

*Abbey Church, North Berwick
and Dirleton Kirk*

Warmly invite you

*to join us
this*

CHRISTMAS



Dear Friends,

although the Christmas story is an ancient one, it is all too familiar in the world today.

Jesus was born into a poor family, in a borrowed stable. Sadly, millions of people today share that same experience, of poverty and homelessness.

Jesus and his family were hounded by a tyrannical ruler; the family from Nazareth would soon have to escape to Egypt as refugees. Today, there are more refugees in the world than at any time in history.

In Herod's rage to kill the newborn Christ child, many innocent children were slaughtered. I don't need to remind you of the headlines about the war zones and trouble spots in the world, where innocent children and adults suffer and die.

Poverty, refugees, oppression, suffering. They are all too familiar from today's news, and also as old as history. Jesus was born into them, and he came to save us from them. There's only one condition: that we listen to his message and follow his example.

In his hymn, Edmund Sears reminds us of the message of the angels, of peace on earth:

But with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;
beneath the angels' hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
and man at war with man hears not the love-song which they bring;
oh, hush the noise you men of strife and hear the angels sing.

May we all hear the angels' message this Christmas, of peace on earth to people of God's favour.

Your minister,
David



**Abbey Church
and
Dirleton Kirk News
December 23 & January 24**

**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**



Blythwood Shoebox Appeal 2023

This year we collected 124 filled boxes, together with an extra £195 in lieu of a box from Abbey and Dirleton Churches and also from people not connected to either Church.

The driver of the lorry who came to collect the boxes is also involved in delivering and distributing them abroad. Already he had been to Moldova with their supply, together with the gifts for Ukraine. He was not allowed to enter war-torn Ukraine but the boxes were collected by Ukrainian transport. The driver was off to Serbia the following week. The Organisation seems to run like clockwork and provides so much joy to those in desperate need.

A huge thank you to all who provided empty boxes, the group who covered them with Christmas paper, and the wonderful people who filled the boxes. A special mention to Paola who sometimes had her office turned upside down, and who helped in so many ways.

Please keep your empty boxes for next year!



Abbey Kirk Session

Robert Burgon



Our Harvest Thanksgiving service on 1 October 2023 provided members of the congregation with the opportunity to hear about the work of Mary's Meals, the Argyll-based charity which provides meals for children in a number of developing countries where the shortage of nutritious food can have an impact on both the health and education of children.



We also had the opportunity to provide donations to support the work of Mary's Meals in Zambia. The amazing amount of £2,051 was contributed in Abbey (with the Dir-

leton congregation making a separate donation). Our donations, together with Gift Aid of almost £300, will enable Mary's Meals to feed more than 100 Zambian children every day for an entire school year. We give thanks for the work of organisations like this and pray that the time will come when all children, everywhere, have enough food to sustain them.

Just three weeks after the Harvest service, the congregation's generosity was once again evident with the large collection of shoeboxes which will be distributed to families in Eastern Europe by Blythswood Care. Remembrance Sunday is always a time for reflection on the losses experienced by so many families in two World Wars and many conflicts since then. This year, the service seemed all the more poignant given the daily loss of life we are seeing in conflicts in the Middle

East and Ukraine. The sanctuary was beautifully decorated with the well-known symbol of remembrance, poppies.

In David's sermon he reminded us that in the 20th century there were more lives lost in conflict than in all of the previous centuries combined. That is hard to fathom and what we are witnessing in the first half of the twenty-first century does not suggest that we are any closer to seeing swords being transformed into ploughshares. Let us continue to pray for peacemakers and peacekeepers.



A front-page in the Scotsman recently had the headline "Worshippers stay away as 700 churches face closure". The article was followed by two whole pages on the same story, mostly focussing on the likely outcome of the current Church of Scotland Mission Planning process. While we understand the concerns of those whose communities are to be affected by church closures over the next few years, we recognise that the reasons behind these closures are not just a shortage of ministers, but also declining attendances and inadequate income. We give thanks that there are no plans to close Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk (in spite of some of the "fake news" and rumours which circulate in the area). We also give thanks for every person who worships in our church and for those who have joined our worshipping community in recent years. We also give thanks for the generosity of our congregation which enables us to carry out the work which we are called to do.

At recent meeting of the Kirk Session, we have been considering the possibility of adding some new elders

to the Session. A number of people have been approached and are considering this possibility further. We hope to be able to induct some new elders in the near future.

The Kirk Session will meet again on 4 December and one of the items on the agenda will be a review of our Vision Statement for the 2020s.

In the coming season of Advent, we look forward to a full programme of services and a bible study series (in conjunction with members of St Baldred's Episcopal Church).

On behalf of the Abbey Church Kirk Session, I wish all members of the Abbey Church family peace and blessings for Christmas and for 2024.



Congregational Lunch: Sunday 21 January 2024

A congregational lunch will take place in the Glen Golf Club on Sunday 21 January 2024 at 12.30pm- all members of the Dirleton and Abbey congregations are invited to join us in this time of food and fellowship. Advance bookings are required no later than 16 January and names can be put on either the lists in church or by contacting the Church office. There will be a limited number of spaces- so first-come-first-served.

The price for a carvery lunch will be £17 for 2 courses and £21 for 3 courses (with tea/coffee provided). Payment should be made to the Golf Club on the day of the lunch.



Enjoy a wonderful evening of Christmas music from beautiful Dirleton Kirk on Saturday 16th December 5.30pm-7.30pm; tickets are FREE, but must be pre-booked online.

TICKETS FREE, MUST PRE-BOOK:

eventbrite.co.uk/e/an-evening-of-christmas-music-tickets-749960541167

Did you know, the Muirfield Riding Therapy Christmas Coffee Morning has been running since 2008? A warm welcome to all, come and join us at Gullane Village Hall for our lucky 15th Christmas Coffee Morning on Saturday 2nd December 10-12noon!

Dirleton Kirk

There was a rumour that the Kirk Session had applied for Planning Permission to convert the church into flats. This came about when a notice to the effect that Planning Permission had been applied for appeared on the main gates.



The answer is much more mundane. A number of years ago pieces of mortar and small bits of stone fell off the tower, landing near the west entrance door. A local firm of builders came along with a cherry picker and removed all the loose masonry and mortar to make it safe, but it was clear more extensive work was going to be required. Architects recommended by the Church of Scotland were consulted, and they thought it possible that Historic Scotland might award a grant to help with the cost of the work. However, it would be a condition of any grant that all other work considered necessary by Historic Scotland would have to be carried out at the same time. Because the Church is a Grade A Listed Building, such works can only be carried out after Planning Permission has been granted, and it is a condition of applying for a grant that Planning Permission has been applied for. So there's the answer. Planning Permission has been applied for to allow the repairs to be carried out, and a grant application will be submitted shortly. But whether or not the full list of repairs as opposed to only strictly necessary repairs will be undertaken will depend to a large extent on funding and what grants are available.

Gordon Symon.

Fabric Convenor

Abbey Church (All Funds) - Quarter to 30 September 2023

General

Expenditure exceeded receipts by £5,188. This is much better than budget.

Income

We are very grateful to the Andrew family for the receipt of £1,000 shown in legacies.

If you would like to contribute to the Abbey Church by please pay into the following bank account:

Name - The Abbey Church No 2 A/c

Sort code - 80-17-95

Account number - 00100437

(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

Premises costs are currently below budget. The costs of the basement flood were collected in a suspense account these costs have been covered by an insurance claim, less the admin fee. Additional to this there are some substantial bills outstanding!

With Church Office expenses an updated photocopier has been delivered. As this is leased it should not have a dramatic effect on Church Office expenses.

If you have any questions please ask.

Stuart Ainslie

21st October 2023

ABBAY CHURCH - NORTH BERWICK
BUDGET v ACTUAL AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2023
ALL FUNDS

Income (All Funds)	Annual Budget	Budget to 30 Sep	Actual to 30 Sep	Variance
Offerings	62,000	46,498	47,571	1,073
Tax reclaim	14,000	10,500	11,374	874
Miscellaneous	7,000	3,750	1,060	(2,690)
Premises income	18,000	13,500	11,450	(2,050)
Investment income	4,200	3,150	3,284	134
Legacies	-	-	1,090	1,090
Sale of Investments	-	-	-	-
Dirleton	6,000	4,500	4,500	-
Total Income	111,200	81,898	80,329	(1,569)

Expenditure(All Funds)	Annual Budget	Budget to 30 Sep	Actual to 30 Sep	Variance
Church of Scotland payments	46,223	34,866	34,866	-
Pastoral Expenses	11,950	8,961	6,699	2,262
Other Salaries	33,360	25,002	25,665	(663)
Premises costs	22,677	17,025	11,755	5,270
Church Office Expenses	4,360	3,270	3,386	(116)
Investments	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	7,430	2,072	3,146	(1,074)
Total Expenditure	126,000	91,196	85,517	5,679
Budget for 2023	(14,800)			

Budget for 3rd quarter 2023	(9,298)			
Income in excess of expenditure		(5,188)		
Positive Variance			4,110	

Your Finance Team

1	Income - Gift-aid	Phil Spencer
	Income - Hall Rentals	Paola Burrows
2	Payment of bills	Janice Cobb
3	Payroll	David Aston
4	Accounting - OSCR, periodic accounts and Church of Scotland	Stuart Ainslie

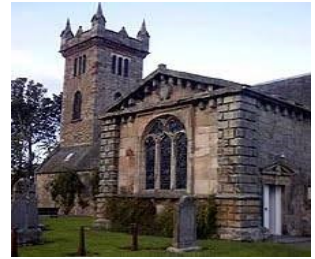
World Church Committee



World Church Committee are delighted to welcome Judy Lockhart Hunter to our team. We still have space for one or two more and would ask anyone considering joining us to please make themselves known to Yolanda at Abbey Church or Liz Keddie at Dirleton Church

World Church Committee aims to support global need be it home or away. We are always on the look out for new ideas for how we go about this and it is just amazing how even the smallest passing remark can be the seed of something for the committee and for all of us as congregations to take forward. We welcome your life experience and energy. Watch this space!

Dirleton Kirk Session Keith Stewart



Remembrance

We marked Remembrance Sunday in Dirleton around the War Memorial. Much of it had the solemnity and sanctity which comes with following a pattern hallowed by time: the laying of the wreaths and the two minutes' silence; every now and again leaves, in ones and twos, falling slowly, poignantly through the cold, still air to the ground. The rehearsal of the names of the fallen, and the silent reflections on what their lives would have been like, before they were cut short; what the parish would have been like on the last occasion on which they saw it, before they made their sacrifice. There were aspects too which are more and more familiar as the years pass. The consciousness of traffic noise in the distance; the walkers passing on the other side of the green, evidently without feeling the need to pause, to acknowledge, to recognise what was going on; perhaps telling themselves that they would observe Remembrance 'in their own way' later- or perhaps having concluded that observance of silence on the Eleventh, or the purchase of a poppy, marked remembrance sufficiently.

We can reflect that those men whose names are inscribed on the War Memorial were sacrificed so that we should have liberty; and the essence of liberty is that we enjoy the freedom to order our lives as we see fit, to set our own priorities, to live as our consciences dictate. For your tomorrow, we gave our today.

Bob Kane as always led the observance in a manner which blended due solemnity with contemporary relevance- and with a voice trained to carry instruction across a parade ground! My thanks to all who participated.



Blythswood Appeal

We observed another, newer tradition in October and November- participation in the shoebox appeal organized by the charity Blythswood Care. As we are poised to begin another winter, the news speaks of continuing war in Ukraine, and across swathes of Africa, and elsewhere in the world. The cold air which nipped us around the War Memorial in Dirleton anticipates the colder air of winter, and reminds us that for many around the world, winter is a time which brings home the reality of material poverty. Blythswood's initiative confronts the realities like old people with insufficient warm clothes, or women and girls without access to sanitary products.

I like to think there is more to it than the meeting of material needs, and I base that view on what I have read in Blythswood's magazines, and in the films which David has shown us down the years from the charity, showing the response of recipients to receiving their shoeboxes. The uniqueness of Blythswood is that charity takes the form of a gift. It is more than a donation of money into a central fund, to be dispersed among the needy. It involves the giver in thinking about the recipient: "I think this hat looks nice", "he would like to have these gloves", "these are my favourite sweets". We will never know the individuals who receive the individual gifts which we give, following the general instructions

which Blythswood gives about what should be included in the shoeboxes, but we know that we are giving a present to an individual, not contributing to a fund. That emphasises the fact that the recipients are our brothers and sisters, children of the one God, as we all are, and that cannot but cause us to reflect on the way in which we lead the rest of our lives. Every present given at Christmas marks the gifts of the Magi to the infant Jesus; and also the gift that we all received at the first Christmas, the gift of Hope. Everyone involved in the shoebox appeal receives that gift again, tokens of our common humanity, and the common delight in giving, and in receiving.



On behalf of the Kirk Session of Dirleton, I look forward to seeing you over Advent and Christmas, and in the year ahead of us.



Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk Christmas Charity

This year our churches Christmas charities will be East Lothian Foodbank for our local charity and The Red Cross for the international one.

The Red Cross is working on both sides of the Israel-Gaza conflict to bring aid.

The collections will be at the 'special' services on Christmas Eve (all 3 services) and Christmas Day. There will also be the opportunity to donate at the service on the 31st December for people who may have been away at Christmas.

Milne Brodie is also making the 'Giant Christmas Card' for Abbey, which people can sign and make a donation.





Little Nippers continues to be very busy with up to 20 babies and toddlers coming along each week. Some of the children who previously came have now moved on to nursery or school but we continue to welcome new toddlers coming along with their adults. It has been so nice getting to know all of them and trying to remember all the new names!

There are lots of toys to play with and a sing-song at the end of each session which proves popular, so there is lots of activity and noise! While the children play, it gives the adults a chance to chat with each other and form a friendship.

The helpers each week prepare the snack for the children which is a nice way to bring the children together at the tables and cups of tea and coffee and biscuits are available for the adults.

It is lovely to see and hear the children having fun and all new babies and toddlers will be warmly welcomed.

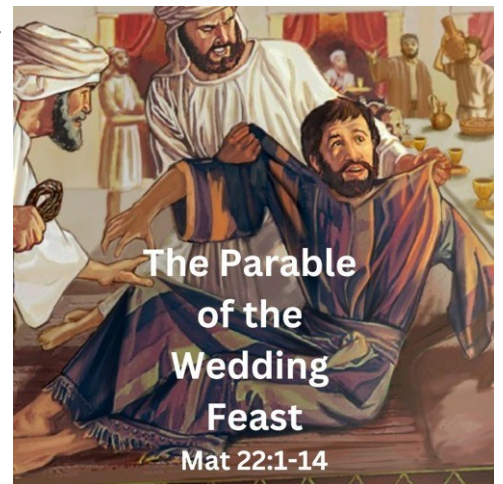
Karen and the Little Nippers Team



WALT - Women Are Learning Together
First Monday in the month
2:00pm in Abbey small hall.

WALT continues to look at the theme "Come Dine With Jesus". We have investigated open air picnics with the Feeding of the 4000 and 5000, home cooked meals with tax collectors Zacchaeus and Matthew, a wedding banquet, and a great feast.

At the parable of the Wedding Banquet in Matthew 22:1-14 we thought about what Jesus was teaching the people at that time and what he continues to tell us today. In the parable the King represents God, the son represents Christ, the servants represent the disciples, the first invited guests represent the Jews and the other guests (sinners) represent the Gentiles.



If you have time, why don't you remind yourself of this story? We had a big discussion about the man who didn't wear the right wedding clothes. At first sight what happens to this man seems unfair and cruel but when we delved into this, we found that in the first century, guests would be given a robe or cloak to wear by the host or groom before entering the wedding banquet. So, this man was disrespectful by choosing not to wear

the robe and he represents all those who have not truly believed in Christ and carried out his work. This challenged us as we asked ourselves the question "Do we wear the right clothes to represent Christ today?" In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he lists some of the ways in which you look as if you are clothed like a guest at the wedding banquet of the king. Some of these include: - gentleness, kindness, patience, self-control, truth, and mercy to name but a few. A challenge indeed!

On Monday 4th December, we will look at the final meal, Jesus ate with his disciples in the upper room. There will be no meeting on Monday, 1st of January. On Monday, 5th of February we will complete our series with Jesus appearing at the meal at the end of the Emmaus road and the breakfast on the beach.



Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk Prayer
December 2023 & January 2024

Dear Heavenly Father,

We come before you with grateful, thankful hearts.

Thank you for the many gifts you freely give us- especially the greatest gift of all- Jesus, your beloved Son. We are so happy to have Jesus in our hearts. He is indeed the greatest gift given to us.

We pray for peace worldwide. Bless all those who go out to war-torn places to restore peace. Where necessary, keep them safe.

Bless your people everywhere, all ages- from the cradle to the grave. Thank you, Lord.

Let us rejoice, especially at Christmas time and take us safely into the New Year.

Take away our fears as we go forward into 2024.

Thank you, Lord.

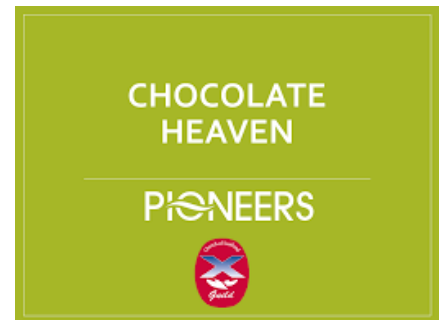
Betty Hawthorn,
Prayer Secretary



Tuesday Afternoon Group



Over the past couple of months we have learned about the important work of Mission Aviation Fellowship whose mission is to fly light aircraft, and to use other technologies to bring help and hope to people in some of the world's poorest communities and also Chocolate Heaven whose success will be measured by more cocoa farmers receiving fair prices, more workers experiencing regular employment, more parents able to provide a brighter future for their children, and more people hearing about Jesus.



Our minister gave a thought-provoking talk on "The best is yet to be" and Jackie Ley, a local author, gave us a very interesting insight into how to write fiction.

The meetings for the next two months are: -

5th December - 'A Celebration of Christmas' - Carols and Readings at 2:00pm.

12th December - Christmas Lunch at the Glen Golf Club at 12:30pm.

16th January - Fresh Start (Edinburgh Charity) - Sylvia MacFarlane at 2:00pm.

30th January - 'More than Shoeboxes' - Blythswood Care at 2:00pm.

Can you help? Fresh Start is an Edinburgh-based charity helping people who have been homeless get established in their new homes. They issue starter packs of essential household items to help someone set up their new home or sustain their tenancy in a dignified way.



The packs include pots, pans, linen, washing up liquid, toilet cleaner, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hand soap, toilet rolls, bin bags & liners, dustpan & brushes, all-purpose cleaners and J-cloths. Long lasting food products are also in great demand. An extensive list is available on the Fresh Start website. It would be great if we could give a few of these necessities to Sophie when she comes on the 16th of January. A box will be placed in the church entrance if anyone wishes to contribute and of course goods can be brought to TAG meetings.

You will have read about the great response to the Blythswood Shoebox Appeal in this newsletter. On the 30th of January we will hear about the other work which this Christian charity is involved in.

Both men and women are warmly welcomed to come along to our meetings.

Abbey Church Flower Rota

DATE	DONOR	ARRANGER
3 December	Dorothy Kirkpatrick	Dorothy Kirkpatrick
10 December	Jean Walinck	Frances Fallmyr A N Other
17 October	Decorate for Christmas	
7 January	Sadie Young	Sadie Young
14 January	Jacki Aston	Frances Fallmyr A N Other
21 January	Rose Leslie	Frances Fallmyr A N Other
28 January	Sally Penman	Dorothy Kirkpatrick



Abbey Church Sunday Tea Rota

DATE	
3 December	Katrina Hendry & Irene Nichol
10 December	Fiona Gibson & AN Other
17 December	Rose Leslie & Mary Graham
24 December	Ann Bell
31 December	Bel Hardie & Linda McLean
7 January	Susan Ainslie & AN Other
14 January	Isabel Smith & Sadie Young
21 January	Katrina Hendry & Irene Nichol
28 January	Fiona Gibson & AN 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

Baptisms

5.11.23 Alice Patricia Marion Grant

Funerals

17.9.23 Gordon Barnes

24.11.23 Fred Lynn

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,
North Berwick

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

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 February/March 2024. The deadline for submitting articles is Tuesday 16th January 2024. Please send to Abbey Church Office.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SEASON

AT ABBEY CHURCH AND DIRLETON KIRK

DECEMBER 2023

Sunday 3rd

6.00pm Remembering Our Loved Ones

**A special service at Abbey Church as Christmas
approaches, for anyone bereaved**

Sunday 10th

10.30am Abbey Communion

Thursday 14th

10.00am Little Nippers Pram Service at Abbey

Thursday 14th & Thursday 21st

(from 3.00pm) Carol Singing in local care homes

Friday 22nd

10.00am Law Primary Christmas Service at Abbey

Sunday 24th Christmas Eve

10.30am Joint Abbey & Dirleton Nativity Service at Abbey

No morning service at Dirleton

4.30pm All age Christmas Eve Service at Abbey Church

11.30pm Watchnight Service at Dirleton Kirk

(Coffee in the Kirk Hall from 11pm)

MONDAY 25th CHRISTMAS DAY

10.30am Christmas Day service at Abbey

SUNDAY 31st

10.30am Joint Dirleton & Abbey Service at Dirleton Kirk



*The Minister, Kirk Sessions and Congregations
will be pleased to welcome you
to these services and events*

Peace on Earth