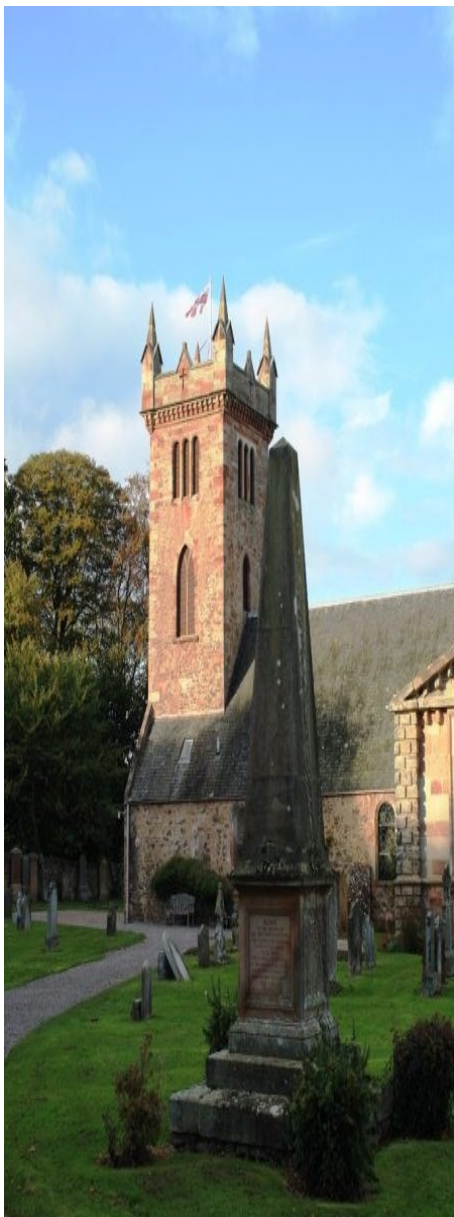




**Abbey Church
and
Dirlerton Kirk News
February/March 2023**



Minister:

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

**Sunday Morning Worship
at**

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

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

Come along. All welcome.

**Wednesdays 10am Half Hour
Prayer Service**

Dear Abbey and Dirleton friends,

'The times they are a'changing'

The newly merged Presbytery of Lothian & Borders met for the first time in January. It combines our former presbytery of Lothian with those of Duns, Jedburgh, and Melrose & Peebles. As you can imagine, it covers a very large area, and will involve a lot more time and travelling for its members. The meetings will initially be all-day on Saturdays, with some members having a 2-hour drive each way. With 90 congregations and annual running costs of £116,000, it's also one of the biggest in the country. I've been appointed to its 'Congregational Support' committee, whose main work will be to organise and monitor Local Church Reviews and Action Plans, and give support to office-bearers in local congregations (one result is that it may give me a good reason to pay a visit the town of my birth!).

I mention this not to scare you (I hope!), but first of all to ask for your prayers for everyone involved in this new Presbytery. But I'm also using it as a reminder (if we need one) that patterns of ministry & worship are changing, society is changing, and so is the church.

What Bob Dylan wrote in 1964 (above) is never more true than today. His song had a message of 'sink or swim', or perhaps 'change or die'. But the message of Jesus is that he is building his church, and the powers of death will never overcome it (Matthew 16:18).

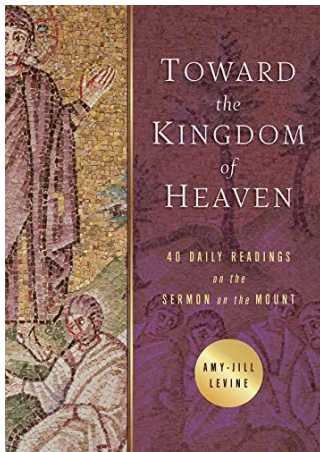
Yours in faith and hope,

David

At our Sunday Morning Services, until Easter we'll be reading passages from the gospel of Matthew.

Our Thursday evening Bible Study discussion group ended for the time being at the end of January.

Our Sunday Evening Lent Group will start at the end of February. We'll be thinking about the Sermon on the Mount (details below).



Alongside this, there's a book of 40 daily readings for Lent, starting on February 22nd. If you'd like to buy a copy for your own personal reading, please contact the Minister of Church Office.

The book (pictured left) is £14.

Lent Group 2023

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)
Sunday evenings 6-7pm in Abbey Church
(except 26th March, which will be at Dirleton)

1. 26th February The Beatitudes (5:1-12)
2. 5th March The Extensions (5:17-48)
3. 12th March Practicing Piety (5:13-16; 6:1-4)
4. 19th March Our Father (6:5-19)
5. 26th March Finding your Treasure (6:19-7:5)
6. 2nd April Living into the Kingdom (7:6-27)

I hope you can join us for these evening devotions which will be meditative, and allow time for thought and discussion.

Holy Week Services in April (all at 7.30pm)

Monday 3rd St Adrian's, Gullane

Tuesday 4th Aberlady Church

Wednesday 5th Our Lady Star of the Sea

Thursday 6th Abbey communion

Friday 7th St Andrew Blackadder Good Friday

Pastoral Care

The next of our occasional pastoral meetings is in February. 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. We're hoping to have a visiting to lead some of these sessions. Keep an eye on the intimations!

Evening Communion

Abbey Church will be holding an evening Communion Service on Sunday 12th February at 6.00pm.

All welcome.

Abbey Kirk Session

Robert Burgon



How encouraging it has been that we managed to have a more normal Advent and Christmas season after the restrictions and stop/start experiences of the previous two years. The "scratch" nativity play on 18 December was well supported and, once again, it was good to see many people entering into the spirit of the occasion by dressing up and taking part. The service attracted some new families, and some commented that they had brought their children along as they wanted them to hear something of the real story of Christmas. Our Young Peoples' Worker, Hazel Gray, has previously led events for Primary 5 pupils in Law Primary School in which she, and a group of volunteers from different churches, have explained the Christmas story in a way which attracts the interest of the pupils. This year, "Bubble gum and Fluff" took place in the sanctuary, which proved to be an excellent setting for such an activity. Our family Christmas Eve service saw a return to the pre-pandemic levels of attendance. All-in-all, Abbey once again made a significant contribution to the celebration of our Saviour's birth.

On 5 January 2023, we experienced a flood in the church basement, following a burst pipe. The first indication that something was wrong, came when the heating in the hall failed to come on for the Little Nippers

group. When our Administrator, Paola, went to the basement (where the boilers are located) to investigate the problem she was faced with 3 feet of water (and rising) on the basement steps and the sound of a torrent inside the basement. Thanks to her quick thinking, the problem was addressed by the local Fire Brigade who reduced the level of the water sufficiently to allow the flow to be stopped and (importantly) the electricity supply to be switched off before the problem became much more serious.

Thankfully, after considerable work by a team led by Alasdair and Stewart Kerr, we were able to ascertain that the electricity supply was safe to use, and the heating boilers had not been damaged. Although we were unable to hold a service on 8 January, a return to "business as usual" was possible shortly after that. Sincere thanks are extended to all who worked so hard to achieve such a positive outcome.

The generosity of our congregation was again evident with the large number of donations which were made to support the East Lothian Foodbank Jingle Bags appeal (which enabled them to provide items of Christmas fare for people using their services). Produce weighing 87.6kg was delivered to the Foodbank (equivalent to 208 meals) along with cash donations of £80.



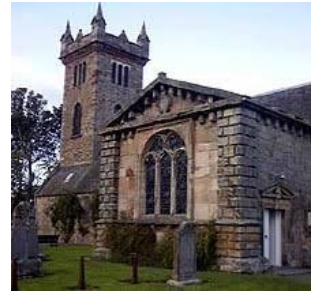
Our offerings at the Christmas services this year, both in Abbey and Dirleton (and the proceeds from the Abbey giant Christmas card) were made to support a local charity, Kids Love Clothes. A total of £1596 was raised to support their work of ensuring that local children have appropriate clothing.

Kids  Clothes

As reported in the last Newsletter, Abbey and Dirleton have lodged a request that the decisions of the Presbytery of Lothian affecting the future ministry in our parish should be reviewed by the Mission Plan Panel. This request had first to be considered by the Committee on Overtures and Cases and we were advised on 13 January 2023 that we have been given "leave to proceed" with the request for review. Answers have now been requested from the Presbytery and comments invited from the Faith Nurture Forum and the General Trustees by 10 February 2023. Updates will be provided to the congregation when we know more.

The next meeting of the Kirk Session will take place on 6 February 2023.

Dirleton Kirk Session Keith Stewart



With Christmas coming 'early' this year- the first Sunday in Advent falling in November- there was more scope to enjoy the decorations in the church. Tracy and Neil Walkingshaw brought in the wonderful Christmas tree and decorated it beautifully as ever; and the lights in the church, the Advent Crown, and the flowers were there to deepen our sense of the wonder of the events of Christmas- the fulfilment of the visions of the prophets, the arrival of hope in the form of a baby, which is God made flesh; the wonder of the shepherds and the glory of angels- contrasted with the uncaring demands of the Roman authorities, and the fear and cruelty shown by King Herod. I reflected on the way our perceptions of Christmas change as we grow in years and in faith: the very small child thinks of presents and treats; gradually the mystery and beauty of the events of Christmas enter into the growing child's enjoyment of the season, and hopefully come to predominate, so that the presents and the treats are adjuncts to the true Christmas, further means by which we celebrate Christmas: just as welcome, but welcome in that they add more glory to our celebration of Christmas itself. It is like the way in which, imperceptibly, the pleasure we take from gifts moves, from the receiving of them, to the giving of them, and watching them being unwrapped or opened, or imagining that if we are not with the person to whom we are giving them.

Christmas events

We hosted excellent joint services with Abbey on Christmas Eve and again on New Year's Day, while Abbey held a well-attended family service on Christmas Eve and then again on Christmas Day

May I express particular thanks to Sue Oliver and Keith Cornwell, who answered a very late request for assistance in providing refreshments for those attending the Watchnight Service on Christmas Eve; and to Alan Aitken and Margaret MacPhail for doing door duty that night. Alan had a particularly important role in guiding people in from the gate, using a torch from the Archerfield Aisle door, before we managed to get the light at the gate activated. We should perhaps look at locating another switch in the Hall, for sake of convenience! Also to our organist Jim Dickson, for the thoughtful and considered way in which he arranged our music- for Lucy Graham and Sean Webster who sang, and for Robert Burgon who played the organ for us, at Watchnight- Jim having so far to travel to be with us.

Discussion of our Christmas services prompts reflection on the very encouraging numbers which attended across all our services in Dirleton and Abbey over Advent and Christmas, and the generally higher numbers we have been seeing on Sundays...and from there, to report that the first stage of our application to have the Presbytery Plan reviewed has been passed. We await sight of the reply to our application.

WALT - Women Are Learning Together

WALT meet on the first Monday of the month in Abbey small hall at 2:00pm. Despite having already studied twenty three women in the Bible, there are still a few more we can talk and learn about. The programme is as follows: -

Monday 8th February - Hannah (1 Samuel 1:2 - 2:21)

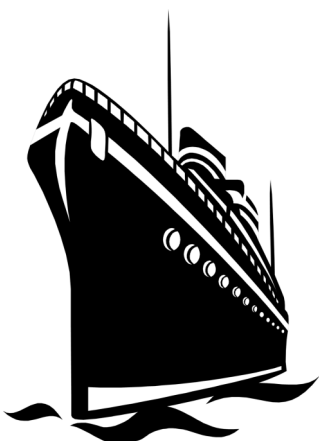
Monday 6th March - Tabitha/Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43)

Monday 3rd April - Priscilla (Acts 18: 1-26)

The informal studies last no more than an hour and all women are welcome to come along and join us. Tea and coffee are available from 1:45.

Sheila Burgon

SET SAIL WITH REGAL



SOUP AND SANDWICH LUNCH

ALL WELCOME

The next meeting of REGAL will be on Thursday 16th February in Abbey large hall at noon. The guest speaker will be Malcom MacMillan who is the former chief executive of the Law commission and is Currently involved with the Commonwealth Association of law Reform Agencies.

Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk Prayer
February & March 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

I do hope you all enjoyed a happy, friendly and peaceful Christmas and also over the rest of the festive season.

Let us give thanks to Father God for all his goodness to us. Let's pray.

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the many gifts given to us, especially the best gift of all, your Son, Jesus Christ.

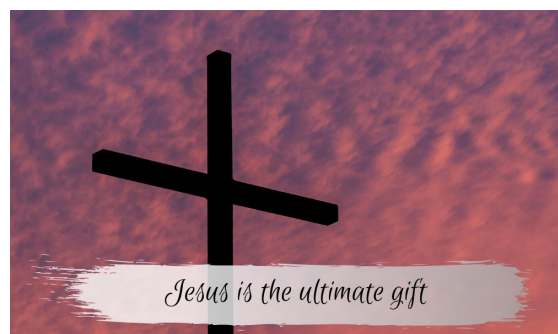
Thank you for keeping us safe from illness and viruses which have been going around and for restoring those who have been ill to full strength and health again.

May we always be aware of those who live alone, may they always be aware of your presence with them.

Lord, thank you for all the many good gifts given to us.

AMEN

Betty Hawthorn
Prayer Secretary



TAG - Tuesday Afternoon Group

Our programme has been slightly altered due to the unfortunate burst pipe at the beginning of January. David Aston has kindly agreed to present his talk on the 7th of February now and the rest of the syllabus is as initially printed.

24th January at 2:00 - "Desert Island Discs" Mary Graham and Robert Burgon

7th February at 2:00 - "Polar Stroke" David Aston

21st February at 2:00 - "Teapot Trust" (Mental Health Charity) Joint Meeting

Friday 3rd March at 3:00 - World Day of Prayer in Our Lady Star of the Sea

7th March at 2:30 - "Starchild Uganda -Joint meeting at St. Andrew Blackadder

21st March at 2:00 - "Recipes for Success" and Easter Tea

If you have a favourite recipe that you would like to share on the 21st March, please give your details to Sheila at any of the above meetings so that it can be typed up in advance. You may share a few words if your recipe has a special significance for you, but this is not compulsory. If your recipe is for a cake or biscuit you may bring some along for the Easter Tea.

All men and women are warmly invited to attend. Abbey meetings take place in the large hall.

TAG Support Group

Abbey Church Flower Rota

DATE	DONOR	ARRANGER
5 February	Doreen Adams	Dorothy Kirkpatrick
12 February	Anna Jardine	Isabel Smith
19 February	Violet Lamont	Isabel Smith
26 February	Sadie Young	Sadie Young
5 March	Maureen Sharpe	Irene Nichol
12 March	Janice Cobb	Irene Nichol
19 March	Kate Campbell	Kate Campbell
26 March	Clare Aitken	Clare Aitken



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 Pro-
ject, 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



Church Register

Baptisms

5.2.23 Fallon Mark

Funerals

6.1.23 David Rushmer

20.1.23 Catherine Andrew

2.2.23 Mary Logan

2.2.23 Geoff Freedman

3.2.23 Mary Heather Thompson

21.2.23 David Mack

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 open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
10am until 1pm*

Newsletters

The next newsletter will cover April and May 2023,
The deadline for submitting articles is Tuesday 14th
March 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