

Duffus, Spynie and Hopeman

Church Magazine

Spring 2022

Scottish Charity Number: SCO04853

Church website: dshchurch.co.uk

Contacts

Minister	Rev Jenny Adams	830276
Probationer Minister	Christine McWhirter	545703
Session Clerks	Mrs Shona and Mr Michael Rowand	850693
Clerk to the Board	Mrs Linda Paiton	541656
Roll Keeper	Mrs Christine Smith	07599040478
Treasurer	Mrs Lesley McPherson	830172

Sub Treasurers:

Duffus	Mrs Sheila Duncan	830238
Spynie	Ms Aileen Buchanan	860329
Hopeman	Mrs Margaret Munro	830422

Property Convenors:

Duffus	Mr Ron Duncan	830238
Spynie	Mr Michael Rowand	850693
Hopeman	Mr John Chesney	07710 040555

Organists:

Duffus	Mr Chris Thompson	830195
Spynie	Mr Kenneth Bews	850663
Hopeman	Mr Grant Rowand	

Contact Persons

Men's Group	Mr Ron Duncan	830238
Safeguarding	Mrs Christine Smith	07599040478
Social Committee	Mrs Shona Rowand	850693
Guild	Mrs Kathleen Young	830491
Webmaster	Michael Thompson	
Christian Aid	Mrs Heather Mitchell	830713

Emails:

Minister jadams@churchofscotland.org.uk

Probation Minister cmcwhirter@churchofscotland.org.uk

Session Clerk srowanddsh@gmail.com

Clerk to the Board lpaiton70@gmail.com

Greetings from the Minister

Dear friends,

I am writing this at a time of great global uncertainty, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We watch the destruction, occupation and loss in Ukraine and the repression of dissenting voices in Russia. We watch with grief and fear. We may feel at a distance, or we may have connections to people and places and involvement through our own armed forces. There is great uncertainty for the days and weeks ahead.



It can be tempting to turn away from fear and grief - whether this war, the ongoing crises in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen and others, or the pain of losses and troubles closer to home. Sometimes we have to turn away to protect ourselves, to show love to ourselves - we cannot carry all the pain of life, no human being can.

Yet we are in the season of Lent, journeying towards Easter, which reminds us that Jesus chose to turn towards human suffering. Jesus - God with us - turned his face to Jerusalem, where he was going to be rejected. Jesus - God with us - lived in an occupied country, challenged the powerful, included the marginalised, and offered a different way to live and love. Jesus - God with us - chose to live that way, accepting that it led to arrest, torture and execution by those in power. So we know God is with us in pain, loss, grief, fear and uncertainty - whether in global crises, church reforms or personal situations.

And the hope of Easter is that love can bring transformation, with new life and possibilities for wounded people in our broken world.

God, community of love,
loving Father, crucified and risen Son, living Spirit,
may we know and share your presence, peace and love
in our lives, our communities and our world.
Amen

With love & prayers,

Jenny

Greetings from the Probationer Minister

Dear friends,

This is a time of uncertainty at local, national, and global level, with many changes and much planning happening.

Sadly we are very aware of conflicts happening around the world. It has been very encouraging to see how, even in times of uncertainty and change, so many prayers and practical support are being readily offered to those who are affected by hostilities.



In the face of the many problems the world has, including climate change and fuel poverty, which often make the news headlines, I have been inspired to remember the little acts of kindness, which often go unnoticed or can be forgotten quickly. Recently I was in a local 'pay and display' car park, I was about to use the app on my mobile to pay for parking, when a lady offered me her already paid for ticket, which still had several hours left to use. I thanked her and I used the ticket while I attended to some errands in town. When I returned to my car, I was aware the ticket still had at least two hours left until it expired, and I waited for a few moments by the ticket machine, so I could pass the ticket on. After about five minutes, I gave the ticket to a man who was sorting through his change to pay for his ticket. The knowledge of the ticket's journey of kindness, from the lady, to me, to the man, and possibly beyond, made me smile that day.

The act of passing on a ticket, which I'm sure happens frequently both locally and elsewhere, certainly wouldn't be considered as worthy of a news headline, but can remind us of the many, many acts of kindness and humanity that happen daily in the world. As we journey through Lent and Easter, may we have the opportunity to smile at many things and find hope and joy in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

From Isaiah 40: 31 – "But those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak"; and 1 Thessalonians 5:11, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

Love, peace, and blessings

Christine

From your Session Clerks

Dear Friends

It seems like no time at all that we were all preparing for Christmas so it's hard to believe that this magazine will be reaching you in the run up to Easter.

As we write this letter at the end of February we are watching the horrifying scenes unfolding in the Ukraine. It's hard to comprehend that this could happen in Europe in the 21st century. Our thoughts & prayers are with the Ukrainian people and we hope that by the time you read this that a ceasefire would have been agreed.



On a more positive note, it's nice to see more folk in Kirk on a Sunday morning. It's lovely that people are feeling more comfortable about mixing with others. We realise just what a lonely time it has been for so many. Getting out and about will hopefully make us all feel better in general & if the weather improves then meeting up with friends & family and being able to return to the groups and activities of pre Covid times should make our lives seem more normal again.

Your Kirk Session & Board met jointly in February for the first time in 2022. There was much discussion, and it was decided to keep to the present pattern of Worship. It was felt that this was working for the moment and with Covid still lingering it wasn't putting any more pressure on the folk who clean our buildings. We hope that you understand the reasons for doing this.

Hectic! That would be one way of describing life in the Rowand household at the moment. The arrival at the end of January of another grandchild was wonderful. Lenox (or Lily as her granny prefers to call her!) has already been in Duffus, Spynie & Hopeman Kirks and big sister Blair hasn't been fazed at all by the new arrival. We are truly blessed to have two beautiful granddaughters.

God bless

Shona & Michael

In Memoriam March 2022

Ian Henderson Hamilton Crescent, Elgin – funeral 27th November 2021
Bert Laurensen Hamilton Drive, Elgin – 13th December 2021
Dave More East Road, Hopeman – 29th December 2021
Tina Hardie Stuart Place, Hopeman – 7th January 2022
Flora Christie Lossie Wynd, Elgin – 11th January 2022
Sandy Young Lossiemouth – 17th January 2022
Sheena Henderson High School Drive, Elgin – 27th January 2022
Billy More McPherson St, Hopeman – 9th February 2022
Dando McPherson Mid St, Hopeman – 11th February 2022
Margaret Murray Hamilton Drive, Elgin – 14th February 2022
Robin Falconer Shempston, Duffus – 19th February 2022
Neil Higgins Threaplands – 28th February 2022
Pat McPherson Manse Road, Hopeman – 11th March 2022

These are the church funerals. We also remember others who have died in our communities and families in these very difficult times.

*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.*

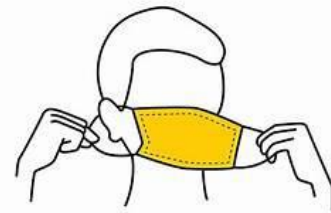


COVID Guidelines

As we will be aware from the news and from people we know, coronavirus is still active in our communities and across the world. Church of Scotland staff continue to engage with the Scottish Government and congregations to keep us as up to date as possible with guidelines.

At the time of writing, this is what we have in place to help you feel safe in our buildings:

- Distancing - We no longer have to keep a legal distance from each other. However, we do have to keep each other safe, so I would ask everyone to respect a safe distance from each other. Please pay attention to how others are feeling, as we all assess risk differently.
- Face coverings – At the time of writing, we do still have to wear face coverings while in places of worship, including when we sing. While it may be uncomfortable, it's something we do to keep others safe.
- Test & Protect – It is still good practice to gather names and contact details (phone or email) for Test & Protect purposes. The paper sign-in sheets are kept confidentially and destroyed after 21 days, and not used for any other purpose. We also offer QR codes for people with smartphones to check in to Hopeman and Duffus Kirks through the Check In Scotland app.
- Hygiene - Everyone is asked to sanitise hands on arriving and leaving the church buildings. We are cleaning each space after every use, and are asking all user groups to do that too. A huge thank you to all the volunteers helping with cleaning. (We are using professional cleaners after funerals to avoid overloading volunteers.)
- Ventilation – We are trying to ensure good ventilation, but we know that can get draughty and colder, so please wrap up well for church.
- Books - We are still being careful about handling books. You are welcome to bring your own hymnbooks and Bibles (and take them home again afterwards).



- No teas and coffees yet, until everyone involved feels more comfortable.

In order to ease the workload on our volunteers, we will continue to have a 3 week pattern, using each of our church buildings in turn for Sundays at 10.30am.

We appreciate that may involve more travel, and would encourage you to offer lifts to others as you feel able, and to use the phone and online reflections.

You are invited to communion



We are continuing to celebrate communion every four weeks. We are doing what we can to make it safe, inclusive, and welcoming for everyone, within public health guidelines. To include everybody, we use non-alcoholic grape juice and gluten-free bread.

Whenever, wherever and however we gather for communion it is the family meal of the church family in which we are fed and nourished for the journey ahead. We will remember it as Jesus' last supper with his friends on Maundy Thursday, and share it as a celebration feast with the risen Jesus on Easter Sunday.

A sacrament is a visible sign – in this case, visible, edible, tastable and touchable – of God's invisible grace. God loves us first and always, and the sacraments enable us to know that through our senses, as well as our minds. Jesus invites us to come, take, eat – we are all invited. You are invited.

Please join us if you can. And if you are unable to join us, please speak to your elder or contact me about home communion.

Rev Jenny



Easter 2022

We hope to journey through Holy Week and Easter together this year, in a way we haven't been able to in recent years – though we will also share reflections online.

As well as the **Maundy Thursday** communion and **Good Friday** reflective services, we are going to have Hopeman Kirk open on the mornings of Good Friday and Holy Saturday. During those times we will offer some “**Soul space**” – reflective space and music with prayerful activities. Anyone can pop in and find rest and restoration for their souls – why not try it and see how God might speak to you?

On Easter morning, we will celebrate from sunrise onwards. The churches in and around **Lossie** will gather looking east towards the East Beach from the car park, for a sunrise service together. We'll have a service in the ruins of **St. Peter's Kirk** – possibly with a picnic afterwards, for anyone who wants to join that. Our regular Sunday worship will then celebrate Easter sharing a communion feast together.



Gathering by phone & online

We are changing the number for phone reflections. We are joining with others to share a 10 minute reflection on a phone line: (01309) 484774



This phone line will have weekly reflections from Jenny, Christine and others from local churches, sharing that more widely. We hope this is still useful and helpful.

For those with access to the **internet or YouTube**:

- Find us on YouTube at “DSH Youtube Channel”. That will offer a weekly 10 minute “bite-sized” video reflection, plus livestreams/recordings of services in our buildings whenever possible.
- Find “Duffus Spynie Hopeman” or “Jenny Adams” on Facebook for the YouTube reflections and other information
- Online church www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk shares weekly and daily worship, discussions, reflections and music to explore



- Many churches locally, nationally and globally share worship and reflections online. Jenny would love to hear more about what you are finding helpful and inspiring.



Watch with others?

We are aware that many of those unable to attend worship in our buildings may not have skills or technology to access YouTube. One option is for people who do have the skills and equipment to **visit and sit with others**, watching and sharing in worship together. Perhaps even a couple of visitors – friends and elders alongside someone who can work the

technology – either on a Sunday morning or at times that suit.

To do this on behalf of the congregation we would ask volunteers to get appropriate Safeguarding checks for work with vulnerable groups, which we can assist with.

Do you think you'd enjoy sharing in worship with someone unable to come to our buildings? Do you think you can (or could learn how to) watch the church's YouTube channel on a tablet or laptop to share? To help, please contact Jenny jadams@churchofscotland.org.uk

Livestreaming

Thanks to Michael and Chris Thompson we are now able to "livestream" services from Duffus Kirk. These are available to watch live at the time of the service, and are also available for people to watch afterwards – all through our YouTube channel (see above).



We are working on extending that to Hopeman and Spynie Kirk buildings – in Hopeman it's currently possible occasionally about an hour after a service has been recorded.

It would be really helpful to have a few others willing to learn **how to use that technology** to share our worship and funerals. It is not sustainable for it to be totally depend on Chris and Michael. If you would be interested in learning more, with time to occasionally help livestream from our buildings, please contact Jenny jadams@churchofscotland.org.uk

Cleaning & Welcome & Flower Volunteers Needed

In order to welcome people safely into our buildings we need volunteers to help – if you can do so safely. We are hugely grateful to everyone who has helped in the past and in the recent pandemic times.



We need people to welcome folk as they arrive at church and take their contact details for Test & Protect.

We need people to take a turn at helping to clean each of our church buildings, so that all surfaces people have touched are clean and safe for the next users. Materials are provided.



Worship in all three of church buildings is enhanced by flowers, bringing some of God's creation into our gathering. If you would like to offer flowers or pay for some for a particular Sunday or when there's a gap, that's much appreciated.

If you can help, please let me know and we'll add you to a list. Thank you.

Rev Jenny

Property matters

Our congregation gathers in three very different church buildings, and offers them and our hall spaces to serve the communities. There is a great wee team of folk who help maintain our property, reporting to the Congregational Board which makes property decisions.



We are currently needing a volunteer or volunteers to assist John Chesney with oversight of Hopeman Church building. That person would keep an eye on the building, co-ordinate any work when John's away, and be a point of contact for John and folk using the building.

Are you interested? Are you organised? Do you think you could help John or with any other property-related jobs? Please contact John (07710 040555) or Rev Jenny to chat.

Moray Food Plus



Moray Food Plus provides a variety of services to those either experiencing or at risk of food insecurity. They also work with partners to reduce the amount of local food waste taking surplus food and redistributing it amongst the community.

Food poverty is on the increase in Moray. Moray Food Plus is working hard to support people who through no fault of their own find themselves in crisis. Reasons for this are varied but include changes in personal circumstances, illness, welfare reform, low income, and unexpected bills.

The crisis service works on a referral basis from agencies such as social work, housing and health. They also accept self-referrals. Once a referral is received a team of volunteers make up a food parcel containing three days' worth of food (including pet and baby food on request).

If you or your family are experiencing a food crisis and need the support of the Moray Food Plus, please get in touch with them: 01343 208293 request@morayfoodplus.org.uk

Donations of food and toiletries can be made in most supermarkets, and **we collect items for the food bank at the service on the first Sunday of every month.**

For those with the technology, you can download the “Bank the Food” app which lets you see what items Moray Food Plus are most urgently needed at any time.

Forest Church

Friends, we are pleased Forest Church continues to be a useful time of worship. The weather has overall been kind to us, and we are very pleased to welcome many familiar and new faces from all ages, including 4 legged friends, to the time of outdoor worship.



The worship is a time for outdoor fun and exploring, including some time for prayer, music, a Bible story and being close to God in creation. Currently we are meeting at the Earth time by Duffus at 2pm, however please see the parish calendar at the back of the magazine for further details for location and time as these will change throughout the year.

If anyone is interested in helping or leading the worship, please get in touch with Rev. Jenny or Prob. Minister Christine.

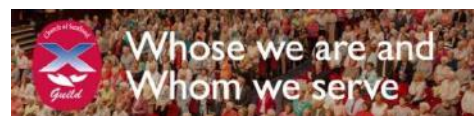
Guild News

For our December meeting we held an afternoon tea instead of a Christmas party.

We were delighted to welcome Rev. J Adams and Christine McWhirter, as it is not very often they are not otherwise engaged with other business.

We held our first meeting of this session on Tuesday 1st March at 2pm in Hopeman Church Hall. We used the World Day of Prayer literature for the meeting as we didn't have Burghead to share readings with, as they were joining up with Forres Churches in Moray West for World Day of Prayer.

Convener - Kathie Young



Moray Presbytery mission planning

Along with the rest of the Church of Scotland, Moray Presbytery is going through a mission planning process just now. This is trying to discern the future shape of church life for the next five years or so, within the financial constraints of the Church of Scotland and shaped around God's mission.

The process has to find a shape of church life with one third fewer paid ministry posts. It affirms the ministries of the whole people of God and that we join in God's mission alongside partners in communities and other churches. This is going to require creative thinking and a huge adjustment in all our expectations of ministries and ministers.

We are also being challenged to consider whether church buildings are "well equipped spaces in the right places" for God's mission now. Trained volunteers have been auditing all church buildings in Moray to feed into the mission planning process.

As you can imagine, this is a difficult and complex process, and there will be some pain and disappointment from its outcomes. However, it can also be exciting, if we can join in God's reforming of the Kirk for the years ahead. The process has been trying really hard to listen – to listen to local congregations, to listen to stories about God at work in communities, and so to listen to God's guidance for the future shape of God's church.

The mission planning team (of which I am Convener) is hoping to share a draft mission plan for Moray by 7 April 2022. The Board & Kirk Session will meet to discuss that draft on 25 April, and will have the chance to meet with others locally to discuss ideas and offer suggestions and amendments. We will try to find ways for wider communication and discussion.

With amendments accepted before the summer, Moray Presbytery will vote on amendments and propose a final plan on 3 September. Implementation will then take place over the coming 3-5 years.

The Presbytery Planning Team asks for your prayers, that we will all discern God's guidance for the future shape of God's church in Moray, together.

Rev Jenny

Quiet mornings in Spynie Kirk

Through an ecumenical quiet group, Spynie Kirk hosts monthly quiet mornings.

A quiet place where you can enjoy precious moments of peace in God's presence.

A quiet time to listen to the still small voice of God within the bustle of the day.

A time to rest, a time to breathe slowly, a time to simply be with God.

The Quiet Group is ecumenical and meets monthly. It offers a space for solitude and for sharing, if you wish; provides materials to work with or not, as you choose. A time for individual preference, while experiencing the strength of silence with others.

Spynie Kirk, Saturdays 10.30 – 13.00 – 26 March, 30 April, 28 May 2022

For more information or if you wish to attend, contact: John Black 01343 815650.



Fairtrade Rice Challenge

The purchase of Kilombero rice helps provide smallholder farmers in Malawi with a sustainable income and enables them to reinvest in their farms, feed and clothe their families, and be able to afford a secondary education for their children, helping families and communities to work their way out of poverty with dignity.

We have 45kg of rice to sell. Brown and white rice, £3.20 for 1kg bag.

Please contact Heather Mitchell (01343 830713) to get some – Heather can bring it to church or it can be picked up from Cummingston.



Health Walks

The Walk Moray project delivers health walks across Moray every week and is managed by Health and Social Care Moray. With the help of a network of fantastic volunteers, Walk Moray runs a variety of low-level, friendly health walks.

A Health Walk continues to meet in Hopeman, from the Surgery car park every Thursday morning at 10am.

There's also one from Burghead Station Road car park every Thursday at 1.30pm.

There are Health Walks in Elgin, from Elgin Library on Wednesdays (11am faster 2 mile,

12.15pm moderate 2 mile, 1.30pm relaxed, 1 mile); Moray Leisure Centre on Thursdays 10am; and Linkwood Medical Practice on Fridays at 10am.

Whether you would like to meet new people, or get more active, they are always looking for new people to join in their walks.



EXCITING NEW OPPORTUNITY AWAITS YOU WITH MORAY SUPPORTS REFUGEES



The current trustees and management of Moray Supports Refugees would like to thank all their supporters over the last few years and especially the volunteers who have dedicated their time and energies into supporting the charity.

The time has now come to hand over the reigns and pass on the management to someone new and a fresh team to support the continuation of the charity.

There are numerous training schemes offered via Third Sector in Moray to assist you in your role and full support will be given in handing

over.

Please contact Katy for an informal chat if you are interested.
07591693888

Treasurer

We have a fabulous team of church treasurer and sub-treasurers. Huge thanks go to Lesley, Margaret, Sheila, Aileen, and Linda for all their work keeping track of the congregation's finances.



Lesley would like to step back as Church Treasurer soon, but with plenty of time to hand things over well. Is that something that you could help with? Why not chat to Rev Jenny or to Lesley McPherson to find out more.

Magazine editor – do you have some IT skills and like to get creative?

Probationer minister Christine has been editing the magazine recently as part of her formation and training. We are currently needing a volunteer or volunteers to take on the role of editor(s) in the longer term. Christine and others can offer plenty of time to hand things over well. Is being editor something that you could help with or are interested in? Why not chat to Rev Jenny or Christine to find out more.



Moved house or changed contact details?

If you have moved house or changed your contact details (including email address), and still wish to be contactable, please can you let your elder know of any changes, so details on the church roll can be kept up to date.

Many thanks.

Hello,

I'm a volunteer at 2 local rescues and a Hedgehog Champion with the British Hedgehog Preservation Society/Peoples' Trust for Endangered Species.



How long is it since you last saw a hedgehog?

The UK has lost a third of its population since 2000, and their numbers are declining as fast as tigers in the wild. They are now officially classed as vulnerable to extinction in the IUCN's Red List for British Mammals. There are many reasons and it's sad to think that, for future generations, such a fate would make this lovely, prickly God's creature only a character in storybooks. Here are 10 simple tips to help them.

1. Link your garden with a Hedgehog Highway. Hedgehogs travel between 1-2 km a night searching for food and a mate. Leaving a small gap in your fence the size of a CD case will let hedgehogs through but be too small for pets. BHPT/PTES sell snazzy little recyclable Hedgehog Highway signs, for a few pounds. Ask your neighbours to do the same!
- 2 Create a wild corner in your garden so they can snuffle around for insects.
3. Tidy up netting and litter which can trap hedgehogs due to their spines. Even rubber bands dropped by the postie can become embedded in their skin, causing a slow, painful death.
4. Put out food and water. You can supplement their diet with wet dog or cat food (preferably not fish based). No bread, milk or mealworms, which are all extremely bad for them. For those who are into simple DIY you can make a feeding station to stop other animals having a free supper - details on the BHPS website/YouTube
5. Stop using chemicals especially slug pellets. Hedgehogs are a gardener's best friend as they eat slugs as well as many other beasts which would otherwise be devouring your prize flowers and vegetables

6. Check before mowing or strimming. Hedgehogs often sleep in long grass or hedges during daytime and won't run away if they hear a mower, resulting in horrific injuries or death. Use gloves to move a single hog to safety. If there's a family, call the BHPS for advice on 01584 890801, the SSPCA on 0300 999 999 or Google to find your local Hedgehog Rescue.

7. Be careful with bonfires or simply burning leaves. Piles of debris are irresistible to a hedgehog looking for somewhere to hibernate or nest – build it on the day of burning to avoid a tragic end, or if you have to build it before then check carefully with a pole or broom, not a spade or fork. They are usually in the centre.

8. Make a home for hedgehogs. A log pile is one of the best features for encouraging all kinds of wildlife, and easy to make. It will encourage insects and provide nesting opportunities all year around. Alternatively, you can make your own hedgehog house – download instructions from the BHPS website.

9. Keep an eye out for hedgehogs when driving at night, & let it get over the road safely if you see one. If you see it too late try to steer so it will pass under the middle of the car where it is least likely to be harmed.

10. Record hedgehog sightings, including dead ones, on The Big Hedgehog Map website. This is important in building up a picture of where they are most active & how we can encourage local populations. A hedgehog seen during the day is usually in need of help & you should contact one of the organisations above. If you'd like to do more, you can become a Hedgehog Champion by registering on the Hedgehog Street website, where you can find lots of resources to make your gardens, neighbourhood and Parish, hedgehog-friendly zones.



Moira Grant

Falkirk

Violence Against Women

There will be **training about Violence Against Women** with the Church of Scotland Integrity group available on the **evening of Wednesday 29 June**. This will be online, and will be 2 hours and 15 minutes with a break in the middle.



The aim of the training is to improve understanding of the topic and the Church's role in prevention. It will also offer basic information for responding to disclosures. The aim is to equip churches to ensure that disclosures are received well and that individual responses do no harm (at the very least) and helpfully signpost to support (at best). It will be online and run by one professional trainer and a volunteer support trainer.

Duffus, Spynie & Hopeman will share the training session with the Lossiemouth Church of Scotland congregations. It is relevant to members of Board & Session and also to the wider membership and beyond. Please join in and learn more if you are available.

The training team need people to book in advance at:

<https://forms.gle/FoSktKcngnvzQzaF9>

Please book ahead as soon as possible so we know we have sufficient numbers.

(Any data being shared in online booking will not be held once the slides and additional information for the training have been shared with participants.)

If that date is not suitable, Elgin congregations have the same training on the evening of Thursday 28 April – contact Rev Jenny for booking details.

There's more general information about the work of the Church of Scotland's Integrity group at:

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-views/violence-against-women/violence-against-women-resources>

Solvitur Ambulando

("It is solved by walking" - a saying attributed to St Augustine)

While walking I have some of my best ideas, formulate plans, consider options, come to decisions.

Prayer never comes easily, but my mind focusses better while I'm walking. Inspiration comes in many forms and somehow I find the words:-

Brisk winds stir up grey waves under a leaden sky.
I am alone. The beach seems empty, scoured, but there is much to observe.

Wary redshank sounds the beach's early warning, curlews burble, sandpipers pipe, oystercatchers peep, rise in the air, settle again, a monochrome whirr slashed with orange.
Sanderling scatter on tip-toe before the incoming breaker, blown sideways by the wind but as the tide recedes, they scamper forward again, searching for sustenance. To and fro as the tide ebbs and flows, they persevere.

Thank you, God, for the beauty and diversity of living creatures and for the lessons they teach us.

Stunted, salt-scorched Scots Pines line the shore. Damaged yet resilient. The soil crumbles, roots are exposed, vulnerable, but they cling on.

Gnarled, long-needed Corsican Pines huddle, their wind-wrought, twisted limbs adapting to survive.

Storm-shredded marram grass, dry and harsh, stabilises the shifting dunes.

A doubter's fragile faith, easily eroded.

Lord, protect and nourish my roots. Keep me strong, even when life distorts me.

At the high watermark, the detritus of our careless, throwaway

society mingles with driftwood and tangled strands of scattered seaweed. Ropes and nets, drinks bottles and food wrappers, creels and crates, floats and buoys, clothing and discarded toys.

I ponder over marless footwear and gloves. One half lost, the pair sundered, useless.

I retrieve a length of fishing line with hooks and lead weights still attached, the tinselled lures glittering, deadly, ready to entangle birds and marine life.

Forgive us, God, for our wasteful ways. Show us how to heal your wounded World.

Wartime defences still guard the bay. Crumbling concrete walls shielded by metal barriers.

'Keep Out', the notices say, but inside there is colourful graffiti. Some may call it vandalism, but here is no mindless obscenity, here is real talent on show.

"This is who I am", the artist proclaims. "My tag is my identity".

Lord, you know each of us by name. We are loved.

On the shingle bar pebbles roll back and forth, smoothed by time and tide.

Lord, my prayer is not smooth, polished, perfect like these pebbles.

Mine is the hesitant drop of a single stone that bounces and spins off into the void or a chaotic landslip of jagged, jumbled thoughts. Untidy and ill-formed but heartfelt.

"I hear you, my child. I understand"

I walk on, still close to nature, a little closer to God.

Church Calendar (continued)

May 2022

Sun 1 May	All-age worship, Duffus Kirk 10.30am
Sun 8 May	All-age worship, Spynie Kirk 10.30am
Sun 8 May	Forest Church, meeting at Hopeman East Beach/playing field car park, 4-4.40pm
Sun 15 May	All-age worship, Hopeman Kirk 10.30am – Communion
Mon 16 May	Board & Session meeting, Hopeman Kirk Hall 7pm
Sun 22 May	All-age worship, Duffus Kirk 10.30am
Sun 29 May	All-age worship, Spynie Kirk 10.30am

June 2022

Sun 5 June	All-age worship, Hopeman Kirk 10.30am – Pentecost
Sun 12 June	All-age worship, Duffus Kirk 10.30am - Communion
Sun 12 June	Forest Church, at Earthtime by Duffus House 4-4.40pm
Sun 19 June	Café Church, Spynie Hall 10.30am – <i>to be confirmed</i>
Sun 26 June	All-age worship, Hopeman Kirk 10.30am

Looking ahead...

Sun 10 July	Forest Church, meeting Spynie Kirk car park, 4-4.40pm
Sun 14 Aug	Forest Church, at Earthtime by Duffus House 4-4.40pm

Would you prefer to get the church magazine by email in the future?

If so, please email Christine Smith: salterhill@live.com
Paper copies will continue to be distributed to the church
family who don't/can't opt for email.

Duffus, Spynie & Hopeman Church Calendar

All gatherings will be subject to current public health guidelines.

In addition to gathering in buildings, you can join in by phone or online:

- **Phone (01309) 484774** for a 10 minute recorded reflection
- Find us on **YouTube or Facebook** for 10 minute recorded reflections and livestreamed worship whenever possible

See also **dshchurch.co.uk** for more information

March 2022

Sun 20 Mar All-age worship, Duffus Kirk 10.30am

Sun 27 Mar All-age worship, Spynie Kirk 10.30am

April 2022

Sun 3 Apr All-age worship, Hopeman Kirk 10.30am
plus congregation's Annual Stated Meeting after worship

Sun 10 Apr All-age worship, Duffus Kirk 10.30am

Sun 10 Apr Forest Church, at Earthtime by Duffus House 2-2.40pm

Thu 14 Apr Maundy Thursday communion, Hopeman Kirk 7pm

Fri 15 Apr Soul space drop-in, Hopeman Kirk 10am-12noon

Fri 15 Apr Good Friday reflective service, Duffus Kirk 7pm

Sat 16 Apr Soul space drop-in, Hopeman Kirk 10am-12noon

Sun 17 Apr (Easter Sunday):-

Ecumenical sunrise service, Lossiemouth 5.30am

Service at St. Peter's Kirk, Duffus 7.30am

All-age Easter communion, Spynie Kirk 10.30am

Sun 24 Apr All-age worship, Hopeman Kirk 10.30am

Mon 25 Apr Board & Session meeting to discuss draft
Moray Presbytery mission plan, Hopeman Kirk Hall 7pm