

Diary: January

February

1		
2		
3		
4		10.30 Makerstoun
5		
6		
7	10.30 Makerstoun	
8		
9	Bridge 7pm	
10	The Guild, 2.30pm	
11		10.30 Stichill
12		
13		Bridge 7pm
14	10.30 Stichill	The Guild, 2.30pm
15		
16		
17		
18	Session Meeting Church Hall, 7.15 for 7.30	10.30 Smailholm
19		
20		
21	10.30 Roxburgh	
22		
23	Bridge 7pm	Quiz Night, Church Hall, 7.30
24		
25		10.30 Stichill
26		
27		Bridge 7pm
28	10.30 Stichill	
29		
30		
31		

Kelso Country Churches



The Country Link

~~~~~ January/February, 2018



*'I said to the Man who stood at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied, "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than the known way!" So I went forth, and finding the hand*

*of God, trod gladly into the night. And he led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.'*

*M Louise Haskins*

In the words of Rt. Rev. Derek Browning, Moderator of the General Assembly, "A new year is a bridge into the future that is rooted in the past and spans the present."

Prayer;

Heavenly Father, we come to you at the start of a new year, knowing what has been, knowing your faithfulness to us, knowing you were there to comfort and guide us when times were difficult, knowing you are a God of love and mercy.

We confess we have sinned against you in many ways, but we can make a fresh start, for through the death of Jesus, we can be forgiven and put right with you. Your hands were nailed to the cross for us, Lord. Now you stretch them out to us. Help us to grasp them daily. Only then can we be unafraid of what the future holds.

We pray for those who need you – those who are ill, troubled, homeless, depressed or just downright weary. Fill them and us, O Lord, with your Holy Spirit, and help us always to remember that our times are in your hands.

Amen

## *Parish News and Updates*

**Christmas in KCC:** The Advent and Christmas services lived up to our hopes and expectations, as we celebrated once again, the wonder of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ, bringing light and hope to a dark world.

Much thought and preparation had gone into the planning and content of the services to make them relevant and appealing and involving people of all ages. A well attended Carol service in Smailholm Church was led by Jim, David and Sophia on the morning of 17<sup>th</sup> December.

A big congregation gathered in Stichill Church that same evening for the Candlelight gift service of Lessons and Carols arranged by George Amos and led by Rev. Robin McHaffie. Nita and Rosalind encouraged the children of Kid's Club to take part in the service and they delighted everyone with their funny Christmas poems and singing, and flute and piano solos. As at previous special services, Jess Knibbs gave a clarinet solo and it was lovely to meet up with her, home for the Christmas holidays. Once again, people brought gifts for women and children and these were donated to Border Women's Aid where they were distributed to families in need before Christmas. There was also a Retiring Offering in our churches for Border Women's Aid, which people gave generously to. The sum of £387 was raised. Makerstoun Kirk was well filled for the Christmas Eve service with several people in the small community taking part. As always, happy greetings and conversation were enjoyed over mulled wine, tea and mince pies after the services. The churches were fittingly decorated for Christmas and looked beautiful. Stichill Church is indebted to Ian Rogers from Stichill Forest Nursery who donated the beautiful Christmas tree.

Website: [kelsolinkedchurchescofs.org](http://kelsolinkedchurchescofs.org)

Scottish charity no. SC000958

### **Dates for the Diary**

It is planned to hold a Quiz Night in Stichill Church Hall on Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February at 7.30pm. Further details will be announced nearer the time.

### **World Week of Prayer**

(Monday 22<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> January)

Kelso Churches Together has arranged lunch-time services on the above dates to mark World Week of Prayer. They will be held in the Quaker Meeting House except Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> which will be held in Kelso Old.

Services will start at 12.45pm and last for approximately 30 minutes, followed by soup and rolls.

A different church will be responsible each day for leading the service and providing lunch. KCC is responsible for this on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> January, and help will be needed. Please speak to me if you can make a flask of soup or give rolls.

*Sophia*

## GREAT TRUTHS.....

### THAT LITTLE CHILDREN HAVE LEARNED

- No matter how hard you try, you can't baptise cats.
- When mum is mad at dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- Never ask your 3 year old brother to hold a tomato.
- If your sister hits you, don't hit back. They always catch the second person.
- You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
- You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
- The best place to be when you are sad is on Grandpa's lap.



### GROWN UPS HAVE LEARNED

- Raising teenagers is like nailing jelly to a tree.
- Wrinkles don't hurt.
- Families are like fudge...mostly sweet, with a few nuts.
- Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.
- Laughing is good exercise. It's like jogging inside.
- Middle-age is when you choose your cereal for the fibre, not the toy!



### ABOUT GROWING OLD

- Growing old is mandatory, growing up is optional.
- Forget the health food, I need all the preservatives I can get.
- When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while your down there.
- You are getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you got from a roller coaster.
- It's frustrating when you know all the answers but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.
- Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.

## Preaching Plan for January/February, 2018

### January

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Makerstoun | Sophia Duncan     |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> Stichill  | Elizabeth Findlay |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> Roxburgh  | David Harvey      |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> Stichill  | James Smith       |

### February

|                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Makerstoun | Elizabeth Findlay  |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> Stichill  | Rev Marion Dodd    |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> Smailholm | Rev Robin McHaffie |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> Stichill  | Elizabeth Findlay  |

### March

|                            |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Makerstoun | James Smith |
|----------------------------|-------------|

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The retiring offerings taken in November for the Disasters Emergency Committee's Appeal for the Myanmar (Rohingya) refugees raised £143.

A very successful **concert** held in Makerstoun Kirk on 8th November raised £669.

The Scrabble Club which meets on a Tuesday afternoon, has been postponed in the meantime.

Marshall Steel has been feeling poorly recently but I'm pleased to report that he is now feeling a bit stronger.

Dawn and Marshall appreciate the good wishes they have received. Notice will be given when the club will restart.

We welcome our new Interim Moderator, Helen Howden this month. Here is a letter telling us a bit about herself. We look forward to getting to know you, Helen.

Dear Friends

At the Presbytery meeting in early December 2017, I was appointed as your Interim Moderator. I thought I would take the chance of introducing myself to you as we start 2018. I am an Elder in Ruberslaw Parish which used to be known as Bedrule, Denholm and Minto. I was born and brought up in Denholm where I live although I lived outside the Borders for a while to earn a living and to study.

Nowadays I am retired and enjoy having time to myself and taking part in village activities. I also have a small campervan and I'm looking forward to making a trip to Italy to see Lakes Como and Garda this summer.

I have unfortunately, a fair bit of experience of Church vacancies as we have had 8 Ministers in our parish since I was a child (we won't go in to how long ago that was!).

In my working life, I was HR Manager of Mainetti in Jedburgh for many years. Among other things I was in charge of recruiting for the company and I am willing to give support and advice to the vacancy committee as they seek the right candidate for you.

I am delighted to have the chance to work with the Kirk Session and the congregation in your every day activities as well as your search for a Minister for the parish. There is a lot to be positive about. According to your last parish newsletter your congregation seems to be very active with many social and fundraising events. Also, we live in a beautiful part of the world. I pray that we can turn all these good things into applications.

I look forward to meeting you all in person during the coming months. Meantime I wish you a Happy New Year.

With best wishes

Helen Howden, Interim Moderator

The Guild

The Christmas Concert held in December was a happy and successful afternoon. 'The Border Tarts' entertained us with their varied and jolly selection of songs and we welcomed visitors from other local Guilds and members of our church family. This was followed by a delicious afternoon tea.

The next meeting is on January, 10th at 2.30pm in the Church Hall. Mary Smith will talk on the life-changing work that 'Mercy Ships' does in many parts of the world. A warm welcome awaits you.

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His grace is great enough...

***His grace is great enough to meet the great things
The crashing waves that overwhelm the soul,
The roaring winds that leave us stunned and breathless,
The sudden storm beyond our life's control.***

***His grace is great enough to meet the small things
The little pin-prick troubles that annoy,
The insect worries, buzzing and persistent,
The squeaking wheels that grate upon our joy.***

–Annie Johnson Flint

This poem is a wonderful reminder that we can ask for God's help in the small things of life as well as the great. 1 Peter 5:7 says:

“Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.”

Off to pastures new

By the time you read this we will be away to pastures new. David has a new job in Hampshire and we are all relocating.

We have had the most wonderful 5 years and 8 months in Kelso where the church family welcomed us with open arms. I remember it so clearly my first service as I waddled in and again as we arrived with a 9 day old Theo. Kelso Country Churches is a remarkable church family and not one I think we will find anywhere again. Every person has made a lasting memory for us.

So, it's goodbye and thank you to you all. If anyone is ever in the new forest, please feel free to get in touch, our door will be as open to you all as yours was to us.

Juliette Knibbs

Juliette, David and Jess came to Floors Estate from Buckinghamshire, having little knowledge of the Scottish Borders and knowing no one, but they came determined to make the best of it and to get involved in the local community. It was fortuitous for us that, after visiting other churches, they decided to stick with KCC and have become well known in our church family, and joined in worship and social activities as much as their busy lives allowed.



Theo has known no other home, and it has been so interesting to see him grow into a polite and delightful wee boy with an inquiring mind and who loves school. Jess excelled at St Mary's school in Melrose, and is now continuing her education at Sedbergh School which she enjoys.

We will miss Juliette's ever-cheerful greetings in the streets of Kelso, and I will miss our shopping trips when we usually found time for tea and cake! God bless you all and keep you safe.

Sophia

8.

George Amos.....

George informed the Kirk Session in November that he had decided to step back a bit from front-line involvement in the work of Kelso Country Churches. You will be glad to hear that this doesn't mean he is retiring completely but he is giving up active eldership duties, and taking services as a valued member of our Worship Team.

He will however, continue to attend KCC services with Isabel and to operate the powerpoint presentation of the hymns at Stichill, which was his idea and which has become a popular, much appreciated part of our worship, and improved the singing considerably.



It was a good day in 2002 for KCC when George and Isabel decided to become members of Stichill church. Isabel had been our organist for some time before that. George used his skills and talents to direct musical productions and concerts. Who could forget the two big 'Musicals with a Message' he masterminded some years ago – **“Hopes and Dreams”** and **“City of Gold”** which galvanised many people in our congregations to sing, act, dance, stage-manage, build props, and generally make us realise we could achieve things we didn't think we could. I also remember fondly a comedy drama he produced called “Strawberry Jam” in which four ladies “starred” and we had such fun at the rehearsals. (I realised then that George also possessed considerable patience.) Happy days indeed!

George and Isabel are much-loved and valued members of our church family and I would like to say on behalf of us all, that their continuing presence and friendship means a lot to us. All good wishes and blessings to you George, as you hang up some of your many 'hats'.

5.

Thoughts on my year as Moderator of Jedburgh Presbytery

You know how some days you are going along fine, not a care in the world and then something happens that disturbs your mind and sets you off on a different thought process. I was having a pleasant morning in the garden and had just stopped for lunch when it happened; a phone call out of the blue from the Rev Frank Campbell who just happened to be the Clerk to Jedburgh Presbytery. He was very pleasant, as he always was, but I could not work out why he had phoned, until he asked quite calmly if I was sitting down. When I said 'No,' he said I should, and he then proceeded to tell me that "The business committee wished for me to be the next Moderator of the Jedburgh Presbytery". This was completely unexpected and it left me in a state of utter shock. I asked for a few days to consider the implications of being Moderator of Presbytery which Frank said was quite acceptable.



Jim and Robin

After talking it over with Janice and more talks with Frank, I decided to accept the honour of being Moderator, with the one proviso that Frank would always be there to help me. So, on 29th June my name was put forward at the June Presbytery meeting as the next Moderator and was accepted by Presbytery. Outwardly, I am not a nervous person and I find if you know what you are doing then everything works out well, but there are certain times in your life when no amount of preparation can prepare you for what is to come. Looking back on my life, I remember certain times such as the first time I took a class of 20 children at Chirnside Primary School which was daunting even if it was for only 2 hours. The first time I stepped up into the pulpit at Stichill Kirk also corresponds to running out onto a football field in front of 10 to 20,000 spectators to referee or be linesman at a football match. On looking back at my time in Presbytery, I can remember Frank saying to me that he would get me a place in Presbytery, and he did as a corresponding elder, but I never thought in my wildest dreams it would also be as Moderator!

Being Moderator of Jedburgh Presbytery ranks up there with all the rest of the above achievements but in another way it is far beyond anything I thought I was capable of doing. Life has many fascinating ways of working out for you and I believe all the above activities helped

me to take on the task ahead of me in one way or another, and it was good that they came in the right order which does not always happen in life.



Jim and Charles

I was inducted as Moderator at Yetholm Church in September 2016 for a period of one year, and it is amazing how that flashed past, and I handed over the baton to Rev. Charles Finnie at Stichill Church at a Presbytery service on Wednesday 6th September 2017. I remain with the Presbytery business committee for a further year, and cover the post of Moderator if the Moderator is unavailable which I did need to do at the October meeting.

I have been Session Clerk to our parishes for, in some cases, over 20 years now, so it did put me in good stead for the job in hand. However, never did I think I would be capable of preaching to Presbytery members and ministers at these meetings, but I did and it seemed to go down well. I must say that the more you do something, the more confidence you gain from it, and the more assurance you get, the more you enjoy it.

Being Moderator means you are also on the Business Committee which meets one week prior to Presbytery to discuss the business for the following week. This gives valuable insight into the workings of the church and of Presbytery itself. It's at meetings like this where you find out ministers are no different from us, and we are all the better for it. They have a great connection to Christianity and to the realities of life, and I thank them all for supporting me through my term. I feel very humbled by the whole experience - an experience which was awesome, frightening but fulfilling all in one, and one which I am glad to say I enjoyed.

My greatest responsibility was the induction of the Rev Alastair Cook to Hawick Teviot & Roberton early in 2017, Alastair Cook had previously preached at Stichill Church as Sole Nominee for the charge so I had met him before and got on well with him,

One of my fondest memories of Presbytery is of the Rev Frank Campbell. I had known him for many years when we were both football referees, and got on well together. I always admired him as a wise person with strong convictions. Frank assured me he would be with me all the time and help me through my year as Moderator. Sadly, his illness progressed and took its toll, but his wisdom in the early months saw me through. His life was a legacy to those who knew him, and I was one of the lucky ones.

Jim Smith

