

Diary: January

February

1		Burn's Supper Mak. Village H
2		10.30 Makerstoun
3		
4		
5	10.30 Makerstoun	Smailholm Fellowship 2.30pm
6		
7	Bridge 7pm	
8	Guild 2.30pm	
9		10.30 Stichill
10		
11		Bridge 7pm
12	10.30 Stichill	Guild 2.30pm
13		
14		
15	Smailholm Fellowship 2.30pm	
16		10.30 Makerstoun
17		
18		
19	10.30 Makerstoun	Roxburgh Fellowship 2.30pm
20		
21	Bridge 7pm	
22		
23		10.30 Stichill
24		
25		Bridge 7pm
26	10.30 Stichill	
27		
28		
29	Roxburgh Fellowship 2.30pm	
30		
31		

The Country Link



Kelso
Country
Churches

~~~~~January/February, 2020



Dear friends,  
We come to the beginning of a new year. The decorations are down and life gets to return to normal once more. For those in the Orthodox Church Christmas has just begun. They celebrate on Jan 7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> night, the day traditionally decorations used to come down. This is also the day

when we remember the visit of the wise men to Jesus. Epiphany.

There is a legendary story of a 4<sup>th</sup> Wise Man who didn't quite make it to Bethlehem along with his three friends. Artaban had travelled from Persia to meet the others carrying with him his gift for the new King - three precious jewels - a sapphire, a ruby and a pearl.

On his way he met an old Jew by the roadside, who was almost dying from fever. He decided to stay with the sick man until he was well and so he missed the other three wise men who completed their journey to Bethlehem. The Jew told Artaban that the prophets said that the King would be born in Bethlehem, but to make such a journey it was necessary to form a caravan and buy supplies and equipment. So Artaban sold his costly sapphire to raise money and he set out for Bethlehem.

When he arrived there he discovered that the other wise men had left 3 days before. A young mother told him that the family he was seeking had fled the city and that Bethlehem was in fear of King Herod. While Artaban was in the town, the soldiers arrived with orders to kill all the baby boys. The young mother was very frightened for her young son and when the captain of the soldiers ordered the child to be killed, Artaban came to the rescue and gave his ruby to the soldiers to save the boy.

Artaban sought for the King for many years, although he only had one of his gifts left - the pearl. Finally, after 30 years searching, he came to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. The city was buzzing with talk about the man named Jesus, whom some said, claimed to be the Son of God and who was to be crucified. Artaban wondered whether he could use his last jewel to save the life of this man, Jesus. But as he hurried through the streets of the city he came across a young girl who was crying. She told Artaban she was crying because she was going to be sold into slavery to pay her father's debts. Artaban could not pass by and leave the girl crying so he gave her the pearl, the last of his jewels. At that moment the city was rocked by an earthquake and Artaban saw Jesus on the cross.

So Artaban did not get to worship the new born King in the stable nor did he ever see him until his death. His precious gifts had been sold, or given away, to help others on his long journey. Yet, it was in helping the sick man, protecting the young child, and preventing the young girl being sold into slavery that Artaban had offered his gifts to Christ. What are the gifts we will offer in 2020?

*Stephen*



*A Challenge for the New Year*

*The New Year lies before you  
Like a track of spotless snow.  
Be careful how you tread it  
For every mark will show.  
Whatever today may hold,  
Whatever tomorrow might bring,  
The future is secure for Christ is with us,  
The same yesterday, today, and forever.*

*Amen.*

**2.**

Minister: Rev. Stephen Manners 470 663

New Website: [www.kelsocountrychurches.org.uk](http://www.kelsocountrychurches.org.uk)  
Scottish charity no. SC000958

*Makerstoun Church*

*Invites you to a*

*Burn's Supper*



*Makerstoun Village Hall*

*on*

*Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> February at 7pm*

Tickets £12.50 each available from Jim Fleming 223470  
and Joan Duncan 460 256 Carriages 12 pm.

11.

## *Prayers for radical change for the church*

God,  
who was, and is, and is to come,  
Unchanging One,  
who makes all things new.

Your love for us is a mystery!  
It amazes us that You have called us by name,  
to be Your people, wherever we are.  
You have given to us places for shelter and for us to share,  
people around us to love and be loved by.  
You have poured such blessings into our hands,  
the gifts of Your generous love.  
We praise and thank You,

Jesus, forgive us  
if we have received Your gifts,  
and have held them too tightly,  
afraid that change and growth might be the same.  
If we have thought rock, that which was only sand.  
If we have declared permanent,  
that which is other than You, Unchanging One.

Holy Spirit,  
enable us to hold lightly  
to the property, processes and plans that we have inherited.  
Free our imaginations,  
to rejoice in a Church that embodies Your love for all.  
Liberate us with the radical belief  
that You are making Your Church new.

This prayer is written by Rev Peter Gardner, the Kirk's pioneer minister to the Glasgow arts community, who also works with his wife Heidi as part of the Gardner & Gardner artistic duo.

## *Preaching Plan for January/February*

### **January**

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Makerstoun  | David Harvey         |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> Stichill   | Rev. Stephen Manners |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> Makerstoun | Rev Stephen Manners  |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> Stichill   | Rev. Stephen Manners |

### **February**

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Makerstoun  | Rev Stephen Manners  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> Stichill    | Charles Orr          |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> Makerstoun | Rev. Stephen Manners |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> Stichill   | Rev. Stephen Manners |

### **March**

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Makerstoun | Rev. Stephen Manners |
|----------------------------|----------------------|

~~~~~  
Christian Unity Week of Prayer

20th – 24th January at Kelso Old Church at 12.45pm

The churches leading the short service each day are as follow;

Monday, 20th St. Mary's

Tuesday 21st Cheviot Churches

Wednesday 22nd Kelso Old

Thursday 23rd Kelso Country Churches

Friday 24th Quakers

Soup and rolls lunch is provided each day by the lead church.

Please get in touch with Sophia if you can provide a flask of soup or some rolls on Thursday, 23rd January.

These lunchtime gatherings are open to all congregations in and around Kelso and are short and meaningful. Please join in if you can.

Christmas in Kelso Country Churches



The Advent and Christmas services and events in Kelso Country Churches reflected once again the wonder of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, bringing light and hope to a dark world.

At the Fellowship meeting in Smailholm Church, several folk from the village joined the usual few

in the cosy setting to sing favourite carols and hear the story of Jesus' birth, as well as an amusing monologue "While Shepherds watched." We all enjoyed the mince pies and craic that followed.

Stichill Church was well filled with members of neighbouring Guilds and many friends at the Guild Christmas Concert. 'Mosaic' led by Grace Payne, delighted us with their rendition of seasonal music. It was a treat to hear carols and songs which were familiar but we hadn't heard for years. This was followed by a festive tea.

A large congregation (and a guide dog in training) gathered in Stichill Church for the candlelight service of Lessons and Carols. Our minister encouraged the young folk of the Youth Club to read the Lessons and there was much audience participation when we were asked to remember a loved one by hanging an angel on the tree. The KCC choir led by David Stark sang two carols. Mulled wine and mince pies were served in the hall amid much Christmas cheer.



The Christmas Eve service in Makerstoun was attended by local folk of all ages (including 3 year old Molly who had a ball and kept us all entertained). The main theme was shepherds, and John Elliot talked about shepherding in the Borders with amusing anecdotes and insights. Once again Christmas fayre was served amid much chatter and goodwill.

Dilemmas of a Rookie Computer Operator

Those of you who have difficulties sorting out technical problems with your computer will understand how I felt when my email provider abandoned me on Christmas Eve, (please note my new email address sophiacpduncan@gmail.com) AND my PC had to be updated from Window 7 to Windows 10 pronto. But help was at hand in the shape of our family who are quite computer-literate and they managed to sort things out so that I could prepare for a service on the last Sunday of the year and compile the new edition of the Country Link.

I was given this poem as a possible contribution to the magazine and thought this a good time to print it!

The Computer Swallowed Grandma

The computer swallowed Grandma,
Yes, honestly, it's true.



She pressed "control" and "enter"
and disappeared from view.
It devoured her completely,
the thought just makes me squirm,
she must have caught a virus
or been eaten by a worm.

I've searched through the recycle bin,
and files of every kind.

I've even used the internet but nothing did I find.
In desperation I asked Jeeves my searches to refine

The reply from him was negative.
Not a thing was found online.

So if inside your Inbox
My Grandma you should see,
please 'Copy', 'Scan' and 'Paste' her
and send her back to me.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW YOUTH WORKER

Hello all, my name is Connor Barclay and I am the new youth worker for the town of Kelso and the surrounding villages of Ednam, Stichill and Sprouston. My role in this new position will involve working as part of a project called Kelso Quest, through which I want to offer dynamic Christian youthwork to the young people of the community.

I grew up in the small seaside town of Dunoon in Argyll and went to Dunoon Grammar School, played rugby and worshipped in the local Baptist Church, I came into youth work through a Church of Scotland minister by the name of Paul Beautyman, who rather than have a church and a parish was employed to run youth work in Argyll. One day in the school, I met Paul and he invited me to one of the many clubs and trips he ran as part of a project he had set up called eXp.

I loved going to these events as a youngster. We played games, ate food and learned about God. I attended their first summer camp in 2011 and just loved the whole week of activities and Bible teachings. On the second summer camp, I gave my life to the Lord and decided I wanted to give other young people the chance to experience a life of faith.

Now as I begin my work in this beautiful area of Scotland, I look forward to serving the Lord and the community with my work in setting up Kelso Quest with the help of many wonderful volunteers.

Connor

A note from the Editor

Our minister Stephen and Kath are becoming familiar figures as they regularly join in the activities of the village halls in our parishes and visit and get to know people.

Amid the busyness and socialising that many of us indulge in over the festive season, we remain mindful that some folk are coping with illness or are anxious about a loved one, or are lonely or bereaved and remembering Christmases past.

To all who are finding it difficult to regain health and strength, be assured of our prayers and good wishes.

Parish News and Updates

Our church family continues to reach out to charities and organisations, give support and practical help throughout the year.

We have received a letter of thanks from **Blythswood Care** for the 98 Christmas shoeboxes which were sent off to people in need at Christmas; *Last year, individuals, churches, groups and schools generously filled shoeboxes. That meant 107,073 people got a Christmas present.*

Let me tell you more. Manuel's mum and dad can't work because of poor health. The family has no money – they can't afford to buy medicine for Manuel's brother who has epilepsy. The family's monthly income is about £36 – just enough to buy basic foods. They can't afford fuel for their fridge or heater.

Last year Manuel got a shoebox thanks to someone like you. What was in Manuel's shoebox? Binoculars. Manuel was thrilled. He'd never seen anything like it. This isn't a toy that's been passed down from someone in his family, this toy is brand new and all his, thanks to you.

Besa Shapilo, a trusted partner in Albania makes sure shoeboxes go to the people who really need help. She said, "Your gifts brought hope. When Jesus was born, God chose to give amazing news to the shepherds, ordinary people faced with ongoing problems, just like this family.

Thank you for bringing a smile to Manuel this Christmas.

James Campbell, Chief Executive.

Also, Kathy Wilkie raised £105 from her angels and other donations which was sent to help with the transport costs.

£213 was given to local charity, **Cheviot Youth** from our Christmas services.

Border Women's Aid also sincerely thanked KCC for the generous gifts for women and children received from the gift service at Makerstoun.

New cleaning and flower rotas will be in Stichill and Makerstoun churches in January. We all appreciate our churches being clean and enhanced with flowers and it is often the same few people who provide this service each week. If you can, please put your name at a date or dates that suit you. Thank you.

If you have saved the stamps from your Christmas card envelopes, bring them to church during January, and they will be donated to the Board of world Mission.

THE BARN OWL

As I walked along through the fields yesterday morning, with my dog, my eye was caught by our local Barn Owl as she quartered the field in her search for voles. I stood watching her for a long time, as she continued on her hunt. She was completely focused on her task, and took no notice of me intruding in her space. Such beauty, and perfection. Such ease of movement, her tawny back, and her silent flight I found absolutely mesmerising. She brought to mind the poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins called "Windhover". This beautiful poem, dedicated to Christ our Lord begins like this:

"I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin,
dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding

Of the rolling level underneath him steady air"

The Barn Owl is not a Kestrel, and her flight was quite different, but the way she moved around the field with quiet, and fierce concentration seemed to me to fit the description above perfectly. As I continued with my walk, I thought about how present the creatures of the natural world are, how undistracted and natural they are, in essence, how unlike ourselves they are in that respect. I thought about how my enjoyment of the moment of seeing her in her beautiful flight was somewhat spoiled by my worrying that she wouldn't find any food, and by my thoughts on how precarious her life was. No such thoughts occurred to her, or spoiled her enjoyment of her flight – at least, I imagine not!

What is it in us, as human beings, that makes us lose ourselves in worries and doubts? In the Bible we find Jesus telling people to take no thought for what they will wear, or eat, because all of this will be provided for us. For me, and I suspect most of us, this is a difficult teaching. It appears to take no account of present day realities such as food banks, and goes against the grain of our world in which we all struggle to make a living, and worry about having enough food to eat, and clothes to wear. And yet, in spite of this, the world goes on, and somehow most of us get by.

As I was nearing the end of my walk, I saw a dead bird lying on the road. It was a thrush. I picked it up, and looked at its beautiful speckled chest, and remembered its heavenly song. I laid it under a hedge so that it wouldn't be flattened by a car, and realised that it was probably perfectly in tune right up until its last breath.

As Gerard Manley Hopkins said:" the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!"

Lynda Stark

EPIPHANY

Epiphany is a strange word, a Greek word: it means 'appearance' or 'manifestation', and on 6th January, the Feast of Epiphany, the appearance of God in Christ is celebrated.

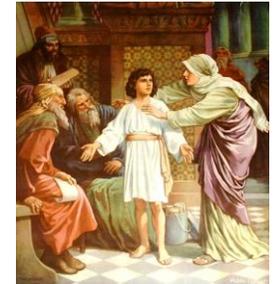


In Spain on 6th January you will see children rushing around in cowboy suits and new bikes: gifts are given on Epiphany to recall the wise men reaching Jesus with their gifts. When they saw the baby, they saw in him God, and worshipped him.



But also on the same Sunday, we recall the baptism of Jesus: that story is one of the readings for Epiphany....simply because at that baptism, a dove appeared, symbolising the presence of God with Jesus – and God's acknowledgement of his Son is made: another 'appearance' of God.

And on the same Sunday, we also read the bible story about Jesus as a boy in the Temple, found discussing theology with the Temple scholars. His words, 'Did you not realise that I would be about my Father's business?' are understood as another demonstration that God was in Christ.



And this same Sunday celebrates the miracle at the Wedding in Cana-in-Galilee – precisely because this is Jesus' first miracle, the first sign to all around him that his power came from God.

So Epiphany has an unusually large number of bible stories associated with it, but one clear message: **God was in Christ.**

.....
The Roxburgh Singers with their conductor Marion Dodd, are giving two concerts, singing a festival of Psalms to suit a variety of tastes.

Saturday 25th January 7.30pm in Melrose Parish Church

Sunday 26th January 3pm in Kelso Old Parish Church.

Tickets £10 with accompanied children free.

Anne Piercy

