



**Come along
All welcome**

**Abbey Church
and
Dirleton Kirk News
October/November 2023**

**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**

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

Dear Friends,

It's that time of year again, when groups and activities get back into gear, and meetings are full-swing. As well as our regular Church groups, we also have our Pastoral Skills training evenings on 25th September and 9th October, and an 'occasional' series on leading prayers & worship (details of both are in the intimations).

Dare I mention Advent? Since it's just the run-up to 'the Big C', I think I'm safe to do so! Our Advent reading this year will be Martyn Percy's book 'An Advent Manifesto'. Starting just before the end of November, it has thoughtful daily readings based on Isaiah and Luke which will help prepare our hearts and minds for celebrating the birth of Christ. This will be accompanied by a weekly group meeting during the four weeks of Advent - keep an eye on the intimations for details. If you'd like a copy of the book, please let the Minister or the Office know, and we can buy them for you (they will be under £10).

In our Sunday morning services, before our Advent themes begin, we'll be thinking about how we hear God's voice - in scripture, in prayer, and in our experience. I was inspired to take up that theme by some of Pete Greig's books on prayer and listening to God: I can give you details of them if you're interested to read more.

Wishing you a happy and healthy autumn season.

Your minister,
David



Blythswood Shoebox Appeal 2023

The Shoebox Appeal is underway for 2023. Some covered boxes will be available in Church from the beginning of October.

This year the last collection day for filled boxes will be on **Sunday 22nd October**.

Shoeboxes will be distributed to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. It's easy to choose gifts for people who have so little. Shampoo, a pair of socks, a notepad, a small toy, a bag of sweets—things we take for granted will seem like luxuries to people living in poverty. By filling a shoebox with simple things you can bring some joy this Christmas.



WALT - Women Are Learning Together

Our theme is "Come Dine with Jesus" and each month we are investigating different meals which Jesus attended or used as a teaching example. In September we thought about "Mass Catering" where Jesus fed the Four and Five Thousand. We are also learning about Jewish meals and customs in the first century.

October 2nd - "Guest Lists" - It is often said that we are known by the company we keep but Jesus turns this idea on its head by dining with a wide selection of people. This study will explore the stories of Zacchaeus and Matthew (Levi). Luke 19:1-10 and Matthew 9:9-13.

November 6th - "Weddings" - The Wedding at Cana and The Heavenly Wedding Banquet John 2:1-12 and Matthew 22:1-14

These informal Bible discussions start at 2:00pm in Abbey small hall and last just under an hour. All women are welcome to come along and reflect on how we can apply Jesus' teaching in the first century to our lives today.

Sheila Burgon



Abbey Kirk Session

Robert Burgon



At the meeting of the Abbey Kirk Session on 21 August 2023 our Minister paid tribute to the late Dr Doreen Guy who had been a much-loved and respected member of the congregation for many years and a very caring elder. Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband, John, and members of the family.

The approach of autumn means a number of things. Often, as this year, it means that we enjoy some lovely sunny weather (just as the schools return after their summer break). In East Lothian, it means that we see the results of the harvest in the fields all around us (for which we give thanks at our Harvest Thanksgiving service on 1 October). In church, autumn often means the start of new sessions for our various church organisations. Little Nippers (our group for pre-school children and their families/carers) restarted in mid-August. Muddy Church (the outdoor monthly programme of fun and Bible teaching led by people from Abbey, StAB and St Baldred's) met at the end of August after a break in July. Our Bible study group for women, WALT, recommenced on the first Monday of September and TAG (Tuesday Afternoon Group, which is affiliated to the Church of Scotland Guild) also restarts at the end of September. For all of these and

the other groups in our congregation we ask for God's blessing on their leaders and participants and pray that people who may not have participated previously might be inspired to do so this session.

One activity which is becoming a regular feature of the summer months is the Holiday Club, which this year took place during a week in late-July. With the theme "The Great Glen Green Welly Garden Show",

the programme, organised under the leadership of Scripture Union, contained a mixture of fun, games, crafts and bible stories ranging from the story of creation to the book of Revelation.



The morning sessions took place in the Lodge Grounds and were geared at children who had completed Primaries 1-5. Afternoon and evening sessions took place in the St Andrew Blackadder Hall for older children. Volunteers from a number of churches in East Lothian participated. Just as the weather in early September this year proved to be lovely, in July we always seem to be prone to the vagaries of Scottish summers, with rain being a challenge for the outdoor activities. This year, we managed to run the entire week with only the occasional shower.

When participating in events which aim to share

something of the message of the Bible with children, it isn't always obvious how much they have taken in. There are, however, occasions when we hear a response which suggests that not only had they listened, but they had also thought about what had been said. This year, after a story which related that God is all around us, one (very) young girl asked the question "Does God have a camera if he can see everything we can do?". It is at moments like that that one recognises the value of teaching in an environment which is principally focussed on having fun.

The Kirk Session will meet again on Monday 2 October 2023.

We have very kindly been given permission by photographer James Deans, to use his images of Dirleton Kirk for our newsletters. Thank you James.

To see more of James' work please go to <http://www.jamespdeans.co.uk/>



All are welcome to join one, several or all of our Tuesday meetings. They start at 2:00pm in Abbey large hall unless otherwise stated. Meetings usually last about an hour and finish with fellowship over tea or coffee.

October 3rd - Starchild Uganda "Finding the Light in Every Child".

This is a joint meeting and will be held in St Andrew Blackadder hall at 2:00pm. The project aims to address the challenges of stigma and myths related to intellectual and physical disability in Uganda.



October 10th - MAF - Mission Aviation Fellowship

Each year, MAF provides aviation services to more than 400 mission agencies, churches, and humanitarian organizations around the world. MAF connects isolated people with vital services and goods while sharing the love of Christ in a tangible way.

October 24th - "The best is yet to be" - Rev Dr David Graham

November 7th - "Writing Fiction" - Jackie Ley.

Jackie is an author who is a member of our congregation.



November 21st - Chocolate Heaven (South East Asia)

Ruth Box Chocolate Heaven have partnered with Pioneers UK, a Christian mission organisation that focuses on taking God's Good News to those who have never had the opportunity to hear it. Come and taste some of the chocolate made and hear the story of this wonderful project. This is a joint meeting in Abbey.

PIONEERS

December 5th - "A Celebration of Christmas"

Readings and Carols

Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk Prayer

October & November 2023

Dear Father God,

We ask your blessing on our church groups, including WALT and TAG which are commencing their new seasons after a summer break. We pray that many will turn up to support these groups and that new members might be encouraged to participate this session.

We think thank you for the harvest in East Lothian and for our opportunity to celebrate this season on Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday on 1 October.

We think ahead to the school autumn break and pray that children will be kept safe as they enjoy their time of holiday and that teachers and others who work in schools will be refreshed during this the autumn holiday.

We ask for your blessings on our Minister, Rev Dr David Graham, his wife Mary and their daughter Lucy and on our Pastoral Assistant, Bob Kane. We thank you for all they do in your name and pray that you might uphold them in their work for you.

Father, we pray for those who are sick, those who are waiting hospital investigations and treatment and those who are sad and lonely. Make them all aware of your loving presence.

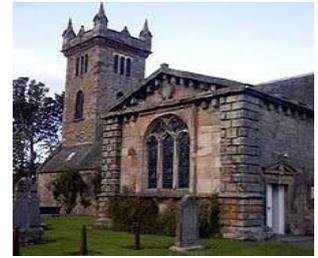
We bring you all these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Betty Hawthorn
Prayer Secretary



Dirleton Kirk Session

Keith Stewart



Preaching in the Kirk

My thanks to everyone who wished me well on the occasion when I led the service from the pulpit during David's absence on Presbytery business. It is a great honour to be asked to do it; it was something which I found very thought provoking to prepare; and most of all, it was a great relief to have completed the task.

There can be nothing like leading worship to make one appreciate how well other people lead worship; nothing like preaching, to call forth a grateful appreciation of how well others preach; nothing like trying to formulate prayers, to make one admire how ably others, when leading prayers, express not only those things for which we ask, but also bring out those things for which we each in our own circumstances ought to ask; and give the thanks for those mercies great and small for which we can never be grateful enough, but which we often seem to overlook in our own prayers.

I was all the more full of admiration given that unlike those who preach regularly, I did not have to set about immediately thinking about and preparing the sermon and service for the next week; and the week after that; and the week after that...Indeed, I have been

making a point of telling everyone whom I meet who preaches more often than I do- that is, more than once every seven or eight years- how much I admire them for it. I started, indeed, more or less immediately, when walking home from the Abbey, and I came across Fr. Simon Metzner speaking to his flock as they were leaving St. Baldred's!

There is a temptation to consider that things are better left to others to accomplish- that there are others better prepared or more skilled than we are, in relation to any particular task or function. Perhaps even more- and perhaps less creditably- we can find ourselves wanting to divest responsibility for some or other task, and settling on others whom we might think have more time, more leisure to devote to it, than we do ourselves. And this at a time in the life of the church in Scotland when it can seem as though more and more was being asked of fewer and fewer people.

Of course these are hardly new considerations, and I am drawn in this regard to the passage in the first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12, which touches upon the different gifts which members of a church have; one will have a particular gift, others different gifts. The emphasis is on the common source of these gifts: different gifts, bestowed on different individuals, or to different extents- but all coming from the Holy Spirit.

The letter identifies gifts of wisdom, knowledge, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy: and from the perspective which most of us have, those look like qualities which would be reserved to a handful of spiritual superheroes. Not at all, perhaps, the gifts which we see in ourselves. But I think that this is merely a set of examples, and not exhaustive; that we can invest in any task the quality of service.

For example, we are always looking for people to assist in door duty on Sundays, to welcome people into church; to help with the flower rota, and make the tea and coffee to be served in the Hall on Sundays, and indeed on Wednesdays. These things don't sound nearly as impressive as healing, or prophecy, or miraculous powers- but they can be directed just as much to service, when we do them in the right way. For who can tell what effect a friendly welcome, or the quiet beauty of a church decorated in floral tribute, might have, on any of us or on any visitor; or how they might encourage and assist someone else, far beyond anything which we might imagine?

I am drawn to the poetry of George Herbert, who was a divine writing in the 17th Century (hence the spelling in the passages I am about to quote). The first verse of his poem *The Elixer* emphasizes that we can, and should, find and honour God in every thing we do, great or small: and he speaks in particular of the small things.

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for thee:—

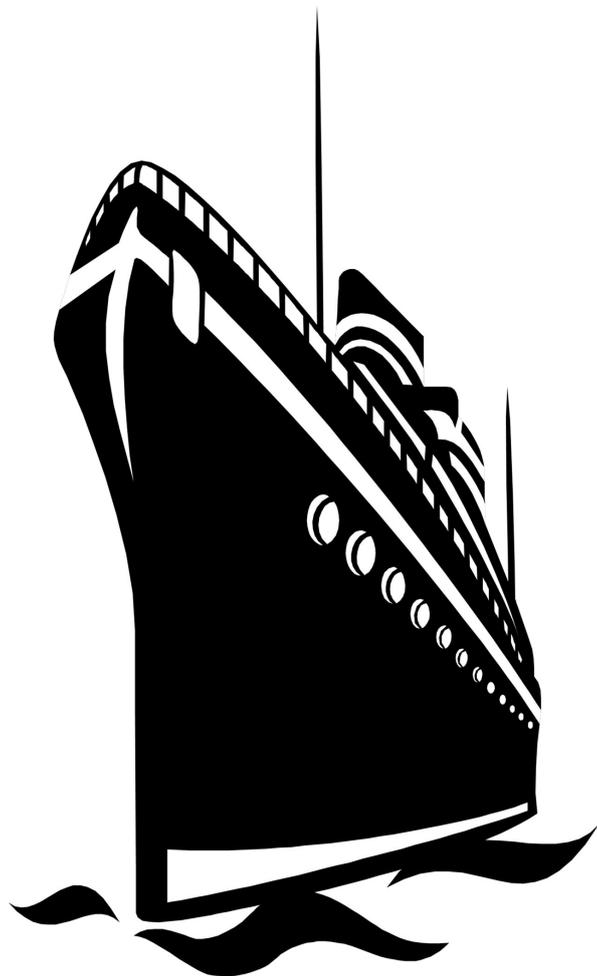
To do something 'as for thee'- to perform an act, as though we were doing it directly for God Himself, is the lesson Herbert asks to be taught: he surely also alludes to the passage of Scripture, in Matthew's Gospel, Ch 25, verses 27-30, when the disciples in confusion say to Jesus that they haven't visited Him in prison, or tended to him when He was sick, and are told that 'even as you have done to one of the least of my brethren, you have done to me.

Herbert goes on to write:-

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgerie divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.—

The most menial tasks of all are made full of meaning, when done in the Spirit: drudgerie is itself divine. Still drudgery, but, transfigured into an act of Service as meaningful as it is possible to be.





REGAL

relaunches

26th October 2023

'A Beginner's Guide to
Happiness'

Ewan Gilchrist

Next meeting

9th November

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
1 October	Yolanda Strachan	Elma Danks Irene Brodie
8 October	Florence Buchan	Florence Buchan
15 October	Linda McLean	Elma Danks Irene Brodie
22 October	Joan Lunn	Elma Danks Irene Brodie
29 October	Jennifer Gilchrist	Elma Danks Irene Brodie
5 Nov	Fiona Hutchison	Fiona Hutchison
12 Nov	Lorna Ferry Caroline Danks	Bel Hardie Ann & Richard Bell
19 Nov	Isabel Hardie	Isabel Hardie
26 Nov	Marjorie Whytock	Dorothy Kirkpatrick



Abbey Church Sunday Tea Rota

DATE	
1 October	Susan Ainslie
8 October	Isabel Smith & Sadie Young
15 October	Katrina Hendry & Irene Nichol
22 October	Fiona Gibson
29 October	Rose Leslie & Mary Graham
5 November	Anne Bell & Sadie Young
12 November	Bel Hardie & Linda McLean
19 November	Susan Ainslie
26 November	Isabel Smith & Sadie Young



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

Weddings

2.9.23 Ross Calder and Joanna Mancini

23.9.23 Thomas Dodds and Catherine Gray

Funerals

7.7.23 Wanda Urbaniak

10.7.23 James Walkingshaw

11.7.23 Sarah Stephen

16.8.23 Dr Doreen Guy

1.9.23 James Middleton

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 December 23 and January 2024. The deadline for submitting articles is Tuesday 14th November 2023. Please send to Abbey Church Office.

Abbeychurch.org.uk

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Abbey Church, North Berwick (Church of Scotland)

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