

The Hird

News for Ashkirk, Ettrick & Yarrow and Selkirk Parish Churches

February 2023

Websites: ettrickandyarrow.church selkirkparish.church
sites.google.com/site/ashkirkparishchurch

"I have heard about
your faith."



Letters of
encouragement

(see pages 9 and 13)

Interim Moderator: Rev. George Shand

Tel: 07765 987163 Email: georgeshand@live.co.uk

Selkirk SC 014883 Ashkirk SC 010768 Ettrick & Yarrow SC 034662

Notes from Selkirk Congregational Board

As you will have noticed, the dedication of the offering on Sundays is once again being incorporated into the service, another step forward towards returning to normal after Covid.

Improvement work continues at the manse with doors and windows having been replaced. The new kitchen arrived in January.

The organ is in need of some minor work in the short term. Long term major overhaul required. Advice has been sought so a decision is to be made on this later.

Thanks to all those who helped with maintaining the Church and Manse gardens over the Summer months. Much appreciated.

Sheila Christer Porteous, Clerk to CB

Selkirk Church Friends

Following the Covid Pandemic and after discussion, it was decided not to re-start Selkirk Church Friends. When we closed for the pandemic, we had a balance of £183.07 in our Bank of Scotland Account. Four of the group met to discuss what should be done with this money. After much thought, it was agreed that we donate the sum to the St John's Memory Cafe. This was done in March 2022. This money was used to have two flower planters specially made and filled with plants. Ann and Jennifer were invited to the little "opening ceremony" and duly cut the string of balloons.

I do hope you all had a Happy Christmas and that 2023 will be kind to you.

Jennifer Barrie

My motto for Life

The more you give
The more you get
The more you laugh
The less you fret
The more you do unselfishly
The more you gain abundantly
The more of everything you share
The more you'll always have to spare

For life is good and friends are kind
And only what we give away
Enriches us from day to day

by Rose Whitehead

January 2023

Dear Friends,

Christmas has come and gone and we are now well into the new year of 2023.

In the Christmas story we read: *"The shepherds went back again to their fields and flocks, praising God for the visit of the angels, and because they had seen the Child, just as the angel had told them."* - Luke 2 v 20.

And again: *"After they gave Him their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, the wise men were warned in a dream not to report back to Herod. So they returned home to their own land by another route."* - Matthew 2 v 12.

So after having gazed in awe upon the Baby Jesus and worshipped Him, both sets of visitors returned to where they had come from. They went back to their day jobs in the fields and in the East. And that's the same for each one of us at this time of year. After all the festivities, it's back to normal or as the old Scots saying has it: *"Back tae auld claes & porridge!"*

But although both the shepherds and the wise men had gone back to where they had come from, their lives were never the same again! They had encountered the Son of God, they had seen Him with their own eyes lying in the manger, they had worshipped and adored Him. Jesus had changed their lives forever!

The shepherds told everyone they met about their encounter with the angels and with Jesus, the Son of God. No doubt the wise men, when they returned home were full of it: *"We have seen for ourselves the new born King!"* And so these humble shepherds and wise men, people from two very different backgrounds, spread the Good News that the Saviour of the world had been born in Bethlehem and that they themselves had seen Him!

We have just celebrated His birth. **We** have listened to the wonderful Christmas story, the greatest story ever told! **We** have worshipped Him with our Christmas carols. **We** have exchanged gifts to remind us of the greatest Gift of all!

But we must not leave it at that! **We** must follow the example of the shepherds and wise men and tell others that we also have met Jesus! That He lives in us by His Holy Spirit and leads us in our daily lives.

We must encourage those around us, our families, our friends, our neighbours, everyone, to think about God's only Son, born for each one of us at Christmas and lead them to discover for themselves just how wonderful He really is!

The Lord bless you and keep you,
Scott

Ambitious building plans on display

After several months of discussion, our architects, Angus Design Associates, have produced plans with exciting ideas to develop our church and hall to be more welcoming, with more flexible, usable spaces, more storage and lower energy use.

Last Saturday, over 50 folk - both church members and representatives from the community - came to the church hall to view and hear about the proposals, and give their feedback. Many questions were raised, suggestions offered, and overall the response was very positive.

These plans will continue to be on display in the church for the next few weeks, and you can view the presentation, explaining the ideas and proposals at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yN5IR44qja0>. The plans reflect our growing desire to be a “church for the community”, looking to the future while respecting the past, and to allow us to become more effective in our outreach to the community.



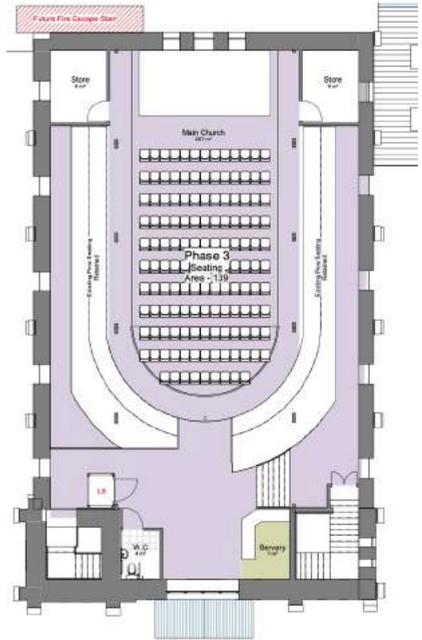
The proposals focussed on three main areas: the front entrance, the hall and kitchen, and the worship space.

The ideas for the front entrance included new steps and ramps up to a glass entrance door, leading into a welcoming social space with servery, reception desk, offices and additional toilets. This could be a drop-in “warm space” and also used for smaller groups for meetings at other times.

A new hall entrance is proposed down the right hand side of the church, with a gathering space, better access to toilets, possibly a movable partition wall to the existing hall, and an enlarged kitchen to meet the needs of Open Door.

Most radically, it is proposed to move the worship area upstairs (accessed by stairs and a lift). This would preserve the tiered pews and woodwork, and provide a beautiful worship space seating around 300, which could also be used for other events through the week.

It would continue to look and feel like Selkirk Parish Church with its windows, arches and ceiling, but be brighter, easier to heat, more comfortable and more flexible.



The bonus would be additional rooms downstairs for groups, meetings and storage, as shown on the plan on p.4.

Lots to think about! Over the next few weeks, we have a period of reflection, before we make any decisions about whether to take any or all of these ideas forward.

If you have questions, please ask. The steering group will value your feedback, and we will use it to improve the plans.

David Bethune

Tearfund prayer for Kenya

Lord Jesus,
when you started your ministry, you proclaimed good news to the poor
and the year of the Lord's favour.
We declare the same over Kenya and across East Africa this year:
bring rain where it's needed
so that crops in the ground will grow and flourish.
In your name, Amen

Different voices, fresh perspectives



It was the most important meeting of my life and my opinion wasn't even invited. Mind you, to be fair, I was only an egg at the time.

Someone asked, "Hair?" and the reply came, "Quite dark; keeps most of it well into his sixties."

Not a bad start.

"Eyes?"

"Let's say "greenish."

This was disappointing: I was sure "smouldering" was a colour.

"Max height?"

"Five feet eleven and three quarters."

Now hang on a minute: surely He could give me a little more: just enough to get over the magical six foot mark?

"That's going to irritate him."

"I know, but it's the height I want him to be."

"Sporting prowess is next."

"Strictly second eleven; not particularly good, not particularly awful."

At this point, I remember, I stopped listening: things were clearly going downhill.

Now, the fact is that if we humans *were* given a say in such matters, we would all choose the same thing. We would choose strength over weakness, talent over ordinariness, bravery over fear, comfort over poverty, beauty over plainness. Ask any expectant parent what they hope for their newborn and the answers are entirely positive: health, happiness, intelligence, a bright future.

The result, if such things were granted, would be a world without need, which sounds rather utopian at first. And yet—

Because at times I have struggled, I have received kindness. Because at times I have played better than expected, I have great memories. Because at times I have been ill, I have been lovingly looked after and because at times I have failed, I have been forgiven, and in the process have learned to forgive. We may be **admired** for our strengths, but we **receive love** as a result of our vulnerabilities.

And so, when God formed me in the womb, He ignored that egotistical little egg that wanted all things "just so". Instead, anticipating all the help and love that would be gifted to me along the way, he made me as I am; weak and daft enough to need it. So "Thanks, Lord" for not creating me a superman.

Mind you, I still think that extra half-inch wouldn't have hurt.

Rod Ward



Worship in the Valleys

When	Where	Time	Led by
Feb. 5	Kirkhope	11.30am	Rev. Scott Guy
Feb 12	Yarrow	11.30am	Worship group
Feb 19	Kirkhope	11.30am	Rev. Scott Guy
Feb 26	Yarrow	11.30am	Rev. Scott Guy
Mar. 5	Kirkhope	11.30am	Rev. Scott Guy
Mar. 12	Yarrow	11.30am	Rev. Scott Guy
Mar. 19	Kirkhope	11.30am	Rev. Scott Guy
Mar. 26	Ettrick	11am	Rev. Scott Guy
April 2	Kirkhope	11.30am	Rev. Scott Guy
April 9	Yarrow	11.30am	Rev. Scott Guy, Easter Day

Our new Presbytery

Selkirk Parish Church has been a member of the presbytery of Melrose and Peebles since 1976. Two years ago, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland decided that larger presbyteries would be more efficient and effective.

The parishes of Ashkirk, Ettrick and Yarrow and Selkirk are now members of the Lothian and Borders Presbytery. This is made up of the former presbyteries of Melrose and Peebles, Jedburgh, Duns, Midlothian and East Lothian.

On 21st of January, we met in Dalkeith for the first time with over 150 ministers and elders attending. New presbytery moderator, the Very Reverend Susan Brown led us in a short act of worship with inspirational singing, then with wit and wisdom through a complicated business session. After lunch, we had an exchange of good ideas for mission and how to move forward. The day concluded with an act of communion. We meet 4 times a year, next on 17th June.

Linda White
Selkirk Presbytery elder



Ashkirk News

As you are aware Ashkirk Parish Church has not held weekly services since the beginning of November. Looking to the future we intend to open again and hold an evening service on the first Sunday of each month starting on 5th March. We will plan for the first three months and then assess where we are.

In the meantime, both the Kirk Sessions of Ashkirk and Selkirk have agreed to take forward a union of our two churches and this will now proceed to the Presbytery of Lothian and Borders to guide us through this process and towards a vote of members.

On a further, though rather sad, note the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland have identified Ashkirk Parish Church as not fulfilling the requirement of a church to be in “the right space in the right place” and therefore as a building (NOT as a congregation) it should be closed and ‘disposed of’. I know, that like myself, this news will be of considerable sadness but reflects the weekly attendance at services and the lack of facilities available on site.

I really hope that you will come and join our worship in Ashkirk Parish Church at 6pm on Sunday 5th March. This will be a Taizé style reflective service led by Louise Raffier.

Fan Heafield, Session Clerk
George Shand, Interim Moderator

Come And Meet Each Other at CAMEO

At time of writing, we have had an interesting and informative talk from Sue Briggs about the General Store and are looking forward to a visit from Hilary Bell and John Nichol.

On February 9, we are having a Beetle Drive, always a fun time. On February 23, John Irving and Sandy Smith will give us a musical afternoon, a bit of a sing-song. We have some new members and there is always room for more especially some more gentlemen. We meet twice monthly on Thursdays at 2pm in the church hall. You will be very welcome.



Marjorie Lawrie

Recycling at church

I have boxed up and sent away many kilos of crisp bags and biscuit wrappers since we joined the Terracycle (the 2 boxes in the hall) recycling scheme 4 years ago . So, well done, everyone who brought in recycling.

Good News! Terracycle has discontinued these collections!

How can that be good news? Because now we can take back to the supermarket packaging that previously went into general waste: crisp packets, biscuit wrappers and lots of other soft plastic. I think this is progress as the supermarkets will now be made more aware of the environmental cost of plastic packaging and will be making responsible steps in the right direction.

What packaging can we return to the Co-op and other supermarkets? Look online here: www.coop.co.uk/environment/soft-plastics/packaging-list or ask me for a list.

Anne Bethune

Thank
you!

Letters of encouragement

The Social Work department thanked us for the gifts delivered after our Gift Sunday. They were amazed at your generosity!

Donations given to Shelter, in lieu of Christmas cards within the congregation, amounted to £160. Thank you!

The cafe church service on 15th January was on the theme of encouragement, both giving and receiving, acting on Paul's *letter of encouragement* to the Ephesians. During the service, the letter of thanks from BGH for our gifts for folk in hospital over Christmas was read out:

"Your gifts provide just that extra, simple but much appreciated, joy in the midst of perhaps the most challenging experience some patients have ever known. Love and care can be offered with a fanfare or in the quietest, smallest gesture, one of the great paradoxes of our Christmas faith."

Be encouraged to do just that!

An oft told story

There was a huge storm last night. As I walked onto the beach a terrible sight, hundreds of starfish had been flung onto the sand by the giant waves. Across the bay was a small figure. As I drew closer, I saw it was a boy picking up a starfish and throwing it into the sea. Then he picked up another and threw it into the sea. He repeated this again and again.



“What do you think you are doing? You cannot make a difference. There are hundreds of starfish dying here. Your actions are insignificant. There are too many.”

The boy replied “I cannot make a difference for them all, but throwing this starfish back into the sea is very significant for this starfish.” With that, another starfish was flung into the waves to live on.

What could I do? I moved a few yards away, picked up a starfish and threw it into the ocean. Then I bent down and picked up another and threw it as far out as I could. I got into a rhythm as, one after another, I threw them back into the sea with a blessing “good luck”, “long life” or “God bless”.

After a while, I stopped to stretch and glance around. A dozen other people were spread round the bay throwing starfish into the sea. Someone was on her mobile phone. More people were approaching the sand.

Later the beach was full of people looking for starfish to rescue. Someone started to cheer. “We have done it!” “We have won!” “Hurray!” “Well done, everyone!” The shouts went round the beach as we all left.

Is there a moral in this for us?



If we do our little bits for the environment they might seem insignificant, but by picking up some litter we do make a difference to the bird or fish that isn't going to eat it. Others may join us in picking litter; others may stop dropping. our actions multiply and become locally and globally significant. Small changes in our lives can lead to changes in society and might even reduce climate chaos.

Jane Peers, Selkirk eco group



Eco-Congregation Scotland meets Fair Trade

Date for your diary: Monday 27th of February 7.30pm

Eco-Congregation Scotland is delighted to be partnering with the Scottish Fair Trade Forum for an event linking issues around climate change and Fair Trade. Fair Trade farmers and



workers are experiencing the impact of climate change on their livelihoods now. They are also leading the way with solutions that care for people and the planet.

Join us for an evening with Catherine Newman and Charles Sim of the Scottish Fair Trade Forum exploring how Fair Trade is linked to climate change and the environment. There will be discussion about what has been achieved by the Fair Trade movement through COP 26 and COP 27. Hear, too, from a producer about the challenges of droughts and flooding and how they adapt and care for the environment, as well as a case study from Dunscore Church, one of Eco-Congregation Scotland's Gold Award winners, who promote Fair Trade goods in their local area.

Booking open on the ECS website and on Eventbrite

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/514780581577>

Earth Hour March 25th 2023, 8.30 - 9.30 pm

*Deep in the darkness a starlight is gleaming,
Calling us out from the safety of home.
God of the questions, the mystery of dreaming,
Lighten our journey into the unknown.*

Join us for a time of reflection, music and prayer.

8.30 - 9.30 pm in the church hall.



Some Spring and Summer walks

Would you like to explore the Ettrick Marshes? What about a tour of the Haining grounds? Have you heard of Bright Green Nature at Deer Park?

The Eco group would like to offer some walks to enjoy the wonderful nature and wildlife we have on our doorsteps. Something to bring our linked congregations together. Details later.

Sunday Worship in Ashkirk and Selkirk

When	Where	Time	Led by
Feb. 5	Selkirk	9.30am	Rev. Scott Guy, hall
Feb. 12	Selkirk	9.30am	Cafe Style, David Bethune
Feb. 19	Selkirk	9.30am	Rev. Scott Guy, hall
Feb. 26	Selkirk	9.30am	Rev. Scott Guy, church
Mar. 5	Selkirk Ashkirk	9.30am 6pm	Rev. Scott Guy, hall Taize style, Louise Raffier
Mar. 12	Selkirk	9.30am	Rev. Scott Guy, hall
Mar. 19	Selkirk	9.30am	Rev. Scott Guy, Communion service in church
Mar. 26	Selkirk	9.30am	Elissa Jones, hall
April 2	Selkirk Ashkirk	9.30am 6pm	Rev. Scott Guy, church Palm Sunday, worship group
April 9	Selkirk	11am	Easter Day Rev. Scott Guy, church

It goes without saying that Ashkirk members are included in the invitation to worship in Selkirk and Selkirk members are invited to support the evening services in Ashkirk. As the rota is subject to change, please see weekly notices for updates.



ReachOut meeting together to share friendship and faith

The Advent study groups don't feel so long ago but we are already thinking about Lent groups. There will be 2 parallel groups meeting on Fridays at 10 am in the church hall and on Sundays at 7 pm at 5 Marion Crescent, beginning on Friday 24th February.

The Advent groups were well attended and appreciated as an opportunity "to build trust with different members of our own congregation and others". The material sourced is different each time, so the Lent group studies will be different in style from Advent. However, there are always some Bible verses

and a chance to listen to others and think about and/or discuss our own experience and faith.

Please consider coming along, especially if you have never attended a small group before. In meeting with others we meet with God, and that can only be enriching.

Check Selkirk weekly church notices for details. selkirkparish.church/worship-resources/

ReachOut group: Anne Bethune, Fan Heafield, Elissa Jones, Louise Raffier

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

A women-led, global, ecumenical movement



Friday 3rd March 2023
2pm
Our Lady and St Josephs

What do you know about Taiwan? An island about half the size of Scotland, lying between Japan and the Philippines, population 21.5 million. Women from Taiwan have prepared this year's World Day of Prayer service. The theme ***I have heard of your faith*** is based on the letter to the Ephesians and is an invitation to active listening, which is the ground of our prayers.

Come along to Connections on Friday 3rd March at 2pm to join in with others from all the churches in Selkirk.

The worship service shares the *letters of encouragement* sent to women who faced suffering and injustice. Their stories of faith contemplate issues that are shared by women and girls around the world and that continue to challenge us to prayerful action.



The indigenous artwork shared each year is always enlightening. *"The women in the painting are sitting by a stream, praying silently and looking up into the dark. Despite the uncertainty of the path ahead, they know that the salvation of Christ has come. Two endangered species are featured: the Mikado pheasant and the Black-faced Spoonbill, which are both of unique significance to the Taiwanese people."* You can read the full description on this year's artwork online: www.wdpscotland.org.uk/resources/

Wednesday Prayer Group

A group of Selkirk church members meets on Wednesdays on Zoom at 7 pm for an hour. The Zoom link is in the church notices every week so anyone can join in, regularly or occasionally. We pray, in silence or out loud, about the community and world topics listed in each week's notices and also pray individually for church members in a particular area. **You** are remembered in prayer at some point in the course of the year.

We also pray about topical events of concern and individual people (family, friends and neighbours) in any sort of need. If you would like prayer for yourself or someone else, just ask. Please join us - it is informal so come when you can and leave when you must.

Anne Bethune

Selkirk Diary dates

Every Monday 10.30 - 1 pm **Open Door, for coffee and lunch**
(Needles and Pins see below)



February (for Sunday services see page 12)

Thursday	2	7.30 pm	Forward in Faith: God in the world
Thursday	9	2 pm	CAMEO
Thursday	16	7.30 pm	Forward in Faith: The presence and absence of God
Tuesday	21	7 pm	Joint KS/CB followed by Congregational Board
Thursday	23	2 pm	CAMEO
Friday	24	10 am	Lent Study Group begins
Sunday	26	7 pm	Churches Together, Our Lady & St Josephs Lent Study Group begins

March

Thursday	2	7.30 pm	Forward in Faith: Spiritual practices
Friday	3	2 pm	World Day of Prayer, Our Lady & St Josephs
Tuesday	7	7pm	Kirk Session, Church Leadership Team
Thursday	9	2 pm	CAMEO
Thursday	16	2.30 pm	Service at The Bield
Thursday	23	2 pm	CAMEO
Saturday	25	10 am	Stated Annual Meeting

Needles and Pins



A new group has started to gather at Open Door on Mondays from 10 am to 11.30 am. It

was good to welcome a small number of new folks and "weel kent faces" on 9th January. Some brought half completed articles, others started from scratch on a knitted or crocheted square and some just chatted. It was convivial.

Coffees and home baking were available from 10.30 am in our warm welcoming hall. Lunches start from 12 for any who wanted to extend their visit. All welcome!

Myra Ward

Wednesday Worship

When	Led by
Feb. 1	Rev. Scott Guy, Communion
Feb. 8	Joanna Smith
Feb. 15	Gordon Junor
Feb. 22	David Taylor
March 1	David Bethune
March 8	Joanna Smith
March 15	Gordon Junor
March. 22	David Taylor
March. 29	David Bethune



Stay in touch

If you would prefer to read The Hird online, or would like to receive Selkirk Parish Church weekly notices by email, please contact the church office. Details on back page. Both also available at selkirkparish.church

Ettrick & Yarrow Church and Selkirk Parish Church can be found on Facebook.

@ettrickyarrowchurch
@Selkirkparishchurch



We welcome into membership of Selkirk Parish Church:

Maureen Franks, Croft House, Kilncroft
Alan Howlieson, 7 Davidson's Place, Galashiels
Rod Ward, 3 Deer Park
May you be blessed and continue to be a blessing to others.

Bereavements

2022

Selkirk

Nov. 11	Richard Heafield Denholm	Dec 18	Jim Jackson 21 Tylers Acre Avenue Edinburgh
Dec. 12	Jocky Linton Thornfield Care Home	25	Lindsay Henderson Millside, 4 The Tannery
14	Betty Wood 34 Raeburn Place	29	Bruce Jeffrey Smithy House, Lindean
16	Meta Elliott 2 Souter Court		

The records on this page are as up-to-date as possible. We apologise for any omissions that may have occurred.

Please note that opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the church or congregation.

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Sketches courtesy of John Hume, Scotland's Churches Trust

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Items for the **April** issue of The Hird should be with the editor by **19th March.**