

**Abbey Church
and
Dirleton Kirk News
February/March 2024**

Minister:

**Rev. Dr David J Graham,
BSc, BD**

**Sunday Morning Worship
at**

**9.30 am (until 10.20)
Dirleton Kirk**

**10.30am (Until 11.30)
Abbey Church**

**Come along
All welcome**

**Dirleton
Wednesdays 10am Half
Hour Prayer Service**

Dear Friends,

By the time you read this, we will be well into the 'new' year of 2024. I wonder what this year has in store for you? Do you have any particular plans, ideas, or dreams? Did you make any new year resolutions, and if you did, have you kept them?

Perhaps you have specific prayers for this year, either for your own life, for your family and loved ones, or for the wider world.

Globally speaking, this is going to be a very important year for politics and government. Almost half of the world's population will be voting for their (new) leaders in 2024. This may include ourselves in the UK, but also in many other countries, large and small. Our prayer is that these elections are conducted with honesty and integrity, and the people chosen would be leaders who pursue peace and justice.

We've also entered a new year in which many places in the world are in war or other conflicts. There have been more wars since 1945 than at any time in history, and, sadly, that doesn't look like changing. We pray for peace, for protection of the vulnerable, and for a just resolution to the causes of conflict.

There are many challenges ahead of us this year, but let's never forget that the One who made time is also the One who goes with us. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

May your year be a blessed one.

David

Future Church Services

In the weeks until Easter, we'll be following the life and ministry of Jesus, as told in Mark's gospel. You may wish to prepare for this by reading the *Gospel of Mark*.

We also have a weekly Lent Group in preparation for Easter, meeting in Abbey small hall from 7.30-9.00pm for 5 weeks commencing 22nd February.

This year Easter is quite early, and Lent begins in mid-February.



A Journey Through Lent
with
The Gospel According to Mark

WALT

(Women Are Learning Together)

February sees the end of our study series on 'Come Dine With Jesus'. Over the past few months, we have realised that Jesus did much of his teaching as a dinner party guest. The meals he shared with others were often life changing for those who participated as Jesus didn't just eat with family and friends, but he also ate with the outsider, the despised, the marginalised, the lost and the lonely.

Jesus calls us to come and dine, to feast on who he is and learn more about him through his word.

5th February - Jesus' Final Meals

The Road to Emmaus - Luke 24:13-24

A Fish Supper - Luke 24:36-49

Breakfast on the Beach - John 21:1-25

4th March - Andrew and Simon Peter, Brothers, Disciples but very different!

WALT meets at 2:00 on the first Monday of the month in Abbey small hall. Hot drinks are available at the beginning of each meeting. Each study lasts between 45 - 60 minutes, and all women are warmly invited.



Abbey Kirk Session

Robert Burgon



It was so good to see so many people attending our Christmas services with the Pop-Up Nativity service on the morning of Christmas Eve and the Family Service later that day being particularly well attended. Many of those at these services are not regular members of the congregation, but it was encouraging to see some who have other links with our congregation (such as through attendance at Little Nippers and Muddy Church). Once again, the generosity of those attending the special services was shown in the amounts gathered in our special offerings. This year we decided to support the East Lothian Foodbank and the International Committee of the Red Cross (for their critical work in Israel and Gaza). Including the proceeds of the giant Christmas Card, which was again organised by Milne Brodie, a total of £1,435 was donated and has been shared equally between the two charities.

10 December 2023 marked the exact 25th anniversary of David Graham's induction to the linked charges of Dirleton and North Berwick: Abbey. We couldn't let such a momentous occasion pass by without unnoticed. We surprised David and Mary at the conclusion of the service that morning with a card and celebratory cake (once again expertly baked and decorated by Isabel Smith). Our congregations have so much to thank God for David and Mary's faithful ministry to us (so far) and ask that they both be blessed in all that continue to do.

The beginning of a new year is traditionally a time for reflecting on the year which has just ended. Church of Scotland congregations have to submit annual returns of their membership (showing increases and decreases), baptisms, weddings, funerals etc. At a time when the media tells us that church membership and attendance is declining, it is good to report that in spite of losing a number of members who died during the year, our membership numbers at the year-end are broadly static. However, the average attendance at our weekly services has increased by 10% over the year. It is not often that positive statistics like this get mentioned in the press or anywhere else. Having made the submission to Presbytery by the due date, your Session Clerk's next duty is to prepare what our Treasurer describes as the "wordy part" of the Annual Report for the year to 31 December 2023. This is done as the Treasurer, Stuart Ainslie, prepares the annual accounts for approval by the Kirk Session in March. The full document should be available to members of the congregation before the end of March and details of our annual congregational meeting will be announced in due course.



As well as reflecting on the achievements of the past year, the Annual Report will contain the recently revised Vision Statement for the 2020s which is reviewed annually by the Kirk Session. The latest version includes a list of what we see as our priorities for the year ahead. In advance of the publication of the full document, I thought that it would be useful to share the headings of our priority activities (which are shown in no particular order):

- Work with young people and families;
- Mission and Outreach;
- Worship Leading;
- Development of our prayer life;
- Bible Study;
- Pastoral Care and World Church.

There is detail attached to these headings- and we have Kirk Session Committees with responsibility for the subjects mentioned. These Committees consist of elders and others with an interest in the topic. We are always keen to involve more people in the work of the Committees and if you have an interest in any of the subjects, please let me know.

The Kirk Session will meet again on 5 February 2024 and the agenda for that meeting will include consideration of the "wordy part" of the Annual Report.

World Church Committee

Happy new year from all in the world Church committee. We hope that everyone had a happy and peaceful Christmas. 2024 is set to be an exciting year for Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk in terms of World Church and we really hope that you get involved in as many of our events as possible and help us to raise much needed funds for good causes.

Back by popular demand, you will be pleased to hear that our schedule of events for the year ahead will include both the Christian Aid Quiz which we will be holding in Abbey Church and the Christian Aid Coffee Morning to be held in Dirleton Kirk. Both the quiz night and the coffee morning are always well attended and great social occasions in our Church calendar, please get involved and support these fantastic events again!



New for 2024, we will be holding a Children's Clothes Drive in Abbey Church for childrens clothes between 0-12 years. Our plan is to ask locally for donations of children's clothing in good condition to be washed and sorted into bags labelled by age (eg. 3-6months, 4-5 years etc). On the day itself, we will have the clothes laid out on tables according to age and for a small fee, families and caregivers will be able to take part in a clothes swap. As well as raising money, by swapping instead of shopping we will help promote sustainability and reduce waste. We are still ironing out the finer details of this event so more information to follow! For



the meantime, if you have any children's clothes you would like to donate, please email Judy Lockhart-Hunter at Abbey Church on judy.lockhart@hotmail.co.uk.

Over the last few years on World Church Committee, we have raised awareness and small sums for initiatives such as Christian Aid, Eco Church, The Sophie Hayes Foundation and The Teapot Trust. We are always looking for new members to help in our committee. If you would like to get involved or are simply interested in learning more about the World Church Committee, please reach out to any of our current committee: Yolanda Strachan, Judy Lockhart-Hunter, Dorothy Kirkpatrick, Janice Cobb, Ronald Ironside at Abbey Church, and in Dirleton Kirk, Liz Keddie.



Please keep an eye out for our updates in future newsletters and intimations where we will publish the dates of our events and more information on how you can help us!

TAG - Tuesday Afternoon Group

It is amazing to think that we are on the last couple of months of our current syllabus. It has been encouraging to see a good turn out at our meetings where as well as learning from speakers on a variety of interesting subjects we also enjoy each other's company.

The rest of our syllabus is as follows:-

February

13th at 2:00pm - 'Real Eightsome' - The Real Eightsome is a choir which as the name suggests is normally made up of up of eight singers. They will perform a Scottish programme, many of which you will know. You will recognise at least a couple of the faces!

27th at 2:00pm - 'Pick-ups for Peace' - Alan Nisbet from North Berwick travelled to Ukraine last year to deliver an important cargo. Come and hear his story.

March

1st at 3:00 - World Day of Prayer in Abbey Church - Although this is not specifically a TAG meeting it would be great if folk could help swell the numbers at this service which is Abbey's turn to organise this year.

12th at 2:00pm - 'Leuchie House' - Jo Yates will give us an update of the work carried out at our local Leuchie House which is a National Respite Centre which focusses on giving guests and their families a great short break experience.

26th at 2:00 - 'A Special Memory' - A few of our group will share a special memory with us. It may be an object, an experience, a holiday or something else

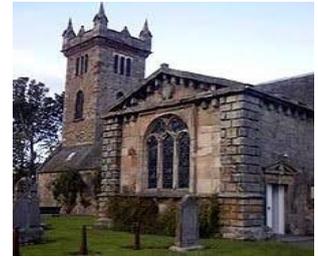
which is treasured in their memories. This will be followed by an Easter Tea and a short AGM where we will discuss the future of this group.



Although we had to cancel our January meeting, many thanks to all who contributed to the Fresh Start collection. All donations were uplifted on 23rd January.

Dirleton Kirk Session

Keith Stewart



The Season of Epiphany- the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles- has commenced, with Bob Kane's excellent sermon reminding us to look at it not as the 'end' of Christmas, but rather as the start of the work of Christmas. I know that it is possible to give way to a feeling of 'thank goodness it's all over for another year' when the decorations come down; and, increasingly, there is a sense that society urges us to feel a bit ashamed of it- advancing the idea that we should make amends for our 'self-indulgence'- hence the rather 'fun-free' or 'fun-lite' calls for us to observe a 'Dry January', or a 'Veganuary'... Perhaps taking the tradition of fasting, which Christians have observed in preparation for great festivals, during Advent and Lent, and turning it into a matter of doing penance for how Christmas was celebrated.

For Christians, the celebrating, the food and drink, the festivities, are not in themselves the things that are valued at Christmas: they are merely reflections of our joy at the astonishing event by which the Word took on flesh, and dwelt among us- which was to end with total victory snatched from what had seemed catastrophic and unrelieved failure- and which fills the whole of life with meaning. We need feel no

embarrassment at celebrating the coming of Christ into the world.

Our specific work of charity at Christmas began of course even before Advent, with our participation in the shoebox appeal organised by Blythswood, and continued with the collections taken at our worship- including the very well-attended Watchnight Service, held jointly with Abbey- in support of our two charities, the East Lothian Food Bank, and the International Red Cross. We had further joint services on Christmas Eve, the Sunday, when we drew upon the rich tradition of Nativity plays in presenting a 'pop-up' Nativity, in which I got to play the part of Narrator. The Minister told me that I would need only one prop- a water-pistol. I found one and, with iron self-control, managed to prevent myself during the performance from opening fire at cast, congregation or Minister. It was great fun, and thanks to all who participated, whether as cast, or in providing the 'audience participation'.

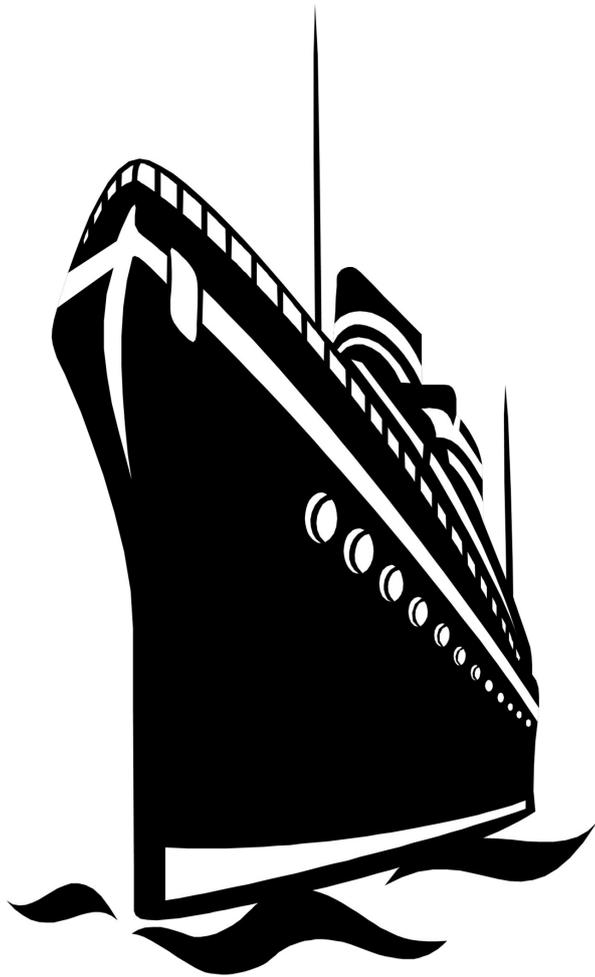
Mention of Nativity plays brings back the Sunday School's efforts in that regard. We are not operating a Sunday School regularly at the moment, but do so occasionally, as we did in the Autumn when we made a straw Angel to participate in the Dirleton scarecrow competition. Although we did not enter with a view to winning a prize, nonetheless, when the rather weather beaten effigy was removed from the side of the Kirk,

we found a rosette beside it- had the children's efforts in stuffing pillowcases with straw, and decorating them with features cut from felt, been enough to win a prize? Do encourage anyone who might enjoy coming to Sunday School to get in touch with us directly or via the Abbey Office.

Our thanks are due to Nancy Hughes who stepped in at short notice for Jim Dickson on one occasion during December, when Jim was laid low by a virus. Happily Jim is back with us, and the organ is playing well after a recent gremlin interfered with one of the pedals!

Thanks also to Gordon Symon, our fabric convenor, for prompt action in arranging for a boiler repair after the Kirk was found to be without heat in the middle of December- the lack of heating would otherwise have perilled not only our Sunday worship but also a concert for Muirfield Riding Therapy, the Primary School's Carol Service, and a wedding on 28th December!

Finally, a Kirk Session meeting on 26th November acknowledged the twenty-fifth anniversary of David's preaching-in to the post of Minister of Dirleton, and moved to take action to commemorate this, and to offer a small, unrepresentative token of our thanks, for all his devoted service. We will take up a collection to this end. I'll have more to say on all this in the near future. Till then- Happy Epiphany!



REGAL

Next meeting

12th March

TBC

Don't Miss the Boat

REGAL is a lunchtime meeting at noon of our Retired Elegant Gentleman and Ladies for a small talk/presentation followed by a soup and sandwiches lunch. A lovely social gathering during the winter months.

We are always looking for new speakers or helpers so please contact the office if you have suggestions for the talks or can offer to help on the day.

abbeychurch@abbeychurch.co.uk

Abbey Church Flower Rota

DATE	DONOR	ARRANGER
4 February	Doreen Adams	Dorothy Kirkpatrick
11 February	Anna Jardine	Isabel Smith
18 February	Violet Lamont	Isabel Smith
25 February	Sadie Young	Sadie Young
3 March	Maureen Sharpe	Irene Nichol
10 March	Janice Cobb	Irene Nichol
17 March	Kate Campbell	Kate Campbell
24 March	Clare Aitken	Clare Aitken
31 March Easter	Alison Bell	Elma Danks Irene Brodie



Abbey Church Sunday Tea Rota

DATE	
4 February	Rose Leslie & Mary Graham
11 February	Ann Bell & A N Other
18 February	Linda McLean & Bel Hardie
25 February	Susan Ainslie & A N Other
3 March	Isobel Smith & Sadie Young
10 March	Katrina Hendry & Irene Nichol
17 March	Fiona Gibson & A N Other
24 March	Mary Graham & Rose Leslie
31 March	Anne Bell & A N Other



Please have a look at our website

<https://www.abbeychurch.org.uk/>

To get information of all the events organised by
Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk.

Sunday Services, prayer meetings, bible classes, TAG
REGAL, WALT, Alpha, Little Nippers,
to mention but a few.

We have many other groups using our church halls,
Little Artists, pilates classes, Jo Jingles, fitness clas-
ses, The Drama Mill, The Brownies, Dunedin Dance,
Freedom and Form, Interoception Yoga, The Scone
Café.

If you are interested in hiring our halls on a regular
basis or for a 'one off' event please get in touch with
Abbey Church office on 01620 892800 or
abbeychurch@abbeychurch.co.uk



Church Register

Wedding

29.12.23 Grant Forrest and Christy Amber Farrell

Funerals

28.12.23 Dominic McCreadie

16.1.24 Graeme Bettison

22.1.24 Margaret Birch

New Members

Abbey Church

Colin and Jackie Ley

Pastoral Visits

The Minister and Pastoral Assistant are happy to contact church members if requested. In the first instance, please contact the Minister (892410) or the Church Office (892800). For privacy reasons, any request for a pastoral visit should come from the individual or a family member.

It would also be helpful to have a mobile number, and the details of the person's next of kin.

Abbey Church,
116 High Street, (at Church Road)
North Berwick

Church Office: 01620 892800

abbeychurch@abbeychurch.co.uk

*Office Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
10am until 1pm*

Working remotely Wednesday and Thursday

Newsletters

The next newsletter will cover April and May 2024.
The deadline for submitting articles is Tuesday 19th
March 2024. Please send to Abbey Church Office.

Abbeychurch.org.uk

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Abbey Church, North Berwick (Church of Scotland)

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