

Diary: July

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3	Smailholm fellowship 2pm	
4		10.30 Makerstoun
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7	10.30 Makerstoun	Smailholm Fellowship 2pm
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11		10.30 Stichill
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14	10.30 Stichill	
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17	Roxburgh Fellowship 2pm	
18		10.30 Makerstoun
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21	10.30 Makerstoun	Roxburgh Fellowship 2pm
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# Kelso Country Churches



## The Country Link

~~~~~July/August, 2019



Dear friends,

We are almost there! We only have one or two minor details to take care of and we will have a Minister for the charge. Rev. Stephen Manners preached as sole nominee on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June and the vote was in favour of calling him to be

your minister. I am delighted for you.

Stephen, like me, attended this year's general assembly in May and he understands both the need for change in the Church of Scotland and the types of change that are being brought forward. He also understands that people are nervous of change and he will lead you both to understand and embrace the changes you don't like and to bring in some changes that you will enjoy. I loved his "Star Trek" video and the way he weaved that into the service.

In his sermon Stephen spoke about renewal and hope for the future and I think there is much to be hopeful about. Kelso Country Churches has a hard-working Kirk Session and a number of people with considerable talents that they offer to the Church. With good leadership and a fresh approach, you may find yourselves being one of the few churches that welcomes new members of all ages.

It has been a pleasure to be your Interim Moderator and I wish you every blessing in the future.

*Helen Howden*

## *Parish News and Updates*

**The Stichill Church Summer Fayre** held in the village hall on 1<sup>st</sup> June was a great success. The sun shone and people came from near and far to sample the delights of the various stalls and enjoy delicious afternoon teas. It is always heartening to welcome back friends and neighbours as well as visitors who return each year to buy their plants over the thirty eight years Bert and I have manned the plant stall, and who tell us how their plants performed the previous year.

The event raised an outstanding total of £1,461.00. Many thanks to all who manned the stalls, provided and served the teas and generally helped to make it such a successful day.

**The Christian Aid Lunch** held in May was also a happy get-together and £320 was raised between the lunch and C.A. envelopes

### *A letter from the Interim Moderator*

By the time you read this we will have had a congregational meeting to decide whether or not to close Roxburgh and Smailholm Churches. I don't know how that vote will go. I do know that the future of these churches has been discussed since I became Interim Moderator and probably further back than that. The Kirk Session committed a great deal of time and thought and prayer to the matter before coming to a decision.

Keeping four churches going is a lot of work for a small group of people and if the vote is in favour of closing two of them, then that will allow the Session, along with the new minister to concentrate on other work such as how to bring back those members who have ceased to attend church, how to attract those in the area who have no interest in the church and how to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to those in our midst who may not have heard of Him.

*Helen Howden*

**Kelso Food Bank:** please be aware that the demand for emergency food parcels always increases during the school holidays which often results in shortages of some foods. At present there is particular shortage of jams, tinned tomatoes, cereals and puddings. All food donations can be handed into Stichill or Makerstoun churches, the food bank receptacles in Sainsbury's and the Co-op, or to the main food bank at Kelso North Church. THANK YOU.

**Border Union Show: Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July.** Once again, Kelso Churches Together are providing a Tea Tent at the show and need 6 helpers over the 2 days from each church. Please contact Lynda Stark (Tel. 225976) who is making up the rota for Kelso Country Churches.

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

Scottish charity no. SC000958

## *Our Church Family*

### *Funerals: 'O rest in the Lord...'*

7<sup>th</sup> June: The funeral took place in Stichill Church of John Renwick, Hume; dear husband of Nita. The funeral was conducted by Rev. Anna Rodwell.

19<sup>th</sup> June: The funeral took place in Smailholm Church of Charles Mitchell, (Charlie) late of Smailholm Farm; dear husband of Ann. The funeral was conducted by Rev. Anna Rodwell.

19<sup>th</sup> June: the funeral took place in Stichill Church of John Havis, Heiton: dear husband of Doreen. The funeral was conducted by Rev. Anna Rodwell.

## *A Prayer for New Beginnings*

Dear Lord,  
This is a time for daring and boldness,  
and yet, so often we find ourselves timid  
and uncertain.  
You lay before us new opportunities, new  
possibilities;  
yet often, we cling to what we know, to the  
security of the past,  
to the rhythms and routines of bygone days.



Right now, we need your breath of life within us,  
re-forming us, transforming us  
into dynamic ambassadors for your kingdom.

Lord, may this be a time of thoughtful reflection.  
Challenge us to think again about who we are  
and who you want us to be.  
Inspire us to see the world in all its brokenness  
and know that we have a part to play  
in putting it back together.

Help us, as we look to the future,  
to consider our own security less  
than the well-being of those you have called us to love.  
Then send us out to do your work,  
to be the bearers of your compassion and grace,  
confident that what lies ahead, though unknown to us,  
is fully known to you;  
that we are in your hands, and equipped with all that we need  
to do the things you have called us to do.

Lord, please bless us and keep us as we go.  
For your name's sake, AMEN.

## *Preaching Plan for July/August*

### **July**

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Makerstoun  | Rev Robert Bruestedt |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> Stichill   | Rev Robin McHaffie   |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> Makerstoun | James Smith          |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> Stichill   | Charles Orr          |

### **August**

|                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Makerstoun  | Rev Robin McHaffie |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> Stichill   | Rev Marion Dodd    |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> Makerstoun | Sophia Duncan      |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> Stichill   | David Harvey       |

### **September**

|                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Makerstoun | Rev Robin McHaffie |
|----------------------------|--------------------|

### **The Fellowship Group**

Our gatherings at Roxburgh and Smailholm churches are continuing - 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. Recent sessions have included considering the transforming power of thankfulness, and reflecting on Psalm 23.

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, 3<sup>rd</sup> July - Smailholm Church  
Wed, 17<sup>th</sup> July - Roxburgh Church  
Wed 7<sup>th</sup> August – Smailholm Church  
Wed, 21<sup>st</sup> August - Roxburgh Church  
Wed 4<sup>th</sup> September – Smailholm Church  
Wed 18<sup>th</sup> September – Roxburgh Church

*Liz Orr*

## *Faith of our Fathers*

We had our ritual too. Down the long glen,  
while startled curlews cried on ebb-tide sands,  
we all would walk, our Bibles in our hands,  
and winter sunshine turned to rain again.

The crisp and cutting edge of our dark suits  
served as a weekly penance. We in turn,  
would kick some chuckies into ditch or burn,  
and scuff the polish on our Sunday boots.

The church bell spread its iron news abroad,  
dull through the trees or clear across the bay.  
With quickened step we hastened on our way.  
And so we entered in the house of God.

Thus went the ritual of that far-off day.  
The creak of bell and bell-rope clanged and jarred.  
The psalms were dignified. The pews were hard.  
The rain was soft. The lowering skies were grey.

Grey too the tenor of our world today.  
The death of humanism, sick and sad.  
And I could wish that once again we had  
that child's acceptance of the Christian way.

Faith of my fathers. If it came again,  
I would not change a moment of my youth,  
the grey kirk and the straight unflinching truth,  
clean as the stones at the burn-side in the glen.

*Alastair Halden*

## **Dear All Humankind**

How nice to hear from you after such a long time! I have some nostalgic pictures of you on the wall, but you must have changed somewhat since you last called on my name in frantic desperation. Do give my regards to all the other creatures I made. They seemed quite content with things until you started getting more and more (how can I put it tactfully) clever.

Well now, you're worried about rising sea levels and mass extinctions. I've seen it all before – though I declared I wouldn't do it again. 'As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease', I said. Yes, a rather good soundbite if I may say so. I didn't know (well, I did, but that's for another discussion) some American senator would quote it years later to prove that man-made climate change doesn't exist. That isn't actually what I meant, but that kind of shallow thinking hasn't stopped thousands of your fellow men doing some appalling things in my name over the centuries. But I digress...

As you know, I don't need to tap the odd phone illegally to hear everything. I swear by myself I heard a senator say, "God is still up there. The arrogance of people to think that we, human beings, would be able to change what he is doing in the climate is to me outrageous." Of course I'm still there, although I don't know what he means by 'up'. And of course, you lot do insist on changing things. Blame me by all means, for giving you free will. But don't blame me if you use it to melt ice caps, turn the oceans to acid and bring about an inexorable rise in sea levels.

Yes, there are a few tricks I might perform, if so inclined. I could change the nature of carbon dioxide. I could suck your carbon emissions back underground. Or I could ask you to do something about it. I made you in my image and gave you creativity. Holding up both Almighty hands, perhaps that was my biggest mistake, but we exist externally and learn. What I am saying is, having set things up as I have, it's up to you to change things again. That's not 'playing God' like the climate deniers say. That's doing something simple that seems to irk a whole bunch of you: My will.

One nutty brigade have done a Noah and made a start. In fact, Noah has reminded me – though he built the Ark, I gave him the idea.

You are not going to be on your own.

***Almighty God***

Concerned about climate change, renowned correspondent All Humankind fires off a letter to God suggesting some helpful ways he could improve the situation.

### **Dear Almighty God**

In your omniscience we thought we'd write and give you some helpful ideas for the future of our planet. In particular, you will know we have a few problems over climate change. Please accept these suggestions in a spirit of constructive criticism.

Things are getting a bit drastic down here regarding global warming. We have tried getting people to live less selfishly. We have tried getting the nations to agree together on radical action. We are getting nowhere fast. So now we need some dramatic Old Testament-style action from you.

You could start by changing the vibrational energy frequencies of carbon dioxide just a little. Either way would work. And, how about fixing it so CO2 isn't acidic when it dissolves in water? You made the molecule, tweaking its properties a little cannot be arduous! Of course, thinking about it, you can't do it in a factory as it might be too cold for life to have evolved on earth at all so it would have to be a post-industrial retrofit.

But you are the God of the impossible! See what you can do and get back to us.

Here's another option. You've got some seriously decent party pieces: parting the Red Sea, sending down fire on Mount Carmel, calming the storm in Galilee. How about an encore or two, such as sucking back underground all the carbon we've released into the atmosphere? Forests did it over 100 million years. It only took us 100 years to release it. From what scientists are saying down here, it looks like we've got about 10 years to find a solution. Bearing in mind that the Bible says one day to you is "like unto 1,000 years", by our reckoning you could sort it out in about 24 minutes.

Please don't leave this letter lying about in your in-tray. There's going to be a disaster of biblical proportions if you do.

We remain your obedient servants

*All Humankind*

**Nanoseconds later comes the reply.**

**8.**

*We say Thank you to Isabel*



Dear Friends,

I would like everyone to know how much I and the whole of my family enjoyed the Tea-party which the church organised to mark my retirement as organist. It was a really enjoyable occasion with a very warm, friendly atmosphere and I appreciated the warmth and good wishes which were evident throughout the afternoon.

I would also like to say how grateful and appreciative I am for the lovely painting, the generous cheque and lovely bouquet of flowers I received. The painting has pride of place in the dining room so we can enjoy it every time we eat.

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

*Isabel*



**5.**

## *An Historic Day Ramblings from the Session Clerk*

Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2019 was special in that, after a long and difficult Vacancy, we found the person that we want to lead us through these times of change within our own church and within the Church of Scotland. We will welcome Rev. Stephen Manners into the fold at his induction service in these parishes later in the year when we can agree a date with Presbytery which is on summer recess just now.

Kelso Country Churches have seen many upheavals over the years with linkages and unions, and the coming and going of ministers. Our most recent Nominating Committee was formed after a lengthy time dissolving the linkage with Oxnam Church and has been compliant to all the needs of our church laws and has served well under the chairman and secretary's guidance as well as the Interim Moderator's help.

The Parish Profile is a very necessary and useful document for interested ministers, but also a splendid insight into our united parish and the involvement of our congregations, and Kirk Session in maintaining continuity and commitment and pastoral care to our church family.

A vital part of our Vacancy has been the Worship Team; four members of our congregation who lead our services on a regular basis, the people who read scripture, the welcome teams at the church door, and the tea and cake makers who provide refreshments after each service. Also, the small team of dedicated cleaners and flower providers who enhance our churches. In the absence of a full-time organist, we are now making good use of the hymnal X400 – another learning curve for the operators - along with organist David Stark who helps out on some Sundays and for funerals. Another enhancement to our worship is the projecting of the hymns and readings at Stichill done by Andrew Nicholson who will be hard to replace when he goes back to Ireland to live. The worship team leaders who conduct services have grown with the congregation and are accepted as good at what they do, providing meaningful and different styles which give variety and, we hope, freshness to the Sunday experience. They are to be thanked for their endeavours over these many years.

Thank you to all our committees within the Session; each one special and each person happy to contribute in their own way. At this time, it is good to say a special thank you to our Treasurer, Liz Orr. How lucky we were when she landed on our doorstep and was willing to take control so expertly of our finances.

She was previously an accountant for the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh so has much knowledge and expertise in church matters. The three 'old' treasurers from our linked parishes were delighted to hang up their money bags when first, Tom Harley, and then Liz came along.

She is also highly respected in Presbytery.

Being a member of Presbytery, and having so many ministers helping us as Interim Moderators and doing pulpit supply, I can say without exception that we are regarded as a model congregation with exceptional skills in conducting our own business in an exemplary way, and with a Worship Team that other congregations would love to have – so well done and keep it up. You will not be disbanded because we have a minister coming. We need you more to explore God's way with our new minister in Kelso Country Churches.

So we welcome Rev. Stephen Manners. Stephen loves the countryside. His last main ministry was in Orkney, 2012 – 2017 as parish minister to South Ronaldsay and Burray Parish Church, so he is well used to heavenly tranquillity!

Changes are coming whether we like it or not; not just for us in KCC or even in the Church of Scotland. It's happening in the Christian faith everywhere and to survive and flourish, we need to change. We need to look at what we are doing then accept the changes that are needed and there is no better time than with a new minister.

*Jim Smith*



