



LOCHEND & NEW ABBEY CHURCH NEWSLETTER

December 2024

LETTER FROM YOUR LOCUM

Dear Friends in Lochend and New Abbey,

As those of you who attended Church on Sunday 24th November will know, we had a visit from the Presbytery Clerk to conduct a vote on the situation in New Abbey and its future Ministry.

Two votes were taken separately:

Vote 1. Whether or not we wished a Union with Maxwelltown West Church in Dumfries.

The majority present voted to accept this proposal, thus creating a new charge of Lochend & New Abbey Church and Maxwelltown West Church.

There is no plan in the foreseeable future to close Lochend & New Abbey Church so both churches will remain in that charge.

Vote 2. Whether or not we accepted Rev. Johannes Wildner (the present Minister of Maxwelltown West Church) as our Minister so that he would be the Minister of both charges.

The majority present voted to accept him as our Minister, thus Rev. Johannes Wildner shall be the Minister of both Churches. The plan is to have the new arrangement in place from 1st January 2025.

No details were announced nor discussed as to when a Service of Union would take place.

I feel that in the present circumstances it's as good an arrangement as is possible. It will mean that a service will take place every Sunday by Rev. Johannes Wildner in our church.

It does mean change of course, but change is everywhere in the Church of Scotland at present. This change is certainly the surest way to keep Lochend & New Abbey Church viable and we encourage you all to support it.

It looks like I am, at last, going to retire, not that I'm looking forward to it. So I will enjoy our Christmas Services together and take the chance to thank all of you for your support during my six years or so of Locumship. I have thoroughly enjoyed it and wish God's Blessing on your future.

Until the changes take place please note that I can be contacted at any time.

Telephone 01387 264847 or email: mackliz@btinternet.com

With God's Blessings,

Liz

KIRK SESSION NEWS

Union with Maxwelltown West Church: On 24th November a meeting of the congregation was held after the morning service at which the Basis of Union between Lochend and New Abbey church and Maxwelltown West church was discussed and voted upon. The meeting was chaired by, and the voting was supervised by the Presbytery Clerk, Mrs Christine Murray. The Union was approved by 25 votes for to 10 against. The Basis of Union will now be approved by Presbytery Business committee on 10th December at which meeting a date for the union will be set. This is expected to be 1st January 2025, a convenient time in the church calendar – the end of the financial year and a time at which statistical returns are made, and the Trustees Report is written.

The union of the two congregations means a union of the two geographical areas which form the parishes. The new congregation will be called Maxwelltown West and New Abbey. There will be two centres of worship – one at New Abbey and one at Maxwelltown West church in one enlarged parish. Rev. Johannes Wildner will be the minister of the parish and lead worship each Sunday in both churches. He will be responsible for the pastoral care of the parish and for baptisms, weddings and funerals. The elders of both current congregations will form one Kirk Session responsible for the governance of the whole parish. There will be one Communion Roll comprising the members of Lochend and New Abbey and Maxwelltown West. Financially the new congregation will have one bank account.

The practical matters concerning how the union will work will be discussed by the current two Kirk Sessions. It will take some time to sort out everything involved in uniting the two congregations.

Copies of the Basis of Union of the two congregations are still available for anyone interested, either at the church or from me.

As I have explained before, the Church of Scotland is facing very challenging times. These readjustments which are taking place all over Scotland are part of the solution to a decline in membership, a decline in the number of ministers being trained and a decline in the income of the church.

Festive Songs of Praise: We are invited to join Maxwelltown West church for a Festive Songs of Praise on Sunday 15th December between 4 and 5 pm. There will be refreshments afterwards and this will give those who haven't already done so, an opportunity to meet the Rev. Johannes Wildner and folk in Maxwelltown West.

Harvest Thanksgiving: First Base Agency food bank in Dumfries were most grateful for the donations of goods and money following our harvest thanksgiving as they came at a time of high demand for the food bank. We collect donations of dry goods, toiletries, long-life milk, etc. for the food bank throughout the year. There are boxes at the back of the church for donations.

Christmas: We will be holding our usual Christmas services including some shared with our friends at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church. Please see the back of the newsletter for dates and times.

Bicentenary: We were happy to join St. Mary's for a celebration of their bicentenary at the end of October. There is an article by Mrs Jo Kemp in this newsletter about the bicentenary.

Stamps: At this time of year when we receive more post than usual, can I remind you that I collect stamps for Church of Scotland projects throughout the world. This year money raised by selling stamps is being used to support "Firmly Planted" which is a community-based agroforestry initiative with the ambition of making a sustainable impact across Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Agroforestry presents an opportunity to address challenges of food insecurity, deforestation, climate change and youth unemployment.

Our Mission partner in Malawi, Gary Brough is one of the project co-ordinators. We receive regular letters from Gary with updates about his work. Copies are available at the church.

Catherine Lye
Session Clerk

CHURCH FINANCES

Once again to keep you all updated on the Church Finances, I attach a summary of our regular income and expenditure for the 10 months to end of October.

Our income has decreased slightly, caused mainly by a drop in regular donations due to the gradual sad loss of generous members. However, we have been able to keep our expenditure under control with a drop of about £4000 leaving us at present with a surplus of over £8,500 for the year to date.

As explained elsewhere in this newsletter Presbytery hope to have the Union with Maxwelltown West Church finalised by 1st January and at some stage both bank accounts will be merged into one. I will be in touch with everyone who donates by standing order once we know the details, to allow them to be changed to the new account, but the existing account will be kept open until all of these have been carried out.

I would like to thank you all for your generosity over the last 10 years when I have been Treasurer as it has made my job of balancing the books very straightforward and I hope that you will continue to support the Union and the new Treasurer once details are decided. We can be proud of the position we are in, and I know that the new joint Church will be delighted to be starting out on such a strong financial footing.

David Kingan
Treasurer

Lochend and New Abbey Church **Accounts – 10 months to end October 2024**

<u>Income</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	£	£		£	£
Offerings	3,435	3,553	Ministries and Mission	12,875	12,667
Standing Orders	16,440	18,200	Presbytery dues	-	825
Other Donations	1,812	1,115	Insurance	1,994	1,799
Church Fees	560	450	Organist	530	1,320
Dividends	2,651	2,228	Beeswing Hall	-	30
Gift Aid Reclaim	4,785	4,718	Beadle	1,325	1,250
Life & Work	84	336	Newsletter	-	202
Fund Raising	-	8	Church Light and Heat	1,847	2,097
Other income	2	2	Life & Work	462	546
			Organ Repairs	173	173
			Website Costs	243	191
			Manse Expenses	171	519
			Sundries	98	26
			Fabric Expenditure	1,405	2,896
			Christian Aid Donation	-	500
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>£29,769</u>	<u>£30,610</u>	<u>Total Expenditure</u>	<u>£21,123</u>	<u>£25,041</u>
			<u>Surplus</u>	<u>£8,646</u>	<u>£5,569</u>

NEW ABBEY GUILD

At our opening meeting in September we welcomed Anne Carstairs who spoke about her involvement with the Vine Trust. This is one of the six charities which all the Scottish Guilds have been supporting for the last few years, and Anne was able to show numerous slides of her many visits to the Kazunzu Village of Hope in Tanzania. It was very heart-warming to see how the work was progressing in providing homes for orphans and foster families as well as education facilities and material support with clothing and essential agricultural tools. Volunteers have helped with building the houses which, looking at the slides made clear that these visits were no easy option for Anne and her helpers.

In October, the People's Project speakers had to postpone at the last minute so the baton was passed to me. With my all-abiding interest in the early years of children, our theme of building on SURE FOUNDATIONS fitted in pretty easily! The extraordinarily rapid development of the brain in babies means that from nought to age three 90 per cent has been completed, and this is before they have even started school. In a secure and loving environment and with lots of talking, singing, being read to, and playing, they thrive. Many programmes have been developed to help families who may need a head start and I am hoping that the region's initiative "Homestart", which is under threat, is able to solve its problems. This has been a valuable asset supporting vulnerable families.

We all joined in the discussion from our own points of view as both parents and grandparents.

Our November speaker was Rev. Johannes Wildner from Maxwelltown West Church, Dumfries who spoke about his faith journey and his visit and talk gave us a good opportunity to get to know him better. His many journeys on pilgrimages to a large variety of countries has opened his eyes to many different ways to worship and he was impressed to find how rich the poorest people are in their spiritual lives, clearly a lesson to us all. We look forward to our many more contacts when our two churches become united.

By the time this newsletter goes out it will be December and we will have had our next meeting on the 6th in the Abbey Cottage Tearoom where we will have enjoyed a Festive Afternoon Tea.

I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Glennys Ardin, Convener

NEW ABBEY SCHOOL

Since I last wrote, time has been ticking away busily in school, as ever. I cannot believe Christmas is almost upon us! Some of our activities since I last wrote:

The children were consulted on their views on their local area by Sue and Anina from the New Abbey Community Council. They had lots of super ideas.

Our P7 children were kindly invited to the doctor's surgery for the official launch of the village's second defibrillator. This was followed up by training on its use along with CPR techniques for all staff and children in school.

We enjoyed a Harvest Assembly with Reverend Liz Mack. Our families and staff kindly donated food items for the Apex Foodbank in Dumfries.

Our P6 children have enjoyed basketball and football sessions with Mr Douglas, PE teacher from Dumfries Academy, as part of their transition experience in preparation for secondary school.

We had a whole school curling session on the first day back after the October Holidays. It was great fun – we have some talented curlers who already take part in competitions.

P4-7 enjoyed an all-day STEM workshop in school. They also had an art lesson with Ms McColl, Art Teacher from Dumfries Academy.

Published poet, Matt Goodfellow, spent the afternoon in our school, inspiring the children to find their inner poet, expressing themselves without worry about spelling and punctuation! They were inspired!

Dumfries and Galloway Outdoor Woodland Learning (DGOWL) spent the afternoon in our playground, showing our children and families how nature can be used to teach maths and numeracy. The children were all given a wee tin filled with resources and idea cards for further inspiration. All for free!

At the start of December, our P1-3 children will be singing Christmas songs for the 65 Club in the Village Hall. On Friday 13th December, the whole school will come back to the Village Hall to sing even more Christmas songs during the coffee morning. It's at 10am and all are welcome.

Still on the Friday, the children will also enjoy a Christmas lunch and party. There may even be a special visitor all dressed in red, arranged by our wonderful Parent Council!

Meanwhile, rehearsals for our Christmas Show, "The Magical Christmas Journey", are well underway. It's showing on Monday 16th December at 6pm and Tuesday 17th December at 1,30pm. Our tickets sell out fast but there may be some left. Please call the office if you'd like to come along. They cost £2 each.

On Wednesday 18th December at 2.15pm, we are holding an Open Afternoon for those whose children are due to start P1, in August 2025. There will a chance to talk to the teacher, meet the children, have a wee play and a tour of the school. There will even be a hot chocolate station! Please spread the word.

And finally, we look forward to a Christmas Service with Reverend Liz Mack in New Abbey Church, at 9.15am on Friday 20th December. All are welcome.

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Helen Anderson
New Abbey Primary Head Teacher

ST MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

In 1822 Thomas Bagnall, the serving priest at Kirkconnell House, moved to Kindar House and said Mass in the dining room there while he arranged to buy land, hired Walter Newall as architect and raised money to build the house and St Mary's church in New Abbey. The foundation stone was laid in 1824 and in mid November we were delighted that Bishop Francis Dougan, Bishop of Galloway was able to come and commemorate the bicentenary with a celebratory Mass in our church in New Abbey. The three priests from St Andrews and St Teresa's in Dumfries assisted him together with our friends from the Salesian Order.

We were also so grateful that in the congregation to celebrate with us were our friends from Lochend and New Abbey Parish Church of Scotland, including the Rev. Liz Mack and she and the Bishop enjoyed a brief conversation.

Afterwards we went to New Abbey Village Hall for refreshments and to examine copies of the church registers, local photographs and information about the 14th century monk's Breviary from Sweetheart Abbey lent to us by Dumfries Museum.

One hundred years ago on 27th August 1924 "The Dumfries & Galloway Standard" included a long article about the celebrations then and on 15th November 2024 that newspaper did the same!

Jo Kemp

CHRISTIAN AID

There is a continuing great need for financial support for Christian Aid in all the areas throughout the world where we are currently working with partners to support those who have nothing, no money, no home and even no family.

A couple of months ago, for obvious reasons that have been well documented in the media for many months, the Disasters Emergency Committee announced an urgent Middle East Humanitarian Appeal. With our donations, Christian Aid can help to alleviate this ongoing humanitarian crisis. For instance, for £10, blankets to keep two people warm can be provided; £20 will buy emergency food for five families for one week; and £100 will provide emergency shelter for five families. Maybe when we are celebrating Christmas this year, we can spare a thought, a prayer and a little money to provide a lifeline for others less fortunate.

Needless to say, Christian Aid is still very active around the world and this year's specific Christmas Appeal is for money to buy food and lifesaving supplies for families in Sudan who were forced by a raging war to flee from their homes with nothing, to seek shelter in a refugee settlement in South Sudan. As even the very basic essentials are unaffordable,

through our partners there, Smile Again Africa Development Organisation, we can help to provide financial assistance. This enables mothers to give their children a nutritious meal, fending off the immediate dangers of hunger and malnutrition, and to save for other essentials in order to be able to start to rebuild their lives.

If you wish to donate to a specific appeal, just say so on your donation envelope and I will ensure that it reaches the correct appeal. Donation envelopes are always available on the table inside the church as you enter, and if you can complete the gift-aid slip, this increases your donation.

Eleanor Kinghorn

NEW ABBEY VILLAGE HALL

We have had such a busy hall this year with lots of events and parties. It has been lovely to see.

We have a warm hub on a Monday and Friday from 2pm to 6pm. This is free, with lots of stuff for all ages to keep you busy. Please bring people along with you.

We have regular classes from Let's Get Sporty. There is a pre-school class on Fridays 9.45am to 10.30am; after school Thursdays 3.45pm to 5.15pm; gentle exercise for older groups Fridays 1.30pm-2.30pm. These are all free so make use of them. There is also a fitness class on a Tuesday evening with Kylie.

We also have New Abbey Bowling Club from April to September for outdoor bowls. If you would like to join they will welcome you - or even just go along to try it out. The Club also does carpet bowls on a Wednesday night in the winter months.

We were asked by New Abbey Church if they could use our lounge for their service on Sunday 1st December as their heating was down. I was delighted to help them out. I hope it was a bit warmer?

I would like to thank all of you who have come along and supported all our events. It's been lovely to have all the support.

Still to come:

Christmas Coffee Morning (with children from New Abbey School singing). Friday 13th December at 10am - £2 entry.

Christmas Craft Fair Saturday 14th December 11am – 1pm. £1 entry (there will also be soup and sandwiches on sale).

Christmas Party Sunday 15th December, 2pm - 3.30pm. This is sold out

Pop-up Pub Friday 27th December 7pm – late. There will be dominos and a quiz with prizes. £5 entry

Thanks so much for all your support and let's see what 2025 brings.

Lorraine Sweeney

For any hall enquiries please email: newabbeyhall@gmail.com or call 07770 910156

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEATHS

24th September Elspeth Greig, Lochduhar Nursing Home, formerly Beeswing.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

14th October George Barclay, Southernness.

EVENTS

DECEMBER

At the time of publishing this newsletter, we are waiting for spare parts to repair the New Abbey Church heating boiler and services are being held elsewhere. For details of Sunday services and other events normally held in the church at Christmas time please see notices in New Abbey Stores and on the Village Facebook Page.

Friday 13 th	6.30pm	Joint Advent Service with St Mary's Catholic Church in New Abbey Church
Sunday 15 th	9.45am	Third Sunday in Advent Morning Worship, Rev. Liz Mack
	4pm to 5pm	Joint Christmas Songs of Praise with Maxwelltown West Church in Maxwelltown West Church followed by refreshments.
Friday 20 th	9.15am	School Christmas Service with Rev. Liz Mack in New Abbey Church. All are welcome.
Friday 20 th	7pm	Lessons and Carols in St Mary's Catholic Church.
Sunday 22 nd	9.45am	Fourth Sunday in Advent Morning Worship, Rev. Liz Mack.
Tuesday 24 th	6.30pm	Christmas Eve Service, Rev. Liz Mack.
Sunday 29 th	9.45am	Morning Worship, Rev. Liz Mack

At time of publication, we await confirmation from Presbytery of the date at which a service of union will take place between Lochend and New Abbey and Maxwelltown West Church. We are unable, therefore, to give any details about services into January until the two congregations are united and Rev. Johannes Wildner leads worship each Sunday in New Abbey Church. Details will be intimated and publicised when they become available.