

The Country Link



Kelso
Country
Churches

~~~~~**May/June, 2024**

Dear Friends,

Spring has been overcast and damp so far, and many of us are longing for some sunshine. Whenever we plan days out, we inevitably carry umbrellas and raincoats, scarves and fleeces, as we don't know what the weather will be like. Towards the end of April, however, I had travelled with a group to Holy Island for a retreat, and we struck it lucky, for it was a dry, bright day. Holy Island is a special place, and we had time to wander round and explore the island. I appreciated sitting on the beach and looking at the stones and shells and driftwood, listening to the sound of birds. As I walked to a garden, I passed sheep and new-born lambs. We truly live in the garden of God's creation.



At the beach I gazed over St Cuthbert's Island, and Cuthbert is very much associated with the place, having been moved from Melrose Abbey to become bishop at Lindisfarne. Cuthbert was a spiritual person who longed to live quietly with God and with creation around him, but he lived in times of great change. He came from the Celtic tradition, influenced from Iona. But the Church further South was influenced by Rome. The two traditions had different emphases, and it was decided to hold a synod meeting at Whitby to look at the way forward for the Church. The outcome of the meeting was to follow the Roman tradition. While some were no doubt unhappy, others like Cuthbert accepted the decision and moved forward with it for the good of the church and the building up of the Kingdom.

Throughout Scotland congregations are uniting for the good of the church and the building up of the Kingdom. That of course includes us at Country Churches, as we will unite with Kelso North and Ednam with Rev Anna Rodwell as our minister. A group made up of members from Country Churches and KNE have been meeting in a very amicable way to ease the transition. We hope that the union will take place in the middle of June,

after which we will become Kelso North and Country Churches. Yes, things will be different, but it will be exciting as we become part of something bigger and engage with the wider community. Our past history is recognised, but together we can move forward to be the People of God in this place. In May we celebrate the Ascension, when Jesus ascended to heaven, basically saying to the disciples, 'It's over to you now', and led by the Spirit, they did marvellous things. As we go into the union, it is 'over to us', as led by the Spirit, we build the Kingdom of God. God bless you and keep you.

Rev Colin Johnston  
Interim Moderator

### *Preaching Plan for May/June*

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

#### **May**

5<sup>th</sup> Makerstoun Sophia Duncan

12<sup>th</sup> Stichill Rev. John Shields

19<sup>th</sup> Makerstoun Charles Orr

26<sup>th</sup> Stichill **Communion** Rev Colin Johnston  
Followed by Bread & Cheese Lunch for Christian Aid

#### **June**

2<sup>nd</sup> Makerstoun - **Songs of Praise** Worship Team  
Followed by lunch in Village Hall.

9<sup>th</sup> Stichill to be arranged

16<sup>th</sup> **Service of Union Kelso North Church 11am**

23<sup>rd</sup> Stichill **at 9.30am** Rev. Anna Rodwell

30<sup>th</sup> Joint service at Kelso North - 11am

## *Parish News and Updates*

Before I start to compile each new edition of our Country Link, I look over ones for the same months in previous years and I am often transported down memory lane, sometimes with pleasure at what we have achieved over the years, sometimes with regret that things didn't work out as we would have liked, and sometimes with sadness when dear friends who were such an integral part of our church family, are no longer with us to share the load and help bring joy to our worship and witness in these rural communities.

The magazine was started in 2001 by Rev. Valerie Watson, and became a vital link between our scattered churches, keeping us informed and up to date with what was going on; and there were many new ways introduced of “doing” church such as providing refreshments and fellowship after our services even though we didn't have ideal facilities at that time, the Sunday schools met in the vestrys, and the Guild and fund-raising events were held in the manse – and it was good! Then the Church Hall was renovated and opened in 2003 and the Makerstoun Annexe was opened in 2012, opening up more opportunities to enhance our worship. Social and fund-raising events were also held in Smailholm and Roxburgh village halls.

I took over as editor of the Country Link, as it was eventually named, in 2005 and have enjoyed the challenge of finding interesting and informative stories over the years, and I was helped greatly by Rev. Jenny Earl when she was our minister. But for some of these intervening years we have been without a minister and we just became more self-sufficient, and I am indebted to Jim Smith for all his help and patience and constant source of interesting stories from his vast knowledge of the communities in which we live. I also thank Rev. Stephen Manners for his contributions during the challenging days of lockdown.

This will be the last edition of the Country Link in its present format but as we go forward into uniting with Kelso North & Ednam, and with Anna as our minister, I'm sure that there will still be a need for the Country Churches to contribute to its magazine, “The Messenger”.

And a special ‘thank you’ to Bert Duncan who has helped print and staple it over the years.

## Finance report May 2024



The proceeds of our March coffee morning amounted to £451.83 and have been donated to the Church of Scotland Guild National Projects which currently support charities in the UK, South East Asia, Uganda, Tanzania and Brazil. The Guild asked us to ‘pass on our thanks to everyone who contributed through their interest, hard work and generosity. Together we can make a real difference to the lives of those in need.’

### **2023 Kelso Country Churches accounts:**

Our General Fund is our main congregational fund and there was a deficit of £4,598 for 2023 (before year end transfers from the Fabric and Reserve Funds) compared to the budget deficit for the year of £4,085. Expenditure included a Giving to Grow contribution of £2,500 (see below). The main savings for the year were in council tax, because of the sale of the manse, and heat and light costs, although the latter was still much higher than in 2022 due to the increase in energy costs. We spent an additional £3,716 on fabric costs, partly offset by increased receipts from our funds held with the General Trustees (we claimed £5,807 compared to a budgeted £4,000) and also a year end transfer to the General Fund from the Fabric Fund of £2,564. One other year end transfer was made – £2,000 was transferred from the Reserve Fund to the General Fund to keep the General Fund in credit. After transfers the deficit in the General Fund for the year was £34.

If you would like a copy of the full set of accounts then please don't hesitate to contact Liz Orr on 224595.

**Giving to Grow contribution by congregations to the Church of Scotland** – from 2023 this replaced the Ministries and Mission contribution and 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;

*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.

**Many thanks** once again to all of you for your support of the congregation, however you do this – through prayer, practical help or finance. We will be moving into a new situation soon as we join with Kelso North and Ednam Parish in a union of our congregations, and whatever we do, as we serve in partnership with the Lord, it takes forward His kingdom both here at parish level and beyond as we continue to trust Him for His ongoing provision for us and for our world in these particularly uncertain times.

***A note to Gift Aid donors:***

We are extremely grateful to all of you who are taxpayers and have signed a Gift Aid declaration in our favour – this enables us to claim an additional 25 pence from HMRC for every £1 you donate. **We recommend that you check that you are still paying as much or more tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all your donations to charities (in the corresponding tax year), and if not, just let me know.**

Liz Orr

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Note from the Treasurer

I think we would all want to thank Sophia for the wonderful job she has done of editing and producing The Country Link magazine since 2005.

The magazine has been interesting, informative, entertaining and inspiring.

Many thanks Sophia for all the hard work you put in to make it possible.

Liz Orr

Part of the fabric of Makerstoun

Makerstoun Kirk has been an integral part of the landscape and of the lives of the country folk of that small community for many generations, but how many of us have really taken notice of the framed words that have graced the wall of the sanctuary since 1954?

I have had the opportunity to study it more closely as I sit nearby providing the music for our singing since we have been without a regular organist, and I was impressed by the words of wisdom.

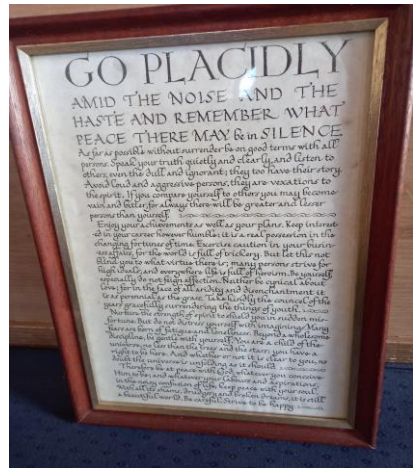
Written on the back of the frame are the words;

Found in Old St. Paul's Church, Baltimore, dated 1692.

Written in pen are the words; **Gifted by Jean and Jim Wilson, 1954.** Perhaps their family can give some insight into how they came upon the ancient words?

I would like to share the words with you. Although they were written over 300 years ago, the sentiments are as relevant to our lives today as ever.

Sophia Duncan



GO PLACIDLY

*Amid the noise and the haste and remember
what peace there may be in silence.*

*As far as possible, without surrender, be on good
terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and
clearly and listen to others, even the dull and the*

ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself to others, you may become vain and bitter for always there will be greater or lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your career however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs for the world is full of trickery, but let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself, especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass. Take kindly the council of the years gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture the strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the tree and the stars; you have a right to be here, and whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God whatever you conceive him to be; and whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace with your soul. With all its shame, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

Be careful. Strive to be happy.

A Letter from our Session Clerk

The Union of Kelso North & Ednam with Kelso Country Churches will take place on 16th June. The new name of the churches will be “Kelso North & Country Churches.”

Lothian & Border Presbytery have given their approval of the documentation sent to them from ourselves and K N & Ednam and the Church of Scotland legal team from 121, who also have had the documentation for some time, have not commented on it, which means it is legally correct.

We have had a good team of elders and the ministers from both camps working as a sub-committee of the sessions to unite our churches into one body. That has been done admirably by all involved with common sense and the will to achieve this for the benefit of all concerned.

Both Ednam & Makerstoun have been labelled “not needed” by the Presbytery plan, and they cease to operate on the Sunday morning after the Union has taken place. But they have been given a lifeline by Presbytery and if the congregation and session can prove that they are needed and are going to be used (in the Christian context) within the next year, then they may be spared.

We need to prove the worth of keeping these two churches open, we need events in these churches and we need the churches to be used for Christian fellowship. It is intended to probably have a monthly service in both churches, times still to be worked out, but it could be on a Sunday evening – perhaps one on the second Sunday and the other on the fourth.

Kelso Country Churches has been struggling of late with membership dwindling. Age has a lot to do with it and with Covid dealing a cruel blow, something needed to change. With the demise of Roxburgh and Smailholm attendance, these churches were sold, and it is sad that Makerstoun (and Ednam) are now deemed “not needed” but it is happening all over the country. Long gone are the days of a minister in each parish.

It is sad if you live in one of these small villages where the heart of the village was the church which is the symbol of our Christianity, but you must remember that it is God whom we seek when we go to church, not the church itself. I know I will be devastated when it becomes Stichill's time to close, but I do enjoy going to church wherever, and I have had the privilege of seeing most of the churches in the old Jedburgh Presbytery, each one unique in its own way. So we move with the times and we are happy to be part of the new Kelso North & Country Churches with the Rev. Anna Rodwell as our minister.

I would like to thank our Interim Moderator, Rev. Colin Johnston. We are blessed to have had him lead us through this time of change and the bonus was he is also a very nice man, so thank you Colin, from the session and congregation. It has been a pleasure working with you and we wish you every blessing as you continue your ministry in the Scottish Borders.

Jim Smith

Useful Contacts

Web site: www.kelsocountrychurches.org.uk
Church of Scotland Charity No. SC000958

Stichill Church Hall
Bread & Cheese Lunch
for **christian**
aid

Sunday, 26th May

Following the morning service.



All donations will be given for the
global work of Christian Aid.
Also there are Christian Aid envelopes in
both churches during May. Please fill
one if you are able and return to
the church or to the Treasurer.
Thank you.

Prayer for Christian Aid Week – 12th – 18th May

Lord of all,

We pray for those in need throughout the world, remembering that, in their cry, you are calling out for help, and that, in responding to them, we respond to you.

Your kingdom come,

on earth as it is in heaven.

We pray for those who have no food – those for whom hunger is an ever-present experience; who do not know where the next meal is coming from; who each day, face the prospect of starvation.

Your kingdom come,

On earth as it is in heaven.

We pray for those deprived of the resources we take for granted – fresh water, clothing, housing, education, and medical care – countless millions who have so little whilst the few of us have so much.

Your kingdom come,

On earth as it is in heaven.

We pray for those like Christian Aid who work for change – organising and transporting relief supplies, offering resources and opportunities for self-help, striving to overcome exploitation and oppression, campaigning for peace and justice for all.

Your kingdom come,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Use these, and all our gifts to show something of your love and compassion.

Reach out, wherever there is hunger, poverty, homelessness and disease, and stir the hearts of individuals and nations to live more simply, so that others may simply live.

Your kingdom come,

On earth as it is in heaven.

In Christ's name, we ask it. **Amen.**



200th Anniversary of Makerstoun Kirk – 31st Augu