

The Country Link



Kelso
Country
Churches

~~~~~ **July/August 2023**

Dear Friends,

Summer is a time to relax, recharge our batteries and enjoy our gardens. We live, however, in the Borders, and there is a rich tradition of ridings, with each of our Border towns having their festival weeks and ride-outs. In Yetholm we have already ‘kirked’ the Bari Gadgi and Bari Manushi, and it was good to welcome young people from Berwick, Duns, Coldstream and Selkirk to the service. In Morebattle we welcomed the Kelso Laddie and the Jethart Callant, who end up dancing an eightsome reel and toasting each other. It is good to see the spirit of support and encouragement in a world of war and rioting; where tennis players from Ukraine, perhaps understandably, refuse to shake hands with their counterparts from Russia; where the anniversary of Windrush reminds us of how difficult it was for people from the Caribbean and elsewhere to integrate in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s.

At the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland this year there was a guest from Palestine, Daoud Nasser. His family have farmed near Bethlehem for centuries and crucially have the title deeds to their farm. Now they are surrounded by Israeli settlements, and sadly some of the settlers try to intimidate the Nassers by burning their olive trees. However, the Nassers call their farm ‘the Tent of Nations’ and have volunteers from many countries staying to help to farm the land. They refuse to be intimidated and refuse to leave. Instead, they have a rock at the entrance to the farm with the words, ‘We refuse to be enemies’. When the olive trees are destroyed, they simply plant others and seek to live in peace.

If only we learned how to live alongside one another without judging according to skin colour or religion or nationality. We are all made in God’s image and precious in God’s sight.

I hope you all enjoy the summer and, for those going off on holiday, travel well and appreciate new people and cultures.

Peace and Blessings

*Colin*

# *Parish News and Updates*

*Vale Jim Wilson*

It is sad to report the death of Jim Wilson from Haymount, Makerstoun. Jim was 90 years old and would have attained his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on 10<sup>th</sup> April. Jim was a well-known and respected member of the community and a faithful member and devoted elder of Makerstoun Kirk for many years and he was also Session Clerk. The funeral took place on 14<sup>th</sup> April, taken by Rev. Marion Dodd, and the kirk was full of people wishing to pay their respects to a loyal friend.

Jim was laid to rest beside his beloved wife Jean, in Makerstoun churchyard.

## **Down Memory Lane**

I have kept all our church magazines since it was created in 2001 by our minister at that time, Rev Valerie Watson. Then, it was printed monthly and simply called 'The Church Magazine' because we couldn't decide on a suitable title, but a few years later, the worthy title, 'The Country Link' was adopted and that continues to this day. I often browse through past editions which makes for interesting reading. With three services each Sunday for our minister and worship team members to fulfil, it was a constant challenge, and I am reminded of how much work, special services, Kid's Club activities, fund-raising and **fun** which was achieved between our four churches.

Another regular feature was the stories I received of amusing experiences and holidays to interesting places. In a summer edition in 2013, we were taken to Durham Cathedral, Dundee, a theatre trip to London, Island hopping in the Outer Hebrides and Tenerife. Are you going somewhere exotic or even just peaceful and beautiful this summer or staying with family or friends? If so, please share it with us in the kirk magazine.

*May God grant you always...*

*A sunbeam to warm you,*

*A moonbeam to charm you,*

*A sheltering angel, so nothing can harm you.*

## *Preaching Plan for July/August*

**Weekly services start at 10.30am unless otherwise stated.**

### **July**

- |                  |              |                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | Makerstoun   | Rev. John Shields                                                                                                                           |
| 9 <sup>th</sup>  | Stichill     | <b>Communion</b> Rev. Rosalind Duncan                                                                                                       |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> | Makerstoun   | Jim Smith                                                                                                                                   |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> | Stichill     | <b>4pm Songs of Praise</b> Worship Team<br><b>Please note there will be no morning service that day.</b><br><b>(see page 5 for details)</b> |
| 30 <sup>th</sup> | Ednam Church | 9.30am or Kelso North Church<br>at 11am. N.B. No service in KCC on 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday.                                                  |

### **August**

- |                  |            |                          |
|------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | Makerstoun | Jim Smith                |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> | Stichill   | Very Rev. Colin Sinclair |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> | Makerstoun | Charles Orr              |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> | Stichill   | Fran Selkirk             |

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Date for your diary:

Our **summer Songs of Praise** in Stichill Church planned for the afternoon of 23rd July will be a great opportunity to gather together with folk from our own and neighbouring churches and share in worship and praise, singing some of our favourite hymns. This will be followed by afternoon tea served in the walled garden if the weather is kind. Please speak to Sophia or Janice if you can help with food.

Across the Parishes

There is a lot going on in Kelso Churches Together and here are some of the activities planned for the summer months. Please try to support these events when you can.

16th July: Kirkin of the Kelso Laddie – War Memorial at 6pm then 6.30pm at Kelso North Church.

18th July: Strawberry Tea in the church grounds and meet The Laddie.

23rd July: Summer ‘Songs of Praise’ in Stichill Church at 4pm followed by Afternoon Tea in the walled garden.

28th and 29th July: Border Union Show

The Kelso Churches Together Tea Tent will be up and going once again and a rota of helpers has been organised over the two days.

It is a good opportunity sit down and enjoy refreshments along with friendly chat. You are assured of a warm welcome.

20th August: Cheviot Churches ‘Songs of Praise’ on Kirk Yetholm green at 6pm.

10th September: ‘Songs of Praise’ in the Square at 2pm accompanied by the Jedforest Band. (Kelso Old if wet.)

17th September: Afternoon Concert with Mosaic and Flutes in Stichill Church.

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Funeral: *Blessed are they who mourn for they shall be comforted*

17th July: Mrs Jean Wood, Rachelfield Farm, Smailholm at Melrose Crematorium.

Kelso Country Churches invite
you to a summer

Songs of Praise

in Stichill Church

Sunday, 23rd July at 4pm

Followed by afternoon tea in
the walled garden adjacent to
the church (weather
permitting) or in church hall.



Please come and share praise,
food and friendship with
friends from neighbouring
churches.

A nostalgic look at life in our parishes in days gone by - with thanks to author, James Smith.

2nd September, 1902 - Berwickshire News (abridged version)

PICNIC AT NEWTON DON

The children of Newton Don estate, Nenthorn and Hume gathered with great excitement on the occasion of their annual picnic at Newton Don House, beautifully situated on the river Eden; the residence of Mr. Charles B. Balfour and Lady Nina Balfour.

Before the return of the family from London, her ladyship asked the teachers to give her a list of names, sexes and ages of the children so that each would receive an appropriate gift. Invitations were extended to mothers and guardians and, as usual, the neighbouring tenantry received invitations.

On arrival, both contingents were welcomed by their hosts, accompanied by their family, masters Jamie, Duncan, Jock and Archie Balfour. They proceeded to judge the trappings of the horses for which they gave handsome prizes for each parish.

Headed by the pipe band of the Border Rifles, the children marched through the gardens to the front of the mansion house where tables were arranged on the lawn, laden with all manner of good food. After grace, the children set to, all except one wee boy who began to cry, saying, "I'm not hungry."

The brightest scene of the outing was when the host and hostess and their house guests and neighbours were busily employed with kettles and trays in hand, in serving their guests for the afternoon. Even the ministers of the different churches ministered in the same fashion. Then followed music and dancing on the green and an endless variety of pastimes in the adjoining field.

While the tenantry and house guests were being entertained in the spacious dining-room of the mansion house, the outside affairs were efficiently managed by Mr Wood, gardener, Mr Pruden, coachman, and Mr Knox, joiner, with numerous staff of willing hands.

Then the children were called together and each one received a gift from Lady Nina - generally of a useful and ornamental nature, a packet of sweets and a Coronation mug. No one was sent away empty handed, however slender their claim might be. The last recipient was a Maggie White from "Kelsie" who accompanied a cousin from Nenthorn.

Simultaneously, there was dancing on the sward, apple eating, boot-lacing, needle-threading and sack and bell racing.

The Nenthorn children had the best of it in the tug-of-war but Hume carters were a worthy second.

The Rev. Young called for three cheers for Mr Balfour, Lady Nina and their family and Mr Balfour expressed his pleasure at once more meeting his neighbours. They might congratulate themselves on the happy circumstances under which they met. The weather was favourable and the times peaceful. At this time last year it was different. He saw some before him who were then under arms in South Africa. Now they had the blessing of peace.

Mr Balfour also thanked the Newton Don staff for all their preparations and the farmers who had been good enough to provide carts.

Just before the carts left, the Balfour family served all in the carts with buns and jelly-bread. Then the word "go" was given and the carts started off amidst ringing cheers.

The gardens and pleasure grounds were great attractions, as were the up-to-date stables with all their equipment, which was shown to visitors by Mr Pruden and his grooms.

Footnote: We were told about the wonderful picnics which used to take place at Newton Don for the local children but they had long ceased before we came to Newton Don in 1978.

This description of the event brought it to life for me and I could picture the scene, and we got to know some of the later family members of the staff mentioned by name.

Sophia

Annual “Giving to Grow” contribution by the congregation to the Church of Scotland

From 2023 Giving to Grow contributions have replaced Ministries and Mission contributions. The new contribution has three elements:

Ministry Here – contribution towards the costs of a Minister of Word and Sacrament;

Ministry Elsewhere – to support congregations who do not have sufficient income to meet the full costs of their own minister, and the costs of Ministries Development Staff who work in a variety of roles;

Presbytery and Shared Activities – provision of start-up funding of the new Presbyteries, the support and services provided by the national church such as legal, finance and safeguarding, as well as contributing to mission activities of the national church.

Kelso Country Churches was assessed as having a very small contribution due for 2023 but this subsequently reduced to zero following the deduction of a vacancy allowance as we do not have a minister in post.

The Kirk Session, however, decided that we would like to make a voluntary contribution of £2,500 for 2023, and the Church of Scotland asked me to pass on their thanks to the Kirk Session and congregation for this payment which is very much appreciated.

Liz Orr

Kelso Food Bank

At a recent Kelso Churches Together meeting, it was reported that the demand for donations for the food bank increases year on year, and usage always increases during school holidays. There are receptacles in Sainsburys and the two Co-op stores where dried, packet and tinned foods can be deposited.

There is particular need for the following items:

JAM	TINNED MEAT	PACKET MEALS
BAKED BEANS	TINNED VEG.	TINNED FISH
TINNED POTATOES	RICE	DESSERTS

Please pop in an extra item in your basket when shopping if you can. Thank you.

Let us Pray

Lord Jesus
We bring you the troubles of the world:
We pray for places of conflict, war and
intolerance.



Lord Jesus,
where there is hatred, bring your love.

We bring you broken relationships and mistrust:
We pray for governments, unions, rich and poor.

Lord Jesus,
where there is injury, bring your pardon.

We bring you the church, here and throughout the world:
We pray for ministry, those who seek, guide, serve and
pray.

Lord Jesus,
where there is doubt, bring true faith.

We bring you all human sorrow:
We pray for the bereaved, lonely, anxious and despairing.

Lord Jesus,
where there is sadness, bring your joy.

We bring you ourselves, our trials and temptations:
our joys and our sorrows.

May we be channels of your peace and love.

Lord Jesus,
bless us in your service.

Amen.

Blythswood Care

We have supported Blythswood Care over the years by providing filled shoeboxes (obtained and beautifully wrapped by Kathy and David Wilkie) for the annual Shoe Box Appeal and also by occasional retiring offerings. Sunday 11th June was Blythswood Sunday and we prayed for them during the service.



Here is a short history of the charity which they sent to us:

‘2023 marks the 30th anniversary of our Shoe Box Appeal. Many of you will be familiar with the notorious reputation that the Romanian orphanages had in the early 90’s. In response to such great need, gift-wrapped, gift-filled shoeboxes were sent from Blythswood supporters in the UK to children living in orphanages. 300 shoeboxes went out in 1993.

In 2022, nearly 90,000 boxes were sent to people in need across Eastern Europe.

One of the beauties of our Shoe Box Appeal is that the gifts aren’t just for one age group or person – they are for people of all ages, from different backgrounds, people with different stories to tell. More than 2.6 million shoeboxes have been delivered to people in need since our Shoe Box Appeal started 30 years ago! Every gift in every shoebox makes a difference.

Blythswood is best known for its Shoebox Appeal, but the charity’s work very much goes on through the year. With the support of people like you, we run projects to support those affected by poverty and isolation in Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia.

Blythswood’s work started in Scotland in 1966 and continues to this day, supporting the running of six foodbanks across the Scottish Highlands and one in Edinburgh.

The work can only go on, in God’s strength, thanks to the prayers and generosity of people like you.’

Useful Contacts

Website: www.kelsocountrychurches.org.uk

Church of Scotland Charity No. SC000958

Smile Time



An elderly priest said to the young priest,
“Your idea of replacing the first four pews
with plush bucket seats worked like a charm. The front of the
church fills up first now. And you told me that adding more beat
to the music would bring young people back to the church, so I
supported you when you brought in the rock ‘n roll gospel choir.
Now our services are packed to the balcony.”

“Thank you Father,” answered the young priest. “I’m pleased that
you are open to new ideas.” “But,” said the elderly priest, “I’m
afraid you have gone too far with the drive thru confessional!”

“But Father,” said the young man, “my confessions and the
donations have nearly doubled since I began that.”

“I appreciate that,” was the reply, “but the flashing neon sign,
‘Toot ‘n Tell or Go to Hell’ cannot stay on the church roof!”



PICNIC AND PRAISE
AT HUME CASTLE
2010