



# **Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk News**

**February/March 2025**

**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**

**Come along  
All welcome**

Dear Friends,

One of the Christian leaders who has inspired me is Nicky Gumbel. He recently retired after being the Vicar of his church, Holy Trinity in Brompton, London. He was on the ministry team for 46 years, the last 17 of them as its leader.

His church is the largest congregation in the Church of England, and has planted well over 100 new congregations, numbering in total more than 10,000 people. Over 30 million people have done his 'Alpha' course (including many of us in Abbey & Dirleton). I recently read his farewell sermon, and he had a lot of wisdom to share, some of which I'd like to share with you now. In the early days of his ministry, his son, shared some of the wisdom of youth with him, which was to '*embrace change*'. It often takes the younger generation to tell us that we need to do that. I won't tell any of the jokes about how many people it takes to change a light bulb, I'm sure you know them all!

Another point he made in his sermon is this: '*Don't be a consumer, be a contributor*'. That may be a more important message in large churches than smaller ones like ours, but it's still relevant. We all have something to give and to share in the communal life of our congregation. And giving - serving - is a blessing to us and to others. Jesus is our example.

Change, and serve. Two good mottos for 2025.

Your minister,  
David

## Abbey Kirk Session

Robert Burgon



Christmas and Advent are traditionally "busy" times in churches and the 2024 season was no different in Abbey Church with a wide range of special services and events. For some years now we have arranged an evening service at the beginning of Advent to which we invite people who have experienced a bereavement. Christmas- and especially the first Christmas after the loss of a loved one- can be a difficult time and this short, meditative service provides an opportunity to focus and remember those who are no longer with us. Many of those who attend such services do not have an active church involvement and it is always good to see people responding positively to our invitations.

Another "pop-up" Nativity on 22 December (a joint service with Dirleton Kirk) was well attended and saw the enthusiastic participation of a number of people of all ages. "Pop-up" Nativities have the significant advantage that there are no words to learn, no rehearsals required and the event can take place in a relaxed atmosphere. Many people left church that day with happy, smiling faces.

For the first time this year, the World Church Committee arranged a film show event (using our new projection and screen facilities). The animated version of "The Grinch" has a lovely message for the Christmas season and the sanctuary was transformed into a cinema for a couple of hours (popcorn and other snacks included). As a result of this event, £200 was donated to Bethany's work with the homeless in Edinburgh.

Although not a church event, we were pleased to offer our halls for use by Buy Nothing North Berwick before Christmas when people had the chance to acquire children's toys, books and Christmas decorations in exchange for a small entry fee. At the beginning of the morning, the large hall was absolutely full of such items and, as the day progressed, people were seen to be leaving the hall with bundles of goodies.

We were pleased to welcome many people at our Family Christmas Eve service and at our joint Christmas Day service.

Our offerings at our special Christmas services this year were split equally between the Edinburgh-based charity Fresh Start and World Vision's DEC Middle East Humanitarian Appeal. Including the proceeds from the beautiful giant Christmas card, once again produced by Milne Brodie, the total donated in Abbey was £1,236. With over £700 donated at services in



Dirleton, these two charities received almost £1,000 each from our linked charges.

The Abbey Little Nippers group for pre-school children and their parents/grandparents/carers on Thursday mornings during term time continues to provide a welcoming place for this part of our community. This group has been led, on a voluntary basis for more than two years by Iain and Karen Murray, who travelled



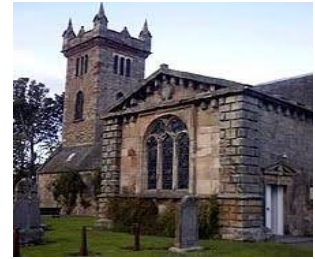
from Monifieth each week to look after their granddaughter and run Little Nippers. They stepped down from this role at the last Little Nippers event just

before Christmas and were thanked by our Minister who presented them with a token of our appreciation. We are pleased to announce that Catherine Mundell (a North Berwick-based Mum of two children) has been appointed as the new Little Nippers Coordinator. Catherine led her first session on 9 January 2025.

The Kirk Session meets again on 3 February 2025 when the main item of business will be consideration of the narrative part of the Abbey Church Annual Report for 2024.

## Dirleton Kirk Session

Keith Stewart



As disclosed in the intimations for 5<sup>th</sup> January the Christmas offerings raised £1,931.86 for our two charities Fresh Start and the World Vision Middle East humanitarian appeal. Thanks to all who contributed to these excellent and worthwhile causes. Each has particular resonance at Christmas and Epiphany.

Fresh Start helps people making a 'journey from homelessness', helping people to furnish new homes, and offering all sorts of necessary support to people who are often vulnerable and disadvantaged. Cookery and nutrition classes, support workers, help with painting and decorating, gardening, advice on budgeting; practical assistance with all sorts of things that those of us who have been blessed with more structured lives may take for granted, forgetting how difficult it would be to have to learn these things from scratch. And all is done with a view to encouraging people and supporting them, looking to help with building friendships and helping integrate into society people who might have felt that society had left them behind.

The World Vision Middle East Humanitarian appeal is a response to the results of conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon. It has assisted over 410,000 people- including 187,000 children- since October 2023. World Vision is a Christian charity which helps children, focusing on

the most vulnerable, in a way which seeks to involve local communities as much as possible, and which works to identify children's needs- not only relieving poverty, but trying to find pathways into education, the best way of meeting their aspirations not only to make a better life for themselves, but to help those around them. The nature of the crisis is such that particular emphasis is being placed on relieving the effect of conflict on children. In the West Bank, helping to provide 'psychosocial' support for those who are feeling the immediate effects, and building and rebuilding community spaces to foster self-help. The charity has long been active in the Lebanon, with staff and supplies in place, to meet the needs of those caught up in the violence, through no fault of their own.

David preached on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> January about Anna and Simeon in the temple, coming across Jesus, and realising that he was not just any other child being brought to the temple to satisfy religious obligations. Theirs are stories of the fulfilment of prayers made over long years, and fulfilled late in the lives of Anna and Simeon: revelations of the truth and order of the world, to people who had been faithful in their service. Theirs are examples for all of us as we take up anew the Epiphany challenge to show God to the world, and we might see the work of World Vision as being in the forefront of that demonstrating Christian love to others, many of whom are not Christians. On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January, Robert spoke about 'light', and its importance to the season of Epiphany: and we see in the work of Fresh Start a means of bestowing light on others, the

warm, gentle light of home to those who have been homeless. Homelessness itself is uppermost in our minds at this time, as we ponder on journeys, not only those made by the Magi to honour Him who is born King of the Jews, but also Mary, Joseph and Jesus themselves, as they fled into Egypt to escape the murderous rage of a tyrannical ruler.

I hope everyone found something to enjoy in our services over Advent and Christmas. I could not attend everything, but I enjoyed particularly a very well attended Watchnight Service at Dirleton, and on behalf of the congregation I offer special thanks to those who gave up their time to serve refreshments in the hall, and for the very generous donation of mince pies for the worshippers! It was also great to join with Abbey on the last Sunday in Advent, and participate in their 'pop-up' Nativity play; and to host Abbey on the first Sunday in Christmas, at which Jim Dickson returned to play wonderfully on the organ at Dirleton. And of course those thanks are extended also to those who led us in worship, those who read lessons, carried out door duties, prepared and served refreshments, decorated and swept the hall and the kirk, and everyone else whose contribution helps the rest of us to enjoy what I always think of as being, in the words of the song, "the most wonderful time of the year."

On behalf of the Kirk Session, I send everyone best wishes, and look forward to seeing you in the year ahead.





Hello! I'm Catherine and I'm the new leader of the Little Nippers Baby & Toddler Group. Originally from Manchester, I previously lived in Edinburgh before moving to North Berwick with my family in 2020. I have two little girls aged 5 and 2 who keep me very busy! For the past 5 years, I've been looking after my girls full time and we've had a lot of fun exploring the local area. We love getting down to the beach whatever the weather! Before that, I worked for various arts organisations - most recently at the Edinburgh International Book Festival.



I'm really excited to be leading Little Nippers, which I've previously attended with my own daughters. It's a great place where children aged 0-5 can have a play in a safe and welcoming space, while parents and carers can have a good chat and a hot cup of tea! There are snacks for the children and we usually have a story and song time too.

Do come along and say hello - we meet every Thursday during term time from 10.00-11.30am in the church hall. All are welcome and I look forward to meeting some of you very soon.

## A Heartwarming Christmas Celebration

On December 21st, 2024, the World Church Committee treated North Berwick and the wider community to a special, free showing of Dr. Seuss' *The Grinch*. The event brought together around 50 people of all ages, some familiar faces and some new - creating a cozy, inclusive atmosphere that truly captured the spirit of Christmas.

Our delightful afternoon was made even more memorable by the generous spirit of Rev. David Graham, who provided *Grinch* masks for the children (and the young at heart!). This simple gesture brought smiles to many faces and added a touch of festive fun to the occasion. Snacks were readily available, and attendees were welcome to bring their own, ensuring everyone had something to enjoy during the film.

"The *Grinch* was so funny, and I loved wearing the mask! I hope we can watch more movies like this," said one of the children who attended. Her excitement echoed the sentiments of many others who enjoyed the film.

The event also served as a fantastic way to showcase the new projection and sound equipment in Abbey Church. The clear visuals and high-quality audio greatly enhanced the viewing experience, making it all the more enjoyable for everyone in attendance.

The Grinch's journey from a heart two sizes too small to one overflowing with love resonated with many in attendance. The film's message of inclusivity and the importance of reaching out to our neighbours is one that aligns closely with the values of Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk.



In the true spirit of giving, we laid out a collection plate during the event and were thrilled to raise £200 for Bethany, a charity dedicated to supporting homeless individuals in Scotland. Bethany's mission is to end homelessness in Scotland, including our local city of Edinburgh, by providing emergency shelter, long-term housing solutions, and community support services. Your generous donations will help Bethany continue their vital work in offering hope and practical assistance to those in need.



We are excited to announce that the World Church Committee is diligently working on our 2025 calendar of events and look forward to sharing it with you shortly. Plans are already afoot for the Christian Aid quiz in early May, and we can't wait to bring our congregations together during these events.

The success of *The Grinch* has inspired us to plan more film afternoons in the future. We will almost certainly plan a Christmas 2025 showing but would warmly welcome any film suggestions you might have for other times throughout the year.

If you would like to suggest a film, request more information about the World Church Committee or would be interested in joining, please get in touch with Judy Lockhart-Hunter, Yolanda Strachan, Dorothy Kirkpatrick, Janice Cobb or Liz Keddie. You can also email us at [worldchurchcommittee@outlook.com](mailto:worldchurchcommittee@outlook.com)

Best wishes for 2025  
The World Church Committee



It's hard to believe that we are halfway through our syllabus already!

Last year we introduced the idea of having collections at meetings where charities were represented. This has proven to be extremely successful and so far we have given generously to Fresh Start £102.00 and Myra's Wells £130.00.

The next meetings we can look forward to are as follows: -

### January

**28<sup>th</sup> - 'Aquabox - Jim Hettrick**

Aquabox is a charity which provides safe drinking water, through the use of filtration units, and humanitarian aid to crisis zones around the world. The charity has recently sent 200 AquaAid boxes, 20 community filters and 240 family filters to Beirut.

### February

**11<sup>th</sup> - 'Light Up Learning' - Richard McLauchlan**

Light Up Learning (LUL) is a registered Scottish charity providing one-to-one mentoring for high school students in Edinburgh and the Lothians. The charity is



dedicated to igniting a love of learning in young people and transforming the nature of education in Scotland. They aim to put youngsters in charge of their own learning and help them build the resources, skills, and contacts they need to achieve their potential.

**25<sup>th</sup> - 'Playful Beginnings - Crossreach** The project aims to work to improve children's health and wellbeing through play and nurture and will support specialist perinatal therapy with creche support in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Joint project meeting at **Abbey**.

### March

**4<sup>th</sup> - 'Bibles for Bairns' - Scottish Bible Society**

Reading to babies helps them to feel safe and loved. It builds self-esteem, vocabulary, imagination and even improves sleeping patterns.

What if the stories read to babies and young children at these crucial moments were stories from the Bible: stories that told children they were safe and loved by a God who made them, and who will always be with them as they learn and grow?

Joint project meeting at **St. Andrew Blackadder**

**TAG** meets fortnightly at 2:00 in Abbey large hall and all are welcome.

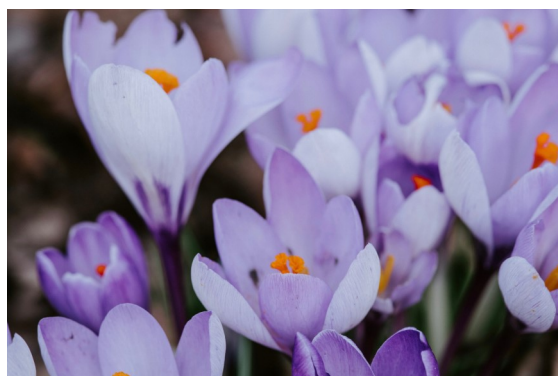
Sheila Burgon



The Christmas poster display outside the front of Abbey Church was well received and appreciated by many during December. Our thanks for the wonderful images is due to Peter Wyatt, an artist friend of Colin & Jackie Ley. Peter lives in the north of France and produced the original artwork a few years ago for his local church.

## Abbey Church Flower Rota

DATE	DONOR	ARRANGER
2 February	Margaret Scott	Dorothy Kirkpatrick
9 February	Anna Jardine	Isabel Smith
16 February	Violet Lamont	Isabel Smith
23 February	Sadie Young	Sadie Young
2 March	Maureen Sharpe	Irene Nichol
9 March	Janice Cobb	Irene Nichol
16 March	Kate Campbell	Kate Campbell
23 March	Clare Aitken	Clare Aitken
30 March	Alison Bell	Elma Danks Irene Brodie



## Abbey Church Sunday Tea Rota

DATE	
2 February	A N Other & Sadie Young
9 February	Isabel Smith & Florence Buchan
16 February	Katrina Hendry & Irene Nicholl
23 February	Fiona Gibson & A N Other
2 March	Mary Graham & Rose Leslie
9 March	Ann Bell & A N Other
16 March	Linda McLean & <b>help needed</b>
23 March	A N Other & Sadie Young
30 March	Isabel Smith & Florence Buchan

If you have spare time occasionally after our  
Sunday Service to add your name to our rota  
it would be greatly appreciated.

Please speak to 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,  
Pilates classes, Jo Jingles, Conexus Tuition, The Drama  
Mill, The Brownies, Dunedin Dance, Freedom and Form,  
Interoception Yoga, JKA Bass Rock Karate, Kundalini  
Yoga, Dirleton Playgroup, Wild Tide 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](mailto:abbeychurch@abbeychurch.co.uk)





## Church Register

### Baptisms

15.12.24 Lochlan Bugler Hodges

29.12.24 Coralie Joy Maplesden

### Wedding Blessing

Michel Kopmann and Annina Euling

### Funerals

21.1.25 Rita Stewart

24.1.25 Jean Anderson

## 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](mailto: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 April and May 2025.  
The deadline for submitting articles is Tuesday 18th  
March 2025. 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