

Diary: May

June

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

Kelso Country Churches



The Country Link

~~~~~ May/June, 2019

Last time I wrote to you I was going on holiday and I'm pleased to report that I am back home having had a wonderful time. All the plans and preparations I made before setting out worked amazingly well – isn't the internet a wonderful thing?

While I was away, I sent photographs and messages to my family using WhatsApp which is a free encrypted app on my mobile phone. It allowed us all to keep in touch with what was going on not just with the holidaymakers, but to hear what was happening at home. I stayed with some friends and they were using Facetime to contact their son and his wife in China and I was able to see and hear their granddaughter sing "twinkle, twinkle little star" in Mandarin Chinese which is an experience I never thought I'd have.

It made me think about a not too distant time when people emigrated to Canada, Australia and New Zealand and the only method of communication was by letter which would take some weeks to arrive. In living memory our ability to communicate around the globe has changed dramatically. Yet there is a danger that we can become too reliant on the technology. How many times do you see whole families in restaurants all looking at their mobile phones and not talking to one another? They are all so busy on social media they have forgotten to socialise.

We are fortunate that we don't need technology of any kind to communicate with God. We need only a little peace and quiet and some time when we can open our hearts and our minds. In that time with God we can pray for others and the situation of our community, country and the world but more importantly we can listen for God's voice telling us what we should do in order to carry out His will. Please remember the Nominating Committee in your prayers as they continue to seek a Minister for the charge. Pray also for the General Assembly this month when they will be discussing the radical plan requested last year. This will have huge implications for the whole Church.

Wishing you every blessing

*Helen Howden Interim Moderator*

## *Parish News and Updates*

### **Ministerial Vacancy**

The nominating committee have rewritten the Parish Profile and it is now in paper form. We placed it on the KCC website but Session have agreed to fund a revision currently being undertaken. Once the new website is available the Parish Profile will be added.

We are aware of three enquiries from ministers regarding our vacancy. Two have submitted applications following a visit and the committee are going to meet with them to discuss matters further. It is very early in the process and by no means certain this will lead to a successful appointment. There are quite a number of criteria that must be met during this process. The committee would ask for your prayers as we make decisions that may have far reaching consequences for the congregation.

*Robert Monie*

**Isabel Amos**, our organist of 26 years, has tendered her resignation following a heart attack which has considerably restricted what she is able to do. We are forever grateful to her for singing as well as playing which, in turn, helped our singing, for the fun and fond memories of her coaching our KCC choir and Guild choir, and special concerts and services in which she has taken part. Isabel is a dear friend to many in the country churches and she hopes to continue attending Sunday worship with George.

To show our appreciation of her work and friendship over the years, there is an opportunity to give a donation towards a gift which can be given to your elder or to Liz Orr by Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> May. Plans are in hand to have Afternoon Tea in the church hall on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> May at 2.30pm when Isabel, George and their family will be special guests. This is an open invitation to everyone in our church family so please come along and share good food and craic with friends on this special occasion.

**Kelso Food Bank:** the demand for emergency food parcels from the food bank is increasing in the Kelso area and shelves in the foodbank are far from filled. There is a particular shortage of tinned potatoes, tinned tomatoes, spaghetti, macaroni, small packets of biscuits and cereals. All food donations can be handed into Stichill or Makerstoun churches, the food bank receptacle in Sainsbury's, or to the main food bank at Kelso North Church. Thank you.

**Roxburgh Singers**, conducted by Marion Dodd are giving a concert on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm in Melrose Parish Church. Programme includes music by Beethoven and Brahms.

Tickets £10 available at the door. 2.

Website: [kelsolinkedchurchescofs.org](http://kelsolinkedchurchescofs.org)  
Scottish charity no. SC000958

## Stichill Church

# Summer Fayre

Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> June at 2pm

in the Village Hall

Delicious afternoon teas served



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

Play area for the children & fun for  
all the family

**Admission £4.00**

**children free**

## Let us pray

*Jesus said, "I am the bread of life."*

We pray for those who are hungry:  
Hungry because crops have failed,  
Hungry because of war,  
Hungry because of unfair trading arrangements.  
We pray for those who hunger and thirst for  
righteousness.  
May they be satisfied.



*Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."*

We pray for those who live in darkness:  
The darkness of oppression, the darkness of injustice,  
The darkness of threat or violence.  
We pray for those overwhelmed by the darkness of depression.  
May they find relief.

*Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd."*

We pray for those who have lost their way:  
Lost in loneliness and isolation,  
Lost in a crowd, lost along life's journey.  
We pray for those who have never truly found their place in life.  
May the good shepherd find and lead them.

*Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life."*

We pray for those who fear that death has the final say:  
Fearful because a loved one has died,  
Fearful of their own life's ending,  
Fearful that grief will overtake them.  
May they clearly hear the promise of abundant life.

*Jesus said, "I am the true vine."*

We pray for those with no firm hold on life:  
Insecure because they are homeless,  
Insecure because they have been driven from their homeland,  
Insecure because their lives seem barren instead of fruitful.  
May they find security in Christ and a sense of belonging in the church.  
We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life

## Preaching Plan for May/June, 2019

### May

5<sup>th</sup> Makerstoun David Harvey  
12<sup>th</sup> Stichill (Communion) Rev Robin McHaffie  
19<sup>th</sup> Makerstoun Rev Robert Bruestdt  
26<sup>th</sup> Stichill James Smith

### June

2<sup>nd</sup> Makerstoun to be arranged  
9<sup>th</sup> Stichill "  
16<sup>th</sup> Makerstoun "  
23<sup>rd</sup> Stichill "  
30<sup>th</sup> Makerstoun "

### July

7<sup>th</sup> Makerstoun "

**CHRISTIAN AID WEEK: 12<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> May**



**A Bread and Cheese Lunch will be  
held in the Church Hall, Stichill  
on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> May following  
the morning service.**

**All donations will be given to  
Christian Aid.**

## Finance report May 2019

**2018 accounts:** The 2018 results for the General Fund, which is our main congregational fund (see insert), show a surplus of £5,672 compared to the budget deficit for the year of £1,643. Donations were £646 above budget, there was a saving of £3,000 as we did not employ a locum in 2018, and there were various other smaller savings which contributed to the overall surplus.



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 2019 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 you do, it enables the work of God's kingdom of love, both here in the parish and beyond, as we continue to trust God for His ongoing 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 2018 this amounted to an incredible £2,373 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*

**The World Mission Council Stamp Appeal** is celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

The 2019 Stamp Appeal will be supporting the Chigodi Women Centre in Blantyre, Malawi, who deliver a broad range of skills training to help the women in Malawi overcome the challenges they face. Kathy Wilkie is always happy to receive your used stamps.

## CHRISTIAN AID Count your blessings 2019

It was in May, 1957 that the first Christian Aid Week was held and it surprised even its organisers. Hundreds of churches came together and raised £26,000 to help refugees around the world. This was an impressive total for a fledgling event and house-to-house collections were at the heart of this success as well as many other wonderful ways of fundraising.

It started with people knocking on doors in their local neighbourhood to raise money for the poorest communities around the world. Nowadays, the idea of knocking on strangers' doors to collect envelopes is rather alien and the amount of cash in people's purses is decreasing as credit cards are used more and more so new ideas in fundraising are being sought. But the commitment to Christian Aid is still evident, especially during the week as thousands of churches and individuals stand in solidarity with the world's poorest and most in need.

The reasons for poverty and suffering in the world are still very real today – cyclones and tsunamis, droughts and famines, war and injustice, pollution of our rivers and seas, deforestation...the list is endless. Christian Aid week gives us, as Christians, added encouragement to bear witness to our faith in our community by inviting others to be part of making a positive change in the world.

Some of the amazing fundraising events include marathons, mountain climbs, walks and the Edinburgh Book Sale which started in 1973 and has raised over £1million in the past 10 years.

For the last 30+ years in Stichill church, we have held a poverty lunch (much more delicious than it sounds) one Sunday in May which has raised in excess of £4,000, and this year is no exception. (see page 3) Do come to the service that morning at 10.30 and stay for lunch in the church hall. You won't be disappointed.

**Kelso Churches Together** are not holding door-to-door collections this year in Kelso. Instead, a Kelso Bridge Cross has been organised for Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2-4pm, starting and finishing in the Square. You can walk, run, hop, scoot or drive. Just pay £10 or get sponsors for your crossing of the two bridges. ALL PROCEEDS TO CHRISTIAN AID.

## The Fellowship Group

Our gatherings at Roxburgh and Smailholm churches are continuing and now have a name! – the Fellowship Group. Do come along if you would enjoy a cuppa, gentle discussion on a “thought for the day”, and quiet prayer. Meetings generally last no longer than an hour.

Our recent sessions have included reflecting on some of God’s promises to be found in the bible. For example:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. **Jeremiah 29:11**

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **Matthew 11:28-29** Sometimes we also share an excerpt from a book which has meant something to us and might be encouraging to others.

Future meetings for the next few months will be at **2pm** on the following Wednesdays and everyone is welcome to come along, whether you can only make it occasionally or are able to attend each time.

Wed, 1<sup>st</sup> May - Smailholm Church  
Wed, 15<sup>th</sup> May - Roxburgh Church  
Wed, 5<sup>th</sup> June - Smailholm Church  
Wed, 19<sup>th</sup> June - Roxburgh Church



*If you can start the day without caffeine,  
if you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,  
if you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles,  
if you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it,  
if you can understand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any  
time,*

*if you can take criticism and blame without resentment,  
if you can conquer tension without medical help,  
if you can relax without alcohol,  
if you can sleep without the aid of drugs,  
then you are probably.....*

*The Family Dog!*

Author unknown

## Did you know this?

If you look closely at the Communion Table or Pulpit Fall in most churches you will see an inscription on the front which looks like an I, an H and an S intertwined. It is the Christogram or monogram symbolising Jesus Christ.



The letters are sometimes thought to come from the latin “Jesus Hominum Salvator” meaning “Jesus Saviour of the world” but they don’t. They are the first three letters of the Greek for JESUS – which in Greek was IHCOYC. Greek has two ways of writing the sound ‘s’ as in the middle of ‘Jesus’. It can be either a C or what looks like a rather stylised E and when you translate the Greek letters IHC into Latin they come out as IHS....thus we see that both spellings have the same meaning.

Communion tables in reformed churches replaced the alter of the pre-Reformation churches and the term ‘alter’ is not used, rather it is The Lord’s Table. The table is generally made of wood with the inscription on the front panel, “Do this in remembrance of Me” from Luke’s Gospel ch 22 vs 19, also Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians ch 11, vs 24.

The indication is that Holy Communion is a memorial rather than a sacrifice; the sacrifice of Christ was a perfect sacrifice for sins made once for all (see Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews ch 9 vs 25 onwards.)

The table itself is usually simple, unadorned except when the Lord’s Supper is commemorated when a plain white cloth is laid over it.

In many Scottish Presbyterian churches the table is situated beneath a prominent pulpit illustrating the dual ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Makerstoun church is a perfect example of this as you see in the picture above. The imposing pulpit with the Precentor’s box below and the simple wooden Communion Table beneath it.



## A Miracle in Stichill?

Perhaps not – I do not think there was any divine involvement – but amazing never the less.

One Sunday last November I was at a service in Ednam Kirk when I looked down at my hands. I discovered that my wedding ring was missing. This was very surprising because my ring does not come off easily and requires careful wiggling and lubrication. However, although I had no recollection of having done so, I assumed that the previous evening I must have removed my ring and placed it on my bedside table.

On returning home there followed an extensive search of tables, drawers and anywhere else that I could have placed the ring. No luck. This was followed by checking all the places I had visited in the previous few days all without avail. I reconciled myself to the fact that it had gone permanently.

At the end of February, I was in my drive preparing my car for a trip north – checking tyre pressures etc. - when Crawford Brown came past with his dog Amber and stopped for a chat. We stood for a while at the bottom of the drive chatting whilst Amber wandered about the drive chasing up interesting smells (my drive is not tarmacked but covered in yellow/ brown gravel). After a while Crawford called for Amber who came and sat at my feet. I reached down to pat her head, looked down to her paws and there nestling between the stones was my ring – somewhat discoloured and bent because of the car passing over it but intact. A quick trip to Blair's and its shape and colour were restored.

I have no idea how the ring came to be on the drive but I am extremely pleased to have it back on my finger. Maybe not a miracle but probably as near as I am likely to witness.

*Ian Dutton (Stichill)*



## *Recognition of long-serving elders.*

Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> March deserves special mention in the life of Kelso Country Churches when, following our morning worship, four elders were presented with framed, long-service certificates in recognition of their long association with, and dedication to their churches.

Bert Duncan, John Elliot, John Logan, and James Smith along with Oliver Stark who received his certificate in February, have clocked up a total of 220 years between them – John Logan, James and Bert at Stichill, and Oliver at Roxburgh and John Elliot at Longformacus and Roxburgh.

They have witnessed and been part of many changes and challenges in our parishes over the last 50 years.

They have all committed to fulfilling a variety of roles in the church, often for many years and are still doing so, using their talents to do God's work in their communities, getting alongside people in their time of need, and most of all in this age when there are not enough ordained ministers to fill vacant charges, learning new skills of leading worship and being the church.

In the words of John Ruskin, “*God gives us strength enough and sense enough for everything he wants us to do.*”

