

Abbey Church and Dirleton Kirk

June/July 2026

**Interim Moderator
Rev Dr Jock Stein**

**Locum Minister
Rev Geoff Berry**

**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.**

Our Locum Minister

Revd Geoff Berry

Fort George Farewell (January 2025)

A couple of weeks ago I spoke about "farewell discourses" in Abbey Church (Jock was preaching in Dirleton) and a few people asked about the photo of my farewell address to 3SCOTS. This got me thinking about change as an aspect of life we all face and the old (slightly cynical) saying, "The only constant is change."



But we, as God's adopted children, have the great promise; *Jesus the Anointed One is always the same: yesterday, today, and forever.* [Hebrews 13:8]

God's love, God's compassion towards us, God's pow-

er and the promised future He has in store for us cannot be shaken by any power on earth. As Paul wrote to the early church in Rome;

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 8]

There is a lot of change happening around Abbey & Dirleton Kirks, both for individuals and congregations. Praise God that we have His assurance that nothing can separate us from His care and power.

(In case you wonder, the Officers and Senior NCO's in the photo are in 'Barrack dress' and the juniors are in 'working dress'.)

Abbey Kirk

Session Matters

June/July 2026



Since the last Newsletter, Abbey Church has been sorry to record the death of two people who were elders and served the church well over the years. For many years, **Milne Brodie** led our publicity in a wide range of ways, including preparing posters highlighting the themes of our weekly services and designing the logo for TAG. He was also instrumental in leading our outreach to new homes being built in our parish by designing (and delivering) welcome leaflets. **Ian Aitken** was first admitted to the Kirk Session in 1982. He became Session Clerk in December 2004 and the minutes record that he accepted that appointment "for a fixed term of three years". He was actually Session Clerk for 6 years and his period in office included the time when significant decisions were taken to sell the Manse in Westgate and to buy a modern, fit for purpose home for our minister. Ian represented Abbey on Presbytery, serving as Vice-Convenor of the Presbytery's Stewardship and Congregational Finance Committee.

Both Ian and Milne had a deep-seated faith, and it was good to give thanks for their lives at services of thanksgiving in the church in which they had both wor-

shipped and which meant so much to them. Our thoughts and prayers are with Irene Brodie and Clare Aitken and their families.

The Abbey congregation thanked **Bob Kane** on Easter Sunday and presented a cheque following his retirement as Pastoral Assistant in our linked charge after 18 years of service. A cheque was presented from the congregation. During that time, Bob had assisted our minister with pastoral visiting at home, in care homes and hospitals. He had also conducted many funerals and conducted services in both churches. A lovely congregational lunch took place a few weeks later at the Glen Golf Club when a large number of members of both congregations (and our locum minister and Interim Moderator) gathered in an informal setting to recognise Bob's dedicated service. We wish him, and his wife, Belinda, every blessing.

It was good to celebrate Easter with our, now traditional, open-air service on Anchor Green (when the weather proved to be very cold, but dry), breakfast in the hall and a well-attended Easter Sunday service. It was a particularly busy week for our Locum Minister, Revd Geoff Berry, as, in addition to the Easter Day services, he had also conducted worship on the Tuesday of Holy Week and on Good Friday. Thank you, Geoff!

Once again, our visitors' book is filling up with appreciative comments from visitors from all over the world who value the opportunity which an open church provides for prayer and reflection and thanks are due to those who so diligently open and close the doors.

Robert Burgon



PARKING IN NORTH BERWICK

At the time of preparing this Newsletter, it was anticipated that the new parking restrictions (and charges) in North Berwick will become effective on 1 June 2026.

Those attending Abbey Church are reminded that while the restrictions and charges will apply seven days a week, they will not start on Sundays until 1pm. This concession, which was granted at an early stage of the process of the new restrictions being developed, is good news for those attending morning services in Abbey Church.

Dirleton Kirk
Session Matters
June/July 2026



Jim Dickson

Jim died, peacefully, on 12th May 2026. We offer our prayers and condolences to Nan and the family, and at the same time rejoice in a long life of faith, love and service. Jim started playing the organ for us on a temporary basis, helping out occasionally, but before very long he indicated he'd be willing to take on a more regular post. He grew very fond of our 1900 Ingram organ and took a very active part in its maintenance, renovation and improvement: aware of the potential within the instrument, he realised what could be done to give it as full a range as possible. He identified the work that needed to be done to produce the kind of sound he knew the organ was capable of making, and was ready to range far and wide to obtain the necessary parts. I remember him speaking of how a trumpet stop would create an effect which would help represent a particular emotion, and how that could be used in the music which forms part of our worship; and how enthusiastic he was when he located a trumpet stop, obtained it, and superintended its installation. He would discuss the music which he would perform, and how the new effects reflected and complemented the themes of the readings, the hymns and the prayers said during

worship. He drew on his wide knowledge of music in considering what to play, and how to play it, during services. His attention to detail used to delight David Graham, and you will remember how often David would speak from the pulpit about the content and effect of the music which Jim provided, particularly in the reflective medleys which Jim would improvise during the period of reflection and dedication of our weekly offerings. With Jim, the music was well and truly integral to worship- not incidental.



Jim would speak of many things, including his work as a draughtsman, then as a teacher, and his service as organist in other churches. We can all be proud that our welcome and fellowship here at Dirleton was attractive to Jim and that he chose to dedicate so much time to us- getting up early on Sundays in all weathers to travel along to Dirleton, as well as coming regularly during the week to try out ideas, explore the range of the organ, and prepare thoroughly for worship. He was always ready to help the children in the church with advice and encouragement about music. His time as organist at Dirleton was the very last part of Jim's accomplishment as a musician, and he was a

beloved and valued part of our community. In our tradition, the organist plays a 'recessional' as the congregation leaves the church: but because Jim's music was enjoyed so much, no-one would leave, except for those going up to the hall to prepare refreshments: we used to joke that we would have to find some means of playing a recessional after the recessional!

Jim drew great support from Nan and his loving family, and it was lovely to have them among us from time to time. We have missed Jim since he 'retired' again from playing organ for us- we had told him years ago that he should consider himself always welcome to play for us when he wished. We view his loss as but a temporary parting, confident in the promises of the Christian faith, which Jim used his skill to express in music.

Door duties

The first part of fellowship is welcome, and the first part of welcome to church comes from those doing door duties. A welcome can be a source of encouragement to the occasional worshipper to be with us more often. Would you be interested in taking a place on the rota, to help out? The existing rota is starting to look short of numbers. Do please think about offering to help out- we will be looking to draw up a new rota shortly.

Reading the lessons

There are many ways to serve God in worship: and all of them are valued. What seems humble or inconsequential in the eyes of the world may, when it is offered sincerely, be glorious in God's eyes. Another way in which we participate directly in the life and work of the church is by reading aloud from scripture during worship. Speaking aloud is, at this time of Whitsun, is greatly appreciated in the church! There is no closed list of people who do this: if you'd like to try out reading, let me know, or contact Darren in the Abbey Office. And don't worry- if you fear being perplexed suddenly by Scriptural names or place names which look easier to read than to pronounce- it is always possible to swap readings with others!

K.D.S.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRLETON KIRK AND ABBEY CHURCH NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Following elections in both churches, a Nominating Committee of thirteen members (six from Dirleton and seven from Abbey Church) has been elected and given the responsibility for seeking a new minister to replace Revd Dr David Graham.

At the first meeting of the Committee, I was honoured to be elected as Convenor of the Committee and

Margaret McPhail was elected as Vice-Convenor. Although not a member of the Committee, we are pleased that Brenda Thomson (who attends services in Dirleton) has accepted the post of Clerk to the Nominating Committee. The vacancy has been advertised on the Church of Scotland website and applications from interested ministers have been invited.

The Church of Scotland stresses that the work of Nominating Committees is confidential at all times. The Guidance Notes which we have to follow state that our work "should not be discussed with other members of the congregation or with others outside the congregation, including family members." We trust that members will appreciate the importance of this.

In practice, the Nominating Committee will only report to our congregations when we have selected a sole nominee to preach in both churches.

In the meantime, I would encourage members of both congregations to pray that the person whom God wishes to lead the development of our congregational life and work in the years ahead will be inspired to come to lead us on the next stage of our journey in faith.

Robert Burgon
Convenor, Nominating Committee

Our Interim Moderator

Revd Dr Jock Stein

Rather to my surprise, I found myself attending the General Assembly for the first time in many years. It has been reduced to four days instead of a whole week, and to my mind that worked, without undue stress - but only because there was really only one 'big debate', and I was told afterwards that during the debate at least three people had signalled they wanted to speak but were not called by the Moderator, Gordon Kennedy - who let me say was generally excellent both in handling debate and in leading us prayerfully. So whether four days is workable I think depends on the volume of business and whether it is controversial. One new thing which has been agreed to reduce time needed is that the reports of Bodies without business needing to be discussed will be taken as read.



Commissioners generally take away the singing as a high point of an Assembly. There was less unaccompanied psalm singing than I remember, but a wide choice of hymns, including a new one copyright the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity, which we sang to the tune for 'Abide with Me'. Here are the words:

We seek your Kingdom throughout every sphere
We long for heaven's demonstration here
Jesus your light shine bright for all to see
Transform, revive, and heal society.

Before all things, in him were all things made
Inspiring culture, media, and trade
May all our work serve your economy
Transform, revive, and heal society.

Peace, truth, and justice reigning everywhere
With us be present in our public square
Fill all who lead with your integrity
Transform, revive, and heal society.

Forgive us Lord, when we have not engaged
Failing to scribe your heart on history's page
Make us again what we were made to be
Transform, revive, and heal society.

Faithful to govern ever may we be
Selfless in service, loving constantly
In everything may your authority
Transform, revive, and heal society.

By Noel Robinson,
Andy Flannagan,
and Graham Hunter

Jock Stein



Blythswood



WEDNESDAY 3RD JUNE 2026

DAY OF PRAYER

**60 MINUTES TO GIVE THANKS
FOR 60 YEARS OF BLYTHSWOOD**

60 minutes to give thanks

This year, Blythswood Care is giving thanks for 60 years since our work began. While much has changed through the decades, the necessity of prayer has remained constant. Prayer was essential to the group sharing gospel tracts on the streets of Glasgow in 1966, and it remains essential today as we seek to see lives changed for good and forever across Africa, Asia and Europe in 2026.

Blythswood Day of Prayer takes place on Wednesday, 3rd June, and this year we are inviting you to set aside 60 minutes to give thanks for 60 years of Blythswood. You may choose to do this on your own, as a family, with friends, or as part of your church's prayer meeting, either all at once or spread throughout the day. I have attached a guide containing information and prayer points that may be helpful, and by taking part you will be joining people around the world in prayer for Blythswood.

Will you set aside 60 minutes to give thanks for 60 years of Blythswood on Wednesday, 3rd June? Please do share news of the Day of Prayer with your congregation, and if you need any further information or materials, I would be very happy to help.

Sixty years after Blythswood's work began, our need for prayerful support from individuals, families and church congregations remains unchanged, as does our dependence on the Lord each day.

Jim Dickson - A Wee Appreciation.

I was saddened to hear of the passing of the organist Jim Dickson last week. I have been fortunate enough to hear Jim bringing the old organ in Dirleton to life on Sunday mornings for several years. Latterly he drove over from Pencaitland even in poor weather, arriving early to liaise with the minister on music for the calming musical interlude held within the service over this period.

Jim was a professional organist with a long history of playing church music. Whether playing a grand requiem or a popular song his mastery of the instrument was outstanding. At Dirleton services he demonstrated the rare ability to take some well-known ancient hymn and, by the improvised blending of variations and harmonies, transform it into a reflective spiritual experience way beyond anything mere words can attain.

His grand finale played after the minister had of necessity left to take the service in the Abbey Church, was his choice alone. It resulted in us remaining seated to hear a Bach Fugue echoing around the stonework or a Wurlitzer-style dance tune which had us tapping our feet. It also led to a round of applause in support of Jim at the end of each service, a habit which has persisted for all the organists who kindly give of their time to maintain the musical tradition in Dirleton.

Keith Cornwell

Little Lights at Abbey Church

You may wonder what we get up to when we leave the church for the hall on Sunday mornings? We have a simple, short Bible Story based on characters in the Old Testament with a follow up related craft then we play some (noisy) games or the children can choose to play with some of the toys.



We have been looking at the story of Joseph and here are some of his wonderful technicolour coats that the youngsters have designed.

We have also been exploring the story of Moses by looking at Moses in the bullrushes, the burning bush, the plague of frogs (pictured below) and the parting of the Red Sea.

Please pray for the small group of youngsters that they may understand how God has worked in the lives of people in the Old Testament and continues to work in their lives today.



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)



LITTLE NIPPERS

The year is flying by at Little Nippers and the



summer holidays are almost upon us! Despite the weather getting better outside, it's been great to still see lots of faces joining us inside the church hall each Thursday morning for a play, and we continue to welcome new families each week as word of mouth spreads about the group. There's a really lovely atmosphere in the hall with parents sharing advice and offering help to each other while the children have a brilliant time making pictures, pushing trains around the track, and singing and dancing.

We will be saying goodbye to some of our regular families at the end of term as they move onto nursery or school, and we wish them all the very best on their future adventures. Our last session of the summer term before the holidays will take place on Thursday 18th June, when we'll also enjoy a little summer celebration.

Having regular volunteers who help welcome families and provide refreshments is invaluable to the group, so please let me know if you are able to join our volunteer rota 2-3 times per term. Little Nippers meets every Thursday during term time from 10.00-11.30am in the church hall, and all children aged 0-5 and their parents/carers are very welcome, so please do spread the word.

If you want any more information about Little Nippers, please contact Catherine at littlenipper-sNB@outlook.com

ABBAY CHURCH FLOWER ROTA

DATE	DONOR	ARRANGER
June 7th	Isabel Smith	Isabel Smith
June 14th	Irene Nichol	Irene Nichol
June 21th	Nancy Chisholm	Florence Buchan
June 28th	Katrina Hendry	Katrina Hendry
July 5th	Sheila McCubbing	Sheila McCubbing
July 12th	Joan Griffith	Joan Griffith
July 19th	Fiona Gibson	Fiona Gibson
July 26th	Jennifer Gilchrist	Katrina Hendry



ABBHEY CHURCH SUNDAY TEA ROTA

DATE	ON DUTY
June 7th	Bel Hardie Morna McClure
June 14th	Joyce Strachan Irene Nichol
June 21st	Fiona Gibson Linda McLean
June 28th	Liz Wright Anne Bell
July 5th	Sally Penman A. N. Other
July 12th	Sadie Young Dorothy Kirkpatrick
July 19th	Katrina Hendry Isabel Smith
July 26th	Bel Hardie Morna McClure



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,
Little Lights, 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, Yoga with Helen, Wild Tide
Yoga, The Scone Café, Scots Tots & Scots Fling, Erin
Taylor Yoga, North Berwick Country Dance.

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

Funerals

07.05.26 Milne Brodie

19.05.26 Sandra Mill

21.05.26 Ian Aitken

26.05.26 Donald McCulloch

Pastoral Visits

The Pastoral Team are happy to contact church members if requested. In the first instance, please contact 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 2026. The deadline for submitting articles is Tuesday 14th July 2026. Please send to Abbey Church Office on the email address above.

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