

The Hird

News for Ettrick & Yarrow and Selkirk & Ashkirk Parish Churches

September 2026

Websites: ettrickandyarrow.church

selkirkparish.church



Minister: Rev. Dr. Kwame Ahaligah

Selkirk & Ashkirk SC 014883 Ettrick & Yarrow SC 034662

Fairtrade Fortnight: 21st September - 4th October

As a church, we believe in Fairtrade and we have a commitment to using Fairtrade tea and coffee on our premises. Some of us also use Fairtrade products at home. The local Coop stocks Fairtrade tea, coffee, chocolate, cocoa, sugar, bananas, tomatoes, wine, flowers and charcoal - can you spot anything else?

Another source of Fairtrade products, if you shop online, is Ethical Superstore, and of course, the Traidcraft Christmas cards we like to buy.

Whatever you do, however you do it: do it fair.

For People. For Planet. For the Future.

**Behind every
product is a
person.**



**Fairness
shouldn't be
optional.**



**Choose
Fairtrade.**

Whatever you do, however
you do it: Do it fair

September 2026

Dear Friends,

Thank you for asking me to write something for this issue of 'The Hird'. I'm acting as Interim Moderator at Selkirk and Ashkirk linked with Ettrick and Yarrow while Kwame is off. I have really enjoyed getting to know you a bit when I have come to take a couple of services and be at a Session Meeting. Thank you for all that you do as part of the church family here.

As some of you know, Kwame has been signed off until 30th September. When a minister is on Sick Leave they are looked after by the Church of Scotland's Ministries Support Team. That means they get the help, advice and support they need – but it's a step removed from the congregation and Presbytery. When there are updates, they let me know in my role as Presbytery Clerk, and I will be sure to pass any news on to you as soon as I get it. In the meantime, I know that you will keep Kwame and the family in your love and prayers and that you will continue to care for one another.

I started as Presbytery Clerk on 1st June and I have enjoyed getting to know the people and places of the area. I have been very struck by the energy and warmth of the congregation here. I give thanks to God for you all and pray that God will bless and keep you.

May God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.'
(Philippians 1:2)

With best wishes,
Dan Carmichael

Prayer

Come, Lord God,
and by your Spirit in us
do a work of grace that
goes deep,
lasts long,
and overflows through us
in service and praise
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen



Come And Meet Each Other at CAMEO

I can hardly believe it is now September already. I hope you have had a good summer. CAMEO will start again on September 24th in the Church hall at 2pm. We are delighted that the Golden Girls from Hawick will be coming to entertain us. Please remember to bring a cup or mug for your cup of tea. The subs are £3 and donations for the prize draw are always welcome.

New members are very welcome, so if you have a friend or neighbour who is interested, bring them along.

We are looking forward to seeing you all again.

Marjorie Lawrie

Future Dates

October 8th: Gala Musicians

October 22nd: Games Afternoon

November 12th: Keeping fit and healthy

November 26th: Mac, John and Miller



Thank you for all your support for my Mighty Hike for Macmillan Cancer Support. On the morning the weather was fine in Selkirk, but between Alnwick and Craster the showers were frequently heavy and persistent. Despite

becoming very wet and aching, Eleanor and I enjoyed the walk. Your generosity raised £1251 + Gift Aid for this tremendous charity.

Jane Peers

Selkirk & Ashkirk Church fundraiser and social

***Saturday 17th October
6.30 - 8.30pm***

*Details in church notices or
from Iona MacNeill, Charlotte
Paterson or Louise Raffier*





Holiday at Home: Down on the Farm

We had a great time at the beginning of July **Down on the Farm**, with 30 volunteers making the 3 days such a fun, safe and thought-provoking holiday for our 52 guests. Each Thought for the Day was based around Bible verses on the theme of grapevines and the hall was decorated with very varied farming scenes.

Special guests for the workshops included Rosemary and Tim from Synton Farm, Angus the beekeeper, Joanna with wool felting, Susan from Ettrick, Sheila with the parachute for some gentle exercise, Amy leading interactive Bible studies also on the farming theme and Lewis from Selkirk High School.

All the activities, choices and games were hands-on and participative, allowing plenty of time for chatting, laughing, reminiscing and asking questions of our guests. As always, the sing-a-long was very popular and we all enjoyed Rod's version of "Oh, what a beautiful morning". The wonderful kitchen team, headed up by Gill, served morning coffee, 2 course lunch and an afternoon cuppa and cake. It is a pleasure eating together when you live alone. Each day finished with one of the team sharing a personal story of faith with a farming link, before we all sang the Northumberland blessing.

Our aim was for everyone to go home, their spirits lifted by shared food and fun and with faith strengthened. We give thanks to God for our 3 days together,

The photos on the church website will give you a flavour of the fun we had.
selkirkparish.church/news/

Holiday at Home team (Anne Bethune, Gill Boyes, Fiona Corbett, Elma Hendrie, Maisie Mackenzie, Isobel Oliver, Jane Peers, Myra Ward, Lee Watt)

Prayer

O Lord, help us to think the best of others,
to hope the best for others,
to believe the best about others,
and to see the best in others.

Grow in us these positive aspirations
as we long for all things
to be the best they can be
for your name's sake

Amen

News from the Valleys

Hello from the Valleys!

July and August have been so busy on the farm, the weather has been consistently good for us, so much so, we are very ahead in terms of harvest and working the land. For the first time in a very long time, we have the silage pit full (winter fodder for both cows and sheep), the barley has been harvested for 3 weeks and all our hay and straw is under cover, all by the second week in August, unheard of! The summer birds have been incredibly lucky in getting their own harvest before they migrate as we are usually still harvesting when they head South.

Today after Church we brought the lambs from our neighbouring farm along to weigh. Despite there being a lack of rain this summer, we have the most lambs ready to sell (some have already gone) that we have ever had. There's only a handful left to come and eat the grass here at Middlestead, the "wetter" of the farms, meaning better nutritious grass, which in turn means that the lambs gain weight more quickly.

Mr W has been AWOL this last week in the lorry, hauling livestock for other farmers, either to markets in the Central Belt or to winter grazing further afield. Unlike us, a lot of farmers have been struggling with grazing and are looking for grazing elsewhere a bit earlier than normal (usually in October). Everything isn't rosy with us though as we've had no water in the steading or water troughs along the road at our other farm since the beginning of June! We moved the cows and most of the sheep along to us, as we are the "wetter" farm, only for the water troughs to dry up here!!! First we knew of it was an observant driver noticing a herd of cows "on the rampage" across the top of our hills heading to Hartwoodmyres top cattle grid (top of the road that links Ashkirk and Ettrick Valley!). So after the rodeo, alternating days have been spent carrying water in 1000 litre IBC's!! S-o-o-o time consuming but very, very necessary!! The Middlestead holding tank has had a very good clean out whilst dry, although the water situation at Hartwoodburn is a very different story! And that's for another day!!

Away from the farm I had a first!! A public information engagement!!! I was asked in a weak moment (joking Anne/Myra!) if I would come and talk to a group at



Selkirk's Holiday At Home!! I will admit to nerves for a few days beforehand but put my big girl pants on and off I wentit was fantastic to meet and hear everyone's memories of farming in the "good old days ". I thoroughly enjoyed it and overcame the nerves, went to bed thinking, "Oh I forgot to show them this and I forgot to ask about their memories of that" I felt very privileged to witness the care, compassion and kindness of the organisers of the whole event: you were fabulous and went the extra mile..... God's work in the Community at its best!

We had inclement weather on Sunday 26th July when we had our annual Blanket Preaching with the Rev Jim Wallace leading the service. Two very thought provoking questions "Was their sacrifice worth it ?" referring to the Covenanters, and "Would we make the same sacrifice today?" Many thanks to Andy Wright for the PA and music system and to the remarkably diligent folks who attend this service regardless of the weather!! The setting, psalms and Jim's address meant there was a lot to reflect and celebrate. It is available to watch on www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX0hYd4EEzc but without the delicious afternoon teas which were available in the Cappercleuch Hall by our very small and incredibly able team of Church Ladies.

Just now can I ask everyone to be vigilant about the whereabouts of our weekly services, for the next couple of weeks, via our churches Facebook page, the Ettrick & Yarrow Valleys Facebook page or sign up for our Monday newsletter at ettrickandyarrow@gmail.com.

Susan White

Worship in the Valleys

When	Where	Time
Sept. 13	Yarrow	11.30am
Sept. 20	Ettrick	12 noon
Sept. 27	Kirkhope	11.30am
Oct. 4	Yarrow	11.30am

Sunday Worship in Selkirk

Our Sunday morning services continue at 9.30 am, with the exception of 29th November (5th Sunday), a joint service in Selkirk at 11am, and also on the last Sunday in the year, 27th December at 11am. Services are held mostly in the hall, using the church sanctuary usually the first Sunday in the month. 11th October and 15th November will be café church - beginning with refreshments and chatting around tables. There is usually a discussion or activity as part of the worship.

We are very grateful to all the people who have led worship over the last couple of months in Kwame's absence: Rev Geoff Hewitt, Jane Peers, Tracy Brown, Gordon Junor, Rev. Donald Scott, Rev. Dan Carmichael, David Bethune.

Thank you!

Encounter, contemporary worship, continues on the first Sunday of the month at 6pm, see page 9.

Open Door

Every Monday: Coffee 10.30am-11.30am, Lunch 12 noon-1pm.



We are all missing Myra at Open Door and hope she is recovering well and enjoying her holiday even though her wrist is in plaster following a fall. The last few weeks at Open Door have been very busy for coffee and we have had steady numbers for lunch.

With Autumn fast approaching, we welcome you to come along to **Needles and Pins** from 10am, join in playing **Rummikub** or **Dominoes** or perhaps just come to enjoy the warm, friendly atmosphere and good food at coffee and lunchtime.

The Open Door Team look forward to welcoming you.

Isobel Oliver

PS Please remember there is always space for new volunteers on the team: a great place to serve the church and community and make new friends. You do not have to be a church member to be a volunteer. Your time commitment might be every week or once a month to suit you and there are different roles available eg serving coffee, preparing food, using the dishwasher, serving lunches - or, if you are very gracious, clearing slops!

Encounter

From August 2025, Selkirk & Ashkirk Parish Church decided to trial a more contemporary evening service on the first Sunday of every month. A few of us musicians formed a group and along with some lovely singers, we started to learn some new songs and stretch our abilities. We did not know how the service would be received and how many people would come the first evening, but we did feel that the Lord was calling us to start this service, and we trusted Him for what was to come.



In August 2026, we celebrated the first anniversary of the Encounter service and we are so grateful for the support we have received. We trusted in the verse from Isaiah 43:19, when it says, *“Behold, I am doing a new thing: now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”*

There has been a great response from members of the congregation and support from other churches. Seeing how God brings people through the doors who may not have been before has been amazing. Kenny Scott works really hard arranging new speakers and choosing music for each month and the group are dedicated to coming to practices and putting in the work, in order to be able to lead the worship.

There is a saying taken from the movie Field of Dreams: *“Build it and he will come!”* God is bringing together gifts and talents from willing servants and creating something new through this service. So, with Him, we are building and trusting that not only will the Spirit come, but that God will bring through the doors the people that He wants us as a church to minister to.

The service style is a lot more fluid, in that there is more modern worship sung and instead of a structured sermon, there is time for the sharing of testimonies, creative lessons on faith and sharing in prayer for others. The wonderful sense of community already felt in this church is continued in this service as people meet and greet over tea and coffee at the end and just commune with each other.

We trust that through this service, God will indeed make a way in the wilderness experiences that we all go through, and that the people who come through the doors will be blessed along with each member of the worship group. Together we wait on the Lord to do a new thing and we trust Him to continue to grow our church.

If you are curious and have not experienced the Encounter service as yet, please feel free to come and join us on the first Sunday of every month at 6 pm. You are all most welcome and we look forward to seeing you there.

Growing Younger (GY)

On Saturday 29th August, Alan Paterson and I spent the day at Wester Hailes Parish Church for the 4th GY summit.

Surrounded by members from churches around central and southern Scotland, we were further supported in our 2 year journey of the GY project: to support church communities to shift their church culture towards engaging with and reaching out to under 50s.

We looked at the church growth and mission model of author Rich Robinson, who lives in Edinburgh, and discussed how Jesus equipped and supported his disciples to go out with the Kingdom message.

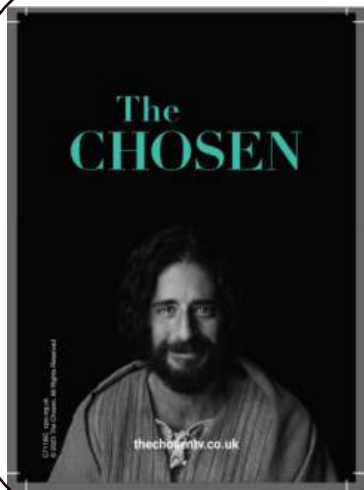


This Autumn we hope to make progress with our idea to use Instagram (the place younger people's attention is) to explain what our church is and promote our activities. We also hope to continue to listen to people in our community and better understand the barriers that may be stopping them coming to our church or engaging with the Christian message.

Pray for us and please consider joining us.
Louise, (Alan, Jane and Annabel)

Prayer

Loving God,
when our everyday lives seem too much to bear,
and our personal circumstances threaten
to overwhelm us,
Reach out your hand to rescue us
and set us on the solid ground of your love
once again.
Amen



Film series: Episode 1
Thursday 17th September 7.30pm
at 3 Deer Park

or
Friday 18th September, 2pm
in Selkirk Parish Church hall

You're invited!

A historical drama based on the life of Jesus. Come along and bring a friend.
 Film, refreshments and optional discussion.

The Bible come to life!

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.

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

Fiona Holmes

Wednesdays

When	Led by
Sept. 16	Joanna Smith
Sept. 23	Gordon Junor
Sept. 30	David Taylor
Oct. 7	David Bethune

When	Led by
Oct. 14	Jane Peers
Oct. 21	Joanna Smith
Oct. 28	David Bethune
Nov. 4	Gordon Junor

Selkirk & Ashkirk Church Giving 2026

It is now time to organise next year's WFO envelopes, so it will be very helpful to know of any additions/changes. For both new and old members, this provides a good opportunity to reflect on our personal level of giving and the method we use.

If you do not already use envelopes but wish to do so, or, alternatively, if you no longer wish to use them, please let Lynda McCraw (tel. 21971) or the office know by mid October. Similarly, please contact me if you wish to set up a bankers' order for details of the church account. If you are a tax payer and have not yet signed a Gift aid Form, please consider doing so, to enable the church to reclaim tax on your offerings at no extra cost to you. Forms are available from the Office, or Charlotte Paterson (Gift Aid Convenor).

Lynda McCraw, Treasurer

Fundraising

It is a monumental task
and it is of you we have to ask
when we require to raise
a lot of money through various ways.

We need your help in what we do,
it is the members who,
with the help of some good friends,
bring to our sales their odds and ends.

We have 2 fundraising events arranged
for the Autumn, the first being a
Coffee Morning on Friday 2nd October.

We need volunteers to help in the kitchen and serve refreshments, and to provide baking for the cafe and items for sale for the following stalls: Home Baking, Preserves, Crafts, Books/jigsaws, Gifts etc.. These can be handed in to the Office Wednesday or Thursday 10am-12noon, or from 9am on Friday morning.

If you are able to help in any way on the day, please add your name to the relevant list in the hall, or contact L. McCraw.

The second event is the **Pop Up Shop** on Friday, 20th November, when we will be looking for crafts, gifts and baking to sell. More details to come later.

For years now attics and cupboards
have been raided;
donations given have been Gift Aided.
But once again we must seek your aid
in filling the coffers, so the bills get paid.



Selkirk & Ashkirk Property Matters

The property group has gone through the photo inventory of historical artefacts (on display in the hall) and identified items which may be suitable for disposal. These are mainly silverware (Communion cups and plates) and excess items of furniture. War memorials and fonts and lecterns etc. would be kept.



It is recommended that items are submitted for auction in small batches in order to gain an understanding of the potential values of each type of artefact. Details of sales dates would be advised to the congregation. As all sales are available to join online in addition to attending the sales room sessions, all interested parties have an equal opportunity to bid or buy.

Permission to sell will also be sought from the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland.

Andrew Laing

Selkirk & Ashkirk Kirk Session (church leadership team)

Notes from June and September meetings

- The Growing Young team presented some short video clips that could be used to increase our social media presence. This will require a small group to implement.
- Kwame described his motorbike ministry at St Mary's Loch.
- Carol Bowman will take up the role of Safeguarding Coordinator.
- Elders were reminded to update their safeguarding training.
- Reports were received from the Presbytery elder, the Treasurer and the Property Convener.
- A Seeds for Growth grant application was considered to improve the PA system and potentially fund a part-time youth worker.
- The fire evacuation procedure has been updated and will be tested during hall and church services in the near future.

The next meeting of the Leadership Team is on 27th October, 7pm in the church hall. Full minutes will be available on the church website once agreed at the following meeting.

From Selkirk & Ashkirk joint Session Clerk



Firstly, a BIG THANKYOU to the 62 individuals who sponsored me to cycle 600km during July. I enjoyed getting out and about around the Borders on my bike, and completed the distance in 21 days. With your generosity, the amount raised for the Building Development Fund was very nearly £2000, and we will be able to claim Gift Aid on most of that. Maybe next year, I should try the equivalent of Lands End to Selkirk !



Secondly, another BIG THANKYOU to all who have stepped up in various ways during Kwame's absence, especially those who have led Sunday services: Jane Peers, Tracy Brown, Gordon Junor, Rev. Donald Smith, Rev. Dan Carmichael, Rev. Peter Wood, and others who have done extra Wednesday services, or some extra pastoral care, or just seen jobs that needed done and have quietly got on with it. The church family in action!

Thirdly, just sharing my frustration at the slow progress with the buildings project. A group from the General Trustees visited us before Easter, asked for more information, which we provided, and we are still awaiting their indication of support 6 months later. Until we receive that, we cannot pursue further funding. In the meantime, we have been able to remove some pews to create more space in the church, and are looking into widening the front entrance from the pavement as a next step towards realising our vision.



David Bethune



Saturday 14th November, 6.30 for 7pm
Big Quiz Night
Fundraiser for Tearfund

Selkirk & Ashkirk Diary dates

For Sunday and Wednesday services, see page 8.



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.

September

Thursday	17	7.30pm	The Chosen, Season 1 episode 1 (see page 11)
Friday	18	2pm	The Chosen, Season 1 episode 1 then weekly
Sunday	20	2.30pm	Service at Thornfield House
Thursday	24	2pm	CAMEO: The Golden Girls
Sunday	27	1pm	Churches Together lunch, Connections
		2pm	Churches Together AGM, Connections

October

Friday	2	10-12	Coffee morning
Thursday	8	2pm	CAMEO: Gala Musicians
Saturday	17	6.30-8.30pm	Paint and Sip (church social and fundraiser)
Thursday	22	2pm	CAMEO: Games afternoon
Friday	23	11am	Service at Riverside Nursing Home

November

Sunday	8	9.30am	Remembrance service
Thursday	12	2pm	CAMEO
Saturday	14	6.30 for 7pm	Big Quiz Night, fundraiser for Tearfund
Friday	20	10-4pm	Pop-up Shop, in aid of church funds
Thursday	26	2pm	CAMEO

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

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

@ettrickyarrowchurch



Ettrick & Yarrow, Selkirk & Ashkirk

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Sketches courtesy of John Hume, Scotland's Churches Trust

Selkirk & Ashkirk

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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 **December** issue of The Hird should be with the editor by **15th November**.