

The Country Link



Kelso
Country
Churches

~~~~~ September/October, 2020

Dear friends,

The world is a different place since Covid-19 began and the church is certainly a different place. We will soon be re-opening Makerstoun and Stichill churches for worship. (check page 3 or website for up to date news) However, with distancing restrictions of 2 metres still in place, we are not able to get many people into our buildings. And the services are taking a different form with no hymns being sung and no teas or coffees afterwards.

But we are thankful that we can come together once more to worship in person.

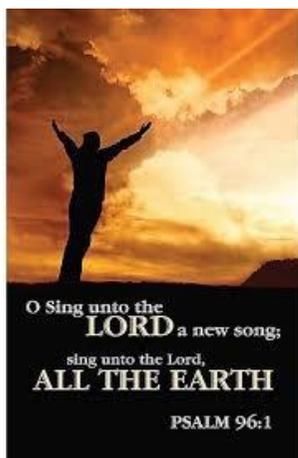
We are thankful that we are still here, able to give praise to our Lord and King. We are thankful for our health and the friends and family we see and spend time with.

As we give thanks to our loving Heavenly Father, let us also remember those who are not here any more. Let us remember and pray for, and offer comfort and support to all those who didn't get to say goodbye as they wanted and are now trying to rebuild their lives in this new world.

And let us remember all those whose lives have been changed – through ill-health or who no longer have a job or....

Let us pray for our neighbours and offer them all the support that they need today and for as long as they need it.

Yours,  
*Stephen*



'Sing a new song to the Lord!  
Sing to the Lord, all the world!  
Sing to the Lord, and praise him!

Proclaim every day the good news that he has saved us.'

## Reopening of church buildings

We are now at the stage where we are able to begin having worship in our church buildings on a Sunday morning again though we will still have services on the website for those not able to attend in person.

Initially when we reopen a service will take place in Makerstoun church on first Sunday of the month at 10.30am as usual and in Stichill on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays at 10.30am. The other weeks it will just be online via the church website.

Services will be quite different from what we are used to though and will have a more reflective, meditative feel. There will be no congregational singing and the service will be shortened so as not to have people in an enclosed space for too long.

When you arrive at church there will be an elder there to greet you outside who may ask you to wait before going in if someone has just arrived ahead of you. They will also ask you to put on a mask, though single use masks will be available if you don't have your own.

When you have got inside the building a second elder will take your name and phone number or email address for contact trace purposes and ask you to use the hand sanitiser.

You will be asked to go into the church and go forward to the pew nearest the front that has yet to be filled at Stichill. At Makerstoun we will enter via the back door through the kitchen – filling up from back to front. It will not be possible for those attending to sit where they normally sit as we need to fill up the seats in a certain order. (We will leave in reverse from back to front). Unless that is you are in a wheelchair where you will sit as usual at the back of the church in Stichill and the front in Makerstoun.

Households can sit together in one pew but otherwise there will only be one person to a pew or row of seats at the very front in Stichill.

Numbers able to attend will be very limited. Only 10 pews will be in use at Stichill - so depending on whether people come individually or in households that is up to 20 people who can attend (including the elders on duty but not the worship leader). Only 14 will be able to attend at Makerstoun and that includes the 2 elders on duty. Only those who live in Makerstoun or have a very strong connection should attend the church there. The balcony is off-limits in both churches. Once the church is full any other people coming will be turned away

An offering will not be uplifted during the service. Instead there will be an open plate at the door you go in for you to place your offering in. Sadly there will not be any opportunity to engage in fellowship over tea and coffee after the service is over, nor will the worship leader be at the door shaking hands after the service.

We will do all that we can to make it a worthwhile worship experience but as said earlier there will be a service on the worship page of the website and a podcast. You may decide it would be better for you to just continue to use those meantime.

No order of service sheet will be printed or bibles or hymn books handed out though you are welcome to bring your own bible.

The building will need to be sanitised after each use, probably three days or so after, before the next Sunday. If you are able to help clean at Stichill please speak to Sophia. For Makerstoun speak to Joan or Kirsty.

**Worship will start on 27<sup>th</sup> September at Stichill, and on 4<sup>th</sup> October at Makerstoun.**

We are looking forward to welcoming you back but understand that for many it will be a lot safer and make more sense to continue to worship at home.

Stephen Manners  
Minister

James Smith  
Session Clerk

### **Changes in elders districts**

Earlier in the year we re-organised elders' districts so some of you will have a new elder. We hope that you will welcome your new (or old) elder into your home as she/he visits and brings news of the church to you - following all the covid-19 rules of course.

Some people are now in a postal district and we will keep in touch with them by posting the magazine out to them.

We are glad that you are members of our church and hope that you will join with us in worship in our buildings or in the services available online. If you prefer not to be contacted by us for whatever reason, let Stephen (minister) or Jim (Session Clerk) know so that we can remove your details from the church roll.

*Stephen Manners, Minister*      *James Smith, Session Clerk*

## Parish News and Updates



I just wanted to say thanks to all those who got in touch after my recent heart attack - cards, emails, messages and phone calls. An especial thanks for your prayers for my speedy and full recovery.

I am feeling fine and gradually getting back to doing more exercise each day. You may see me more often walking, about Stichill especially, or cycling as they are the recommended exercises. I may yet start swimming in Kelso pool when it reopens which would please Kath!

I should be back at work by the time you get this magazine. *Stephen*



In the words of the hymn, 'Look forward in faith' the committee planned a programme of meetings for the new session 2020-21 but it won't be possible to meet or have tea together, or expect speakers to travel far so regretfully, KCC Guild is on hold while the covid 19 restrictions are in place. It is hoped to re-start in January and we have an option to extend the session until May.

The annual Guild conference was due to be held on 5<sup>th</sup> September but instead, the Guild National Team have produced a wonderful DVD of a virtual meeting with members and guest speakers filmed in their own homes. I have a copy of this and hope there will be an opportunity to show it during the winter months.

Guild Week is from 6<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September and it is important to raise awareness of the ongoing work of the Guild and of the Projects we support each year.

There will be a KCC Guild Service podcast available on our church website on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> September. I will lead the service and will be helped by Kath Manners and Lynda Stark so I do hope you can listen in and feel part of the service as we explore this year's theme, "The Extra Mile." And I hope that you will pass the word around to our wider church family and friends to listen in at some point during the week/s.



# NEWS ITEMS

Mostly from the nineteenth century  
from the Parishes of  
**Kelso Country Churches**

Author: James Smith, Session Clerk

## INTRODUCTION

Do you give much thought to the lives and times of the people who inhabited these lovely parishes we call Kelso Country Churches in days gone by?

Jim Smith is fascinated by the history of these parts, especially the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and has been going through the archives of local and other newspapers of these times which are now available on line.

Jim has been studying these newspapers and unearthing a fascinating account of what life was like then.

Through the newspapers, we see the trials of the local people and how they lived. The news is dominated by “the Farms”, “the Kirk”, “the Courts”, “the Village School” and “the Big House”. The church had a huge influence in those times (how things have changed) and it also provided much of the social interactions for all ages.

News was scarce in those early days and the newspapers even more so, so every account is written in great detail and in the language that was used then....often conjuring up amusing scenes for the reader.

Jim has compiled seven books of the seven villages and surrounding areas.

The place names, roads and buildings mentioned are familiar to us today and they conjure up a fascinating insight into the day to day lives of these stoic and hard-working country folk.

The books are interspersed with photographs, many of which are his own.

If you would like to purchase one or all of the books, Jim would be delighted to hear from you. They are £10 each and all proceeds will go towards church funds which is much needed at this time when our churches are closed.

This is a true labour of love on Jim’s part and I recommend them to you.

Here are a few entries from the books to give you a flavour and whet your appetite for more:

STITCHEL 26<sup>TH</sup> Dec. 1876 (*Berwickshire News & General Advertiser*)  
John Affleck, sometime groom at Newton Don, pleaded guilty of contravening “The Tweed Fisheries Amendment Act 1859” by having on a Sunday fished for salmon in the Eden by means of rake hooks, and on a part thereof known as Stichel Linn, in the parish of Nenthorn, and was fined 5s of penalty, with £1 19s 9d expenses, and in default of payment to be imprisoned for 10 days. Fine paid.

20<sup>th</sup> March 1877 (*Berwickshire News & General Advertiser*)  
ESTIMATES WANTED for Mason, joiners, slater, plasterer, plumber and glazier work for new United Presbyterian Church at Stichel. Tender for the above, according to relative plans and specifications, to be made not later than 23<sup>rd</sup> March to Rev. David Cairns, Stichel or to Mr. Stevenson, Architect, Berwick on Tweed. The committee of managers do not bind themselves accept the lowest or any offer.

ROXBURGH 24<sup>th</sup> July 1862 (*Kelso Chronicle*)  
EXCURSION FOR SABBATH SCHOLARS – Tuesday evening last a meeting of Sabbath school teachers and ministers, convened for the purpose of considering the propriety of having an excursion for Sabbath Scholars, was held in Roxburgh School – Rev. Jarvie in the chair. A railway excursion was agreed upon by a large majority. The destination was then discussed when Selkirk and Spittal were proposed. On a vote being taken the hither was chosen, the seaside possessing greater attractions to the children. The trip should take place on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> inst. and committees were appointed for purpose of making arrangements and collecting subscriptions

SMAILHOLM 1875 (*Berwickshire News & General Advertiser*)  
PLOUGHING DAY AT SPOTSMAINS – Mr Purves, having obtained a lease of Spotsmains, his friends and neighbours gave him a day’s ploughing. No fewer than 119 ploughs appeared on the ground which is proof of the high esteem in which Mr Purves is held in the district. The day was favourable and the horses able and the men anxious, a considerable amount of work was done. The men were supplied with refreshments during the day, beside each receiving the customary shilling. The visitors were also very generously treated. Mr Purves was assisted by Mr Thomson, Smailholm House and other gentlemen. The farmers were entertained to dinner in the afternoon at Spotsmains.

## *End of an Era: from the Session Clerk*

Recently a group of elders have been removing items from our two closed Churches – Smailholm and Roxburgh and it has been sad to see the demise of these two churches of which it has been said that they were once the true life of the villages and both of them in their day were the heartbeat of the community, especially when the minister was living in the manse. Sadly they are not going to be the last churches to close in our area as the present membership of many churches is getting older. The younger generation in general do not see the need for worship in these historic Holy Places and new people coming to the villages are unaccustomed to the kirk way of life.

Both churches are in remarkably good condition because we have looked after them, as we have seen them as a symbol of our Christianity and our love for God. I find it hard to think of these small country churches as closed to “The Word and Sacrament”.

When you think of it, each of these kirks were, in their day, the hub of rural life. Think of the weddings, the baptisms, the church services held over the centuries and also the funerals of so many of the loved ones of these communities.

Perhaps it was fitting that the last funerals to be held in these churches were faithful members of their church. Peter Batchelor, long time factor of Roxburgh Estates had a fitting service in Roxburgh kirk and was laid to rest beside his wife in the local cemetery, and Andrew Fairley from Smailholm, whose service and burial at Smailholm Kirk was witnessed by so many of his friends. Andrew loved the village in which he was born and many of us have fond memories of him.

People who have lived for many years in the area will have so many memories of village events, of friendships, and of a way of life which revolved around the kirk.

So now is the time to say good-bye to these buildings as our local parish church. They are going to be put up for sale by the Church of Scotland soon. This is all done through the General Trustees at 121 George Street, Edinburgh. A photographic record has been taken and some items offered to the village communities as mementos.

We hope that in the future these buildings will be an asset to their villages and continue to serve a useful purpose in some way to benefit the people who live there.

*James Smith*

## *Farewell to John and Anne Piercy*

The Country Churches were sorry to bid farewell to Anne and John who have lived at Makerstoun for many years and who have been active and caring members of Makerstoun Kirk and the community.

They have relocated to Yorkshire to be nearer members of their family and know the area quite well.

They joined in the life of KCC with enthusiasm and used their considerable talents to benefit us all. They loved to sing and greatly enhanced our congregational singing and joining the church choir for special events. And all that and more despite times of illness and incapacity.

Sadly, because of lockdown, we were unable to say goodbye to them personally, but the Makerstoun congregation presented them with a beautiful painting of Makerstoun Kirk painted by Charlie Orr which they loved, and Kirsty organised their friends in the Country Churches to relay personal messages with our good wishes for the future.



### **From the Editor's desk**

We may still be in lockdown in many ways but it has been an eventful summer for us in KCC one way and another. Thankfully, Jim Fleming and Jimmy Wichary who were in hospital with the corona virus are now well again. Stephen, our minister suffered a heart attack while with his family in Edinburgh and received prompt, effective treatment and I'm glad to report that he is back at the manse working and getting around on his bike as usual.

Bert landed in hospital but is now home and receiving treatment. We are both so grateful for the good wishes and offers of help he received. He feels better but is having to take it easy for a while so a lot of the tasks needing done have fallen to Jim Smith. It may seem as though nothing has been happening but Stephen and members of the Worship Team have prepared on-line services most Sundays which can be listened to anytime and there has been much work to do behind the scenes keeping in touch by phone, putting all the health and safety and hygiene precautions in place before we are allowed to open our buildings, and much more.



## Update from Connor Barclay, Youth Worker for Kelso Quest.

Hello All,

I am pleased to tell you what Kelso Quest has been doing since lockdown has been eased. I have been able to work closely with the High School and I am there on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday working with young people.



One of the most important things we do is hosting 5-a-side football tournaments for 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> year groups. These have proved to be a success with a good number of both boys and girls turning up ready to play. The skill level of players varies greatly but we are pleased to see good sportsmanship and fair play on show.

I also do one to one sessions with a few students in school. These are really beneficial to the young people as it is always good to talk to someone else. Our teenage years aren't always the easiest, but I hope these meetings can help.

I have been working with the Duke of Edinburgh class on Wednesday afternoons. So far we have learned about mapping and finding landmarks. Our first outing was litter-picking on Angraflat road, Croft Park, Bowmont Street and the Square. This worked well and all groups came back with bags full of rubbish having braved the rain to earn their volunteering hours.

An amazing act of kindness has been offered by Selkirk Baptist Church. They are willing to give us a whole range of equipment we can use when we start our out of school club. They have offered us sports equipment, board games, chairs, space-hoppers and loads more! Our plan is to move these into a youth space in Kelso soon so we can't thank Jan and her church in Selkirk enough.

Although all these amazing things are happening, we would love your support and prayers.

**Connor**

Website: [www.kelsocountrychurches.org.uk](http://www.kelsocountrychurches.org.uk)

Church of Scotland charity no. SC000958



**Self Help  
Africa**

*In recent years we have given our harvest retiring offerings to Self Help Africa (charity number 298830). Here is some information from the charity about their work:*

*Liz Orr*

‘Self Help Africa is dedicated to ending hunger and poverty in rural Africa. **250 million people** in Africa, farmers and their families, suffer hunger and malnutrition, struggling in extreme rural poverty without enough food; left behind by rising economic growth. Self Help Africa is a leading international development charity with an **expertise in small-scale farming and growing family-farm businesses**. We are motivated by injustice, by our expertise in small-scale agriculture and family-farm business, and the opportunity we have to **help small farmers change the lives of their families**. We work in **nine countries across sub-Saharan Africa**, tackling poverty and improving the lives of local communities.

The impact of Covid-19 has resulted in a significant fall in Self Help Africa’s income. If you would like to make a donation to their work at this harvest time, there are several ways to do it:

1. Directly to Self Help Africa – see [selfhelpafrica.org/uk/](http://selfhelpafrica.org/uk/) for details;
2. Send a cheque, payable to ‘Kelso Country Churches (Church of Scotland)’, to church treasurer Liz Orr, Downstream, Mayfield, Kelso, TD5 7BL, with a note to say that it is for Self Help Africa;
3. If we are holding church services, bring your donation in an envelope marked for Self Help Africa. (Any cheques should be payable as per 2.)

## *Prayers for the Week*

**Monday:** Dear Lord, we come together as a family of your people. We come as unique individuals, from contrasting backgrounds, and with various moods and expectations, but bound to each other in Christ. Though we are many, make us one.

**Tuesday:** Heavenly Father, we praise you for the beauty of our surroundings and we thank you for the comforts and freedom we enjoy. Save us from being complacent but always aware of a troubled world where hunger, war and poverty are constant companions to so many.

**Wednesday:** Creator God, we thank you for the bounty of harvest which surrounds us today in field and garden, sea and factory. We thank you for the toil which has made it possible and for your hand which ultimately lies behind it.

**Thursday :** Father, we remember before you those known to us who are no longer able to do the things they enjoy because of illness or disability or advancing years. May they know your love through the companionship of friends and family.

**Friday:** Loving Heavenly Father, we pray for children everywhere who have never known a secure and loving home, those who are denied the opportunities of education because of poverty, abuse, hunger or conflict. Bless the work of charities, individuals and agencies who strive to reach children in need, wherever they are.

**Saturday:** Eternal God, We pray for our own churches, and churches everywhere who are opening for the first time this month. May we have a meaningful time of worship together.

**Sunday:** Gracious God, you have given us, your people, all that we need. We offer our gifts of worship and money...help us to show your love to others and we pray that these gifts will be used in Your name and that Your will be done.

This we ask in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**