

MAXWELLTOWN WEST CHURCH, DUMFRIES

www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk https://twitter.com/MaxWestChurch

Scottish Charity No.: SC015925 Tel: 01387 255900

SUNDAY SERVICES: 11.00am.

COMMUNION SERVICE: 4th March at 11.00am (3pm service in Hall – June and September Communions only.

See article preceding 'Kirk Session')

SUNDAY CLUB: 11.00am during term time.

CRECHE is available during the morning service every Sunday.

During the vacancy our Interim Moderator is Rev. Sally Russell (01556 503645)

and our Locum is Mr. David Matheson (01387 252042)

Congregational Office Bearers

SESSION CLERK: Mr. A Crossan, Dumfries CLERK TO DEACONS' COURT: Mrs. J Wood, Dumfries

ORGANIST: Mr. S Crosbie, Dumfries TREASURER: SITUATION VACANT

CHURCH OFFICER: Mr. R Wilson, Dumfries FABRIC CONVENER: Mr. D Miller, Dumfries

EDITOR OF 'CONTACT': Mrs. F Saddington, Dumfries

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

Baptisms

26th November: Flynn Douglas Goodwin, son of Scott Goodwin and Shannon Cameron

Deaths

11th November: Mrs. Margaret Carruthers, Dumfries
19th November: Mrs. Josie Thomson, Dumfries
22nd November: Mr. Ian Slack, Dumfries
24th November: Mrs. Irene Brown, Dumfries
1st December: Mrs. Kathleen Brown, Dumfries
3rd December: Mr. James Taylor, Dumfries
6th December: Mr. Alexander Gatheral, Dumfries
10th December: Mrs. Helen Edgar, Dumfries

7th January 2018: Mrs. Elizabeth (Betty) Walker, Dumfries

In the last edition of Contact it was intimated that Mrs. Andrena Thomson of Calside, had been issued a Certificate of Transfer. This was not the case and we are happy to say that Mrs. Thomson is still on the roll of Maxwelltown West.

MAXWELLTOWN WEST MISSION STATEMENT

Maxwelltown West Church seeks to be a place of welcome to all in our parish; a centre of Christian worship and fellowship. We seek to provide a framework for family life and a place where young people may be nurtured in Christian values.

Greetings to you all at the beginning of a New Year.

The past year has seen difficult times for our congregation here in Maxwelltown West, but as we look forward to a new year, I believe that there are new beginnings happening within our community, and I hope and pray that these will continue to grow and flourish during the coming months.

At the end of last year, we submitted some prospective dates for a presentation to the congregation, about Interim Ministry. This will now take place in the church on **Thursday 22**nd **February at 7.00pm. The whole congregation is invited to attend.** Following that, we may have to wait some time for an Interim Minister to become available, but after the presentation, there may be more details of timing available. In the meantime, we look forward to what this year brings and all that it holds for us, as individuals and as a church community.

It has also been a difficult time for our friends in Bondo and Mathia. Indeed, it has been difficult to maintain contact during the past few months, so our prayers are with the folk there as they face the struggles before them.

Thank you to everyone for your help and support,

Love and prayers,

Sally.

A Letter from our Locum

As I type this article (last minute as ever) I can see clear signs of Spring bulbs coming up through the cold snowy earth, showing us signs of Spring in the depth of January. Mid-January last year saw snowdrops in full bloom in my garden. This year, barely an inch above ground level, proving this has been a much colder winter than past few years.

Over the festive period we enjoyed the Special Christmas Services, which were well attended and enjoyed by us all. The Nativity Service on 10th December was brilliant and our Youth, so ably led by Dawn McLeod, were absolutely brilliant and surely many of us will remember their story for many years to come.

Laurieknowe School held their own Christmas Service in our Church and hearing over 200 children singing "Hark the Herald Angels sing" was a joy and surely offers us a real hope for our Church future.

Christmas Eve 7pm service was well attended and good singing and happiness was in much evidence.

Christmas Day service saw 8 children bring a Santa gift to share with us, and I am delighted to say I didn't break anything, - tho' I did manage to allow some cosmetics to fall out of their box.

Sadly, many of us have also gathered over the past few weeks in Church to not only pay our respects, but also to celebrate the lives of a number of very loyal, faithful, dedicated, members - members who gave so much of their time, talents and wealth of love and fellowship to Maxwelltown West Church over a great number of years. Indeed they saw our Church as their second home. Each member will be sadly missed, not only by their own families, but also by their extended family here at Maxwelltown West Church.

I am slowly but surely getting to know many of you better, and together we will continue to journey in the Love of Jesus. My sincere thanks to all who have welcomed me into their homes, and I have enjoyed our chats and fellowship, as well as sharing a wee Psalm and prayer together. I look forward to meeting many more of you over the coming weeks, in church, at home, and in various Church activities and meetings.

On 25th February we will celebrate Thinking Day with our Youth Organisations parading their colours into church. So **please** come along and support our Youth and their Leaders who give so much of their time and talent to nurture our next generation.

The Season of Lent will commence on Sunday 18th February and the Service will be led by Members of Kirk Session and Members. Palm Sunday will be celebrated on 25th March and Easter Sunday on 1st April.

If you have not been in Church recently, let me assure you a very warm, friendly welcome will greet you, and make you feel at home once again.

The author of the Book of Hebrews wrote in chapter 10 v 24 and 25,

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

May God Bless you and keep you.

May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

And may the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Your Brother in Christ,

David Matheson

Service Changes

Afternoon Communion

At the last meeting of the Kirk Session there was discussion concerning the afternoon communion services. Due to the fact that the numbers have been quite low recently, it was proposed that afternoon communion be held at 3pm following the morning services in June and September. Consequently, there will be no afternoon communion in March and December. Anyone who would miss out on communion due to this proposed trial new system, can have a home communion which would be arranged through their Elder. The sacrament would be led the Moderator/minister and could also involve their Elder at a time to suit all parties.

This will be reviewed at the beginning of next year, and if necessary the other services can be reinstated. If you have any thoughts on this please contact the Session Clerk, myself, or your own Elder. Thank you.

Church Service – Sunday 18th March

During March, our Presbytery will be visited by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. This only happens about every ten years. Towards the end of his visit, the Moderator will lead worship in St Michael's and South on Sunday 18th March at 11am. Presbytery have agreed that congregations can cancel worship in their own parishes that day, and come to join with the rest of Presbytery at St Michael's and South. The Kirk Session has agreed to do this. Therefore, on Sunday 18th March 2018, there will be no service in Maxwelltown West Church. We will, instead, be joining with others to worship with the Moderator. There will be a buffet reception after the service and all are welcome.

Sally Russell, Interim Moderator

Kirk Session

The Advent season has now well and truly gone, along with Christmas celebrations of the birth of our Saviour and New Year events. A number of our members took part in the Christmas Eve BBC Scotland broadcast of carols, songs and readings from the Crichton Church.

Linda Hyles has now resigned as Treasurer, having carried out this task for 4 years; she has undertaken to follow through until the end of March when the end of year financial report is due to be presented to Presbytery. (Linda originally undertook to fill this office for a period of 3 years, and has done us proud).

Our fund raising needs to continue and we have a sheet on one of the notice boards in the Simmons Hall where members and friends are invited to help by putting a note of any ideas or suggestions of additional ways to raise much needed cash.

Sadly, the winter season has seen us lose several members, including at least 2 active office bearers who will be missed from our midst. We are now in need of recruiting at least 3 additional elders. I would be grateful to hear from any members who are able and willing to give of their time and talents to ensure that the work of the Lord's church in our parish continues.

The Lent season will soon be upon us and it is proposed that we hold another series of bible study meetings over Lent (and if successful and called for, beyond that period). Anyone interested in seeing what this involves should contact either David Matheson or the Session Clerk. This small, friendly group allows getting involved with others in fellowship and widens their understanding and knowledge of the bible, as well as simply getting to know fellow worshippers a bit better.

We hope to have a presentation by the Interim Ministry Team in the fairly near future which will clarify the church's way forward in the short term and, God willing, to lead us forward to the appointment of a new full-time ministry.

D C, Session Clerk

Maxwelltown West Church Needs You

Do you have computer skills, a basic knowledge of accountancy and a desire to be part of an enthusiastic, motivated and dedicated team; then Maxwelltown West Needs You.

Our church Treasurer is unable to continue for a further term and we urgently need to fill this vital position within the church. The church accounts are maintained on computer and training will be given in the particular software programme and the way that the accounts are managed. The role includes managing the church bank accounts and undertaking all usual Treasurer's responsibilities. It will be the Treasurer's responsibility to produce figures, showing the current financial position of the church, for the Finance Committee and the Deacons Court.

The position is open to any member of the church, or anyone of suitable character and competence, who is not a member of the church, who feels that they can be of service by filling this role. If you can't do it, ask someone else who you think might be able to undertake this work.

Please contact, in the first instance, Mrs. J Wood, Clerk to the Deacons Court, or speak directly to her, or any member of the Kirk Session or Deacons' Court, when you see them in church, to intimate your interest.

The remuneration package includes the satisfaction that you are providing a vital service for the church and thereby playing a significant role in God's work; what more could you ask!

JW

World Church Team

Following David's last report in Contact, times in Kenya are still very unstable with violence and corruption reported.

John in Mathia writes "The year 2017 has been very bad in our country as ordinary people are badly affected in terms of Economy, Politics and other things. We have confidence that God is doing something new in our life - Isaiah 62 v1-9.

Family and church are doing well except for increasing food costs by four times of normal. Hospitals are not reliable for medicines and you may buy some at chemists. Again we thank you very much for your concerns towards our young people in their education. This has given them motivation for extra efforts to achieve good grades. Five new students will be joining university this year."

Our Christmas Gift Appeal this year towards Kenyan projects realised £600 which will be a great help in 2018. The WCT thank you for the generous support and we ask you to keep our Kenyan friends in your prayers. May God bless you all.

From A D and the World Church Team

Pilgrimage

A deliverance proposed and accepted at last year's General Assembly of the Church of Scotland reversed centuries of the Church's hostility to the ancient practice of Pilgrimage and affirmed its place in the life of the Kirk. Congregations were asked to explore the opportunities for pilgrimage locally, in a modern-day setting.

The tradition of pilgrimage is seeing a resurgence in Scotland, with six major Pilgrim Routes under development, and the popularity of spiritual journeying is increasing yearly. Pilgrimage offers a way to explore spiritual values in the context of our surrounding landscape, heritage, art and devotion. Pilgrimage is recreation and re-creation, for all tastes, ages, cultures and backgrounds.

Scotland is well placed to offer opportunities for contemporary pilgrim journeys. Our surroundings are varied – expansive, austere, urban, rural – steeped in thousands of years of spirituality, from stone circles to modern-day churches, mosques and temples. At a time of declining Sunday church attendance, pilgrimage offers a way for people to reconnect with their spirituality and with the church.

Christian pilgrimage can be traced to the 1st century AD, when Jerusalem and other biblical cities became popular destinations. Known as "People of the Way" – a title used by the 2016 Moderator, the Very Reverend Dr. Russell Barr, as his theme for that year's General Assembly – these early Christians were instructed to travel in order to spread the good news. As a result, saints and their journeys became associated with special places: in Galloway for example, Saint Ninian and Whithorn; Robert the Bruce, who is said to have suffered from leprosy, travelled twice to Whithorn to pray for relief from his illness.

The Middle Ages was a time of popular pilgrimage, but during the Reformation people rebelled against abuses such as selling pardons for sins and making money from supposedly sacred objects such as saints' clothing, hair or bones. Pilgrimage fell out of favour, but now this way of worship is attracting many more "People of the Way". The journey is as important as the destination.

With this background in mind, what I am proposing is that we at Max West Church respond to the remit from the General Assembly and actively explore the opportunities for pilgrimage locally. My local pilgrimage proposal is based on the Ruthwell Heritage Trail. This attractive (particularly in Spring) and interesting walking route visits the Brow Well and the Savings Bank Museum along the way, featuring quiet lanes and tracks, a woodland walk amongst bluebells and a path along the Solway Merse, finishing at Ruthwell Church with its magnificent Ruthwell Cross.

This cross is thought to date back to around 680 AD and is one of the most famous and elaborate Anglo-Saxon monumental sculptures, a rare treasure surviving from the Dark Ages in Britain. Ironically, the General Assembly of 1664 ordered that the cross, "this idolatrous monument", be completely destroyed. Courageously, the Reverend Gavin Young hid the cross in the clay floor of the church. In 1818, the Reverend Dr. Henry Duncan recognised the relevance of the fragments and restored the cross in the Manse garden.

In 1887, the Reverend James McFarlan built an apse in the church to house the cross. Now, after an extensive renovation, the Ruthwell Cross has been restored to its former glory, featuring intricate inscriptions in Latin, and, more unusually for a Christian monument, the Runic alphabet.

If you are interested in joining this initial pilgrimage, which does not necessarily have to be completed on foot, and would like to hear more, please get in touch either at church, by telephone or by email.

Plans for future pilgrimages include Glenluce Abbey to St Ninian's Cave and Garlieston to the Isle of Whithorn.

DJ

Maxwelltown West Church History - Ministers of Our Church

The tenth Minister of our Church (1929-1943) - the Rev. J. McW. Melrose Update to James McW. Melrose's War Record

The official war record for James Melrose obtained from the National Archives is different from that shown in the Church History Records. The following, taken from the Archives records is a time line of his 4 Years in the army.

05-12-1915: Joined the army and posted for basic training, with the army reserve. James listed his occupation at that time as an inspector of munitions and his address as c/o Wilson, Main Street, Shettleston.

04-09-1916: Mobilised and posted to 5th Reserve Brigade, the Royal Field Artillery at Scotton Camp (now Catterick). James with the rank of gunner.

12-10-1916: Posted to the 64th H division ammunition column with the rank of gunner. It is probable that during this period he suffered exposure to gas which would affect his health for the rest of his life and contributed to his death.

05-01-9117: James Melrose transferred to No2 officer cadet school with a view to obtaining a commission.

17-12-1917: James failed his gunnery exam but passed at the 2nd attempt.

18-12-1917: James was commissioned as 2nd lieutenant.

21-09-1919: James had now resumed his studies for the ministry, but remained in the Army Reserve and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

18-01-1920: James finished his service in the Reserves. Later in that year he was ordained as a minister of the Free Church.

REPORTS FROM ORGANISATIONS

The Guild

How time flies and now into another year, a lot has been happening since the last Contact - some happy events and sad ones too.

We have lost several members lately, all of whom will be greatly missed: Ella Edgar who was our oldest member at 103, Kathleen Brown, a former Guild President attended meetings this session and Betty Walker more recently, who was very involved in Guild, Church and community. All these people worked tirelessly for us over many years and will always have a special place in the hearts of everyone who knew them.

Singing always lifts the spirits and "The Guild Big Sing," a national event held in our area at St Mary's-Greyfriars in November, almost lifted the roof.

Our Coffee Morning in the autumn, although poorly attended, raised £817 for Church and Guild. Grateful thanks to everyone who generously supported us.

This is the final year of our theme and the six projects which we have chosen, run by Christian Aid - "Caring for Mother Earth" in Bolivia - helping to save the rain forests and supplying indigenous communities with solar ovens which removes the need to cut trees and smoke which affects people's eyes, as well as allowing women time for education and other choices in life. Our soup and sandwich lunch in February will be to raise funds for this.

A D

Brownies

The Brownies returned after the October holidays and enjoyed dressing up for their Hallowe'en party with traditional games. Later that week, 20 Brownies and 4 Leaders attended our Sleeping Beauty Sleepover. We went to the movies in the Centenary Hall and watched the film of Sleeping Beauty. We made several craft items to take home and managed to get a little sleep.

In November, we had a visit from a Red Cross trainer to help us start working on our First Aid badge. Everyone was able to learn some basic first aid and we hope to complete the badge by Easter.

In December, we went to the Theatre Royal in Dumfries to see the Panto. As it was Sleeping Beauty, we could compare it with our knowledge from our Sleepover.

We held a Snowman Drive before the holidays and we also practised Christmas songs which the Brownies performed to their parents and some guests. Snowman pictures were made as our Christmas craft and extra ones were taken to Lochduhar for some of the residents.

Currently we have 29 Brownies, and some will be moving on at the summer. Should you know anyone interested in becoming a Brownie, please register interest at www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested or get in touch.

Jill McEwan, Brownie Leader

Scout Group

The Cubs and Scouts had a Christmas night out to the pantomime at the Theatre Royal to see Cinderella. Since then, we have lost the Assistant Cub Leader, Amy McCreadie. Thanks for her work. She has now gone on to be the District Secretary.

If anyone would like to become an Assistant Cub Leader, please contact me. There are 12 Cubs. The Leader is J McNaught. The Scout section is doing well with scouts coming in from Noblehill scouts. The leaders there are S Sinclair, D MacPhee and A Rush. We are indebted to all the youth leaders for their time.

The Scouts had a camp in December, when it was freezing. The zips on the tents froze making entry and exiting difficult. A successful event.

H MacD GSL

Children's Corner

Welcome boys and girls. I hope you all had a fantastic Christmas break. Unfortunately, due to my back injury, you have returned to the Sunday Club before me! I hope you have all been having fun learning with David who has kindly been standing in for me.

We ended last year with a really positive congregational nativity, with Blair and Georgia narrating and Daisy directing and acting as lead angel. Well done to you all. You did a fantastic job of helping me involve the congregation within our small but heart-felt nativity play. It was lovely to see everyone pull and work together to make it such a huge success. I hope you all enjoyed the social group brunch afterwards too. Well done to everybody for all your hard work. As our Sunday Club numbers are so small, our 3 stars this year will be treated to afternoon tea and cakes, rather than have a Christmas party when I am more mobile © I look forward to it.

I know you all have looked at the story of Zacchaeus both at school and Sunday Club. Here is a short story from the perspective of his nephew that I thought you would enjoy. Why not look it up in your bibles (Luke Ch 19 Vs 1-10) then see if you can complete the puzzles afterwards.

My Uncle Zach (Zacchaeus)

Jonah had an Uncle Zach who you can read about in your bibles at home. Jonah was looked after by his Uncle Zach ever since he was a little boy, when his Mum and Dad were killed by robbers on the road into Jericho. He treated him like his own son.

Although Jonah loved his uncle very much, everyone thought him a rich thief as he was the head tax collector for the Romans in his home town. Uncle Zach wasn't really a nice man but he worked really hard to make sure Jonah had everything that he needed. Because Uncle Zach also collected and took a portion of the other tax collectors' money, he became very rich. They lived in a very nice large house with a big open courtyard, with fountain and trees and a beautiful garden. They had servants, horses, chariots, sheep, goats and a nice roof terrace to sit out on when it was really hot. Uncle Zach told Jonah they didn't really need friends if they were comfortable.

Because Jonah was his nephew, no one spoke to him either at school. No one liked the fact that Jonah's Uncle not only paid the Romans their tax but kept plenty for himself.

One day Jonah went rushing in to tell his uncle that there was a prophet called Jesus in town, who could heal people. People were saying he could do anything. Uncle Zach looked really excited and ran out of the house to go and see this prophet. When Jonah finally caught up with him, he saw Uncle Zach climbing a sycamore tree. Because he was only a wee short man, he couldn't see over the crowd.

Jonah had never before seen so many people in the town. He tried like mad to climb up after Uncle Zach but he couldn't manage. Just then he heard Jesus speak for the first time to his Uncle Zach. He said "Zacchaeus! Quick, come down for I must be a guest in your home today." The crowd got annoyed that Jesus would wish to go to the house of a sinner and called Uncle Zach names; Sinner, Scum!! Jonah was really angry as his uncle was only collecting taxes, not sinning.

Anyway, when Jonah looked round his Uncle Zach was running home so fast, a cloud of dust followed him!! He was running holding up his robe so that he didn't fall over it. It was pretty funny to watch © When Jonah got home, Uncle Zach was so excited that he invited most of the town to come round, even all the ones who called him names. The servants were all running around making a big feast for Jesus as well as all the other Pharisees and scribes and townspeople who attended.

Jonah went up to the roof terrace so that he could watch from above the proceedings. He was really surprised to hear what his Uncle said to Jesus; "I will give half of my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have overcharged people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much." The people in the courtyard could hardly believe their ears. Jesus said loudly to everyone "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be the son of Abraham. And I, the Son of Man, have come to seek and save those like him who are lost"

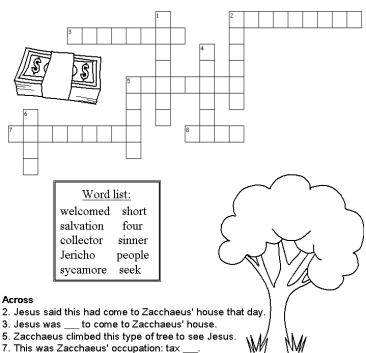
Jonah didn't really understand what was going on but rushed downstairs to see Jesus for himself. Jesus took his hand and told him that he was very pleased to meet him. Jonah couldn't speak and was so overwhelmed by what he was feeling that he rushed forward and hugged Jesus for all he was worth. Jesus hugged him back and Jonah felt so loved that he just knew that loving Jesus was the most important thing he could do in life.

Jonah and Zacchaeus's lives would never ever be the same again. Uncle Zach did everything he promised Jesus he would do, turning his life around and becoming the nicest man Jonah knew. He gave to the poor and gave four times the money he had wrongly taken from the town. He made loads of friends and people stopped hiding from him and calling him names. Jonah worked a lot harder at school and at making friends, telling them all about how Jesus the son of God had once visited his Uncle Zach and him.

Do you feel like you know Jesus yet? Out of all the people he could have chosen he chose to forgive a sinner and show him and his family love and acceptance. Do you know that he loves you more than anyone in the whole world could? If not, come to Sunday Club and learn how to open your hearts to Jesus. Your life too can be turned around.

If you need any information please contact me - Dawn

Zacchaeus Crossword

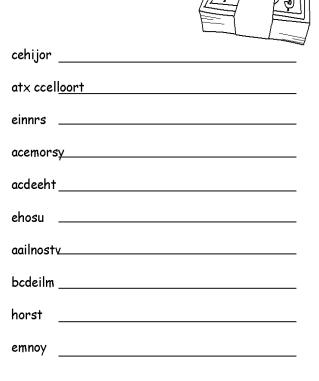


- 5. Zacchaeus climbed this type of tree to see Jesus.
- 8. Jesus came to ___ and to save the lost.

- 1. This was the city where the story took place.
- 2. The crowd was surprised Jesus would go to a house of this type of person.
- 4. There were a lot of these surrounding Jesus.
- 5. Zacchaeus wasn't tall but this.
- 6. Zacchaeus didn't just pay people back but gave them ___ times more.

Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

Zacchaeus Anagram



		Church Flowers	Memorial Vase
April	1st	Mrs. J. Grant	Mrs. O. Geddes
	8th	Mrs. M. Whelan	VACANT
	15th	Mrs. S. Muir	Mrs. P. Williams
	22nd	Mrs. O. Woods	Mrs. J. Boyer
	29th	Mrs. M. Holmes	VACANT
May	6th	Miss M. Gemmill	Mrs. J. McEwan
	13th	Mrs. S. Robin	VACANT
	20th	Mrs. M. Savage	Mrs. A. Milligan
	27th	VACANT	Mrs. I. Johnstone
June	3rd	Mrs. Anderson	Mrs. E. Wilson
	10th	VACANT	VACANT
	17th	Mrs. E. Riddick	VACANT
	24th	VACANT	Mrs. J. Sloan

If you would like to take a vacant date or help to arrange church flowers, please contact Anne.