Abbey Church and Dírleton Kírk

Warmly invite you

to join us this

CHRISTMAS

Dear Abbey and Dirleton friends ,

This year has been one of great change and turmoil in the world. A war was waged (and still rages) on European soil. Our beloved Queen died, after a 70 year reign. This year was also the 'year of three Prime Ministers'. Then there is financial instability and the cost of living, the covid pandemic which has not disappeared, and the migrant crisis. The message of the Christmas angels of 'Peace on Earth' seems very faint.

At the time Jesus was born, there was also a lot of unrest and uncertainty. King Herod was in the last months of his long reign; Jesus and his parents had to flee from his murderous clutches. After Herod's death, Judea was divided up amongst his family. Plague and famine were not uncommon, and economic migrants and refugees toothey are not a just modern phenomenon. What was the answer to such seemingly insurmountable problems?

Some people turned to violence to achieve their political aims, others held on to political power. Some sought solace in their 'old time religion', hoping that the promises of the ancient prophets might somehow be fulfilled. They were, but not in the way most people though they would. God's answer was found in a baby, born to a poor family in a remote part of the world.

God can surprise us at times. 'His ways are not our ways', and his answers are not always the way we would try to solve things. At the end of a tumultuous year, let's look for God in the unexpected places. And find him above all in the manger of Bethlehem.

I hope you have a very peaceful and happy Christmas.

Your Minister,

David



Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk News December 22 /January 23

Minister:

Rev. Dr David J Graham, BSc, BD

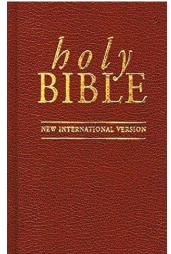
Sunday Morning Worship at

9.30 am (until 10.20) Dirleton Kirk

10.30am (Until 11.30) Abbey Church

Come along. All welcome.

Wednesdays 10am Half Hour Prayer Service Dirleton Our **Bible Study** discussion group meets on Thursday evenings until December 1st, then takes up again on January 19th. We're using 'Sleeping Giant', the new book by Tommy MacNeil about renewal and revival. Join us!



The annual 'Remembering Loved Ones' service is on Sunday 4th December in Abbey, an opportunity to give thanks for those we have loved and lost.

Pastoral Care

The next of our occasional pastoral meetings is in January (date to be confirmed). This will be an informal chance to chat about pastoral care and share some resources (it will NOT be a place for individuals to be discussed!). This is for anyone interested in the pastoral care we offer as a congregation, so feel free to come and invite others.



Christmas Offerings to support Kids Love Clothes The offerings at this year's special Christmas services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, along with donations made in support of Abbey's giant Christmas card, will be donated to a charity called Kids Love Clothes.

This is an entirely volunteer-led charity, based in Ratho and operating with volunteers throughout the Lothians (including North Berwick). The families which Kids Love Clothes aim to support are based in the Lothians and sadly, the need for their service continues to grow. The mission of the charity is "to give a wardrobe's worth of quality, donated clothes to every child in the Lothians who really needs it." Since being set up in 2009, Kids Love Clothes have supported over 7,000 children.

In addition to cash donations, we hope to pass on quality, used children's clothes to Kids Love Clothes.



Abbey Kirk Session Robert Burgon



It was a joy to see such a large congregation in church on Remembrance Sunday, 13 November 2022, when Abbey Church hosted official representatives and members of the town's uniformed organisations in a service which reflected on the tragedy of conflict, including, but sadly not restricted to, the two World Wars in the last century. The sanctuary downstairs was almost full and there were also many people in the balcony. David left us all with a real message of hope, in spite of the anguish and sorrow which conflict brings. During his sermon, we spotted a colourful butterfly flitting around. Such a visitor isn't unusual in church (I assume it isn't the same one!), but this one somehow underlined the feeling of hope that morning.

Attendances at the services in the weeks leading up to Remembrance Sunday had also been encouraging and it has been especially good to welcome back some of our members who hadn't felt able to come to church since the first Covid lockdown, but are now doing so on a regular basis.

The Harvest Thanksgiving weekend on 1 and 2 October was a happy time for all involved. Starting with a wellattended harvest supper on the Saturday evening and concluding with worship in a beautifully decorated



sanctuary on Sunday morning, our focus this year was our twinned congregation in Kalimpong, North India. We raised over £2000 to support that church in providing families with fruit

plants to enable them to grow fruit either for their own use or for sale (which would give them muchneeded income).

The issues relating to Presbytery Mission Planning rumble on. Our request that the Presbytery's Plan should be reviewed by the Mission Plan Panel established by the General Assembly was lodged in October (within the 14-day period allowed for such requests). Unfortunately, the Presbytery of Lothian's Plan was altered after its initial submission to the appropriate bodies in the Church of Scotland and has had to be resubmitted. We will therefore have to lodge our request again (and it is likely to be adjusted in the light of the latest version of the Presbytery's Plan). Once submitted, the Panel is allowed up to three months to consider the request. In the meantime, I would simply like to stress that, despite the proposed reduced ministry allocation for Abbey and Dirleton in the Presbytery Mission Plan, there are NO proposals to close either of the churches. If members hear anyone suggesting otherwise (as I have heard), it would be good

if they could take the opportunity to correct such unhelpful misstatements.

We have been pleased to welcome Karen Murray as our new Little Nippers Coordinator. Karen, who has recently joined the congregation with her husband Ian, is the grandmother of the youngest participant in our Sunday morning services, Maya, and she has offered to undertake this role on a voluntary basis. We wish her well as she leads this key area of work in our congregation.

At the beginning of Advent, as we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, I pray that all of the Abbey family and all who join us at worship in the coming weeks will experience peace and blessings this Christmas time and in 2023.



The Abbey Kirk Session meets again on 5 December 2022 and a report from that meeting will appear in the next Newsletter.

Dirleton Kirk Session Keith Stewart



Out of the eater, something to eat, Out of the strong, something sweet. (Judges 14:14)

This is the riddle which Samson poses to his thirty companions, in the Old Testament story, ahead of his wedding, and challenges them to solve. The puzzle posed by the hero refers back to his journey on the way to be married, when he finds a lion's carcass in which bees have nested: he scoops out some of their honey and eats it with his hands, sustaining himself on the journey. We have for a long time been reminded of the story by its featuring on the side of syrup tins, an image accompanied by the legend 'out of the strong came forth sweetness'.

Elsewhere in the Bible, though, bees get a worse press: cited for their capacity for hostility. The Amorites in the hill country are described as chasing the people of Israel 'like a swarm of bees' from Seir all the way to Hormah (Deuteronomy 1:44); and in Psalms 118:12, the lament is that all the nations swarm like bees around Israel.

All of that is by way of introduction to the point discussed at our most recent Kirk Session, that there are bees in the church tower, and other insects in the stairwell. Our thanks are due to Gordon, our Property Convener, for taking steps to obtain advice about how we might best deal with these matters. Happily no-one has yet been beset by swarms or chased anywhere; and I urge anyone in the mood for a sustaining snack not to venture up the ladder and into the tower in search of the bees' honey, but instead to hang on for the biscuits which are served to the many of us who go up to the Hall directly after worship on Sundays.

Also on the topic of the fabric of the Kirk, Gordon has completed the process of drawing up a formal application for Approval of Works, for submission to the Presbytery Clerk. This is part of the preliminaries towards obtaining grants to fund structural repairs to the tower.

We are often reminded that the real work of the church is with people, not with buildings: but our stewardship of a 400+ year old building confers upon us an important duty, to our congregation and to the wider public.

In these financially straitened times, it is most encouraging to hear from David Kirkpatrick, our Treasurer, that Gift Aid offerings are up 50% from 2018; while it appears that open offerings are on course to rise to 2018 levels. As the country emerges from pandemic restrictions, church hall lets are increasing again, as are wedding bookings (though we must bear in mind that the comparatively large number of weddings which Dirleton hosts takes a corresponding toll on the time and energy of the Minister, as well as those who assist. The Harvest appeal this year looked to provide horticultural supplies- seeds- for our twin church in Kalimpong, where the climate permits the cultivation of a staggering variety of flowers, fruit and vegetables. We are also looking to supply chanters, to help in the training of Kalimpong pipers!

Finally, may I express thanks on behalf of all of us to Liz Keddie and others who assisted in the exhibition of 'Cherished Clothes'. As a way of looking at clothing which is the opposite of 'disposable fashion', this was a thought-provoking exercise, one which caused us to reflect not only on the history of garments, but on the implications of how we purchase and use them today in a throwaway society. The exhibition raised the sum of £1,800 for the Teapot Trust.

Blythswood Shoebox Appeal 2022

Thank you to everyone who supported the Shoebox Appeal again. This year one hundred and eighteen boxes were collected from Abbey and Dirleton Churches, together with \pounds 275 in extra donations towards transport costs.

This year Ukraine has been added to the list of countries receiving gifts. The photographs in the Blythswood Newsletter showing the joy on the faces of the recipients make it all worthwhile.





The Bethany Welcome Centre has been open for 4 weeks now and have already supported 232 individual people who are experiencing homelessness. We have a couple of different volunteer opportunities we wanted to share with you.

Catering Teams

The evening meals are at the heart of the Welcome Centre providing a hot 2 course meal to the guests. The genuine care along with hot food is invaluable to us here. We still have a few dates to be filled this season. Could you or your church add a team to the rota?

Cleaners

With so many people using the service we need support getting rooms ready for our guests, particularly in the late afternoon, evenings and weekends. Do you have an hour you could spare per week to help?

If your are interested please contact <u>welcomecentreadmin@bethanychristiantrust.com</u>

Dirleton Kirk Flowers

A big thank you to all the kind people who have provided flowers for the church during the past year. They have given pleasure to many.

As we are now getting into the depths of winter we are not re-starting the rota. Several people have commented that they do not agree with buying imported flowers out of season. During these times of energy crisis we must respect this.

You will have noticed we are using artificial flowers which have been donated to the church over the years so no expense has been incurred. We hope we are setting an example and saving where we can.

There are people who like to mark different private anniversaries with flowers which they arrange themselves. We hope they continue to do this if they wish.



Abbey Church (All Funds) – Quarter to 30th September 2022 General

Payments exceeded receipts by £2,084. This is much better than budget. The budget was set to allow for the employment of a youth worker and many other expenses.

Income

Miscellaneous income covers things like the Harvest Thanksgiving/ Kalimpong. As these happened in October they will be shown in the next quarter's report in miscellaneous.

Premises income reflects the increased use of our halls.

We are very grateful to Liz Harrison's estate they paid Abbey a further sum of £17,831. In 2020 we received a first amount of £20,000.

(Note - If you are a tax payer and wish the Abbey to recover the tax paid by yourself please would you ask for a gift-aid form by phoning the office or ask Phil for one. Alternatively, both the gift-aid and the standing order form are available from the Abbey Church website).

Expenditure

The savings on premises costs reflect the reduction in maintenance during lock-down periods. There is a backlog of maintenance which should be tackled later in 2022.

If you have any questions please ask.

Stuart Ainslie

26th October 2022

Your Finance Team

- Income Gift-aid Income – Hall Rentals
- ² Payment of bills
- ³ Payroll
- ⁴ Accounting OSCR, periodic accounts and Church of Scotland

Phil Spencer Paola Burrows Janice Cobb David Aston Stuart Ainslie

Abbey Church Budget v's Actual September 22

Income (All Funds)	Annual E Budget	Budget to 30 Sep	Actual to 30 Sep	Variance
Offerings	62,700	47,024	45,043	(1,981)
Tax reclaim	16,000	12,000	10,582	(1,418)
Miscellaneous	8,000	6,001	(210)	(6,211)
Premises income	10,000	7,499	9,998	2,499
Investment income	3,750	2,650	2,525	(125)
Legacies	-	-	17,831	17,831
Sale of Investments	-	-	-	-
Dirleton	6,000	4,500	4,500	-
Total Income	106,450	79,674	90,269	10,595

Expenditure (All Funds)	Annual Budget	Budget to 30 Sep	Actual to 30 Sep	Variance
Church of Scotland payments	52,506	39,529	39,548	(19)
Pastoral Expenses	15,200	11,274	7,790	3,484
Other Salaries	39,145	29,285	29,655	(370)
Premises costs	18,420	16,171	10,450	5,721
Church Office Expenses	4,200	3,150	3,001	149
Investments	-	-		-
Miscellaneous	7,560	3,214	1,909	1,305
Total Expenditure	137,031	102,623	92,353	10,270
Budget for 2022	(30,581)			
Budget for 3rd quarter 2022	-	(22,949)		
Expenditure in excess of income		(2,084)		
Positive Variance				20,865

Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk Prayer December 2022 and January 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

It's hard to realise that we are approaching December already, so let's put our prayer thinking caps on.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for bringing us safely through the various seasons of the year. Please keep us safe in these difficult days. My Granny used to say "If I can make it through November, I'll be fine." What a relief when December arrived!

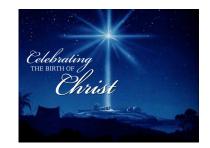
In the run-up to Christmas, that wonderful and exciting time of the year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, let us never forget what 25th December really means to us. Yes- it's our Saviour's birthday. May it be a very happy time for Christians - worldwide. So Lord, keep us safe and happy during the festivities as we all look forward to the coming year, 2023.

Thank you, Lord.

Amen

Betty Hawthorn,

Prayer Secretary





Tuesday Afternoon Group

It is hard to believe that we are already halfway through our yearly programme. The fort-

nightly numbers have been very encouraging and thanks to those who attend, the atmosphere is friendly and welcoming.

The new year programme is as follows:-

10th January - "Polar Stroke" - David Aston will describe his trek to the North Pole. 24th January - "Desert Island Discs" - Mary Graham and Robert Burgon will tell us what they would like to take with them to a desert island if they ever get the chance! (Music, books, favourite hymns and special memories)

<u>Women Are Learning Together</u> have recently studied sections of the minor prophets, Daniel and Hosea. The first three chapters of Hosea, although quite tricky, opened our minds to not just the relationship between Hosea and Gomer but more importantly to God's relationship with Israel and how God was disciplining Israel in order that they would repent from their worship of Baal and return to him.

As the first Monday in January is so close to New Year's Day, our first meeting in 2023 will be on **Mon-day**, 6th **February at 2:00** in the small hall.

All women are warmly welcomed.



Mary and baby Jesus Colouring Page

Abbey Church Flower Rota

DATE	DONOR	ARRANGER
4 December	Dorothy Kirkpatrick	Dorothy Kirkpatrick
11 December	Jean Walinck	Frances Fallmyr
18 December	Decorate for Christmas	
8 January 2023	Sadie Young	Sadie Young
15 January	Dorothy Marsh	Francis Fallmyr Olive Curran
22 January	The Abbey Home	Francis Fallmyr Olive Curran
29 January	Sally Penman	Dorothy Kirkpatrick



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, The Voice Project, to mention but a few.

We have many other groups using our church halls, Physiotherapy Plus, pilates classes, Jo Jingles, fitness classes, The Drama Mill, The Brownies, Dunedin Dance, Freedom and Form.

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



<u>Church Register</u>

<u>Baptisms</u>

23.10.22 Rosie Joy Sperling 23.10.22 Alba Poppy Sperling 23.10.22 Hope Charlotte Livingston-Docwra

<u>Weddings</u> 17.12.22 Michael Fedo and Melissa McCluskey

<u>Funerals</u> 29.11.22 Gladys Millar 1.12.22 Aileen Walker 2.12.22 Frances Archibald

<u>New Members at Abbey Church</u> Harry & Liz Wright Karen & Ian Murray

<u>Pastoral Visits</u>

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 <u>abbeychurch@abbeychurch.co.uk</u> Office open Tuesday and Friday 10am until 1pm

Working remotely Wednesday and Thursday 10am until 1pm

<u>Newsletters</u>

The next newsletter will cover February/March 2023, The deadline for submitting articles is Tuesday 17th January 2023. Please send to Abbey Church Office.

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

What's on at Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk Christmas 2022

Sunday 4th December, 6pm, Abbey Church

'Remembering our Loved Ones'. A special service as Christmas approaches, for anyone who has been bereaved.

Thursday 15th from 10am in Abbey large hall Little Nippers Christmas 'Pram Service'

Friday 16th, Dirleton Kirk Dirleton Primary School end of term service

Sunday 18th, 10.30am, Abbey Church All-Age Nativity Service

Monday 19th and Tuesday 20th from 6pm Carol Singing in local Care Homes [to be confirmed]

Tuesday 20th, 11am, Abbey Church Law Primary 7 Christmas service **Christmas Eve, Saturday 24th December, 4.30pm**

Abbey Church All-age Christmas Eve service.

Christmas Eve, Saturday 24th December, 11.30pm

Dirleton Kirk Watchnight Service (coffee in Kirk Hall from 11pm)

Christmas Day , Sunday 25th December, 10.30am Abbey Church joint Christmas Day

Sunday 1st January 2023 10.30am

Dirleton Kirk Joint New Year's Day service

