



Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk
April/May 2026

Interim Moderator
Rev Dr Jock Stein

Locum Minister
Rev Geoff Berry

Sunday Morning Worship
at
9.30 am (until 10.20)
Dirleton Kirk

10.30am (Until 11.30)
Abbey Church

Dirleton
Wednesdays 10am
Half Hour Prayer Service

Come along.
All welcome.



**Abbey Church
North Berwick**

INVITATION

to join us and other churches this
Holy Week and Easter

ALL WELCOME

- Monday** **Holy Week service in St Baldred's Church at**
30 March 2026 **7.30pm**
- Tuesday** **Holy Week service in Abbey Church at**
31 March **7.30pm**
- Wednesday** **Holy Week service in Our Lady Star of the Sea**
1 April 2026 **at 7.30pm**
- Thursday** **Maundy Thursday Holy Communion in St An-**
2 April 2026 **drew Blackadder Church at 7.30pm**
- Friday** **Good Friday service in Abbey Church at**
3 April 2026 **7.30pm**
- Friday** **Open Air Easter Sunday morning service on**
5 April 2026 **Anchor Green at 8.00am followed by break-**
 fast in Abbey Church hall
 Easter Sunday service in Dirleton Kirk at
 9.30am

 Easter Sunday service in Abbey Church at
 10.30am



Our Locum Minister Rev Geoff Berry

I lift up my eyes to the mountains - where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip - he who watches over you will not slumber.

- Psalm 121:1-3

So much of my life has been spent in mountains around the world. Seventeen years as a full-time ski teacher and race coach, in both northern and southern hemispheres, as well as another ten years or so as a part time instructor. The first twelve years I worked in the hills was before I came to faith, which I very much view as a gift from God. And yet even through that time, I didn't ever not believe there was some guiding intelligence and power in the universe. Working in the mountains, or at sea, leaves you in no doubt that humans are very small and live fleeting lives. This may seem like a recipe for reducing your sense of self-worth; but, on the contrary, the knowledge that the eternal Lord of cre-



ation cares for us as individuals should lift our spirits regardless of our immediate circumstances.

There is a reason Isaiah 40 is one of my favourite Old Testament passages.

10 See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. 11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

I have been blessed to have had jobs throughout my life (mostly) that I thoroughly enjoyed. I'm now in something of a voluntary career hiatus and so it has been immensely encouraging to spend time in Dirleton and Abbey Kirks. So, thank you for making me so welcome and I look forward to Easter with you.

P.S. In the photo, taken earlier this month, I was having a lot more fun than the last one in a rain-swept WW1 graveyard (although I suspect the rainy one was far more important in the grand scheme of things).

Abbey Kirk

Session Matters

April/May 2026



It was good to share some good (actually, excellent) news with our congregations in early March. You will recall that our Presbytery decided in late 2025 to increase our ministry allocation from 25% of someone's time (under the ongoing guardianship of an Interim Moderator appointed by Presbytery) to 75% (and not in guardianship). We welcomed this news. We were then advised in mid-January that our Presbytery had applied to the national church to have a further increase in our allocation. The Church of Scotland loves acronyms, and this request was lodged with the PPSPG- which stands for Presbytery Partnership Support Programmes Group. At its meeting in mid-February, the PPSPG approved the application and the Presbytery meeting at the beginning of March confirmed that we can call a full-time minister on a five-year reviewable basis.

This means that our Nominating Committee (which was appointed on 22 March) can commence the process of looking for a full-time minister for Dirleton Kirk linked with North Berwick: Abbey. In preparation for the search process, a Parish Profile (18 pages long) has

been prepared highlighting what we do and our strengths and weaknesses. This will be available to potential applicants when the Nominating Committee meets. When the Nominating Committee starts its work, there will be no detailed progress reports from that group, whose work is to be conducted in strict confidence, until they come forward with a recommendation of a sole nominee.

Few of us thought too much what a 25% ministry might look like and mean in practice. Many prayers have been said over the last few years that the good work which David Graham carried out in our churches might be permitted to continue in a real and meaningful way. These prayers have been answered, and we now trust that God will guide the right man or woman to us for the next stage of our journey in faith.

As we come to the end of the season on Lent, we look forward to joining with fellow Christians from other churches and denominations in the series of ecumenical Holy Week services before our own celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. Details of all these services are contained elsewhere in this newsletter, and I pray that many Abbey members will be able to attend these services.

Bob Kane has served as our joint Pastoral Assistant for some 18 years and will be retiring from his post on 31 March 2026. The congregation has been given an

opportunity to thank Bob in a tangible way, and we hope to hold a congregational meal after Easter at which Bob will be our guest of honour. In view of the vacancy, we do not plan to appoint a replacement Pastoral Assistant until a new minister is inducted and we can discuss with them what sort of pastoral support they would like.

Visitors to our beautiful town love an open church and we hope, again this summer, to open our sanctuary for visitors between Easter and end-September. This will depend on appropriate numbers of volunteers coming forward to assist in the opening and closing of the premises. An appeal will be made in the weekly intimations.

Finally, our sincere thanks go to North Berwick in Bloom (and specifically Libby Morris and Alex Hutchison) for agreeing to "adopt" the plants which decorate the corridor between the two halls in Abbey Church. These plants had been looking a bit sorry for themselves, but after some initial loving attention by Libby and Alex, they are already beginning to look better.

The Abbey Kirk Session meets again on 27 April 2026.

Robert Burgon

Dirleton Kirk

Session Matters

April/May 2026



The excellent news from Presbytery is that the next Minister of Dirleton and Abbey will be 'full time', a '100%' allocation. Putting to one side the necessary jargon in which these announcements are couched (I am reminded of that mordant comedian Dave Allen, in the 1970s, crouched on his bar stool, considering the statistic that the average family has 1.8 children and wondering "What the h*ll is point eight of a child?") this is great news, and an answer to our prayers. Many people have been concerned, gravely concerned, about the implications of a '25%' allocation for many aspects of our worship and our collective life as a congregation. The possibility of leaving our congregation, and going to worship elsewhere, has been mentioned to me, if our new Minister was not going to be full time.

Now that we have the assurance that our growing congregations at Dirleton and Abbey are to be served with appropriate ministerial resources (sorry, the jargon must be catching) we must apply ourselves diligently and prayerfully to the business of issuing a call for a new Minister, and to the process of selecting an applicant who best meets the needs of the whole of our congregation, and the parish at large.

When the nominating committee sets about its task, there will be six representatives of the Dirleton congregation on it: but every single member of the congregation can provide input, insights, thoughts, reflections, and most importantly prayers, on this matter. Whoever is appointed to the nominating committee should know that they are charged with identifying someone who will lead, guide, counsel and cherish the life of the whole of the congregation. The whole of the congregation, and not merely the nominating committee, can involve itself in the process- so be ready to share your thoughts, hopes and reflections on the matter as the task is undertaken.

I take the opportunity afforded by this newsletter of thanking Rev. Jock Stein for his patient and deft handling of the role of our Interim Moderator, since David's retirement, and Rev. Geoff Berry for the enthusiasm and energy which he is bringing as locum minister.

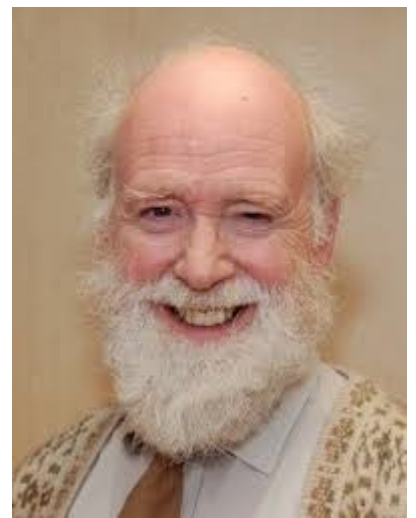
We celebrated Holy Communion at Dirleton on Sunday 15th March, and I must thank Daisy Tse for her diligent preparation for the sacrament, with Alison Stokes' assistance. Anne Carswell is stepping back from the role of superintending Communion, after long, patient and uncomplaining service in the role. It is only when someone who has taken responsibility for something resigns from such a post, having for so long ar-

ranged matters seamlessly and smoothly, that we realize fully the complexities and difficulties of the task, and appreciate fully their service.

Many thanks Anne.

K.D.S

Our Interim Moderator Rev Dr Jock Stein



You may have already heard that Presbytery has allowed us to call a minister on a fulltime rather than a 75% basis, and we have got this news just in time to update the 'parish profile' which the Nomination Committee will use as they seek to find our new minister.

By the time you see this, the Committee will have been chosen with seven members from Abbey and six from Dirleton. The Committee will appoint their own convener and clerk, and their first task will be to advertise the vacancy using the Parish Profile. They will work in confidence, and as you know this word in English has two different meanings: while on the one hand it indicates that we should be patient and not try to pester them for information, on the other it tells us

that we and they should be confident about the Lord's good purpose for us.

As it happens I have been enthusing a bit about 'passionate patience' a phrase from Eugene Peterson's translation of what the risen Lord said to the church at Philadelphia: "Because you kept my word in passionate patience, I'll keep you safe in the time of testing . . ." While in context it is a time of testing which will come over the whole earth, I recall the time this congregation was tested with the prospect of only being allowed one quarter of a ministry post, and I salute your faithfulness.

The Lord bless you and keep you,
Jock Stein



A Fond Farewell

Bob Kane

Some 20 years ago I was obliged to take medical retirement from my job with the Church of Scotland. What's more, the Doctors strongly advised that I take time before even considering a return to work ... as one might imagine Belinda put it even more forcefully. Sometime later I was looking for part time work, and was approached and was delighted to accept, the post of pastoral assistant to both Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk.

Time indeed has sped by and I very much want to thank you all for the support and assistance I have received over the years in extending our care and message to the community, especially all the helpers with the Easter flower distribution (!!), Regal and so much else.

Any pastoral job can and will have times when one feels spent or unequal to the task. I want to record my deep heartfelt thanks for the care and kindness you have shown me. It has been a lot of fun, joy and spiritual blessing as well, with the trip to Iona, opposite, standing out among so many good times.

For the avoidance of doubt Belinda and I are staying in North Berwick, but we'll have a little break at times.

God Bless you and keep you all, now and in the future.

See you soon,
Bob

Tuesday Afternoon Group

It's hard to believe that we have come to the end of our 2025/26 syllabus. We have enjoyed a wide range of meetings and have joined together with St. Andrew Blackadder for two project meetings.



We would like to thank all those who have attended over the year as we greatly value your support. A special thanks goes to Joyce our Treasurer who has kept our records in good order and has produced clear accounts.

The plan going forward is that we will meet on the first Tuesday of every month from September until May. We are going to close our bank account due to the fact that we are now charged a monthly fee for having the account and we are also charged for every hundred pounds we deposit. If a speaker is representing a charity, a collection will be taken at the meeting and will be given to the speaker who will sign for it in order to keep our records straight.

Our first meeting of the new session will be on Tuesday 1st September where we will celebrate Harvest in some way. Details will be given nearer the time.

So, a great big Thank You once again for the fun and fellowship we have shared over the year. Let us keep this verse in our hearts until we meet again in September.

"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." Hebrews 10:23

Sally and Sheila

Bethany Lunchtime Care Van.

Last year we started a joint venture with North Berwick Christian Fellowship who have for many years been involved with the Lunchtime Care Van in Edinburgh which is operated by Bethany Christian Trust in Partnership with Edinburgh City Mission and with local churches in Edinburgh and the Lothians.



The van goes out 5 days a week to assist with feeding men and women who are either homeless or living in temporary accommodation in Edinburgh.

The three staff on the van are normally provided by NBCF but there is a pool of volunteers and there will be an opportunity for volunteers from Abbey to gain experience on the van serving tea/coffee and sandwiches/crisps/biscuits & fruit and packets of soup, and stocking or cleaning the van.

Drivers have to be under age 70 in order to be covered by the insurance.

We go out on the third Monday of each month and spend time at three fixed spots around the City where we are expected.

On average we are serving 40-50 " users" but occasionally that can rise as high as 70 so it is clear that this is an essential service.

The food and beverages are purchased on the Saturday and the ingredients for the sandwiches are brought to Abbey on the Sunday before church whereupon our dedicated team of "chefs" make up 70 rounds of sandwiches which are carefully marked and packaged ready for transportation to the Van on Monday morning. We also give the "users" a choice of sandwiches which they really appreciate as they are not used to being given a choice.

Dorothy Kirkpatrick and Joyce Strachan lead our team assisted by a pool of assistants including Margaret Ann Crawford, Lyle Crawford and Irene Nichol.

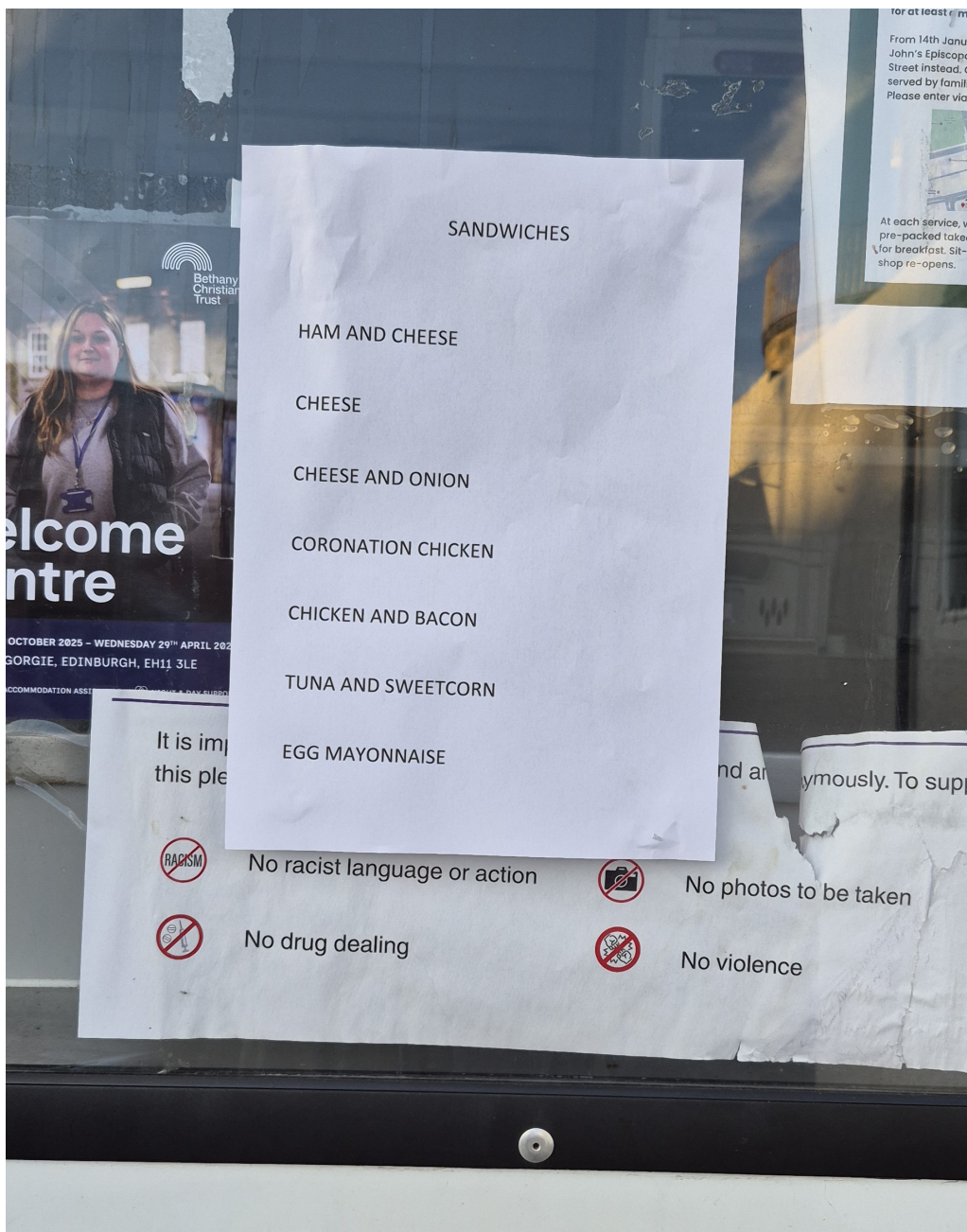
Dorothy also organises clothes such as socks, underwear, tee shirts, jeans and jumpers and these are either taken up to be included on the van or dropped off at the Bethany Shop in Gullane. Please do contact Dorothy if you wish to donate any items, these are really appreciated by the men and women we serve especially in the winter.

The role of working on the van requires volunteers to work as part of a team and remain calm under pressure as well as having a desire to enrich the lives of vulnerable members of society and to be respectful of

the Christian ethos upon which Bethany Christian Trust is founded.

Overall it is a God-given opportunity to serve those who have fallen by the wayside in life and it is a humbling experience as most have no job, no home, no money, no food and a sense of worthlessness and lost identity and yet they will thank you for serving and ask you how you are and what kind of day you have had.

Ken



CAN YOU HELP?

Like most churches, Abbey Church relies on the time and talents of volunteers for many roles. There are usually opportunities for people to help in new ways and we would currently like to see more people helping in the following areas:

THE CHOIR



We have a small, but dedicated choir, leading praise at our services and would like to see this number increasing. Currently, there is only a short practice immediately before the service- and an ability to read music, while useful, is not essential. Do you enjoy singing and think that you could help by joining the choir? If we see a few more people in the choir, then we might even be able to return to singing occasional choral items to supplement our congregational worship. If you would like to help, please contact Robert Burgon.

LITTLE NIPPERS

Although we have seen an increase in the team supporting our Little Nippers Coordinator, Catherine, at the term-time Thursday morning sessions for pre-school children and their carers, we can always do with a few more who might have a spare Thursday morning once or twice during a school term. If you would like to help, please contact Catherine Mundell (email: littlenippersnb@outlook.com)



LITTLE NIPPERS



We've had a wonderful spring term at Little Nippers with lots of families coming along each week to play, chat, sing and have lots of fun!

It's amazing to see the little ones using their imaginations - whether making dinner in the play kitchen, looking after the dolls or building exciting train track creations. And it's a joy to see the babies starting to roll, sit up and join in at snack time.

We will have a special Easter celebration on Thursday 2nd April - with an Easter story, songs and a little treat for each child. We will then break for the Easter holidays and start back on Thursday 23rd April.

Little Nippers meets every Thursday during term time from 10.00-11.30am in the church hall. All children age 0-5 and their parents / carers are very welcome so please do spread the word.

If you want any more information about Little Nippers, please contact Catherine at littlenipper-sNB@outlook.com

ABBEY CHURCH FLOWER ROTA

DATE	DONOR	ARRANGER
5th April	Val Watt	Elma Danks Irene Brodie
12th April	Helen Mackenzie	Elma Danks Irene Brodie
19th April	Joan Griffith	Joan Griffith
26th April	Val Young Irene Brodie	Elma Danks Irene Brodie
3rd May	Cath Hill Margaret McLean	Frances Falmyr Olive Curran
10th May	Donald McCulloch	Dorothy Kirkpatrick
17th May	Zandra Main	Isabel Smith
24th May	Sheila Burgon	Isabel Smith
31st May	Frances Falmyr	Frances Falmyr Olive Curran



ABBHEY CHURCH SUNDAY TEA ROTA

DATE	ON DUTY
5th April	Katrina Hendry Isabel Smith
12th April	Bel Hardie Morna McClure
19th April	Joyce Strachan Rose Leslie
26th April	Fiona Gibson Linda McLean
3rd May	Liz Wright Anne Bell
10th May	Sally Penman A. N. Other
17th May	Sadie Young Dorothy Kirkpatrick
24th May	Katrina Hendry Isabel Smith
31st May	Bel Hardie Morna McClure



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,
Little Lights, Little Nippers, to mention but a few.

We have many other groups using our church halls,
Pilates classes, Jo Jingles, Conexus Tuition, The Drama
Mill, The Brownies, Dunedin Dance, Freedom and Form,
Interoception Yoga, JKA Bass Rock Karate, Kundalini
Yoga, Dirleton Playgroup, Yoga with Helen, Wild Tide
Yoga, The Scone Café, Scots Tots & Scots Fling, Erin
Taylor Yoga, North Berwick Country Dance.

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

Funerals

18.02.26 Elizabeth Stevenson

20.02.26 Helen Mitchell

25.02.26 Jenny Williamson

05.03.26 Ian Russell

06.03.26 Betty Scott

12.03.26 Stephen Parcell

Pastoral Visits

The Pastoral Team are happy to contact church members if requested. In the first instance, please contact 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*

Dirleton Kirk,
Dirleton Kirk, Manse Road,
Dirleton. EH39 5EJ

Newsletters

The next newsletter will cover June and July 2026. The deadline for submitting articles is Tuesday 19th May 2026. Please send to Abbey Church Office on the email address above.

Abbeychurch.org.uk

Like us on Facebook: Abbey Church, North Berwick & Dirleton Kirk



Abbey Church, North Berwick (Church of Scotland)

Scottish Charity No. SCO 04761—CCL51436