

Jesus is the

Light

of the

World



Join Us Online This Christmas

Dear Dirleton & Abbey Friends,

I heard about a church which recently re-started their services. After months of online services, the doors were finally open for a 'real' congregation. But there was one big difference... before the pandemic they had more than 800 in the congregation; on their first Sunday back, they had just 37.

We hope that their numbers will grow in the coming weeks. But it's not all about numbers; for all I know, that church may have their other 763 members watching the service online! It's good to meet up, but even more important that we worship, in whatever form that takes.

What we're all discovering is that church isn't just going to jump back to what it was before, at least not any time soon. We're learning to live with differences in our everyday lives, which are all too familiar, and that includes differences in being the church.

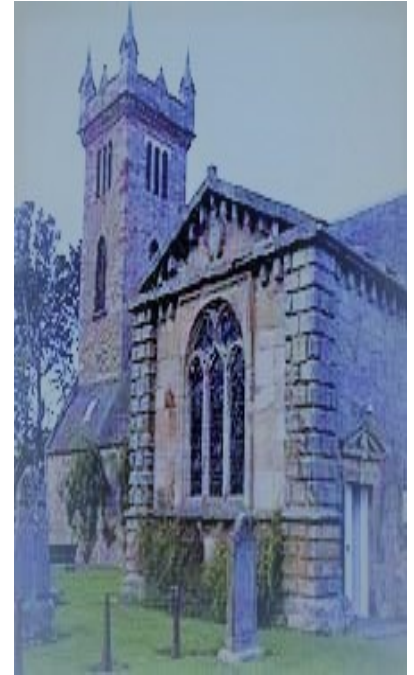
Yet it's also important to retain as much normality as possible. I've tried to do that for special services such as Remembrance, but also for our regular Sunday ones. And since 'Christmas is coming', I hope that we can celebrate and enjoy it as part of our faith in as near-normal a way as possible. You'll see our programme of services in this newsletter, and I hope you'll be able to join us in these, whether online, in-person, or a mixture of both.

Some things in the world may have changed, but our Lord and our faith has not. May you have a happy, healthy, and peaceful Christmas as we celebrate His birth.

Your Minister,
David



**Abbey Church
and
Dirleton Kirk News
December 2020/
January 2021**



**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

All welcome

Book through Abbey Church Office

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

Our services are available by email, on our website, Facebook page, and YouTube channel (see back page for details).

Printed copies of the words are also available, please let the Church Office know if you would like to receive these.

Church Services

During December, we'll take the traditional Advent and Christmas readings as our service themes.

Abbey Guild

Greetings to you all.



As you are aware it is unlikely that we will be able to run our planned programme in the first part of the New Year. The Guild Office in Edinburgh has reduced the capitation fees to £9 per member this year and we have enough money in the Guild funds to cover this.

Although Christmas may be different for us this year, thankfully the message of Christmas never changes! On behalf of the Guild working party I wish you a peaceful and healthy Christmas.

Sheila Burgon

Novels on CD

I have been offered a large selection of novels on CD. If anyone would like then please contact me.

Sheila Burgon.



Congratulations to Dirleton's Session Clerk, Keith Stewart QC. Keith was recently appointed Advocate General for Scotland by Her Majesty the Queen. This important role is a UK Government appointment, and involves advising the Westminster Government on matters of Scots Law as they affect UK Government policy: a tall order in these days of Covid, Brexit, and a change of leadership in the USA, to mention but a few!

His appointment carries with it a Life Peerage as a Baron in the House of Lords, and we're delighted that his title is now Lord Stewart of Dirleton. Our support and prayers are with Keith as he begins this onerous job.

ABBEY KIRK SESSION

Robert Burgon, Session Clerk, Abbey Church

In the last Newsletter, I mentioned that as Covid restrictions continued to affect all of our lives we appreciated the exemption which has been granted to places of worship. Since then, churches in Wales and England have been forced to close for a number of weeks and if parts of Scotland move into tier 4 in an attempt to lower the rate of infection, numbers in places of worship in those areas will be limited to 20. We pray for our brothers and sisters affected by these restrictions.

In Abbey Church it has been encouraging to see attendances at our weekly services increase over the last few weeks, although we have not yet quite reached our maximum number of 48. It has been particularly good to welcome back some members for the first time since we reopened in mid-August and we have also been joined by some people who have recently moved to the town. An important milestone was reached on 15 November when our Super Sunday Club met in the large hall while the Sunday service was taking place. Our Young Peoples' Worker, Hazel Gray, has been running the Club online during lockdown and was delighted to be able to meet some of our young people for the first time since lockdown began. It is planned to continue with a blend of online and actual meetings over the coming months.

In spite of the restrictions, the congregation responded very generously to this year's Blythswood Trust shoebox (and bag) appeal and our Remembrance Service on 8 November 2020 saw the laying of poppy wreaths at the two memorials in church commemorate-

ing those who died in the First and Second World Wars. These wreaths have now been placed in the church garden alongside the beautiful poppy pallet garden, posters relating to Armistice and poppy stones painted by the Brownies. A service of Holy Communion has been planned for Sunday 13 December. In place of the service which we would usually hold in early December for the families of those who have been bereaved during the year, a recorded service is being prepared which will be distributed to these families. Although our programme of worship at Christmas this year will not be quite the same as in more normal years, a nice blend of online and actual services has been arranged which we hope will allow many people to join us in the celebration of the season of our Saviour's birth.

A few of the groups which regularly use our hall facilities have been able to meet again recently (although in the case of some physical exercise classes their return was short lived as they had to cease again when East Lothian moved into Tier 3 of the Scottish Government's current arrangements only one week after they recommenced).

The Kirk Session met on 5 October and we were delighted to be joined by Mrs Liz Weir who has agreed to take on the post of Minutes Secretary. My predecessor as Session Clerk, Sally Penman, had undertaken this role on a temporary basis, and I am grateful both to her and to Liz for their support. Having someone to take the minutes of Kirk Session meetings makes my role so much easier.

Our next Kirk Session meeting will take place, again by Zoom, on Monday 7 December 2020 and a report of that will appear in the next Newsletter.

DIRLETON KIRK SESSION

Keith Stewart, Session Clerk, Dirleton Kirk

Remembrance Day was marked this year in an informal way- there was no official ceremony at the War Memorial, the church bell was not rung; but in spite of the persisting prohibitions against many of the most familiar and best loved aspects of worship, we managed to contrive to mark the occasion with due solemnity and respect. Bob Kane led us in reflection and prayer, and wreaths were laid; people did gather, appropriately distanced, by the War Memorial; the gate into the churchyard was decorated with poppies, and we thank Pam Smith and Mr. Moodie at the school for organising the children's efforts this year.

The virus situation continues to dictate the manner in which our collective life as a congregation is played out. Many are kept from attending church on Sundays, and during the week, by a proper and serious concern for their own health and that of others; many feel acutely the absence of the ability to meet, whether at church or in our homes, visiting, which the pandemic has caused. Perhaps it is being deprived of the opportunity for fellowship, for sharing, in company, our joys, sorrows and difficulties, which has been the hardest thing of all to bear over the past few months. Let's make a special effort to maintain contact with one another as we move forward through this extraordinary and unprecedented time.

For those who are able to attend Sunday worship, David and Bob have sought to respond to the 'new

normal' with their customary thoughtfulness.

We send our best wishes and prayers to Jim Dickson who was unwell earlier in the month- and we look forward to seeing him and hearing him on the organ whenever he would like. Meanwhile, thanks also to Nancy Hughes and Diana Buchan for playing the organ (and getting used to its newly rediscovered range and power) and for those who have agreed to play in the coming weeks.

And so we approach the first (and hopefully the last) Covid Christmas. This will be Advent under lockdown; we will hearken to the Herald Angels singing in unheralded circumstances. To echo Bob's words from the pulpit on Sunday 22nd November, whatever may be the implications for consumption; for the substance of the 'Christmas adverts' by the big retailers; and, more seriously, for our ability to join together in wonder and adoration as we consider the Word made flesh, Christmas is not being cancelled. It is part of the ongoing intervention of God in our lives, part of the continuing work of salvation. It can no more be 'cancelled', by the restriction on its outward celebration, than it could be cancelled, centuries ago, by misguided men with long faces banning mince pies and football games. I look forward to our participation in that work, in whatever form we can devise, over Advent and beyond.



A Christmas Advent

for the Younger members to colour

Giant Christmas Card

As we have done in the last few years we are again using a Giant Christmas Card, to invite members of the congregation to wish all their friends at Abbey a Happy Christmas. By donating to this year's Christmas charity and having your name(s) added to the Card, savings can be made, if required, by not buying lots of individual cards. The Giant Card will be on display on each Sunday prior to Christmas starting on 29th November.

To make sure that distancing rules are kept, and avoiding multiple use of items, you will be asked on entering church and checking in, if you would like to donate. If you do, your name(s) will be noted and added to the card after the service. A box for donations will be positioned beside the weekly offering plate, just inside the church.

If you have not been attending church but would like to donate, please send a donation directly to the charity and let Milne Brodie know either by phone (894347) or email iandmb@btinternet.com so that your name can be added to the card.

The charity that has been chosen to receive the money raised, along with the Christmas services offerings is:

The Trussell Trust Food Bank (also goes under the name of East Lothian Food Bank) which we assume most people are familiar with.

The address of the charity for donations is: The Trussell Trust Food Bank, 3 Civic Square, Tranent, EH33 1LH or online.

Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal

The Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal began in 1993 when 300 boxes were given to people in Romania. Last year more than 107,000 shoe boxes were distributed to people in need across Eastern Europe. This year the boxes are being delivered across Eastern Europe and Pakistan. Every gift in every box makes a difference. It can provide practical support but more than this it lets someone know that they have been thought about, that they are valuable and they are loved. This is an amazing gift to give and receive.

During this difficult 'Covid time' we have been able to send 116 filled boxes and bags from Dirleton and Abbey Churches, plus an extra £400 donated by some who were unable to fill a box this year.

A huge thank you for your kindness and generosity. So many people helped in so many ways but a special thank you to the ladies who made very special draw-string bags when we knew we might not have enough empty boxes this year.

Bel Hardie
World Church Committee



Christmas is certainly going to be different this year so instead of sending gifts to family and friends why not donate a bed for a homeless person. There is always a need to support Bethany but this year the need is even greater. Abbey and Dirleton Churches are not able to provide meals as we have done in previous years so this would be a generous alternative. Please see below a letter from The Bethany Team.



Covid-19 and the lockdown measures hit in the middle of last year's Care Shelter season bringing extra challenges to the shelter and those we support. To respond to the change of need we extended our open period and provided 24-hour support in a local hotel. This meant individuals could isolate safely, access important hygiene facilities, as well as access to food and support. We saw more people move on to better accommodation than ever before. Your generosity helped make this increased level of support possible.

Following on from the success of last year's campaign, the traditional Care Shelter model has been modified into an even more inclusive service with the emphasis on re-accommodation. Running from 5 October 2020 until 2 May 2021 we are taking the very best from what we have learned running the Care Shelter for the last 24 years to provide a **24-hour service and a COVID safe space, operating in the Haymarket Hub Hotel.**

The new Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre

ensures that everyone has their own room with ensuite facilities and 24hour access to professional services and tailored support to move rapidly out of the crisis of homelessness.

Can you help even more individuals by Buying a this year? Please take a look at Buy a Bed 2020 to see the changes we have made and how you can help us reach the people who need it most this winter.

<https://www.bethanychristiantrust.com/>

Best Wishes
The Bethany Team

It is nearly 16years since we started using our Abbey Church mugs. During that time, several have been broken or chipped. These have now been replaced, and I can therefore offer the remainder of the order for sale ,just in time for Christmas gifts!! They are fine bone white china with a print of the Church in navy and cost £6 each or two for £11.

Contact Isabel Smith
01620 89 2175.



Abbey Church (All Funds) 9 Months to 30 Sep 2020

General

The deficit for 9 months was £30,570 financed by using funds received in past years. As the Abbey employed a Youth Worker in 2019 a deficit was expected, additionally some stonework and manse repairs were carried out.

With the COVID-19 pandemic income is very much reduced.

It not possible to predict what the effect will be on the Abbey's year-end financial position, but it is difficult to see how the budget deficit will be not be exceeded!

Income

There was no Open Plate income when the Church was closed. Standing Orders have increased substantially though.

(Note - If you are 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).

The Halls are currently closed, therefore there will be no Halls income as long as they are not available for let.

Expenditure

The Abbey has claimed furlough income on some staff. The staff, however, are being paid their full salary.

Premises costs include the stonework repairs and the front and back of the Church. Additionally work was carried out at the manse.

If you have any questions please ask.

Stuart Ainslie

27 Oct 2020

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

Actual v Budget - Nine Months to 30th Sep 2020

Income (All Funds)	Annual Budget	Budget to 30 Sep	Actual to 30 Sep	Variance
Offerings	68,000	51,000	47,166	(3,834)
Tax reclaim	16,000	12,000	10,647	(1,353)
Miscellaneous	9,900	4,725	2,686	(2,039)
Premises income	18,000	13,500	5,828	(7,672)
Investment income	5,650	4,230	3,404	(826)
Legacies	-	-	1,000	1,000
Sale of Investment	-	-	1,000	1,000
Dirleton	6,000	4,500	4,500	-
Total Income	123,550	89,955	76,231	(13,724)

Expenditure (All Funds)	Annual Budget	Budget to 30 Sep	Actual to 30 Sep	Vari- ance
Church of Scotland pay- ments	57,168	43,676	43,563	113
Pastoral Ex- penses	10,350	8,136	8,136	0
Other Sala- ries	44,580	32,415	26,802	5,613
Premises costs	19,461	14,532	22,069	(7,537)
Church Office Expenses	4,500	3,374	2,402	972
Investments	-	-	-	-
New Building	600	600	432	168
Miscellaneous	5,615	2,269	3,397	(1,128)
	<u>142,274</u>	<u>105,002</u>	<u>106,801</u>	<u>(1,799)</u>
Total Ex- penditure				
Budget for year 2020	<u>(18,724)</u>			
Budget for period		<u>(15,047)</u>		
Deficit for Period			<u>(30,570)</u>	
Variance				<u>(15,523)</u>

REGAL UPDATE

*It is now sadly nine months since we last met and **with-**
out lunch!*

Given the guidance from the Kirk and the thinking of the session, it may be a wee while yet before we can meet as we did before. Certainly not until the spring.

It may be possible to have a working date after we see how things work out with the vaccination developments.

In the meantime, thanks go to our long ago lined-up speakers for waiting on possible dates.

I ken fine that the food and fellowship are as much a part of Regal, along with the fun and banter, as the wit and wisdom of the speakers; we miss all of that and each other indeed.

Plans for outings are done and speakers too so we will be able to hit the floor running.

May I take this chance however to wish you all God's Blessing on you and yours this Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

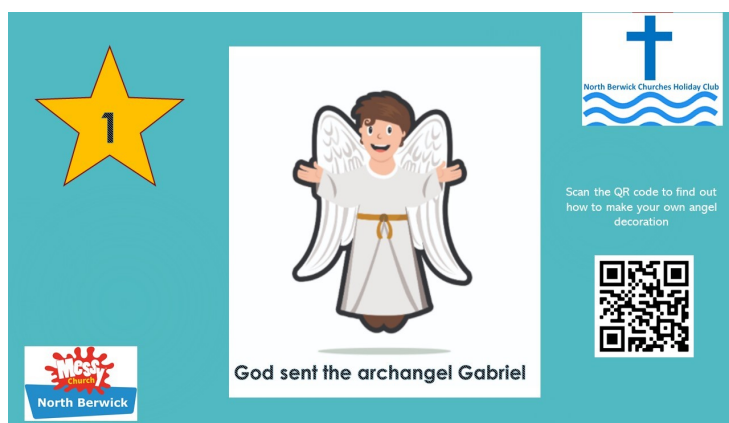
As aye

Bob Kane

Christmas Holiday Club

This Christmas, we have a few different events lined up for children and families, run by the joint churches holiday club team.

Advent Trail - From the weekend of 29th November, there will be 24 posters in the windows of shops, cafes and church noticeboards. Anyone can take part and follow the Christmas story as they hunt for all 24 posters. There are QR codes to link to activities, songs and storytelling videos, clues to find and interesting pieces of information as you go. (see attached photo of poster 1)



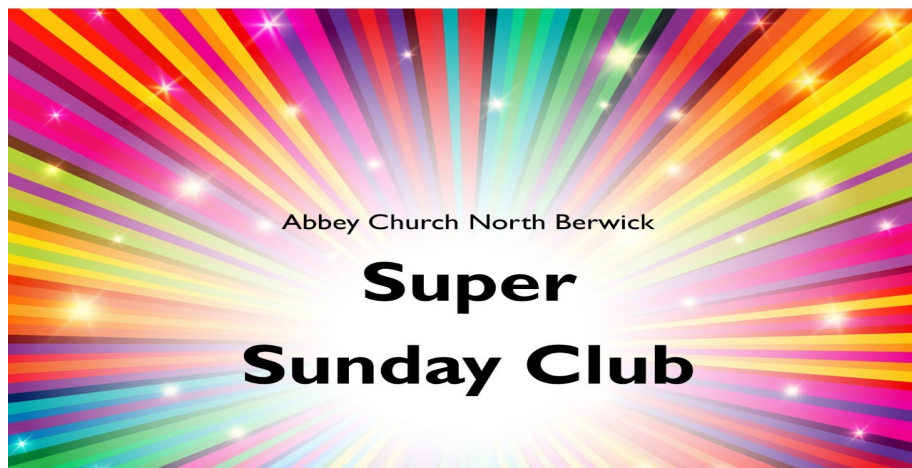
Nativity Trail - During December, some paintings will appear around the outside of church buildings in North Berwick. Can you find them all and follow the account of the first Christmas?

Christmas Activity Bags - Please sign up for our bags full of fun. There will be activity sheets, crafts and maybe a wee treat too. They will be delivered on Saturday 19th December. Please sign up with number and ages of children, address, phone number - email NBchurchesholidayclub@gmail.com by 15th December to request your bags.

Please encourage children and families to get involved. You can follow our Facebook page for updates - NB-Churches-Holiday-Club

Super Sunday Club

We're delighted to be able to meet in person again for Super Sunday Club on a monthly basis. We had our first meeting in November and were really pleased to see one another in person again after all these months. Children can be dropped off at the church hall entrance from 10.20am, and collected from there again at approximately 11.15am, at the end of the church service. The children will remain in the hall for the whole time. Please book a space by emailing hazel.abbeychurch@hotmail.com. Our next meeting is Sunday 6th December, where we will be working on our nativity video. Any questions, please contact Hazel. We hope to see you there



Feast!

Our Feast youth group has continued to meet online, but we're delighted to be able to meet in person from December. Our first 'in person' meeting will be on Saturday 6th December 10am-12 noon in the small hall. We will be enjoying some hot breakfast rolls and hot drinks as we discuss advent. Feast is aimed at a S4-S6 age group. Please let us know you're coming so we can get the food ordered. For more questions or to book, please email hazel.abbeychurch@hotmail.com



Hazel Gray
Young People's Worker
Abbey Church
North Berwick

Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk Prayers

December 20 & January 21

Dear friends in Christ,

Wow! It's hard to believe we've come to the end - the beginning - of another year. What a difficult time it has been. Let's pray:

Heavenly Father, thank you for being with us all during these very trying months. Please Lord stay with us keeping us safe in the times ahead. Thank you Lord. Bless all who are working flat out through the NHS, and all those who are caring for others with no thought for themselves. Bless them abundantly. May those living alone be aware of your presence that they may know they're never on their own. Bless those struggling to cope financially with young families etc or with health problems. Forgive us when our faith falters, strengthen each of us as you lead us forward into the New Year. Lord stay with each and every one of us, guide us along the way. Thank you. We ask these things in Jesus precious name. Amen.

Betty Hawthorn, Prayer Secretary.

May you and all whom you love be aware of God's love as this year draws to a close and the new year begins.



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, The
Guild, REGAL, WALT, Alpha, Little Nippers, The Voice
Project, to mention but a few.

We have many other groups using our church halls,
The Gospel Choir, the Scone café, Christian fellowship
men's breakfast, physiotherapy plus, yoga classes,
pilates classes, Jo jingles, fitness classes, The drama
Mill, the Artisan Fair, the brownies, North Berwick
Photographic group, dance classes.

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

Baptism

18.10.20 Heidi Maple Clark

Funerals

21.9.20 Alexander Taylor

2.10.20 Christina Dickson

13.10.20 Sylvia Pugh

23.10.20 Joyce Renton

5.11.20 Violet Hamilton

18.11.20 Sheila Gilvray

27.11.20 Margaret Wight

Pastoral Visits

The Minister and Pastoral Assistant are happy to make contact with church members who are ill, either at home or in hospital. This information should be given to the Minister (890800) or via the Church Office (892800). Thank you.

For pastoral visiting, it would also be helpful to have a **mobile number**, the number of a next of kin, and your 'Sunday' name- hospitals use your official name, as it can be confusing when making contact if you're known by something different! And the ward number too, please.

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 February/March 2021.
The deadline for submitting articles is Tuesday 19th
January 2021. 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 2020

Sunday 20th

Early evening carol service on Zoom

Thursday 24th December

Watchnight service on Zoom

Friday 25th December

Christmas Day service at Abbey



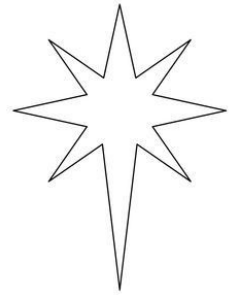
Sunday 27th December

Morning worship at Abbey

Sunday morning Services remain as normal throughout:

9.30am at Dirleton

10.30am at Abbey



*The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it*

John 1:5

Please see our Facebook page and website for details,
and
check out our You tube channel for videos for all ages

www.abbeychurch.org.uk

 [@abbeyanddirleton](https://www.facebook.com/abbeyanddirleton)

 [Abbey Church](https://www.youtube.com/Abbey Church)

