

# The Hird

News for Ettrick & Yarrow and Selkirk & Ashkirk Parish Churches

## June 2026

Websites: [ettrickandyarrow.church](http://ettrickandyarrow.church)

[selkirkparish.church](http://selkirkparish.church)

Lord, you are here.  
Here in this moment,  
here in this place.  
Not yesterday, with its memories,  
Not tomorrow, with its promises,  
But here, now, today.  
This hour, this moment, this second.  
Present, near, alongside, within.  
Here and now.  
Amen



Minister: Rev. Dr. Kwame Ahaligah

Selkirk & Ashkirk SC 014883 Ettrick & Yarrow SC 034662

## Border Street Pastors Update

Borders Street Pastors have been operating lunchtime patrols in Hawick for the past two years. This has led to some great interactions between students from Hawick High School (HHS) who are in the town at lunchtime, and also with the management team of the school.

As these links developed, we have been exploring the possibility of School Pastors with HHS. School Pastors are basically Street Pastors, but operating in the school environment, using the same ethos of Listening, Caring and Helping. We are now at the stage of agreeing protocols and arranging training, which will take place in June, with the aim of launching after the summer holidays. Please remember the team at Borders Street Pastors and the teachers and students of HHS in your prayers as we develop this exciting project!

For more information see [scotland.ascensiontrust.org.uk/school-and-rail-pastors/](http://scotland.ascensiontrust.org.uk/school-and-rail-pastors/)

I will also be on the team of Street Pastors patrolling at Magnitude this year (3 patrols per day for the week). This is another calling for us as Street Pastors. So what is Magnitude.....

"Magnitude is a five-day annual Christian youth festival for young people aged 11-18. Based in Lendrick Muir, near Kinross, it is a week like no other: a space to encounter God, enjoy community and experience nature together. This gives an opportunity for young people to be captivated by the magnitude of who God is, then be transformed by encountering Him: a movement of 2500 young people, who go on to transform their churches & their communities."

18-22 July  
Lendrick Muir  
Find out more at: [magnitude.org.uk](http://magnitude.org.uk)

We would welcome your prayers for all the events in the Borders Street Pastors calendar.  
Thanks  
Fiona Corbett



May 2025

Dear Friends in Christ,

**“Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.” Psalm 127:1**

Over the past few months, a great deal of conversation, prayer, listening and planning has been taking place within Selkirk & Ashkirk Parish Church as we work on our Action Plan for the next five years. I want to sincerely thank everyone who has contributed in any way through meetings, discussions, ideas, encouragement, prayer and practical support.

Thanks go to our Session Clerks, David Bethune and Fiona Corbett, to all our working groups and leaders, and to Louise and the Growing Young team for helping us think carefully about the kind of church God is calling us to become. One thing that has encouraged me greatly is the positive spirit in which these conversations have taken place. There is a growing sense that God is not finished with us yet. Our Action Plan speaks about being a welcoming, encouraging and intergenerational church, a church that is growing in discipleship, outreach and prayer, a church open to new ideas while remaining deeply rooted in Christ. Those are exciting things. But perhaps the biggest thing we are learning is that renewal will not come simply by adding more programmes or activities. It will come as we return to the basics of the Christian life, prayer, Scripture, worship, hospitality and sharing our faith in Jesus with others.

In Acts 2, the early church devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer. From those simple foundations, God brought growth, transformation and witness. That is still true today. As we look ahead, we especially want to be a church where younger generations can belong, ask questions, encounter Jesus and grow in faith. At the same time, we deeply value the faithfulness, wisdom and commitment of those who have carried this church for many years.

In fact, if you have been part of church life for a long time, let me gently say this, the Lord still needs you. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, he chose to ride on a humble donkey. The owners may not have fully understood why it was needed, but the disciples simply said, “The Lord needs it.” (Luke 19:31). In the same way, your prayers, encouragement, presence, experience and willingness still matter greatly in the life of this church. “God uses ordinary people in extraordinary ways.”

So let us continue to pray. Let us continue to invite. Let us continue to encourage one another. And above all, let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ, who alone is the hope and future of the Church.

Blessings,  
Kwame



## **Come And Meet Each Other at CAMEO**

For our trip this year, we did not venture far but still had a very enjoyable afternoon. We started off at the Haining where Viv Ross and John Nichol gave us a guided tour of the work that has been done during the renovation. From the very modern kitchen to the beautiful rooms with gorgeous cornicing, it was a joy to see this old house being brought back into use. It is the result of a lot of hard work not only by the tradesmen but also by the trustees.

From the Haining, we made our way to the Fleece for afternoon tea where Hilary spoiled us with a delicious spread. Sandwiches, sausage rolls, scones, cakes and shortbread disappeared at some speed as we did need to replenish our energy after the walk round the Haining!!! The CAMEO ladies know a thing or two about afternoon teas and this was definitely one of the best.

My thanks to the car drivers who ensured that we did not have to walk too far. My thanks also to our hard-working committee for all their efforts over the last session. Many thanks too, to the Church for providing a warm and comfortable meeting place.

CAMEO will meet again at the end of September.

Marjorie Lawrie

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## **Join a Team**



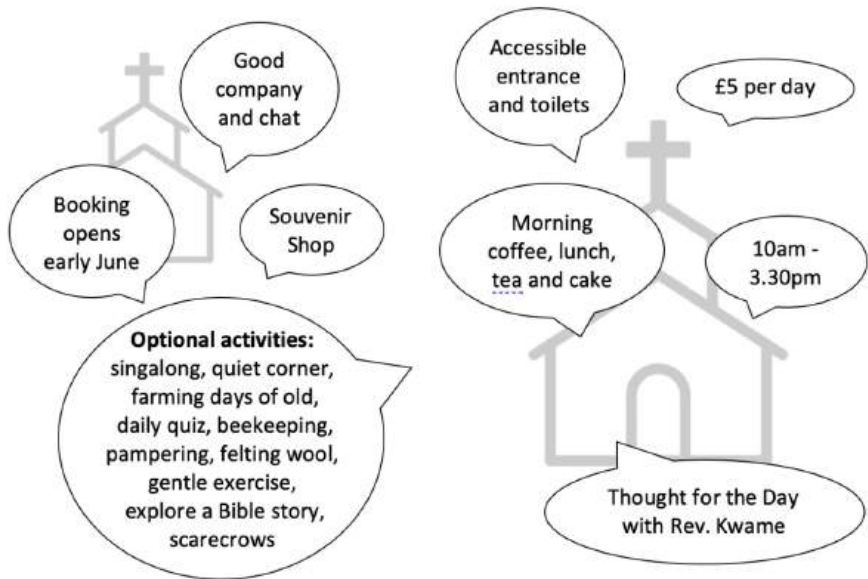
If you enjoy being welcomed into church and the cuppa and blether time after the service, why not join the Welcome and/or Coffee Teams? You will be teamed up with someone experienced and your turn doesn't come around too often - every 6 weeks or so.

Both are a lovely ministry to be part of and greatly appreciated by us all.

Contact Fiona Corbett for the Welcome Team and Anne Bethune for the Coffee Team.

## Holiday at Home: Down on the Farm

Selkirk Parish Church Hall Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> - Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July



Holiday at Home is open to anyone over 70 (ish) - no need to be a church member. Come along and bring a friend for 1, 2 or all 3 days of good company, good food, fun and games, and stories of life and faith. Booking Forms available from the church office (Wed - Fri, 10-12) or from any of the planning team.

### Any questions?

Here is the planning team:

Elma Hendrie, Isobel Oliver, Lee Watt, Gill Boyes, Myra Ward, Anne Bethune, Maisie Mackenzie, Fiona Corbett, Jane Peers, Heather Carroll



## News from the Valleys

Hello from the Valleys - and more importantly from outside the lambing shed!! When I last touched base with you, we were about to go into solitary confinement, aka the lambing shed! As farmers (or Scottish farmers!), on the whole we're a glass half empty breed; however, when asked about lambing, year after year, my husband is usually a little guarded and says "fine, could have been better, could have been worse", but this year it was great, apparently!!!

Can't decide if that was A) great weather B) great lambs/ewes (no major issues) or C) we didn't have the day 19 sleep deprivation argument!!!

Seriously, whether the combination of food/nutrients and minerals beforehand, the continual monitoring of ewes' well-being and just luck (being in the right place at the right time) to give a helping hand/set on a spare triplet/ give a wee top up to an extra hungry lamb or just old age/ experience but we seemed to have cracked it this year.

As I write this, I'm looking out the window watching the 2 sets of triplets we have, one as a trio of lovely, cute, woolly blackie lambs and the other has 2 identical lambs and a different third lamb!! It's what I call lamb Olympics - who told them how to frolic and chase around the obstacles in the field like their lives depended on it!!

Tomorrow sees a busy 5 mornings going through the ewes and lambs, post-delivery checkup for those of us in the know!! Ewes will be dosed for ticks etc and the lambs will get a squirt of preventative medication down their backs! After this week, the ewes and lambs will be left in good grass fields for a good few weeks and the ewes will be shorn in approximately 3-4 weeks! I'm sure I have said previously that we

farm according to the weather and seasons but after 5-6 weeks in the lambing shed with its regular routine (of sorts!), I really enjoy living in the "here and now", not having many plans set in stone!!

At this point in time, it's late Sunday evening (sorry, Anne!) and I'm sitting outside watching the sunset over both valleys! No phone/photos/videos just me, my mind and my eyes making memories!

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Whilst in the lambing shed, I still managed to hear that our Easter Services were “very emotional and sad, travelling with Jesus to the end”, “very uplifting”, “moving and reflective”, “those who didn’t attend missed Kwame at his best”! I’m sorry I couldn’t attend but our Pentecost Service was outstanding, a hugely motivating and uplifting service for our church birthdays! We should have all worn red!!

On Sunday 7th June, we are celebrating Holy Communion at 11.30 am (refreshments from 11am) in Kirkhope Church. A warm welcome is always extended to our wider church family.

For accurate information about our regular services please check our Facebook page and the information below. The Blanket Preaching is on Sunday 26th July at 3pm in St Mary’s Kirkyard, Yarrow - please spread the word about this deeply moving and atmospheric service to all who haven’t been before (oh, and the legendary afternoon teas!).



Susan White

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## Worship in the Valleys

| When    | Where                               | Time    |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| June 7  | Kirkhope, Communion                 | 11.30am |
| June 14 | Ettrick                             | 12 noon |
| June 21 | Yarrow                              | 11.30am |
| June 28 | Kirkhope                            | 11.30am |
| July 5  | Yarrow                              | 11.30am |
| July 12 | Kirkhope                            | 11.30am |
| July 19 | Ettrick                             | 12 noon |
| July 26 | Blanket Preaching                   | 3pm     |
| Aug. 2  | Yarrow                              | 11.30am |
| Aug. 9  | Kirkhope                            | 11.30am |
| Aug. 16 | Yarrow                              | 11.30am |
| Aug. 23 | Ettrick                             | 12 noon |
| Aug. 30 | Selkirk, joint service<br>Communion | 11am    |

## Dear Friends,

With God's will and a great deal of work and prayer from us all, our church/your church is going to be transformed into a modern twenty-first century building: open, welcoming and multifaceted, versatile, adaptable and flexible.

But: it has a history which deserves to be recognised and respected.

With this in mind and while there is a period of pause, we, the Kirk Session, would seek your co-operation and commitment to keeping that history, both physical and personal, alive.

1. We would ask each and every one of you to look closely around the church, both upstairs and down to see if there are any artefacts to which you can lay claim, or know of a person or family that may be entitled to them. They may be able to add some provenance or history for our records, even if not wanted as a keepsake or souvenir.



2. You will all have memories, recollections, reminiscences of your time in the church, be it at the times of amalgamation or more recently. We want to hear all about your time "in the pews" and with your permission record the conversations to help keep history alive as we stride into the future.

With thanks,  
Colin MacIntosh, on behalf of the Kirk Session

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### Prayer

O God of the mess and the message,  
Thank you that you bring order out of chaos,  
And that you bring good news where there is despair.  
May you meet us afresh  
As we worship you in creative ways,  
welcome people with extravagant hospitality,  
celebrate your presence with joyful participation,  
and value every generation with equal enthusiasm.  
Amen

## The Bible? What does it have to say to us nowadays?



*'It's hard to understand and boring, isn't it?' 'How is it relevant to me?'* These are the kinds of comments you might hear if you ask around and things we sometimes feel ourselves, if we are honest.

**But ....**

In the Spring, over 30 of us, a real mixed bag of folk, with a range of opinions and knowledge, signed up for the Bible Society Bible Course: *"Explore God's Story One Step at A Time. The Bible Course is an 8-session small group resource with video teaching, discussion, and a reading plan to help you navigate and apply the Bible to life"*.

Feedback indicated that for almost all of us the course was a big success! It was delightful to learn how much it was appreciated. We had a daytime group in the church hall and an evening one in a home. We watched the video together each week when our expert guide and teacher, Andrew Ollerton (and his knowledgeable helpers), took us on a "fly over" Bible journey, Genesis to Revelation. We learned so much that helped us appreciate this amazing collection of books, their historical context and the highlights of God's guidance and work in and through people just like us. And how everything led up to Jesus coming. It really connected us with the roots of our Christian faith. We also heard contemporary personal stories of transformed lives as folk shared what God has done for them. **This is not just history, this is real now!** And there was plenty of background reading and short video clips available between weekly sessions. We were encouraged to read the Bible for ourselves, with help, every day.

It was a very positive experience and if you considered attending but couldn't, do sign up next time. You won't be disappointed and will have greater confidence in Scripture and a deepened faith, or for some a new start in reading the Bible and following Jesus.

Myra Ward

## A page of prayers

### A morning prayer

Thank you, Lord  
for the gift of this new day  
and for the opportunities that lie before us.  
May our conversations this day  
be life-giving;  
may our decisions this day  
be life-enhancing;  
and may our thoughts this day  
be life-affirming.  
Amen

God of all creation,  
God of decision-makers and dung beetles,  
God of MSPs and midges,  
we can feel very small in the world around us.  
We can feel silent as the adults shout:  
about wars and power and rights and responsibilities.  
But we have lots of thoughts:  
about food and poverty and peace and climate.  
We have lots of feelings:  
about fairness and kindness and love and dignity.  
Show us how we can act fairly for your world.  
Show us how we can love well in your world.  
Show us how we can walk alongside all sorts of people,  
for the good of your world.  
Amen.

### A prayer about Prayer

Thank you, Lord,  
when our prayers are answered in ways  
we don't expect or understand;  
when our prayers are often answered beyond our time,  
in ways we don't need to know about;  
and when our prayers are answered secretly and silently  
in ways we may never hear about.  
Lord, we trust you to answer our prayers,  
Amen.

## Growing Younger

We recently had a Saturday morning conference around the 'Growing Young' initiative and our vision for the future. Peter Wood, our Presbytery mission officer, helped us playfully look at the reality of our current demographic and the need to shift more of our focus and culture towards reaching out to under 50s. We were encouraged to especially listen to younger voices and try out new things.

2 new things we are hoping to try are:

- a few relaxed church events aimed at telling seekers more about our Christian faith and life.
- creating short video Instagram reels explaining what church is and why our church community follows Jesus.

Louise Raffier,  
and the GY team

**GROWING  
YOUNG**

## What do you like to read?

### Check out the church library

My favourite read is a human story telling people's experiences, thoughts and actions; so my favourite Christian books tend to be about how people came to know Jesus or grew in their faith. One such book is "Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus" by Nabeel Quresh. In following Nabeel's search for who is God - the God of the Bible or Allah as taught by his family and the Quran - the reader sees the wonder of God being born as a normal, human baby, going through the normal life of an ordinary person, horrific criminal death and an impossible resurrection.

If this book is not for you, please search our church library for a book you do enjoy. There is a wide variety of books because, thankfully, we are all different.

Jane Peers

Come, Spirit, come,  
Help me to worship the Father,  
And see the Son.  
Come, kingdom of God, come,  
Help me to receive the Spirit,  
And follow the Son.  
Come, Lord Jesus, come,  
Help me to be filled with the Spirit  
And to glorify the three-in-one.  
Amen



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## Churches Together in Selkirk and the Valleys

Quote from the recent Churches Together meeting: "We are blessed to have such a rich diversity of leaders in our churches in Selkirk". Blessed indeed with Lesley at St. John's, Father Benedict at Our Lady & St. Joseph's, Jaaziel at Selkirk Baptist and our own Kwame.

Fiona Corbett and Joanna Smith described the simple services that they lead in our Care Homes, using well-known songs with actions, short Bible stories and plenty of relaxed chat before and after.

We reflected on our joint short times of reflection on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, hosted by St. John's, and resolved to do something similar next year, probably in our own church building.

Various ideas were discussed for events in the coming months, including:

- Prayers for Scripture Union in the Borders, on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 7pm, at Connections
- A talk and discussion on "AI and you" on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June, 7.30pm at St. John's (booking required, cost £3)
- Songs of Praise and cups of tea, on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June, 3pm at St. John's, developing from their Memory Cafe
- Churches Together in Prayer and Worship, on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July at 7pm in Connections, when we hope folk from every congregation will join together to share in worship

Watch out in the notices for confirmation of these dates and times.

We also noted that the Foodbank is looking for new low-cost premises, so if you have any suggestions, please let us know.

### **A postcard from The Northern Cross pilgrims**

*"Thank you so much for inviting us into your home." "Thank you for the delicious breakfast and good conversation." "The hot shower and comfortable bed were greatly appreciated." "I often find I experience God through interactions with people and I definitely found that with you." "Sorry I was so tired from the walk that I couldn't stay up to chat."*

Well done to all those from **Churches Together in Selkirk and the Valleys** who were involved: meeting the Pilgrims from the Three Brethren, cooking the delicious meal, offering B&B or joining them to cross the sands to Holy Island on Good Friday.

## Christian Aid Week 2026 - Thank You

Thank you for your support in Christian Aid Week this year. Selkirk & Ashkirk Parish Church donated £212.15 plus £22.50 Gift Aid plus any amounts paid on-line. The street collection on Friday morning raised £138.26.

How will Christian Aid use this money? Christian Aid aim to end poverty and injustice worldwide by focusing on key areas which involve working in partnership with local organisations, as well as with governments and the private sector.

Christian Aid's work includes helping people to:

- claim their rights and access services such as healthcare and education
- ensure they are not discriminated against for any reason
- become more resilient to disasters such as drought, climate change and hurricanes
- make the most of opportunities, such as being able to sell their produce for a fair price.

You can learn more about this at [www.christianaid.org.uk/our-work/what-we-do](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/our-work/what-we-do)

Last year, Christian Aid reached 4.1m people directly (of whom 57% were women and girls); and 12.4m indirectly, from the following countries and regions:

**Asia:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar.

**Africa:** Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, South Africa,

Burkina Faso (incl. watching brief Mali), Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Sierra Leone.

**Middle East:** Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel and occupied Palestinian territory.

**Latin America and Caribbean Region:** Haiti/Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras.

**Europe:** Ukraine, Romania.

Christian Aid grew out of British service personnel returning home after WWII and insisting that German civilians and displaced people were starving and needed immediate help. I know this to be true: the mother of a family known to my family died of starvation; her husband and sons survived.

Christian Aid works in various ways: supporting projects to grow communities sustainably out of poverty; combining experienced help with local knowledge when there is a natural emergency or war; campaigning locally, nationally and internationally on climate change and injustice.

Our gifts of money further this work as an act of Christian love. We can do more by joining in the campaigns and by praying for the work; we are part of a worldwide church and have neighbours in need across the world who are loved by Jesus.

Jane Peers,  
Christian Aid rep



## Selkirk and Ashkirk Kirk Session (church leadership team)

### Notes from April meeting:

- The mobile library is now in action with a wide selection of books to borrow.
- The position of Safeguarding Coordinator is still vacant.
- Elders were reminded to update their safeguarding training.
- The Growing Young team are investigating our social media presence.
- The GY team will be invited to attend church leadership meetings.
- We continued to refine the five-year Action Plan.
- Short reports were given by various working groups.
- Charlotte Paterson is now the Gift Aid convener.
- We are grateful to Ettrick Kirk for changing the time of their service to 12 noon to allow Kwame to lead services both in Selkirk and in Ettrick Kirk.

The next meeting of the Leadership Team is on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 7pm in the church hall. Full minutes available on the church website once agreed at the following meeting.

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### Building the Future update



We had a site visit from representatives of the General Trustees and Presbytery on 30<sup>th</sup> April. Frustratingly, they have requested more detailed plans and costings before giving us permission to move forward. That means instructing our architect to do further work, so we have requested “permission in principle” which we

hope they will give after their meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> May. If that is given, in the meantime we can make some minor changes in the church to make it a more suitable space for our Encounter services.

Over the summer, our architect will undertake the necessary further work, along with a structural engineer and a quantity surveyor, so that we have the information requested for the General Trustees’ August meeting. So slow! But our vision remains, and we pray that the General Trustees will give us their full blessing (and a substantial grant) in due course.

David Bethune



The recent Coffee Morning and plant sale raised £800 (to date) for the Development Fund. Many thanks to Lynda and the fundraising team for all their hard work - and to everyone who came and bought and enjoyed delicious home baking, and a good blether.

Adding to this total is £70 from the sale of 2 bentwood chairs which came from Ashkirk Church.

## Sunday Worship in Selkirk

Our Sunday morning services continue at 9.30 am, with one exception: 30<sup>th</sup> August (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday), a joint service in Selkirk at 11am with Communion. Services are held mostly in the hall, using the church sanctuary once a month or so. 7<sup>th</sup> June will be a Communion service. 14<sup>th</sup> June, 12<sup>th</sup> July and 9<sup>th</sup> August will be café church, either led by Kwame or the worship team. Café church begins with refreshments and chatting around tables. There is usually a discussion or activity as part of the worship. Kwame is on holiday for 2 weeks in August when the worship team will be leading.

Encounter, contemporary worship, continues on the first Sunday of the month at 6pm. We do appreciate the input of different musicians and singers to lead the worship.



### A 4<sup>th</sup> Century prayer

O Lord our God,  
steer the ship of our lives to yourself,  
the quiet harbour of all storm-tossed souls.  
Show us the course we are to take.  
Renew in us the Spirit of docility.  
Let your spirit curb our fickleness.  
Guide and strengthen us to perform what is for our own good,  
to keep your commandments  
and ever to rejoice in your glorious and vivifying presence.  
Yours is the glory and praise throughout eternity.

*Basil the Great - early Christian prelate, serving about 370-380 in Cappadocia, opposer of heresies and supporter of the Nicene Creed.*



## The Selkirk Wednesday Service

Are you an early riser with “get up and go” or a more relaxed morning person? If the latter, then our service on Wednesdays at 11am in the hall would be perfect for you. Coffee/ tea and chat from 10.30am, short 30 minute service and we remain seated for the hymns. You will be made most welcome to come and catch up with friends and enjoy fellowship together. The service on 10<sup>th</sup> June will include Communion.

We are grateful to have a regular team of different people willing to lead the services.

Fiona Holmes

## Wednesdays

| When    | Led by                  |
|---------|-------------------------|
| June 3  | Jane Peers              |
| June 10 | Rev. Kwame<br>Communion |
| June 17 | Gordon Junor            |
| June 24 | Rev. Kwame              |
| July 1  | Joanna Smith            |

| When    | Led by        |
|---------|---------------|
| July 8  | Rev. Kwame    |
| July 15 | David Bethune |
| July 22 | Rev. Kwame    |
| July 29 | Jane Peers    |

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## Church Garden Team

During the growing season, most Thursday afternoons the garden team can be found tidying up the church grounds. We would welcome your help.

If you can wield a hoe or snip with secateurs, you have enough skills to join us! If you prefer to help in your own time that would also be welcomed. You can be assigned a patch to look after or join with others on a Thursday afternoon. There are tools available or you can bring your own favourites.



Please let Andrew Laing know if you can help. 01750 21210 or 07787 627723

## Of Saints and Sinners

A few weeks ago I came across an article on *Jesús Malverde*, (1870-1909), a Mexican bandit; a moustachioed Robin Hood. Regarded as a saint in much of Mexico, (though yet to be officially recognised as such elsewhere), he has a shrine and miracles attributed to him. In both the United States and Mexico you can buy statuettes, soap bars, oils, candles or mass produced paintings. He's a popular guy!



*Jesús Malverde* has 2 titles: firstly he is the “Patron Saint of the Poor”: not surprising as there are millions of those in Mexico; exactly the demographic that any would-be saint **should** be supporting. The poor, after all, are generally victims of circumstance, born into cycles of poverty and exploited by political systems controlled by the rich and powerful. They are often hampered by ill health and poor living conditions. Most of us would reckon they **deserve** a Patron saint; so no problem for me there.

But; (and it seemed at first a big “but”), *Jesús’s full* title is “Patron Saint of the Poor and Drug Traffickers”. Well, I had to read **that** twice! How could those two titles go together? With the exception of disadvantaged adolescents trapped into County Lines, drug traffickers are right up there amongst my “lowest of the low”. They make money out of others’ weakness, and ruin lives in order to line their own pockets. They are responsible for millions of premature deaths worldwide each year. Surely they don’t deserve a Patron Saint? Suddenly, I didn’t feel such a fan of *Jesús Malverde* anymore.

Then I thought: “Hang on: Jesus Christ Himself was criticised by the Pharisees and co. for being a “friend of sinners”. Why? Because He was. And then I also remembered His invitation to the crowd to “cast the first stone”. I could imagine Him placing a pebble in my hand, pointing to some drug lord, and inviting me to throw it.

But only if I am “without sin”. Before becoming all self-righteous and throwing my pebble, Jesus invites me to rediscover my own shame: shame for actions and attitudes that have been, and continue to be part of my own life. This is a truth I discovered years ago: shame is a great gift to me because it prevents me from being quick to pass judgement on others and think myself better than them.

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If you look up “patron saints”, you will find there is one for all kinds of professions, medical conditions, forms of exploitation, but surprisingly few for people we might ordinarily consider to be “sinners”. St. Nicholas, (he of Santa Claus fame), prays for thieves and prostitutes, (who are often victims of circumstance anyway), and St. Thomas More covers politicians. On the other hand, slave owners, tyrants, and various abusers seem to be entirely without a saintly advocate.

Well, perhaps they need one too. I may not push drugs, crush the poor or scam the vulnerable out of their life savings, but I still need my advocate in Heaven to plead my cause on those many occasions when I fail (1 John 2:1). And since there is joy in Heaven over **any** sinner that repents, we should exclude nobody as deserving of Christ’s grace.

So let’s hear it for *Jesús Malverde*: Patron Saint of The Poor, and Patron Saint of Drug Traffickers. What a great title after all!

Rod Ward

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## General Assembly 2026

The new Moderator of the General Assembly for the church of Scotland is the Very Reverend Gordon Kennedy. He chose as his theme “Walk in the ways of God” and Jesus said, “Follow me” from Deuteronomy 5 and John 12 respectively.

The assembly was well attended but as it has been reduced to 4 days it felt very rushed and intense. There were several highlights such as the apology for Slavery and the part Scotland played in the trade and the benefits that we have gained from the trade such as buildings and our own wealth from sugar cane, jute, tobacco, cotton and many other products. The benefits may seem indirect but are a direct result of the slave trade. Another highlight was the report into the decline in church attendance and where to go to reverse this situation. The Assembly Trustees also made an official request that we inform them of duplication or outdated bureaucratic / administrative tasks and they will look to change and remove them.

A considerable amount of time was given to income protection and capability of ministers as well as a new system of training ministers.

As always it was a really good opportunity to catch up with friends and to share ideas informally. All in all it is a rewarding experience – though very, very tiring.



## Selkirk & Ashkirk Diary dates

For Sunday and Wednesday services,  
see pages 15 & 16.

### Every Monday

10.00 - 11.30am Needles and Pins

10.30 - 2pm Open Door, for coffee and lunch

**Every Wednesday** 7pm Prayer Group on zoom. The link is in the weekly notices.

### June

Sunday 7 9.30am Communion service

Wed. 24 7.30pm "Al and you", St John's (see page 18)

Friday 26 11am Service at Riverside Nursing Home

Tues. 30 7pm Church Leadership meeting

### July

Fri. 3 7pm Prayer and Worship, Connections (see page 18)

Wed. 8 - Fri. 10 10am-3.30pm Holiday at Home (see page 5)

Sunday 26 3pm Blanket Preaching, St Mary's Kirkyard

### August

### September

Mon. 21 - Sun. 4 Oct.

Fairtrade Fortnight

Sunday 27 1pm

Churches Together lunch

2pm

Churches Together AGM, Connections

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## Stay in touch

If you would prefer to read The Hird online, or would like to receive Selkirk & Ashkirk Parish Church weekly notices by email, please contact the church office. Details on back page. Both are also available at [selkirkparish.church](http://selkirkparish.church)

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

@ettrickyarrowchurch



## Ettrick & Yarrow, Selkirk & Ashkirk

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**Treasurer:** Nora Hunter



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*Sketches courtesy of John Hume, Scotland's Churches Trust*

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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.

Items for the **September** issue of The Hird should be with the editor by **6th September**.