

March 2020



MAXWEST CONTACT



Maxwelltown West Church - Dumfries



The Church of Scotland



MAXWELLTOWN WEST CHURCH

Our Mission

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.

SUNDAY SERVICES – 11 am

Communion Service: Sunday 1st March - 11am

MaxWest Bible Explorers: 11am during term time.

CONTACTS

During the Vacancy: Interim Moderator: **Rev. Sally Russell** (01556 503645)

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Scottish Charity Reference: SC 015925; CCLI: 1194718

Session Clerk

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Clerk to the Deacons' Court: Patricia Jardine (01387 247604)

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The Guild

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Anne Dunbar

Dawn McLeod

Anita Stott

Jill McEwan

Tracey Stewart

Anne Walter

Eileen Riddick

Jane Marchbank

Heather Johnson

David Johnson

Eileen Riddick

Margaret Young

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Issue No 41 - Cover Picture: Snowdrops in Durisdeer Churchyard



Frae Your Locum -

David Matheson writes:



Belated New Year Greetings to you all! I do hope you all enjoyed Christmas and welcomed in 2020.

Writing this on a cold stormy winter's day seems so far from the springtime which will be soon with us. Indeed it is a joy to see spring bulbs sprouting their green shoots up through the cold wet ground.

So it is for us as "Church". For out of the depths of cold despair of 2016 has come a real sense of hope springing up for the future of Maxwelltown West Parish Church. The Nomination Committee have been very busy praying, thinking and writing our Parish Profile. And I for one promise my PRAYERS for God to call the right Minister to lead you forward on your Christian Journey.

Elders and Deacons have once again a spring in their step and thoughts: those who were in Church on Sunday 22nd Dec all with one accord felt something move amongst them. The Nativity play rekindled our Christmas message so powerfully and yet so beautifully scripted and performed by all. A truly memorable service!



Now that is true worship where many participated in the service and all felt were truly uplifted, and had worshipped and praised God for the greatest Gift of His only Son, baby Jesus. This was followed by a gloriously festive feast of soup, sandwiches, mince pies, cake and refreshments for charity.

Seven of us thoroughly enjoyed Advent Bible study, again using material from *Embrace*, who help others in Christ's Name in Middle East countries, including Bethlehem itself.

It was a real pleasure once again to welcome on your behalf, Laurieknowe School to Max West on Friday 20th December. Wow! The children really were superb. P2 and P7 led the Readings and reflected upon the familiar Christmas Bible texts as well as what Christmas meant to them personally. Again some of the youngsters did that by drawing pictures, and some were stunning. They put their souls into singing carols and other festive songs. What was also great was to see our gallery well filled with parents and relatives as well as members of our Church. This I am sure encourages the children as well as Head Teacher Mrs McLellan and her staff.



Christmas Eve saw a good attendance, and once again we welcomed Anna Pearcey and Declan McGarva to display their musical talents. They very deservedly received a rousing round of applause.

As we approach the season of Lent we will once again

be offering Lenten Bible Study on Thursday evenings at 7pm from 27th February through to 2nd April. These evenings last around two hours and time seems to fly by. I again invite you to come along to any or all of these evenings. **Please do not feel you lack Bible knowledge and unable to come along.** It's a very rewarding experience, and it's through discussion and prayer that God reveals new ideas, and opens up His Gospel to us.

My thanks to all who have welcomed me to their bedside in hospital, nursing home or at home. I leave these visits feeling blessed and so often re-energized.

May I appeal to those who have not recently attended Our Lord's Sacrament of Holy Communion, to join Rev. Sally and your fellow Christian friends at 11am on 1st March in Church.

I hope that many of you will come along and join with us on Palm Sunday 5th April and Easter Sunday 12th April. **Remember Easter is the most important time in our Christian calendar**, when we remember the supreme sacrifice Jesus paid on the Cross for us, and His glorious resurrection up from the cold tomb on Easter Sunday.

Halleluiah! JESUS IS RISEN! May the LORD bless you and keep you:
May God make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you:
May God lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God Bless you and all those whom you Love,
Your Brother in Christ,

David Matheson Locum

BUILDING UP OUR PROFILE

It was at the February 2019 meeting of Presbytery that the “sisting” of the vacancy at Maxwelltown West was finally lifted and we were “cited” to call a minister. In plain English, this meant that negotiations with Presbytery had been concluded and that we were now allowed to call a minister.

Since that time, we have held two congregational Meetings to discuss where we think we are as a church, and our way forward. These frank discussions have proved to be most useful when it came to putting our draft Parish Profile together.

Before that, a Nominating Committee of 13 members of the congregation was voted in, with David Johnson as Convener, and Faye Dickie as Clerk. A small group of four from the Nominating Committee was charged with producing a draft Parish Profile for approval by our Kirk Session and the Vacancy Procedure Committee of Presbytery. By the time of publication of this edition of “Contact” we hope that this approval will have been given and our vacancy will have been advertised.

Included in our Parish Profile is the following: *“.....the congregation has worked together with our Interim Minister and Locum and has emerged as a stronger, united church.....*

“We are a warm, friendly and welcoming church, with a strong feeling of ‘church family’”. Our Interim Minister, Rev. Sally has given us calm and wise counsel, and our Locum, David Matheson, continues to be an enthusiastic advocate of Max West’s positive qualities. We are prayerfully appreciative of their commitment to us.

At present within the Presbytery of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright there are 15 out of 32 congregations in vacancy, nearly half. We are well aware of the challenges that face us as we embark on the next stage of “our journey”.

David Johnson - Convener of the Nominating Committee



Greetings from the sponsors of this issue of

MAXWEST CONTACT

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Diary Dates

Sunday 1st March: Communion Sunday - 11 am

Friday 5th March: The Guild: at 7pm:

Spring Meeting & AGM at St Mary's-Greyfriars Church Hall:
Pam Cairns: 'Seema's Project'.

Saturday, 6th March: World Day of Prayer

Friday 13th March: Film Night at 7pm: 'Edie'

Tuesday 24th March: The Guild AGM -
Edith Beeton & Friends

Thursday 26th March: After Eighths at 8pm:
Kathryn King - Designer Jewellery

Friday 3rd April: Film Night at 7pm: 'Lemon Tree'

Sunday 5th April: Palm Sunday

Friday 10th April: Good Friday

Sunday 12th April: Easter Sunday

Thursday 30th April: After Eighths at 8pm:
End of Session Meal

Friday 15th May: Film Night at 7pm: 'The Chorus'

Thursday 4th June: Nithsdale Guilds Together:
'Let's Celebrate' - Dunscore Church 7pm



KEEPING OUR HOUSE IN GOOD ORDER

If you were attending church during January you could not fail to notice the scaffolding that had been erected beneath the chandelier over the space in front of the apse. This was required for Health and Safety reasons, while we secure the chandelier and fit an electric winch to lower and raise it. This will make it suitable for use in the 21st Century. Our Locum David Matheson has been flexible and philosophical about adapting how he takes the service around the inconvenience of it all. The cost of the scaffolding will be £960 in total. We'd face this cost each time we need to substantially replace light bulbs, so it's therefore sensible to take this opportunity to fit a remote control for the winch when the time comes round to replace a lamp.

Jane Fair has volunteered to clean the ten globes which have a jacket of dust accumulated over

several years. It may be necessary to wear sun glasses in church for a few weeks after completion of the work!

In December 2019, David Miller resigned as Fabric Convener after his second stint in that capacity. David will be worshipping at the Baptist Church henceforth where Norma has been an active member for many years. We owe him a debt of gratitude for his many years service as a Deacon as well as overseeing the care of the buildings. He will be a hard act to follow, but we need to find a replacement for him in short order. **Any volunteers? Please contact me asap!** The need to continue to maintain and, if possible, upgrade the property is forever ongoing.

David set out the groundwork for the 2020 Fabric Budget at his final Fabric Committee meeting in December and this has now been completed for presentation to the Finance Committee and thence to the next Deacons' Court meeting.

In addition to the regular costs of heating and lighting; gas and electric safety inspections; telecom bills; fire extinguisher inspection and the many small items of minor repairs and replacements, we are required by Presbytery to address items of disrepair and the like which are highlighted in the Quinquennial Property Inspection report. This has been commenced but is well behind programme due to time and budgetary restraints.

An injection of finance will be required in order to complete the outstanding works. This year may well see a return to fund raising events and possibly some form of Stewardship Campaign.

Our church is the house of God; open to all to be received in safety, love and warmth; and to facilitate the worship of God in song, music, prayer and the Word. We should do our utmost to maintain it.

Drew Crossan - Session Clerk

MAX WEST BIBLE EXPLORERS

We had a fantastic start to our new Sunday bible study group, which the youngsters seem to be enjoying. Our first project has been to look at Genesis, and both Blair and Georgia have been breaking down and questioning what is contained there. They have been particularly interested in how long ‘a day’ was when the world was created and we have explored many theories around this and how Satan arrived into ‘paradise’. Deep stuff, but it is allowing us to explore the true meaning of God’s word.

Towards the end of the summer David Matheson suggested that we have a trip with the youngsters. David, Blair, Georgia, Sandy the dog and I all headed off to the Mabie Forest where we followed a range of different routes, finishing off in the park and then the Mabie House Hotel. David had phoned ahead and they had prepared a mountain of food for us all, including sandwiches, hot chocolate, cream and jam scones and ice-creams which were huge. We had a lovely night and made a huge hole in all the food. It was much appreciated and our thanks go to David for this lovely treat.

If you would like information about our Youth Bible Explorers group for 10 to 16yr olds, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01387 251419. Thanks! Dawn McLeod



Bible Word Search

C Y U V M S S G I C E B S D P
K K O U E R R I D Z V I R E R
W R I T E R S E I E V B O R O
J P C T B T S R T Z R L H I M
K K T O R G O E C P O E T P I
M E O U P M O A S E A T U S S
L K T N E M A T S E T H A N E
S H W M P A R A B L E S C I S
G N I H C A E T E D I U G Y Q
D A E R L E A R N Y R O T S Q

- authors
- Bible
- books
- chapters
- guide
- inspired
- learn
- letters
- memorize
- parables
- promises
- read
- red
- story
- teaching
- testament
- truth
- verses
- writers



MESSY CHURCH





MAXWEST MOVIES forthcoming attractions

It's been a heartwarming experience to see how well the MaxWest Movies' Film Nights have been progressing – judging by the numbers of people who ask us about the next screening it's become a much-anticipated social experience. The general feeling is that around ten films, spread

monthly over the period September to early May is about enough – as the lighter nights begin to demand more of our time.

When this issue of *MaxWest Contact* appears we'll already be well through our Spring Season, with three shows left. Anticipating the need to get outdoors, in March we'll be showing **'Edie'**, a truly remarkable story with Sheila Hancock starring as an 80+ year old who is determined to scale one of Scotland's most dramatic mountains – Suilven.

Running close to Holy Week is a film that doesn't follow the usual box-office blockbusters that get repeated at Eastertime. Instead **'Lemon Tree'** is an extraordinary and sensitive portrayal set in the fractious lands between Israel and Palestine about a widow whose fruitful lemon tree orchard is threatened by a land grab with barbed wire and bulldozers, to accommodate a high-ranking Israeli minister and his wife. The two women form a dignified bond in the face of adversity on all sides.

Finally, in May, we go to France where, in a provincial run-down school for 'difficult' youngsters, a newly arrived teacher takes on the challenge of finding the best channel for taming their energies. Beautifully made, **'The Chorus'** is a gem of a story with some beautiful music and voices.

We're already looking at programmes for next autumn, and spring 2021. If you have any titles that you would like to put forward for us to put into the mix – do let us know! *M.M.*

David and Heather Johnson had been hoping to have a forest of beans growing in time for a Messy Church session - alas only two seeds decided to co-operate. Maybe the other seeds had heard that someone had plans for beans on toast? There was even a little rumour that if the scaffolding rigged in the church for the lighting repairs stayed for any length of time we could be in for a new production of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' from the Praise Group! Maybe we should ask the team at **The Beechgrove Garden** for some tips?

Anyway, this is just a little reminder from the 'Two Has-Beens' (groan) that Messy Church continues on the last Saturday of each month - and everyone has a really great time!



MESSY NATIVITY!

Maxwelltown West Church Register

Rest In Peace

23/10/19 Mrs Maud Ainslie
29/10/19 Mr James Saunders
01/11/19 Mrs Elizabeth Archibald
17/11/19 Miss Irene Biggar
21/11/19 Mrs June Hurry
27/12/19 Mrs Margaret Leys
04/01/20 Mrs Sarah (Sadie) Flockhart
11/01/20 Mr Douglas Boyer
11/01/20 Mr John Elliot Smith
14/01/20 Mrs Doreen Sutherland

STEPHEN'S AT HOME WITH THE KING OF INSTRUMENTS!

It was the great humanitarian and Nobel Peace Prize winner Albert Schweitzer, also a passionate organist, who once said *'Thank God each time when you are privileged to sit before the organ console and assist in the worship of the Almighty.'*

Today, many churches in Scotland struggle to find someone to play the organ, assuming of course that the instrument has been kept in a playable condition. Sadly, we're relying more and more on electronic substitutes pre-loaded with entire



hymnaries. How fortunate we are at Max West! Any early arrivals on a Sunday morning usually can share in Stephen Crosbie's 'warm up' on our organ as he checks out the hymn tunes for the service. Stephen has always been keen to explore the instrument's incredible range of tonality, and many of us have already noticed a fresh, exciting clarity - something of a departure from the standard church organ sound. With over thirty years' experience I wondered how his interest in music began:

S: I was about twelve years old when I came across an old LP record – do you remember those? – my father had quite a large collection, and this particular disc was



CHURCH FLOWERS

	Church	Memorial Vase
Apr 5	Mrs J Grant	Mrs O Geddes
12	Mrs M Wheelans	Miss M Gemmill
19	Mrs S Muir	Mrs P Williams
26	Mrs E McNay	Mr J McQueen
May 3	Mrs M Holmes	Vacant
10	Mrs J Mc Ewan	Vacant
17	Mrs M Savage	Mrs A Milligan
24	Miss E Beeton	Mrs I Johnstone
31	Mrs J Marshall	Mr Roy Wilson
Jun 7	Mrs Anderson	Vacant
14	Mrs E Riddick	Vacant
21	Mrs C Muir	Vacant
28	Vacant	Vacant

If you would like to take a vacant date or help to arrange church flowers, please contact Anne Dunbar. Tel: 01387 251455
Flower distribution is a big part of our outreach - bringing contact and a bouquet to the unwell or housebound.

of organ music. I was amazed at the range of sound that the instrument could play – from a whisper to a huge roar, and that really excited me.

M: So where could you go to learn to play?

S: Here in Dumfries, at St John's was where I started – I was able to have lessons there, and then my musical world suddenly opened up – there was a course in St Andrews, and from there I was lucky to get onto a weekend course for teenagers at the Royal School of Church Music in Surrey. It was in the very grand surroundings of Addington Palace, formerly the summer home of the Archbishop of Canterbury; the school was well known as the heart and home of church music, devoted to improvement of music in Christian worship. That really laid the foundation for me, and I continued with lessons in Carlisle Cathedral with the Assistant Organist there for five years. That was an amazing instrument to play – 4,000 pipes!

M: Did you have many other opportunities to build your experience?

S: Some years ago, I went to the Netherlands for a seven-day organ festival – the classes that were organised there were absolutely fantastic; the tutors and instruments were all world class, and it even included the chance to go on to the Müller organ in the Grote Kerk of St. Bavo in Haarlem that had once been played on by Mozart at the age of 10!

M: You were recently very busy getting ready for a series of new exams.

S: That's right – the London College of Music and the Royal Schools of Music had just introduced diplomas for Organ Performance, and I gained awards from both, including an Associateship at the Royal School of Music. It doesn't end there – I'm now working towards the next level to become an Associate (Level 5) of the London College of Music.

Stephen - we wish you well in your musical journeys on the organ!

Mike Marshall



NEWS FROM ALL THE GROUPS

Maxwelltown West Brownies - *What a busy and fun November and December we had!*

- enjoyed **Brownie Sports** at David Keswick Centre
- **Bonfire night** - invited by Mr & Mrs Irving for fireworks and food
- Took part in **Remembrance Sunday** Church Parade
- Winter themed **Sleepover** in Church Hall. Enjoyed crafts, newspaper snowball fight, chocolate fountain and hot dogs - (we're all looking a bit tired in the picture above!)
- Made many **snowmen gifts and cards** to give to residents at Lochduhar
- Went **carol singing** at Lochduhar and enjoyed our walk back on a crisp winter evening.
- Made **Christmas decorations** for the tree in the Church hall.
- Enjoyed **Dick Whittington panto** at Theatre Royal.



Leanna achieved her **Brownie Gold Award**, presented by **Mrs Rosalind Hall**, County President of **Girlguiding Dumfriesshire**.

Some of our plans for Brownies in 2020:

- Celebrating **75 years of Brownies** at Maxwelltown West
- **Thinking Day** Parade
- **Display** on notice board in the Church
- Hoping our **daffodils flower!**
- Taking part in **Country Dancing and Music festivals**
- We will be **planting a Belgian Elm tree** in Dock Park in late February/early March.
This is to have a plaque to mark our 75 years
- End of term **Birthday Party** in March
- **Day trip** in April, destination will be announced soon!

It looks that we will have lots of fun and continue to have a busy time. We currently have 30 Brownies and are happy to take names of future Brownies.

Jill McEwan, Brownie Leader

Scout Group

GSL Hamish
MacDonald
reports

We had a successful EGM to join the 28th MaxWest Scout Group with the 10th Georgetown Scout Group on 28th October 2019. A date incorporating the two group numbers: 28/10/19. The merger has enabled us to create a Group with all three sections. The Cubs (*below*) are showing the old

and new colours, the new version taking in the two dominant colours.

The new Necker was presented to Stewart Sinclair, (*below*) with the Scout Leaders gathered around.



We sadly bade farewell to John McNaught after some eight years, and will be a loss to the group. New leaders Kieran, Alexena and Gary are taking over.

There was a camp arranged in October, but we had to call it off after finding out that the hall was surrounded in building materials. We are hoping to do up the Scout hall in the New Year, and the Parent Committee are actively looking at grants to enable us to do this.



Beavers and Scouts proudly wearing their new colours





Here we are in 2020, another decade with many exciting events ahead!

Firstly at Christmas our “Travelling Santa” won by Ruth Poole and donated to a young friend from Canada, made £80 for Guild funds. Grateful thanks to those who supported us.

By the time you read this we hope our “Soup and Sandwich Lunch” in February has raised a good sum to help this year’s project **Seema’s** in Puna, India to help support brothel children and mothers to escape to a better life. Dr Pam Cairns from Forfar

and her team return regularly to visit Seema in Puna, funding their own flights and reporting on progress. *(Make a note in your diary for March 5th when Pam Cairns will be attending our Guild Spring Meeting).* Latest news confirms the two homes for girls and boys in a countryside village are complete and running well. The children attend school every day with senior pupils working in a market garden and supplying vegetables to the school kitchens.



One senior girl has qualified to attend a residential college and hopes others will follow.

In the city, thanks to Guild funding Seema has started a feeding

programme for the very small children who are left behind. She reports there are over 100 children living on the streets of Puna.



You will be interested to know last year we supported the Boys Brigade sending them £500 towards training new leaders in Christian faith and sports as well as life skills. National figures for them are now over £45,000 with the final year to go for our six projects.

Membership in the Guild is free again this year for men and women, so why not come to a meeting and find out more about us. Dates and information are always on the church intimations and a syllabus is on the Guild Notice Board. *Anne Dunbar*



After Eights

Like the BBC we aim to entertain and inform and we think our autumn programme offered both aspects as well as providing opportunities for friendship and fun. Helen Wright shared her passion for Malawi, and the adventures and pitfalls of leading pupils from Lockerbie Academy Educational Partnership to experience life in an African school. Local musicians Whigmaleerie led us on a joyful musical odyssey from Canada to Shetland

and Scandinavia and Mike Marshall transformed "A Little Postal History" into a fascinating film of mail delivery across the British Isles using horseback, steamtrains, ferry, air and even rockets. We thank all our speakers for making our meetings so enjoyable. *Heather Johnson*

Good Companions

We continue to meet every two weeks and our numbers have remained constant. We had planned to meet at Cavens for lunch last week, but as many of our members were unable to attend due to colds I was left with no option but to cancel. I am hoping that we will be able to re-arrange this soon. I have planned another set of speakers to take us up to Easter. We are a happy group who would welcome new members. *Eileen Riddick*

Parish Visitors Group

We continue to keep up to date with our visiting. Sadly, we have lost a few of our number but we have recently taken on a new member. At present we visit thirty housebound members of our church.

We had an afternoon tea at Edenbank in November, and as usual this was a very happy event. The staff at Edenbank are very helpful, and Donna, the owner cannot do enough for us. I had to alter the numbers three times in two days and this did not cause any problem, and we were not charged for the change in numbers. *Eileen Riddick*



For many years we have supported Dumfries & District in their fund-raising activities. In 2020 we will once again be part of "Lent Lunches". Every Friday from 28th February to 3rd April, at St John's Church, Lovers Walk, soup and roll lunches will be provided from 12 to 1.30pm. Congregations

come together to provide home-made vegetarian soup served with rolls, tea and coffee. Friendships are formed and renewed during these weeks of Lent. Please do come and join us, Max West will be responsible for providing soup on Friday March 13th and we look forward to seeing old friends and new.

Further ahead we celebrate Christian Aid Sunday with a service on Sunday May 10th when envelopes will be available to make donations in support of the valuable work undertaken across many countries where there is need, and to both Christian and non-Christian communities.

Before this on Saturday 9th May we are planning a sponsored "Walk for Christian Aid". Bring along friends, children, dogs, for fresh air and chat. Approx. 4 miles easy walking, refreshments provided. *More information from Heather Johnson Tel 01387 261627.*



Maxwelltown West Church Faith Share Partnership Mathia Church, Karatina, Kenya



Greetings and good wishes for 2020 from Mathia Elders.

Our Vision: "To have a society which has children and adults who are God fearing and uphold the Christian values of love, moral integrity, self-control and respect".

Our Motto: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (*Hosea 4:6*).

Through our Bursary Funding three more students graduated in December and as always they are most grateful to us.



We thank everyone who donated to our Christmas appeal which allows us to fund the students again this year.

Latest news from John tells us their Minister of 5 years completed his time and was celebrated with a party at Christmas before moving on. On 2nd January they welcomed the next Minister allocated to them by the PCEA (Presbyterian Church of East Africa), so we are looking forward to making contact with him soon.



Mathia Church Elders

L-R: Bernice - Senior Senior Elder; John - Senior Elder
Jane; James; Easther and Joseph



John, who is the Co-ordinator of the Faith Sharing, and also a Senior Elder.



John & Easther

