

The Hird

Church News for Selkirk and Ashkirk

December 2014

www.selkirkparishchurch.org



Minister:

Rev. Margaret Steele, Tel: 01750 23308

Charity no: Selkirk SC 014883 Ashkirk SC 010768

FLOWER MINISTRY

Dec. Fiona Holmes in charge

7th McKenna Family
14th Elaine Dunipace
21st Justine Lawton
28th Jean Wood

Jan. Marjorie Lawrie in charge

4th Margaret Forrest
11th Gillian Grant
18th Elma Hendrie
25th Marjorie Lawrie

Feb. Liz Thompson in charge

1st Sheila Waugh
8th Mo Rogan
15th Margaret Chisholm
22nd Margaret Hamilton

The Flower Calendar is available on the notice board in the Meeting House. Donations would be appreciated for any blank Sundays.



Christian Aid on Climate Change

“We know that our world’s climate is changing. And it’s changing because of our actions. The impact of these changes is already being felt by people across the world, but it is communities who are most vulnerable and least able to protect themselves who are suffering the most.

All the steps we take to live our lives more gently for our earth - however small or big - will make a difference. Whether changing our light bulbs to energy-saving ones, walking to church rather than taking the car or writing to our politicians to ask them to act, they all count. That’s because when we take these small steps together, we start to make giant leaps - ones that cannot be dismissed or ignored by politicians and business.”

Christian Aid’s quarterly magazine

Hospital Visiting: your minister needs YOU!



Over this past month or two there have been several times when I’ve missed being able to visit someone in hospital because I have not known they have been there. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE let me know AS SOON as YOU KNOW so that I can visit at a time that is suitable to me rather than waiting till the Sunday. I never tire of hearing about anyone who needs a visit. If I’m not in, you can leave a message on the answering machine, tel. 23308. This will help me enormously and also help the folk who are in hospital. Thank you.

Margaret Steele

Dear Friends,

For to us a child is born...and he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Names were so important in olden times. They very often gave the character of the person, the job they did, or both. Jesus, the baby born in the stable, is no different. Isaiah gave him four names which had an impact on his listeners and can have an impact on our lives today as we turn to him.

Wonderful Counsellor. Many of us have times when we need help to think things through. Times have been difficult for us, our experiences in life have shattered us and we wonder how we can go on. Isaiah's promise is that this baby will help us to see ways of coping with life changes. Jesus, as a man himself, said, "Come to me and I will give you rest. Cast your worries on me and I will help you."

Mighty God. Have there been times this past year when you've wondered how you will manage to continue to live your life? God created us to have a strong personal friendship with him, a relationship where He is willing to be our strength, our help, where he is willing to carry us when we find it hard to take the next step in front of us. This mighty God's power allowed Jesus to be raised from death to new life. This mighty power is available to us today through the Holy Spirit.

Everlasting Father. There's a verse in the Old Testament that tells us that underneath everything that happens to us are God's everlasting arms – stretched out to hold us up and hold us in close to Himself. Jesus tells us that God's fatherly love for us is the same love that God has for Jesus himself: a life giving, strengthening, hope-providing love.

Prince of Peace. Jesus said to his friends when he was about to leave this earth, "Peace I leave with you, it is my own peace that I give you. Do not be worried or upset...I will come back to you." The peace Jesus offers us is a restored friendship with God through his forgiveness of the things that we do that are wrong. It's a peace that encourages us to enjoy the happiness that life brings, knowing God is present there full of joy for our happiness. It's a peace that allows us to acknowledge that God weeps with us as we struggle through life's difficulties. Or as the hymn puts it:
"Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside."

This is the season of giving: the giving of God and our own giving to God and to others. It is also the season for receiving: God longs to receive our love and trust. We have the choice as to whether we receive His love and the promise of His help

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or whether we leave it be to continue to struggle on ourselves.

Thank you all for your support, love and friendship over the past year. I pray that you will choose to accept the gift that God offers you this Christmas time so that you may know the strong love of the Father, the sacrificial love of the Son and the powerful love of the Holy Spirit in your life this Christmas and throughout 2015.

With every blessing

Margaret

A Service of Remembering

Christmas is for most people a happy time. Everywhere you look, you see pictures showing happy smiling faces, laughter and merriment. However, for many (and perhaps more than we imagine), Christmas can be a very painful, sad and difficult time. Illness, bereavement, sad memories or loneliness can each make this time very difficult to face and get through.



With this in mind, there will be a special “service of remembering” in the Church side-chapel on Sunday 14th December at 3pm. The service will begin and end with quiet reflection. There will be hymns, not carols, some readings and prayers. Tea and coffee will be served at the end of the service in the Meeting House, though some people may prefer to go away quietly. There will be an opportunity to have the names of loved ones to be read out during the service, in remembrance of them. A sheet of paper will be in the Meeting House from early December for names to be added. If you would like a name read out in memory but do not wish to attend, that is perfectly acceptable. Please feel free to phone Rev Margaret Steele (23308) or myself (22562) with the details.

Katrina Smith

Churches Together in Selkirk and the Valleys

CTSV held its AGM in the Parish Church hall on September 21st. Fran Selkirk stepped down from chairing the group, and Rev. Margaret Steele was elected in her place, agreeing to be chairperson for the next two years. Joanna Smith (URC), Christine Hil (St. Johns) and David Bethune (SPC) agreed to continue in their current roles as vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer. After reviewing the year past, discussion turned to forthcoming events, including Scott’s Selkirk. Dates were set for meetings in 2015: the next being on 11th January in Church House, Viewfield Park. Although each congregation sends four official delegates, we welcome any interested members or friends at meetings, especially those willing to get involved!

Future Focus: THE WAY AHEAD



Over 3 meetings in September and October, around 50 people participated in wide-ranging but focussed discussion on the past, present and future dreams and hopes for Selkirk Parish Church and the community we serve.

The aim of the final session was to identify three major hopes or dreams and to suggest some practical steps that we could take to achieve these over the next two years. The Kirk Session took the 30+ suggestions and nominated several to progress with immediately.

Key point: to achieve all our dreams and hopes, we need loving and supportive relationships and a willingness to change.

Hope/dream 1: that church life would become more inclusive (involving all ages and a wide cross-section of the community) and more participative for everyone.

Action

- A Communications Group has been set up to ensure everyone, within the church and out in the community, knows who we are and what we do. Please contact Louise Raffier (23125, louiseeduff@hotmail.com) if you have ideas to share or would like to join this group.
- A Men's Curry Night is being planned. Contact David Bethune (21703, david@dbethune.com) to be kept in touch.

Hope/dream 2: that we provide more opportunities to develop relationships, and engage and deepen our faith in relevant ways.

Action

- ReachOut is hosting a study group early in 2015 see page 14 for more details.
- A forum to think about Contemporary Issues and the Christian Faith has been proposed.

Hope/dream 3: that we listen to and serve needs within the community.

Action

- Community Research will help us find out the needs in our community and what action we can take. If you would like to be involved, contact Jim Smith, Liz Thompson or Myra Ward. On Sunday 16th November, Jim challenged each of us to speak to 10 people and ask them, "What are the needs of the community in Selkirk?"

Fresh Start Borders

Earlier this year, Fresh Start Borders made up its 1000th home starter pack since beginning in 2010 and the demand for packs continues to grow.

Our appeal this Christmas is for casserole dishes, which are particularly appreciated at this time of year, when a warming winter dish really hits the spot. Could you give a Christmas gift of a casserole dish for one of our home starter packs, for only £5?

For more information, please see leaflets in the Meeting House.

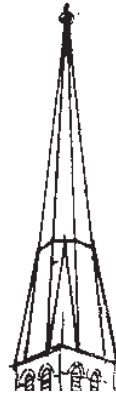
Glynis Wilkie, church rep.



Property Report

Spire

K2 Steeplejacks have completed the spire works, which included the dismantling and rebuilding of the top section of the spire and the replacing of the rusty metalwork inside the spire with new stainless steel. The lower part of the spire has been repointed, and the wooden louvres in the bell tower repainted. A new floor has been installed above the bell which allows for easier inspection of the inside of the spire. A new lightning conductor has been fitted, and is linked to the existing one which has been improved. Thanks to Jack Peers for helping to monitor the work in progress, and for carrying out inspections of the completed works. Thankfully, neither he nor the Property Convener had to scale any ladders on the outside of the spire!



Loanside Manse

The kitchen was redecorated during September while Margaret was away on holiday, and a number of other maintenance tasks carried out at the same time by members of the Property Group. A leak in the base of the shower has been fixed, the trees and shrubs overhanging the back of the house have been cut back and the gutter cleaned out. Many thanks to Elaine Dunipace and Myra Ward for all their work. Also, more recently, a new vinyl floor was laid in the kitchen.



Maintenance & Improvements

Coat hooks for the children have been put up in the corridor next to the hall. A new wooden post which matches the existing woodwork has been installed next to the choir steps. Thanks to Colin Macintosh for arranging both of these. A door bell has recently been installed at the Hall Entrance.

Let us pray: Part 2

As well as finance, of course, there is the huge quantity of what is generally called 'humanitarian aid' - bedding, tents, cooking equipment and fuel, sanitation aids, medical supplies etc. This is often dropped in huge quantities by Hercules transport openly in the public eye, lately for example to the Waziri Christians in Iraq, surrounded both by the victims of the extremes of climate and murderous aggressors. Equally often, it is undertaken secretly and at great risk. The Open Doors organization, for instance, is planning to take food into North Korea this Autumn and Winter. The consequences of discovery could be very serious indeed, as they could also be for those seeking to help North Korean women who have escaped into China, but are in great danger of being discovered and forcibly repatriated.

Then, (and this is my main concern this time) there is the whole area of counselling, coming alongside people and helping them come to terms with the trauma of what they have seen and endured. Consider, for example, a young Burmese boy from the predominantly Christian Kachin people. He saw his mother gang-raped in front of him by the brutal Burmese army until she died. He became separated from his father as they fled into the jungle but finally, terrified beyond words, managed to reach a place where partners of Barnabas Aid took him in, put their arms round him, both literally and spiritually and are seeking to help him overcome his anguish. Or there is the team who have met with the tormented parents of those kidnapped schoolgirls in Nigeria.

"I realise", said one of them, "that is not so much the words I would speak that would comfort them, but the fact that we were willing to come despite the danger." One of the parents said, "You came to our place to tell us we are not alone in the battle. This means a lot to us. It will dry our tears." This is sometimes called Presence Ministry and the list of examples of such service world-wide is huge indeed.

Think locally too. Patients in the BGH have often said, "It's just the mere fact of a visitor showing his or her face round the door that makes all the difference. They don't have to say a word!"

Costly? Very! Think of these words from The Servant Song:

"I will weep when you are weeping - when you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through."

and

"I will hold the Christ-light to you in the night-time of your fear."

David Taylor, Prayer Promoter

Celebrate Christmas with Selkirk Parish Church



*Gifts to fill the Advent Banner
for BGH or Food Bank
see page 8*



1st Sunday in Advent
10.15 am *A Healthy Church*



2nd Sunday in Advent
10.15 am *Communion Service*



11 am *Communion Service*



3rd Sunday in Advent
10.15 am *Gift Service
with Selkirk Silver Band
Taste & See party and lunch*
*Gifts suitable for children and teenagers, with wrapping paper
separate please, will be distributed by Social Work Dept.*
3 pm *Service of Remembering*



4th Sunday in Advent
10.15 am *Christmas Family Service*
2.30 pm *Carol Service, Thornfield House*



Christmas Eve
7.00 pm *Living Nativity, Market Place*
7.30 pm *Carol-singing, Market Place*
8 pm *Refreshments, Meeting House*
8.30 pm *Churches Together Service
Selkirk Parish Church*
11.30 pm *Watchnight Service
Ashkirk Parish Church*



Christmas Day
10.30 am
*Selkirk Parish Church
Celebrate Christ's Birthday*



Scotland's Climate Change Pledge for Communities

Having been discussed and agreed at the Kirk Session in May and mentioned in the June Hird, this pledge was signed in September, making Selkirk Parish Church the first group in the Scottish Borders to sign up. Photos were taken of the congregation and the pledge, at a Sunday morning service and at an afternoon Taste and See service. Both photos can be seen in the hall, where the Pledge is also displayed.

The pledge reads:

We, Selkirk Parish Church, acknowledge the increasing impact that climate change will have on our community, across Scotland and internationally and commit to tackling the causes and effect of a changing climate within our local area.

We pledge to:

- take active steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions wherever possible, collectively and individually;
- tell people what we are doing and why we are doing it;
- explore other actions we can take to address climate change and our resilience to it.

The topics for our Thinking Green, Acting Green campaign have informed and encouraged us to make choices that lead to **Greener Travel, A Greener Christmas, Warmer Homes, Using Less Energy, Reducing, Re-using and Recycling more**. These themes and others within the context of our Christian faith will continue to be explored under the banner of Eco-Congregation, following our intended registration early next year.

Meanwhile, **Green Energy** will be the final theme of the campaign with advice offered from church members and friends who are successfully generating electricity using PV panels, along with other information. Watch out for the article in the February Hird.

Also in February, there will be a questionnaire circulated with the Hird, which will complete the Thinking Green, Acting Green campaign, funded by the Climate Challenge grant. The church has already substantially cut its carbon footprint with the changes we have made in the hall. The questionnaire will find out what changes church members have made as individuals over the last 2 years eg using the car less, counting our food miles or making energy saving changes in the home.

Wishing you a Green Christmas! (see December display in the hall)

Anne Bethune

The Congregational Board reports

The Congregational Board met on Tuesday 21st October and most of the business was routine. It was noted that the steeple repairs had been completed and the fundraising for the same was going very well. All other property repairs are being dealt with by the property group who do a grand job.

Hall lets are down on recent years, mainly due to the groups that used them no longer being in existence. It was agreed to publicise the availability of the hall for letting and a notice has been placed on the notice board at the front of the church. Of course, personal recommendation is always good, so if you know of any groups that would benefit from the use of our excellent facilities, please suggest it to them.

It was confirmed that Vicki MacFarlane has been given a permanent contract in the role of Office Administrator,

The date of the next meeting is 16th December – if anyone has any items they wish to raise, please contact myself or any of the Congregational Board members.

Jacqui Lee, Clerk to the Board

Fairtrade

We will continue to have monthly stalls on a Sunday. Thank you for buying £332.20 of products since September, excluding Christmas cards.

Dec. 7th Last minute Christmas gifts

Jan. 4th January Sale &
Fairtrade Challenge:
buy from six of the next
nine stalls and get a
Fairtrade surprise gift.

Feb. 7th Pasta Party with Fairtrade
ingredients

March 1st Spring Clean with Fairtrade



Loyalty Card

**6 purchases
= 1 free gift**

Myra, Pauline, Linda, SPC Fairtrade group

Blythswood Shoeboxes



A very big **Thank You!** to all the folk who gave so generously to the Blythswood Shoebox Appeal, either by filling a box yourself or giving a donation of goods towards one. Thanks also to those who gave donations of money. This will be a great help in getting the boxes transported. Whatever way you gave, it is very much appreciated.

Thank you, Maisie and Beth

Kirk Session Notes

You've all been waiting for it, the inside story from the Kirk Session!

- The church will soon be undergoing a local review (which used to be called the Quinquennial) by Presbytery, when the church's property and worship will come under its scrutiny.
- Future Focus. The Kirk Session has been considering the suggestions made by the group as to how the church's hopes and dreams, drawn up at the Future Focus sessions, might be progressed. These were many and varied but expressed a vitality is there in our church which some might have thought lacking. It resulted in a very positive meeting of the Kirk Session. More of this in a future issue.
- The Kirk Session and Congregational Board held a joint meeting led by representatives of the Stewardship Committee from 121 George Street, Church of Scotland HQ, on Sunday November 2nd, at Churches House, Viewfield Park. The suggestions and outcomes of the day have not as yet yielded a report from Edinburgh. You'll hear about it in full once that appears.
- There is only one District, Gordon Junor's, which has not yet had its District Tea. It has been most enjoyable to meet with all those who have come to the Manse and enjoyed Rev Margaret's hospitality. We hope you all enjoyed it too.
- Session is being asked to consider who might become the church Tearfund representative. You just have to receive the letters from the Tearfund Head Office and pass on anything that needs put in the Intimations to Vicki in the Church Office. Could it be you that we're looking for?

Well, that's all, folks, for the time being.

Your Session Clerk,
Elma Hendrie

5p Mile

We have just completed the 11th year of our second 5p mile. 63,268 5ps have been donated, totalling £3,163.40, which equates to 1,240 yards, or 0.7 mile. At this rate our faithful plodders will be struggling on for another 5 years, so any additional support would be very gratefully received!



Lynda McCraw

Prayer

Grant us all a vision, Lord,
To see what we can achieve
To reach out beyond ourselves
To share our lives with others
To increase our sense of purpose
To be aware of where we can help
To be sensitive to your Presence
To listen to your call at all times.
For Jesus' sake
Amen

From Amy Ward in Guatemala

Dear all,

Hello! Well, as I write to you I've but a handful of days to go in the prison, Mum's plane is hovering on the horizon and the immediate future is stuffed full with farewells and a long voyage home. Reflecting on two years' experience out here is not really possible in a few pithy paragraphs, but there are certainly things that stand out as I look back.



Latin Link
COMMUNITY WITH A CALLING

Exchanging jokes and laughs with the girls, sharing more of their stories, discovering more of their lives has been at the heart of this time, and remains a significant part of what I shall take away. Getting to know Ignacio and his family better, building a friendship there and seeing all that he does out here has been a privilege and equally important. Bumping around in the back of pick up trucks, getting to eat in civilised company with my fingers and Mexican ranchero music that has singers wailing throughout the instrumental interlude have also been things to cherish!

Meeting God in a different place, with different people, and realising just how much mad and marvellous variety he has created in this world has been challenging, illuminating, exciting, difficult, beautiful and just about any other adjective you'd care to pick! Living in a more dangerous part of the world, and learning to put my life in his hands, has been something new too. As has understanding the reality of the battle we're in, not just of flesh, as Paul says, but against powers and principalities; fighting on behalf of a kingdom that has already won the ultimate victory, but that faces tremendous opposition in the meantime. Above all, in these two years I've seen how God's love continues to pour out on his children, and that he continues to call us to share in that love - and share it out as well.

So I shall come home with new friendships, new memories, and, hopefully, a fairly decent tan(!), but also invigorated and encouraged by the way in which God continues to interact with us in this world, and by the power of his love which overcomes fear, prejudice, doubt and darkness.

Looking forward to seeing you all in January and relishing the chance to wear my woolly jumpers, knitted gloves and thermal underwear once again. It's been too long!

Praying that you too will enjoy the sweetness of God's love this Christmas time and the joy of all the good gifts he gives us.

¡Hasta pronto, y que Dios les bendiga!

Love, Amy

Sunday School

It is good to see the youngsters attending Sunday School on a regular basis and we have been following the sermon plan for our lessons. We have also spent some time designing a teatowel which we are getting produced to raise funds for the church. This will be available at Scotts Selkirk weekend: it is an ideal Christmas present, easy to post if required and will cost £5, with all profits going to support the church. We will also be drawing pictures of the Christmas story which will be displayed in the corridor at the BGH – a contribution to our wider community!

The dates for the rest of the year are:

30th November	Sunday School at 10.15am
7th December	Scotts Selkirk Family Service at 10.15am, Communion
14th December	Taste and See, Silver Band and gift service at 10.15am followed by Taste and See Christmas Party in hall.
21st December	Sunday School at 10.15am
25th December	Christmas Day Family Service at 10.30am
28th December	Family Service at 10.15am
4th January	Taste and See at 4 pm

Jacqui Lee



ReachOut: women meeting together

After an enjoyable curry evening at Connections, we are planning to meet on 5th December, at 5 Marion Crescent at 7.30 pm for some Christmas Cheer and to learn a Christmas craft.

In the New Year we will be following "The Possible World" course, produced by CMS, which consists of seven sessions.

- Jesus, a prophet. Me, a prophet?
- Hospitality: All right for some?
- Consumer culture: I want to live simply...but I like stuff
- The environment: For God so loved the world
- Human suffering: How can I show I care?
- Injustice: So many issues, so few of us
- Now what? Joining the prophetic and the practical



The focus of the course is "practical ways to join in Jesus' mission" with video extracts, interviews, leaflets and thoughtful discussion. Please let us know if you are interested, so dates and venue can be planned.

Thanks

ReachOut Planners

Anne Bethune, anne@dbethune.com tel: 21703,

Louise Raffier tel: 23125, Fran Selkirk, Myra Ward



Celebrate Christmas with Ashkirk Parish Church



Sunday 7th Dec.

12 noon

Service of Holy Communion

Church

Sunday 14th Dec.

12 noon

Gift Service

Church

Donations for Fresh Start Borders

Sunday 21st Dec.

12 noon

Christmas Family Service

Church

Monday 22nd Dec.

6 pm

*Carols round the village from Village Hall
short act of worship, refreshments Smiddy*

Tuesday 24th Dec. Christmas Eve

11.15 pm

Carol singing

Church

11.30 pm

Watchnight Service

Church

followed by refreshments,

collection for Margaret Kerr Cancer Fund

***Our Church is always open for you to
enjoy its beauty and peace.***



Ashkirk News

Over the past year, a small team from Ashkirk has enjoyed worshipping with the residents of Riverside. We have been able to share readings, prayers, stories and singing to make our time together fun and enjoyable. It's wonderful to see folk brighten up, engage and to be part of the family of God, together.

On our **Gift Day**, October 18, we enjoyed coffee and biscuits in the Village Hall, the chance to chat and catch up with neighbours and friends and the opportunity to give to our church. At our Harvest Thanksgiving service, October 19, we heard that approximately £850 (including Gift Aid) had been raised. Our praise and thanksgiving was fulsome and the Food Bank benefitted from the parishioners' generosity.

Remembrance Sunday, November 9, was marked by a traditional service with our youngest member laying flowers in thanksgiving at the war memorial in the church. At the end of the service, the congregation processed into the kirkyard to dedicate a Rowan Tree sapling, "With gratitude to the people of Ashkirk for their service to their country." This was done in memory of the start of WW1 because there have been so many, never before honoured, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude and so Ashkirk gave honour and thanks to them all.

Selkirk

December 2014

Tuesday	2	2 pm	Selkirk Church Friends, Liberty Trading
Friday	5	7.30 pm	ReachOut, 5 Marion Crescent
Sat. 6 & Sun.	7	10 - 4 pm	1914-1918 Commemoration Display (see below)
Thursday	11	2 pm	CAMEO
Tuesday	16	12 noon	Selkirk Church Friends Christmas Lunch
Thursday	18	2 pm	CAMEO Christmas Party

January 2015

Sunday	4	4 pm	Taste and See
Tuesday	6	2 pm	Selkirk Church Friends: Flodden Garden
Sunday	11	2 pm	Churches Together St John's Church House
Tuesday	20	2 pm	Selkirk Church Friends: Craft & Chat
Thursday	22	2.30 pm	Service at Mungo Park Court
Thursday	29	2 pm	CAMEO

February

Sunday	1	2.30 pm	Service at Thornfield House
		4 pm	Taste and See
Friday	7		Fairtrade Pasta Party



Fundraising Update

Steeple Fund: Cost £20,920 + VAT £4,184. Donations, fundraising and grants have produced the amazing sum of £20,023 so far. As a listed building we hope to be awarded a grant to recoup the VAT, leaving just £897 still to find.

Facilities Upgrade Fund: Final payment of £3,286 due in February. To date, we have a balance of £1,793, leaving £1,493 to find. With pledges and donations continuing to the end of April 2015, plus the recovery of tax from gift aided monies, we should be very close to achieving the required amount.

Our final fundraiser of the year will be over the weekend of Scott's Selkirk, Saturday 6th (10 am - 4 pm), and Sunday 7th December (12 noon - 4 pm). We are planning a **"1914-1918 Commemoration Display"** in the Meeting House, with the Coffee Shop and gift stalls in the hall. If you have items which could be used in the display (photos, memorabilia, letters, postcards etc., which can be photocopied or transcribed if preferred), please contact a member of the Committee, or hand them in to the Church Office by Wednesday 3rd December at the latest.

Volunteers are needed to supervise the display, to help in the Coffee Shop or to man a stall, and to provide baking. If you are able to help in any of these ways, please add your name to the relevant list in the Meeting House. Otherwise, please support us with your presence on either day, and bring a friend!

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Selkirk

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Ashkirk

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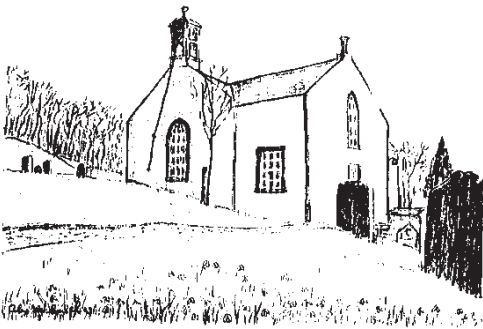
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Items for the **February** issue of The Hird should be in the office by **18th January**.