



Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk News

June/July 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,

This month I want to share with you a very important message from the General Assembly. It comes from Rev Tommy McNeil, the convener of the Faith Action Team. We recently studied his book 'Sleeping Giant'.

This is a prophetic word for today.

Your minister,
David

I want us to learn from Jesus and how He coped with his Gethsemane moment. He didn't feel able to meet the challenges it presented alone. He took his three trusted disciples Peter, James and John along with him and said, "Sit here while I pray".

Why? What would any of the three of them be able to do to help Jesus? The obvious answer is nothing, but the request shows that there are times where people won't be able to save us from our time of trial, but just being there with us, is comforting and provides strength. In this moment for us as a church, we need one another. Jesus' trusted friends didn't cope too well with what was being asked of them. They kept falling asleep. We can't be too hard on them as they were exhausted from sorrow. They were having their own personal Gethsemane moments.

So, it has been for many in our churches. Feeling a sense of loss for what was and grieving for the changes we've had to navigate has left many feeling exhausted and sorrowful. Jesus moved out of Gethsemane. Whilst greater challenges awaited Him, I'm convinced that greater blessings await us. Moments after being strengthened by an angel, Jesus speaks to his three tired friends, "Get up! Let's get going! My betrayer is here."

I want to issue a call, a cry to you today that it is time to get up. It's time for us to move forward. Not to meet our betrayer and death, but to meet our risen Saviour and the future he has for us. I am absolutely convinced there are better and brighter days ahead for our church. But we will only see them if we get up and get going with what God has called us to do. Jesus would say to us all here today, "Get up, move forward with me, my future awaits you!"



Abbey Kirk Session

Robert Burgon



Once again, we celebrated the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ with an early morning open-air service on Anchor Green on Easter Sunday. Although on the cold side, (the keyboard player was glad that he had brought fingerless gloves) the weather was favourable. In 2024 we thought that we had achieved a record attendance of about 50 people at this service. This year, the number was closer to 70 and we were pleased to have the challenge of having to put out extra chairs in the hall where we enjoyed a breakfast prepared by Joyce, Willie and Rose.

On Easter Sunday the large wooden cross in church was adorned with a number of prayers on red paper which had been written by worshippers at previous Sunday services. We thank Colin Ley for the idea behind this and for the arrangements which he made to bring it into effect.

Since Holy Week our church doors have been open during the daytime between Monday and Saturday, with our grateful thanks to a small team of volunteers. An open church in a town centre is clearly appreciated by

visitors given the number of positive comments which appear in the visitors' book. People often comment on the beauty and peacefulness of our sanctuary. Two visitors even used the word "quaint" to describe our church- not a word which comes to my mind, but it is quite possible that these visitors (one of whom was from overseas) are more used to modern places of worship.

Pastoral CARE

Abbey Church has always taken pastoral care seriously and I would go so far as to suggest that one of our priorities is looking after our congregation, following the teachings of Jesus. I am pleased to report that the Abbey Kirk Session has created a new role of Pastoral Visitor to support the work already undertaken by our Minister (and our Pastoral Assistant, Bob Kane, who works in both the Abbey and Dirleton parishes). After an application and interview process, Ian Lennock (a member and Treasurer of Dirleton Kirk) has been appointed to this part-time role and we look forward to seeing him working within our congregation.

I am pleased to report that Tom Lockhart-Hunter has taken on the role of Convenor of our Resources Committee (which looks after the fabric and finances of the church) and we wish him well in this new role.

There is an increasing emphasis on the ministry of lay people within the Church of Scotland nationally and we are privileged to have a number of members who have been trained to lead worship, both in church and in our care homes. Our Presbytery recently announced a programme of training to assist people who might in future be able to conduct funeral services. The first of these sessions will take place in June and it is encouraging to report that no fewer than 5 members of the Abbey congregation (and 1 from Dirleton) have expressed an interest in participating in this training.

In the last Newsletter, I announced the appointment of Darren Barber as our new church administrator (for both Abbey and Dirleton). Darren is now well and truly in post and is working from the Abbey office between 1000 and 1300 on Tuesdays- Fridays each week. A number of those who had worked closely with Darren's predecessor, Paola Burrows, attended a happy afternoon tea with Paola and her husband at which a presentation was made to thank her for her hard work over the years.

The Abbey Kirk Session meets again on 2 June 2025.

Dirleton Kirk Session

Keith Stewart



Repair and renovation works have commenced on the church tower. I place at the head of this note my thanks, on behalf of the whole congregation and community, to those who have spent tedious hours wrestling with bureaucracy at every stage of the process leading up to this point, and in that regard give special mention to Gordon Symon, our apparently indefatigable property convenor.

Efforts will be made to keep the level of disruption to the work and fellowship of Dirleton Kirk to a minimum, but some temporary changes are inevitable. For the duration of the works, entry to the church will be by way of the Archerfield Aisle. I appreciate that this is less convenient for those of us who drive directly to the main door: but that part of the building is no longer accessible, and so cars should be parked by the Archerfield Aisle door- bearing in mind at all times that the Minister has to drive to Abbey directly after our service on Sundays! We have given over the vestry to the contractor, for use as the site office. We can anticipate that the area of the vestibule will not be accessible, owing to the works: we can review this as the works continue, but where there is no access to the vestibule, during worship we will keep the hall open should anyone need to use the toilet or other facilities.

There have been other obstacles than bureaucracy in the way of beginning renovations on the tower. Sunday 11th May was the first Sunday on which the scaffolding was up outside the tower. I went on the Saturday to deliver the intimations for the forthcoming service, and found a bee-keeper in the vestibule, taking a moment's rest from his work. We had engaged him to remove, from the tower, what he described as the largest nest of bees which he



had ever come across. He explained that he had already extracted the Queen Bee, into a frame, so that she and hopefully the bulk of the bees could be removed so as to found a new hive in some better location than the church tower.

There were lots of bees flying around in what seemed a random and aimless manner- presumably distracted by the removal of the queen, and the disruption to the nest. The bee-keeper explained that he had already removed many of these by using a "bee-hoover": but what must have been thousands of bees remained, in the tower, clustering around the window in the tower. I declined the offer to climb the stairs of the tower to view the site of the nest- insects with the capacity to sting alarm me- but peering round the corner of the tower staircase, I found that honey from the nest was literally dripping onto me from above! Dirleton Kirk is ...flowing with...honey (Exodus 3:8).

I was reminded of Hayley Kirkpatrick teaching the Sunday School about John the Baptist, and giving them honey to eat, and a substitute for locusts, to illustrate the text (Matthew 3:4) ...and his meat was locusts and wild honey. If only we'd had some way of tapping the tower bees, so as to have given the kids actual wild honey instead of honey from a jar!

Paying a visit in Dirleton directly after seeing the bee-keeper, my hosts noted a larger number of bees around, and wondered whether they had followed me up from the church. I thought it prudent to remove my outer clothing and to leave it elsewhere in their garden, for the duration of my visit. The bees didn't chase me back to North Berwick when I headed home on my bike.

Our thanks are due to the bee-keeper for his efforts- which were to take him much longer than anticipated, due to the size of the nest and the number of bees, and which were carried out without assistance. And I hope that the bees will indeed found a new colony in some better, more profitable, place. I tasted some of the honey that dripped onto my shirt- it was delicious. Remember the story of Samson in Judges 14, about the bees and honey in the carcass of the dead lion- ...and out of the strong came forth sweetness, as it used to say on the front of the syrup tin!

Opening and Closing Abbey Church

Once again this year, we will have our church doors open from Monday- Saturday between Easter and October. An open church is so much appreciated by many visitors from the UK and overseas. A rota of helpers is required to open the doors in the morning (usually before 10 am) and to close in the afternoon (usually before 5 pm). If you would like to help on days which suit you, please add your name to the rota which is placed on the table inside the church doors.



Christian Aid Quiz Evening

A huge thank you to everyone who supported this quiz evening for Christian Aid. From the many helpers, to those who donated prizes and most importantly everyone who took part in the actual quiz, it wouldn't happen without you. A total of £240 was raised from the evening.



This article was in Life and Work in May. We recently watched the 'Vivid Vision' video in church.

The Church of Scotland stands at a defining moment, facing stark financial realities while holding onto a compelling vision for the future.

The need for radical change has long been recognised as declining minister numbers, membership reductions, and shrinking income place strain on the Church at both national and local levels. Recent General Assemblies have introduced necessary reforms, but the urgency of the current financial situation demands even more difficult decisions, with free reserves now covering less than five months of operating costs.

In 2024, the General Assembly instructed the Trustees to reach a balanced budget by 2027. However, the financial outlook has worsened as income continues to fall in real terms as cost pressures increase, bringing the Church to a tipping point. As a result, the Trustees have had to implement measures they had hoped to avoid, including a Voluntary Exit Scheme, compulsory redundancies within the national administration, and significant reductions in the Seeds for Growth budget. Changes to the Vacancy Allowance, now covering only locum or pulpit supply costs for vacant congregations, took effect in January.

Further adjustments to the Presbytery Mission Plan Act will be presented at this year's Assembly, introducing a closer focus on financial sustainability and requiring mandatory adjustments for congregations unable to meet their debts.

These steps, while necessary, come with intense grief. They affect our people, ministries, and the Church's ability to serve communities. We acknowledge the pain these changes bring, and we hold in prayer those affected, trusting in God's guidance as we navigate this challenging landscape.

Yet even amid difficulty, we look beyond mere survival toward renewal. At the National Ministers' Conference in February, the Faith Action Leadership Team launched 'Vivid Vision', a bold commitment to a future where the Church is vibrant, growing, and deeply rooted in Christ.

By 2027, we envision a Church where congregations - whether traditional, new, rural, or urban - find innovative ways to make Jesus known, serving their communities with compassion and courage. Local ecumenical partnerships are flourishing, and new worshipping communities are emerging organically, guided by the Spirit.'

The leaner national Church we have been moving towards will remain focused on empowering local mission and equipping leaders to serve faithfully. This

transformation requires sacrifice. Some churches have closed, and others will still follow. Familiar ways of working may no longer be sustainable. But even as we lament these losses, we hold fast to a greater hope.

A new culture is taking root - one of faith, trust, and a "can-do" spirit that empowers congregations to dream, act, and serve in new ways. Presbyteries are becoming centres of support, and young leaders are stepping forward to shape the Church's future.'

Yet vision alone is not enough. The renewal of the Church will not come from words alone, but from the willingness to act. This is why what we do matters, stewardship matters. The choices we make now - how we allocate resources, what we prioritise, and where we invest our time and energy - will determine whether this vision becomes reality. The Church of Scotland must be both courageous and responsible, balancing tradition and adaptation, financial prudence and missional ambition.

This is a moment for lament, but also for resolve. A time to grieve, but also to dream. As we walk this road together, may we trust in God's provision and the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit, who continues to call us into a future filled with promise and purpose.

Rev David S Cameron. Convener of the Assembly Trustees, Church of Scotland

REFLECTIONS ON LIFE, LOVE, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING

(WITH APOLOGIES TO Douglas Adams)

Time flies they say, and I now contend speeds up with the years. Hardly an original thought that. Recent events have caused me to reflect. This all started off with a literal reflection- I am the proud owner of a new pair of specs to see me through till I have an eye op. They have changed my view of life. For some time I have shaved without glasses, now I can stand back and admire the true Adonis-like image in the mirror. To my shock I was surely looking at some sort of imposter! Gone were my curly locks- vanished all together indeed! My once stylish stash now grey was on the upper lip of an old man! Where had I gone?

As ever my wife was keen to help. Apparently this imposter had been hanging around for some considerable time, and what's more she has photographic evidence. The subject of wedding photos was banded about; even I am not stupid enough to get involved in that conversation.

If all that seems a little whimsical then yes but it says something about the human condition. We all change both in appearance and experience. The reflection that has caused me to pause most however is of quite a different nature, helped along by David's series on the book of Romans, and that is no matter how much we

become detached or stray from the fold, find the world changed or not, doubt, misunderstand or how bewildered by it all we become, God our Heavenly Father still sees us as his Child- loves and forgives us understands our nature and foibles and values us,

After all that's what the whole incarnation and resurrection thing was about, so whatever you may think of the view in the glass, you are still valued and loved even if YOU are no longer impressed with the view .

BOB KANE





We've had a fantastic term at Little Nippers with lots of new families attending, as well as our committed regulars. Song time has been great fun, with 'Grand Old Duke of York' proving a particular favourite as parents throw the little ones up in the air!



We will be sad to say goodbye to some of the children at the end of term as they move onto school or nursery. To mark this, we will hold a special celebration in the church on the last Little Nippers of the school year. We wish all of those who are leaving us the very best for their future adventures!

This celebration will take place on Thursday 26 June and the group will then resume after the summer holidays.

Little Nippers meets every Thursday during term time from 10.00-11.30am in the church hall. All children age 0-5 and their parents / carers are very welcome.

If you want any more info about Little Nippers, please contact Catherine at littlenippersNB@outlook.com

CAN YOU HELP?

Like most churches, Abbey Church relies on the time and talents of volunteers for many roles. There are usually opportunities for people to help in new ways and we would currently like to see more people helping in the following areas:

THE CHOIR

We have a small, but dedicated choir, leading praise at our services and would like to see this number increasing. Currently, there is only a short practice immediately before the service- and an ability to read music, while useful, is not essential. Do you enjoy singing and think that you could help by joining the choir? If we see a few more people in the choir, then we might even be able to return to singing occasional choral items to supplement our congregational worship. If you would like to help, please contact Robert Burgon.



LITTLE NIPPERS

Although we have seen an increase in the team supporting our Little Nippers Coordinator, Catherine, at the term-time Thursday morning sessions for pre-school children and their carers, we can always do with a few more who might have a spare Thursday morning once or twice during a school term. If you would like to help, please contact Catherine Mundell (email: littlenippersnb@outlook.com)



Holiday Club 2025

Holiday club is running 21st-25th July this year. It is a Scripture Union holiday club led jointly by Jodie Boardman, the children and family worker at North Berwick Christian Fellowship and Lesli Lawrie from St Andew Blackadder.

Planning is in progress and it looks like we will run

- an indoor club in the mornings for p1-5s at Abbey Church 10-12 (Lesli)
- An indoor club in the afternoons for p5-7s at St AB. 2-4 (Jodie)
- Youth nights 7-9 for S1-S6 at St AB and outdoors (Lesli and Andrew Duncan)

The theme for the mornings will be "A Tale of Two Kings" a brand new SU Resource combining a fun-filled Medieval theme with the contrasting kingdoms of King David and King Jesus.

The afternoons are looking at new testament stories which display Jesus' power and authority, how He has the same power and authority today and what that means for us. There will be fun, pizza making, treasure hunt, new skills and challenges.

The on-the-ground team seems to be coming together well with members several different local churches and we thank God for this.

- We now are praying that all the children and young people that God wants to attend will book, and that the teams will be inspired and equipped to plan for a truly great experience for them all.

- please also pray that all the team will be healthy and equipped in order to fulfil their various roles when the time comes.

- Please also pray for Jodie and Lesli. We are both new to this kind of leadership and there is a LOT of admin!

We are hoping to develop a prayer team email list, so that those who would like to be part of the club but for whatever reason cannot be there in person can pray specifically and be involved. Please get in touch with leslilawrie@gmail.com

There will also be a commissioning service in the evening on Sunday 20th July, time and venue TBC. We would love to see many of our North Berwick church family there, joining in with what God is doing through Holiday Club.

Lesli Lawrie

Abbey Church Flower Rota

DATE	DONORS	ARRANGERS
1st June	Frances Fallmyr	Frances Fallmyr Olive Curran
8th June	Isabel Smith	Isabel Smith
15th June	Irene Nichol	Irene Nichol
22nd June	Nancy Chisholm	Florence Buchan
29th June	Katrina Hendry	Katrina Hendry
6th July	Janet Raeburn	Sheila McCubbing
13th July	Joan Griffith	Joan Griffith
20th July	Fiona Gibson	Bel Hardie
27th July	Jennifer Gilchrist	Katrina Hendry



Abbey Church Sunday Tea Rota

DATE	
1st June	Sally Penman and A. N. Other
8th June	Isabel Smith and Florence Buchan
15th June	Katrina Hendry and Irene Nichol
22nd June	Irene Brodie and A. N. Other
29th June	Anne Bell and Liz Wright
6th July	Joyce Strachan and Sadie Young
13th July	Fiona Gibson and Linda McLean
20th July	Rose Leslie and Anne Bell
27th July	Sally Penman and Dorothy Kirkpatrick



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



Church Register

Weddings

10.5.25 Marco Monet and Olivia Fearn

1.6.25 Andrew Sharman and Sarah Thomas

Funerals

3.4.25 Robert Graham

7.4.25 John Sperling (committal of ashes)

5.5.25 Eleanor Reid

15.5.25 Jean Waddell

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*

Dirleton Kirk,
Dirleton Kirk, Manse Road,
Dirleton. EH39 5EJ

Newsletters

The next newsletter will cover August and September 2025. The deadline for submitting articles is Tuesday 22nd July 2025. Please send to Abbey Church Office

Abbeychurch.org.uk

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Abbey Church, North Berwick (Church of Scotland)
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