



**Abbey Church**

**and**

**Dirleton Kirk News**

**April/May 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**

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.

Dear Dirleton & Abbey Friends,

We're fortunate in our area to have supportive community groups. And for those who can get out of their house, we're also very lucky to have lovely countryside and beaches on our doorstep. But at the moment, we don't know exactly what this Easter will be like. It's possible that some of the 'lockdown' restrictions will be lifted, but we won't know until the week before, and that will depend on a continued fall in the virus infections. We don't yet know for certain if churches will be allowed to open for Easter services. Indications are that they will, with limited numbers and other safe precautions, which we hope will be allowed (for more information, 'watch this space', or at least our intimations and website).

The whole of the past year has been something of an uncertain one. It's been an up-and-down rollercoaster of statistics, regulations, infections, and sadly also deaths. The first Easter was also a time of uncertainty and surprises. The high celebration of Passover, then a midnight trial and a crucified man watched by weeping women, followed by an empty tomb, and frightened men and women. But it ended with hope and joy, as they witnessed the risen Lord Jesus, and gloom and despair turned to joy and peace.

As you read the Easter story, listen for the indications of human emotions in it. I think you'll find they are all there, from anger to doubt to trust. The Psalmist wrote 'You turned my mourning into dancing'. I hope that your Easter is one of hope, peace and joy.

Your Minister,  
David

CONGRATULATIONS to Abbey member Mrs Ann McCarter who is a recipient of Her Majesty the Queen's Maundy Money. This honour is given to a small number of people each year, who are chosen because of their service to the church and community. Among many other things, Ann was Convener of the Business Committee of the General Assembly for many years, and in that capacity she kept the General Assembly running like a well-oiled machine (not an easy task when there are more than 750 ministers and Elders to keep in order!). This honour is richly deserved, and we offer our congratulations and best wishes to her.



**Abbey Church  
Robert Burgon  
Kirk Session Clerk**

As I write, we await confirmation of the lifting of the restrictions which have prevented places of worship being able to hold services since just after Christmas. It is hoped that infection rates (and the roll-out of the vaccination programme) might permit us to return for live worship on Palm Sunday (28 March). Pre-booking will still be required as will be social distancing in and out of the church, the wearing of face coverings and no singing. We pray that some of these restrictions might be relaxed as the year proceeds.

In the meantime, our live Zoom services on Sunday mornings have been well attended and have been followed by a time for coffee (in our own homes) and chat. We have run a series of studies on the book of Jeremiah and during Lent these have been supplemented by Sunday evening meditations based on a book by Gordon Giles in which the focus has been on the link between ordinary household items and the season leading up to Easter. There has been good participation in both groups.

The Kirk Session has met twice since my last report - on 1 February and on 8 March and the main item of business at both meetings has been consideration of the Annual Report of Activities and Accounts for the

year to 31 December 2020. Although we were in some form of lockdown for much of 2020, our congregational life has been busy, and this is reflected in the Annual Report. With the halls being closed for use by external organisations for a large part of the year, there has been a large reduction in our income from that source. Encouragingly, with some having increased their givings and more members now making their regular offerings by standing order and bank transfer, our income from offerings was marginally greater than we had experienced in 2019.

We undertook some planned expenditure on stonework in the church, which, along with some other items of maintenance on our property meant that expenditure during the year was greater than income. The overall excess of expenditure over income of £35,546 was met from our reserves. The Annual Report and Accounts were approved by the Kirk Session and now appear on the Abbey Church website- paper copies are also available on request from the office.

We will not be holding an Annual Stated Meeting this year (and our constitution does not permit such meetings to be held on Zoom or other similar online platforms). However, members with any queries about the Report and Accounts should submit them to the church office. The Kirk Session is extremely grateful to our Treasurer, Stuart Ainslie, his finance team of Janice Cobb, Phil Spencer and David Aston for all the hard work they put into keeping our financial affairs in good order. Our thanks also go, once again, to Andrew Scott for carrying out an independent

examination of the annual accounts.

Our Young People's Worker, Hazel Gray, is busy preparing for Easter activities both in connection with Law Primary School and also for the North Berwick churches' Holiday Club arrangements.

The Outreach Committee has been working on an online Alpha course, in conjunction with the North Berwick Christian Fellowship which is due to start on Monday 22 March 2021.

The next Kirk Session meeting will take place, again by Zoom, on Monday 12 April 2021.

On behalf of the Kirk Session, I extend our best wishes to all members and friends for Easter when we celebrate the hope which we get from the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.



**Dirleton Kirk**  
**Keith Stewart**  
**Kirk Session Clerk**

As the coronavirus restrictions drag further and further into the year, and we approach the first anniversary of 'lockdown', we continue to be frustrated in our inability to meet together for worship, or any other purpose. Whatever our immediate circumstances, it is difficult to avoid a sense that time is slipping away from us; perhaps, that days are merging into one another. (On reflection, that may be something personal to me, given the presence in the house till recently of a teenager who had turned the order of the day upside down, sleeping by daylight and living by night...)

The vaccination process at least offers hope that we will see lockdown restrictions lifted before too long; and that is a hope to be nurtured, as we contemplate long inconvenient journeys to get the jab. My offer to the NHS to discuss the use of the church hall as a vaccination centre for Dirleton and the parish is, as yet, unacknowledged: but in the meantime we have learned of friends, members of the congregation and others, who have fallen ill with the virus, and we carry them in our prayers.

In such times it is good to remember that at this season of Lent, many Christians choose to undergo privations willingly, to give up some pleasure or indulgence, or take on some apparently inconvenient task or duty, as a symbolic sacrifice: something to call to mind the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, praying and meditating, before commencing His work among us; so that we can try to find the value in the extra time we are

all spending with only ourselves for company. With that in mind, I draw to your attention the Lent study groups which the Minister will be running, via Zoom, on Sundays during the season, beginning on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>, the first Sunday of Lent. There is also a study group on the book of Jeremiah; and he has begun a Zoom tutorial on New Testament Greek, which can be started by people with no knowledge whatsoever of the language. As with our Sunday worship, all of these things are being done through Zoom; all would be better if there were at least the option of participating in person; but all offer another small way of keeping in touch and keeping our minds and souls active as lockdown drags on. And there are all sorts of resources available for those with access to computers or smartphones to help us structure our prayers and reflections as we move through Lent, such as this one available via the BBC website: <https://www.onlineprayer.net>

I am one of the very few people to have had very positive new experiences in the time of lockdown- a new post, new responsibilities, meeting new people- traveling to and from London on trains sometimes so empty they might have been put on for my private use. While all this has provided me with more stimulation than almost anybody else will have had over the past four months, much of it has been mediated through videoconferencing. This applies not only to work but to the activities provided by the Christians in Parliament group: just like us, it operates via screens. There is a weekly Chapel, online; talks and presentations are done online. None of it as good as being there in person: but

it means that contact is kept up. What's more, it means that we can go over things again, or watch events that we've missed.

At this time of year we often reflect on the way in which the steadily increasing signs of new life in nature around us matches some of the theme of the journey through Lent towards Easter. Perhaps the most symbolic plant is the snowdrop, the first bunches of which have appeared in the churchyard by the main door. Such reflections are familiar, but, I hope, never need be commonplace: they point to truths which are eternal. We have had bitterly cold weather, more snow than we often get, and there may perhaps be more cold weather before we are properly into spring. Just so with the virus restrictions- however tiresome and repetitive they are, they will, in time, be lifted. Just as I typed those closing words, the first bumblebee of the year bumped into the windowpane and flew off.



## Easter Holiday Club

We're not yet able to meet in person for Easter holiday club, but the team have come up with some great ideas to share the message of Easter with the community.

## Easter Activity Bags

These will be bags filled with activity sheets, crafts, Easter story, and a wee chocolate treat. We will also send out an email with a storytelling video to accompany the activity bags. We will be delivering the bags on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March so that families have the activities for Holy Week. We currently have 64 children to deliver bags to, which is great. If you know of anyone else who would like to sign up, please ask them to contact [hazel.abbeychurch@hotmail.com](mailto:hazel.abbeychurch@hotmail.com) by Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March.

## Easter Trail

The Lodge Gardens will be the location of an Easter Trail between Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March and Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April (Palm Sunday to Easter Monday). There will be 9 eggs to find on A4 posters which will be on the trees to your left as you enter the Lodge Gardens from the entrance opposite the community centre. All ages are welcome to come and follow the Easter story, and engage with extra crafts and stories via QR codes if you would like. Do come along and enjoy - the competition to enter a prize draw for an Easter egg is only open to primary ages unfortunately, though, sorry!



 NB-Churches-Holiday-Club



# Easter Trail

**Saturday 27th March - Monday 5th April**

**The Lodge Gardens, North Berwick**  
(turn left as you enter the gate opp. Community Centre)

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**Follow the trail of eggs and explore the story of Easter together.**  
Use the QR codes to access crafts, stories, etc.

Find the clues, and email the phrase to  
[nbchurchesholidayclub@gmail.com](mailto:nbchurchesholidayclub@gmail.com) to enter the prize draw for  
3 chocolate Easter eggs: closing date 12 noon on 5th April  
(All ages can take part in the trail, but competition only open to primary age).



## Easter Cross

An Easter cross will appear outside Abbey Church. Over Easter weekend, we will dress it appropriately for Easter Friday and Easter Sunday. We are inviting all ages to paint a stone on an Easter theme and place it at the foot of the cross. On Easter Saturday, a holiday club team members will be there to engage with visitors from 10am - 2pm, but stones can be left at any time over the weekend.

Hazel Gray

Abbey Youth Worker



## Guild Update



The Church of Scotland Guild 3 year project focus entitled "One Journey, Many Roads" comes to an end this Spring. Due to an accumulation of funds in our Abbey Guild account £250.00 has been sent to each of the 6 projects.

These are as follows:-

**Crossreach** - Joining up the Dots : Scotland

**Sailors' Society** - A Chaplain for Our Ports : Scotland

**The Boys' Brigade** - Faith in Young People : Scotland

**World Mission Council** - Journeying Together : Zambia

**Malawi Fruits** - Growing the Future : Malawi

**The Free to Live Trust** - Seema's Project : India

£250 has been given to Abbey Church and our fixed annual fee of £12 has been sent to Guilds Together. Plus our annual capitation fees for 2020/21 have been sent to 121 George Street and paid out of our funds. That leaves us with a total of £163.59 in our account.

Due to the present Covid restrictions we will be unable to meet for the rest of this session.

On behalf of the Guild I would like to wish you a peaceful and healthy Easter and in the words of Mission Praise 460 - "May God's blessing surround us each day, As we trust him and walk in his way, May his presence within, Guard and keep us from sin, go in peace, go in joy, go in love."

Sheila Burgon

## Budget - v - Actual - Year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

<b>Income (All Funds)</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual to 31 Dec</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Offerings	68,000	61,442	(6,558)
Tax reclaim	16,000	14,883	(1,117)
Miscellaneous	9,900	11,302	1,402
Premises income	18,000	7,386	(10,614)
Investment income	5,650	4,583	(1,067)
Legacies	-	1,000	1,000
Sale of Investment	-	1,000	1,000
Dirleton	6,000	6,000	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>123,550</b>	<b>107,596</b>	<b>(15,954)</b>
<b>Expenditure (All Funds)</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual to 31 Dec</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Church of Scotland payments	57,168	57,164	4
Pastoral Expenses	10,350	12,071	(1,721)
Other Salaries	44,580	35,335	9,245
Premises costs	19,461	26,036	(6,575)
Church Office Expenses	4,500	3,770	730
Investments	-	-	-
New Building	600	432	168
Miscellaneous	5,615	8,334	(2,719)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>142,274</b>	<b>143,142</b>	<b>(868)</b>
<b>Budget for year 2020</b>	<b>(18,724)</b>		
<b>Excess of Payments over receipts</b>		<b>(35,546)</b>	
<b>Variance</b>			<b>(16,822)</b>

# Abbey Church (All Funds)

## Year to 31 December 2020

### General

Payments exceeded receipts by £35,546 financed by using funds received in past years. As the Abbey employed a Youth Worker in 2019 a deficit was expected, additionally some Church stonework and manse repairs were carried out.

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

### Income

There was no Open Plate income, in the last nine months of the year, 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 were also closed for nine months, therefore there was very much reduced Halls income.

### 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

March 2021

## Your Finance Team

Income - Gift-aid

Phil Spencer

Income - Hall Rentals

Paola Burrows

Payment of bills

Janice Cobb

Payroll

David Aston

Accounting - OSCR, periodic accounts and Church of Scotland

Stuart Ainslie



Please have a look at our website

<https://www.abbeychurch.org.uk/>

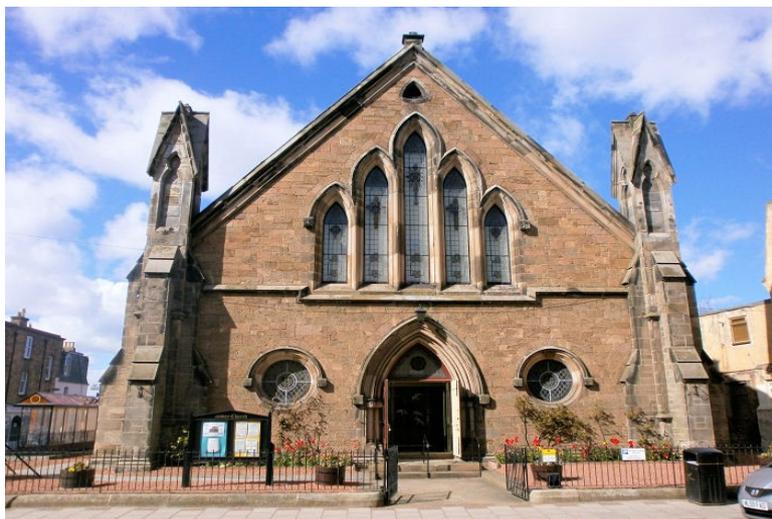
To get information of all the events organised by  
Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk.

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.

**Hall Hire is limited in line with current government  
Covid-19 restrictions**

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](mailto:abbeychurch@abbeychurch.co.uk)





[www.LittleBlossoms.com](http://www.LittleBlossoms.com)

A picture for Easter to colour

## Church Register

### Funerals

3.2.21 David McEwan

24.2.21 Morag Gatherer

3.3.21 Mary Nelson

1.4.21 Rosemary Robertson

### 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](mailto:abbeychurch@abbeychurch.co.uk)

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

## Newsletters

The next newsletter will cover June/July 2021. The deadline for submitting articles is Tuesday 18th May 2021. Please send to Abbey Church Office.

[Abbeychurch.org.uk](http://Abbeychurch.org.uk)

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Abbey Church, North Berwick (Church of Scotland)

Scottish Charity No. SCO 04761—CCL51436