 10am  
Family Service, Spynie Kirk 11.30am

# Calendar

## March 2018

- Sat 24<sup>th</sup>** Prayers for peace in Israel & Palestine, Spynie Kirk 4pm
- Sun 25<sup>th</sup>** Family Service & Sunday School, Hopeman Kirk 10am  
Family Service, Spynie Kirk 11.30am
- Mon 26<sup>th</sup>** Hopeman Kirk open for reflection 10am – 12noon.
- Tue 27<sup>th</sup>** Hopeman Kirk open for reflection 10am – 12noon.
- Wed 28<sup>th</sup>** Hopeman Kirk open for reflection 10am – 12noon.  
Intergenerational/Young People meeting, Hopeman Kirk Hall 7.30pm
- Thur 29<sup>th</sup>** Spynie soup & sweet lunch, Spynie Hall 12noon-2pm  
Maundy Thursday communion service, Spynie Kirk 7pm
- Fri 30<sup>th</sup>** Good Friday service, Hopeman Kirk 7pm

## April 2018

- Sun 1<sup>st</sup>** **Easter Sunday**  
Sunrise communion service, Lossie East beach 6.30am  
Biblical garden service, Elgin 6.30am  
Early service, St. Peter's Kirk Duffus, 7.30am (with bacon rolls in Duffus hall afterwards)  
All-age communion celebration, Duffus Kirk 10.30am
- Mon 2<sup>nd</sup>** Monday morning group, Hopeman Kirk Vestry 10.30am-12noon
- Sun 8<sup>th</sup>** Family Service, Hopeman Kirk 10am  
Family Service, Duffus Kirk 11.30am
- Thur 12<sup>th</sup>** Sitting down service, Hopeman Kirk Hall 2 for 2.20pm
- Sun 15<sup>th</sup>** Family Service, Hopeman Kirk 10am  
Family Service, Spynie Kirk 11.30am
- Mon 16<sup>th</sup>** Monday morning group, Hopeman Kirk Vestry 10.30am-12noon  
Congregational Board meeting, Duffus Kirk Hall 7.30pm
- Sun 22<sup>nd</sup>** Family Service & Sunday school, Hopeman Kirk 10am  
Family Service, Duffus Kirk 11.30am
- Tue 24<sup>th</sup>** Prayers for peace in Israel & Palestine, Spynie Kirk 4pm
- Thur 26<sup>th</sup>** Spynie soup & sweet lunch, Spynie Hall 12noon-2pm