

Diary: May

June

1		
2	Presbytery, 7pm	Stichill Summer Fayre, 2pm
3		10.30 Makerstoun
4		
5		
6	10.30 Makerstoun	
7		
8		
9		
10		10.30 Stichill
11		
12		
13	10.30 Stichill H.Communion	
14		
15		
16		
17	7pm	10.30 Stichill
18		
19		
20	10.30 Roxburgh	
21		
22		
23		
24		10.30 Smailholm
25		
26		
27	10.30 Stichill, C.Aid Lunch	
28		
29		
30		
31		

Kelso Country Churches



The Country Link

~~~~~May/June, 2018

*From the counting house...*



I write this on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May and spring has very much sprung. Martins are flitting around my house, lapwings are swooping over the newly sown fields and, high above, a lark is singing its heart out in the sunshine. Rewind two months and it was a very different story as the ‘beast from the east’ cut off

many towns and villages for several days with high snowdrifts and brought normal everyday life to an abrupt halt.

The weather is an excellent picture of the seasons of our lives – we go through good times and some more difficult times. One thing which does not change is God’s love and presence with us. In the Bible we see that God loves a celebration and He rejoices with us in our happiness. During the 2012 Olympic Games, John Beattie was trackside for Usain Bolt’s 100 metres final. Instead of watching the runners, he watched the expressions of pure joy and delight on the faces of the people in the stadium as they witnessed this exceptional athlete. I am convinced God also loves to watch our faces lit up with joy. And as Anne Lamott says, ‘laughter is carbonated holiness’.

In the difficult times, God has great compassion for us – in James we read ‘The Lord is full of compassion and mercy’. The word compassion means ‘to suffer with’; in the Easter season we recall that God himself suffered greatly on the cross and so we know that He understands what we experience when we go through pain and struggle. He promises to never leave us or forsake us. Even if we don’t feel it, He is still there, watching over us with love and working in our lives to help over days, months and years.

We are very blessed indeed to have such a wonderful God. May you know all God’s blessings this spring.

Liz

## *Parish News and Updates*

**The Guild Coffee Morning** held in March was very successful despite snow showers and low temperatures on the day. £287.75 was raised for Guild funds. This money greatly enhances the donation KCC Guild gives to the Guild Projects which we support annually.

**Kathy Wilkie's Easter chicks** proved very popular and proceeds were given to Blythswood Care to help cover the cost of transporting the Christmas shoe boxes to other countries. A letter of thanks has been received from Blythswood Care:

*I was delighted to hear about the donation of £244.50 from Kelso Country Churches to Blythswood Care and the thought of 100 knitted Easter Chicks is lovely! Please pass on our thanks to the lady who knitted them and to all who bought them. Please accept the thanks of us all for the kindness and thoughtfulness shown by this donation.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Margaret Tooth, Fundraising, South of Scotland*

**The Bridge Club** held a very successful Afternoon Bridge and Tea Party in Stichill Village Hall and £550.00 was raised for Kelso Country Churches. During the winter, the Bridge Club met on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month in the Church Hall and raised £140.00. That makes a total of £690.00 for church funds. Warm thanks to all who made it possible.

**World Mission Stamp Appeal:** Kathy is grateful for the used stamps she receives throughout the year. She sends them to the Church of Scotland stamp appeal and this year, the stamps will be used to help run a number of day care centres in Transcarpathia in Ukraine which provide educational, emotional and physical support to children and young people with disabilities.

A Retiring Offering for a local charity, Cheviot Youth, taken in our churches during April, has raised £153.50.

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Scottish charity no. SC000958

## Dates for your diary



You are invited to a

**Bread and Cheese Lunch**

in Stichill Church Hall

Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> May at 11.45am

following the morning service.

**All donations to Christian Aid**

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Kelso Churches Together are having a

**QUIZ AID**

17<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm in Cross Keys Hotel

Teams of 4, donation of £2.50 each

## ☺Some Light Relief ☺

Let us ponder;  
If walking is good for your health, the postman would be immortal.

A whale swims all day, only eats fish, drinks water but is still fat.

A rabbit runs and hops and only lives 15 years, while a tortoise doesn't run and does mostly nothing, yet lives for 150 years. And you tell me to exercise!!

It was a whole lot easier to get older, than to get wiser.

The world only beats a path to your door when you're in the bathroom.

If God wanted me to touch my toes, He would have put them on my knees.

I don't find it hard to meet expenses; they are everywhere.

A printer is comprised of 3 main parts; the case, the jammed paper tray, and the blinking red light.

Never let your printer know you are waiting until the last minute to print something and you're in a hurry. They sense fear!

The word 'Bible' comes from Greek and Latin words which mean 'books' and 'the book'. This is because the Bible is a collection of books as well as a single book. It is estimated that 6 billion copies of the Bible have been printed – and the Bible is said to be the most shoplifted book in the world!

"A Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't." Anon

### Prayer choice:

Church of England: "O Lord, grant that we may not be like porridge – stiff, stodgy, and hard to stir, but like cornflakes – crisp and ready to serve."

Church of Scotland: "O Lord, grant that we may not be like cornflakes – lightweight, empty and cold, but like porridge – warm, comforting and full of natural goodness."

10.

## Preaching Plan for May/June, 2018

### May

6<sup>th</sup> Makerstoun James Smith

13<sup>th</sup> Stichill ( Communion) Rev Robin McHaffie

20<sup>th</sup> Roxburgh James Smith

27<sup>th</sup> Stichill Elizabeth Findlay

### June

3<sup>rd</sup> Makerstoun Rev Robin McHaffie

10<sup>th</sup> Stichill Sophia Duncan

17<sup>th</sup> Stichill Elizabeth Findlay

24<sup>th</sup> Smailholm Sophia Duncan

### July

1<sup>st</sup> Makerstoun David Harvey

### Presbytery News concerning KCC

At the Jedburgh Presbytery meeting at Denholm on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, Presbytery agreed the deliverance proposed by Oxnam Kirk Session that the linkage between our two churches should be broken. This was not exactly straightforward and after much discussion, Jim Smith spoke stating that Kelso Country Churches concur with the break of the linkage.

As this will result in an alteration to the Jedburgh Presbytery Plan, this proposal agreed by our Presbytery, now passes to the Presbytery Plan Task Group in Edinburgh for their approval at the next meeting.

Subject to the agreement of the PPTG, Oxnam Church will pass into a state of Guardianship and Kelso Country Churches may proceed to call a 75% minister.

*Nita Renwick, Presbytery elder.*

3.

## Finance report May 2018

### 2017 accounts:

The 2017 results for the General Fund, which is our main congregational fund (see insert), show a surplus of £47 compared to the budget deficit for the year of £1,578. Because of the vacancy for the whole year there were substantial cost savings made which were used to fund significant fabric work, particularly the manse refurbishment. A transfer of £1,500 was made from the Fabric Fund into the General Fund to assist with these costs and a claim of £3,000 had been made from the capital of the Consolidated Fabric Fund also (this a fund held by the Church of Scotland General Trustees in Edinburgh on our behalf). Donations were £3,506 below the 2016 figure, in part because there were fewer services held than in 2016 and also we did not have as many large donations in 2017.

The General Fund is one of a number of funds which the congregation holds and they are all included in the full set of accounts. If you would like to see the full accounts then speak to me and I can get a set to you. Copies should also be available at each of the churches.

The position for 2018 is uncertain in a number of respects because of the vacancy and so we will keep the finances under review as the year goes on.

**Many thanks** again to all of you for your support of the congregation, however you do this – through prayer, practical help or finance. Whatever we do, as we serve in partnership with the Lord, it takes forward His kingdom both here in the parish and beyond as we continue to trust Him for His ongoing guidance and provision for us.

### **A note to Gift Aid donors:**

We are extremely grateful to all of you who are taxpayers and have signed a Gift Aid declaration in our favour – this enables us to claim an additional 25 pence from HMRC for every £1 you donate (in 2017 this amounted to an incredible £2,352 in total).

We recommend that you check that you are still paying as much or more tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all your donations (in the corresponding tax year) following the rise in the personal allowance, and if not, just let me know.

Liz Orr, Treasurer

4.



## THE BEAUTY OF GOD



If we walk through the world  
and do not see beauty,  
If we cannot stop for a flower,  
how can we know you, Lord?

You speak to us through beauty  
Let us reverence the spotted burnet  
and look in awe upon the bugloss,  
bowing before you in wonder.

Lord, speak to us through light,  
Let us glimpse your splendour,  
May we thrill at your brightness  
and be aware of your glory.

Let all of your creation speak  
and tell us of your power.  
Let us walk in gentleness  
among the mysteries you have made.

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May the God whose first word is 'peace be with you'
help us make peace with ourselves.
May God bless us in our sleep with rest,
in our dreams with vision,
in our waking with a calm mind,
in our souls with the friendship of the Holy Spirit
this day and always. Amen

9.

Stichill Church
Summer Fayre
Saturday, 2nd June at 2pm
in Stichill Village Hall

Delicious afternoon teas served

*Stalls: garden plants, cake & candy,
bottle stall, books*

Play area for the children and fun for all the family



Admission £3.50

children free



Turning Stumbling Blocks into stepping Stones.....

Following the inspiring conference held in Stichill Church Hall on 17th February, and reported in the last magazine, a follow up meeting will be held on 17th May at 7pm in Stichill Church Hall to which all the congregation are invited. We will consider the suggestions of the Church of Scotland Advisors for the way forward for our churches. The details are available in the report of the February conference which you will be able to read beforehand.

Copies are available at Sunday services or from Jim Smith.

Do join us that evening as we consider these fresh ideas for our congregation and community.

50 years of women in ministry

On Wednesday, 22nd May, 1968, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed a deliverance that women should become eligible for ordination to the ministry of word and sacrament on the same terms and conditions as men. This legislation brought to an end decades of campaigning and debate. This historic decision opened the door to new opportunities and challenges, and has changed the face of the kirk. Following in the footsteps of the pioneering first generation, women now comprise around 30% of ordained ministers, and for 50 years have served in diverse and challenging situations across Scotland and beyond.

One of the first women to be ordained is The Rev. Dr Margaret Forrester and she recalls in this month's Life and Work that, at the age of eight, she had asked within her family if she could be a minister, and was told, "Of course not; it's not allowed."

The same thing happened again when she was choosing subjects for Highers. Her teacher lamented it was such a pity she wasn't a boy as she could train for the ministry!

But Dr Forrester, went on to be a prominent campaigner for equality and one of the kirk's first parish ministers.

The very Rev Dr Lorna Hood was the first female serving parish minister to be elected Moderator of the General Assembly in 2013. She recalls how, in 1979, the shops and streets of Renfrew were buzzing with the news that one of the churches had chosen a sole nominee. When news got out that it was a woman, the comments were something like, "A wummin? Wis there naebody else?"

This year during the annual General Assembly, the Church of Scotland will celebrate the historic anniversary with special events, including a women-led procession up The Mound into the quad of New College on 22nd May, the exact date of the anniversary. The event organiser said,

"This will be a simple, public and dignified procession to honour the pioneering women (and men who supported their call) who first walked this way – remembering all those who knocked but were not allowed to enter – and to celebrate the many gifts and service of women in ordained ministry over 50 years, 1968-2018."

Editor's note:

John Elliot, well known farmer, church elder and raconteur' has another string to his bow; he writes a monthly article in 'The Scottish Farmer,' imparting his wide knowledge on all things to do with the land and agriculture.

John is a good storyteller and I was delighted when he agreed to write an article for the Country Link. In it, John goes down memory lane as he reminisces about his parents' experiences during the 1939-45 war years and it is particularly appropriate as the RAF celebrates 100 years this year since it was inaugurated.

Down Memory Lane with John Elliot

In November, I read that George 'Johnny' Johnstone, the last surviving member of the Dam Busters had been honoured by Her Majesty The Queen. I reflected that my mother, who has since died aged 97, had some claim to similar status. She was an officer in the WAAF (the Women's Auxiliary Air Force now the Women's Royal Air Force.) Although the WAAF didn't actually fly on the raid the success of the operation very much depended on their skill and commitment too.



My mother's first husband was in the RAF and was killed in the Battle of Britain, just six weeks after getting his wings. Soon after, my mother, aged 22, joined up. Her brother Eric was already a serving officer in The Liverpool Scottish which was affiliated to the King's Own Cameron Highlanders, my Father's regiment. He and my father were good friends, which led to my parents meeting.

Just after D Day in 1944 my Father was seriously wounded and reported dead. He rallied however, and after a year of endless operations at Chester Hospital, was moved to Gogarburn outside Edinburgh. My Mother meantime had moved from various RAF stations in East Anglia to RAF Turnhouse now Edinburgh Airport. In July 1945 my parents were married in Edinburgh. By coincidence, the best man was Major George Rogerson, KOSB, who farmed Roxburgh Mains where we were to farm five decades later.

In 1946 my parents moved to the high hill farm of Rawburn near Longformacus in the Lammermuirs. After the Great Depression of the thirties and then the recent war, the farm was run down and the farmhouse was in a poor state. My parents first winter in 1947 was the snowiest in the twentieth century. Old folk then had never seen anything like it and we haven't seen snow like it since. My father described in an account which he wrote at the time, of men going for provisions with a huge sledge pulled by a Clydesdale horse which they normally used for taking hay to the sheep. They walked on snow drifts level with the telephone wires. The year after that the Borders experienced the Great Flood when many of the local railway lines, including the main Edinburgh to London line, were washed away.

For a time the main east coast trains were diverted through Kelso, Roxburgh and St. Boswells, where they joined the line from Carlisle to Edinburgh, until the embankment at Cockburnspath was rebuilt. Many of the local lines were never reinstated and were finally closed fifteen years later. My mother, a town girl, took the new life in her stride and everything got better for my parents and farming generally after that.

As an aside, although autumn is normally when we remember those who fell in the two World Wars, I often think of the Remembrance Day Services which I attended with my mother and father as a boy. The wars were very recent. It seemed the whole town turned out and the sadness was palpable.

We must never, ever forget the courage, determination and suffering of two generations which stood firm at such cost in defence of what was right.



KCC Worship Team

I am pleased to report that we have a new member in the Worship Team, Charlie Orr. Charlie, who is an elder, was recently welcomed to the Kirk Session of Kelso Country Churches, and it was music to our ears when he willingly offered to share in leading worship in our churches. Welcome to the fold Charlie, and may God bless you.

