

# MAXWEST CONTACT

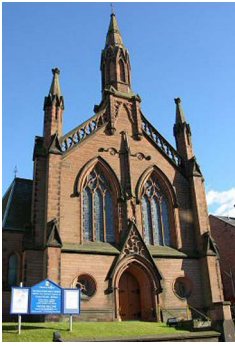
June 2023



Maxwelltown West Church - Dumfries  
[www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk](http://www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk)



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 4th June - 11am

## CONTACTS

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**Fabric Convenor:** (*Volunteer required - please call the Session Clerk if you can help!*)

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#MaxWestChurch Tel: 01387 255900

Scottish Charity Reference: SC 015925; CCLI: 1194718



**Front cover:** A Ukrainian Easter Basket at MaxWest

**Above:** With our Ukrainian friends at Max West as they celebrate the Blessing of the Baskets



# Rev Johannes

Tomorrow is my eldest son's wedding! Of course, when you are reading this editorial then it will be an event of the past. But at the time of writing this text everything in my mind and in my house revolves around this event! This big step in the life of my son alone is exciting, and I am going to marry him! But that my entire family is coming over from Germany to this family reunion: it is simply too much happiness for one day and for one heart.

Weddings are wonderful! For what is better than to celebrate love! No wonder that the wedding serves as an important imagery in the Bible believing in a God who is love. Admittedly, Jesus himself is very critical of our natural relationships; he encourages his followers to leave their families, he even uses the word "hate" in this context: "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life

itself, cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26)

Consequently, Jesus never got married and when he speaks of his relatives, he does not mean the ones given by nature. "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:35).

Nevertheless, at the most prominent passage about the new heaven and the new earth the Bible employs the imagery of a bride and a groom: "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup>Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup>And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." <sup>5</sup>Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:1-5a)

When you want to experience heaven on earth then look at a bride and a groom. For they mirror as "a great mystery" the relationship between Christ and his church (Ephesians 5:32).

To understand the full meaning of this imagery it is important to be aware that weddings were different in the time of the New Testament. Bride and groom would not have lived together before the wedding, sometimes they would not even have really seen each other, at least not in the way how God has created them. Imagine the excitement, but also perhaps a bit of fear when you see the one with whom you are going to live together for the first time. The wedding marked a big change in a life of a person. It was really a start into a new life. ►



► We still can find traces of that in our own wedding traditions. A bridal veil for example is still often used although only as a decorative accessory. Traditionally, it disguised the face of the bride because her husband wasn't supposed to see his wife until they have entered into the bond of marriage. How exciting must have been the moment of unveiling the bride!

A wedding also still carries the meaning of a new beginning. The white colour of the bridal gown symbolises innocence as a new start with a blank slate. The whole life before the wedding is then understood as just a preparation for the true life that starts with that day.

When we look forward to Jesus' coming again, then we resemble a bride in biblical times: we do not know how it will be and even who he will be when the veil of our sinful condition is lifted and when we for the first time can truly see our Lord. Then, as it is prophesied we will start again leaving our corrupt lives behind us with souls white as snow:

'Though your sins are like scarlet,  
they shall be as white as snow;  
though they are red as crimson,  
they shall be like wool. (Isaiah 1:14)

As followers of Jesus, we should live like a bride in excited anticipation of her husband. And then we will also see again all our loved ones that we have missed for a long time. How exciting the thought: to live each day as if tomorrow is the day when you marry God's son.

*Johannes Wildner*



*Many Congratulations & Every Blessing*

**WILHELM & MIKAYLA**

**29 APRIL 2023**



## Notes from the Kirk Session

**A**t the Kirk Session meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 there was much discussion concerning the latest draft Presbytery Mission Plan submitted to the General Trustees from the former Presbytery of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright. The draft Plan as it affects Maxwelltown West Church proposes that Max. West be United with Lochend and New Abbey Church.

Rev. Johannes, Jane Marchbank and myself had met with two representatives from the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group [PMPIG] during the week prior to the Kirk Session.

All churches in the Plan were given this opportunity. The advantages of a Union over a Linkage were explained to us.

At the Presbytery of South West Scotland's meeting at Dumfries St George's Church on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023, the Draft Mission Mission Plan of March 2023 from the former Presbytery of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright was approved, albeit with several amendments. The Plan's proposal that Max West be United with Lochend and New Abbey Church remains in the Plan.

Representatives from Lochend and New Abbey Church moved an amendment which argued for a Linkage rather than a Union for our two churches. The PMPIG's representatives were opposed to this amendment, and on a vote of Presbyters the amendment "fell", that is, it was not approved. The Mission Plan is now with the General Trustees and we await their decision.

*David Johnson - Joint Session Clerk*



Rev. Sandy Geddes, former Pastoral Assistant at Maxwelltown West Church Dumfries died aged 86 at home in Mauchline in the early hours of Easter Day, on 9<sup>th</sup> April. Sandy was Ordained by the Presbytery of Aberdeen in June 1960, then Inducted to Peebles St Andrew's in May 1961. He later translated to Paisley St John's in November 1966 where he stayed

until he translated to Aberdeen Langstane Kirk in December 1979. Sandy then moved with his family to Stewarton St Columba's in May 1989 until he retired in March 1998. Sandy & Elizabeth (who died in 2017) retired to Dumfries where he became Pastoral Assistant in Maxwelltown West Church. They later re-located to Mauchline to be nearer their family.

### ✠ CHURCH REGISTER ✠ Baptism

**Julia Kay Vevers**  
Easter Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2023

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**Our condolences to the  
family and friends of:**

**Mrs Violet McEwan**  
17.02.23

**Mrs Beatrice Wilson**  
23.03.23

**Reverend Sandy Geddes**  
09.04.23

**May they Rest in Peace**

## A DEFIBRILLATOR FOR MAXWEST...

Earlier this year, the MaxWest Guild welcomed Ali Donohue (right) of the Scottish Ambulance Service to tell us about defibrillators and their use in situations involving cardiac arrest. It's a disturbing statistic that 70 people in Scotland suffer from cardiac arrest every week. Starting CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) as soon as possible will give the person the best chance of survival but being able to use a defibrillator within the first few minutes of collapse improves that chance even further. Often seen in public places and in decommissioned old telephone boxes in rural areas, the devices are also known as AED's or Automatic External Defibrillators. They, even to an unfamiliar user, are extremely straightforward to use and can be a vital tool in helping to save a life.

Despite their increasing presence, none are so far located within easy reach of MaxWest and surrounding streets. In fact, the nearest 24-hr publicly available unit we could track down was at the Toll Bar, with another near to the Globe Inn.

Our church and its facilities are used by a wide range of people and age groups, not just for Sunday services, but throughout the week. In addition, there are the local neighbourhood streets where a similar mix of people reside.



The demonstration and the discussion that followed left us in no doubt that MaxWest could benefit from having a defibrillator at the church, installed in such a way that it could benefit any residents in surrounding streets facing an emergency. The back entrance in Rosemount Street was suggested as the most suitable location – it's

sheltered, and there is step-free access both inside and outside the building. The unit would be secured in a cabinet providing a temperature-controlled environment, and in an emergency a 999 call to the ambulance service would result in the release of an unlock code to gain immediate access.

Costs of defibrillator units have become much more affordable: it's been calculated that an outlay of just under £2,000 should be budgeted to cover the costs of a fully automatic unit, suitable for both adults and children, and installation.

It was subsequently agreed that we seek help in moving the project forward. An application has now been lodged with St John's Scotland for their help in sourcing and installing a suitable life-saving device through their PAD (Public Access Defibrillator) scheme. Their volunteers are working with communities across the country to increase the availability of Public Access Defibrillators, as well as providing free training in CPR and the use of an AED.

Mike Marshall



# MATHIA NEWS

from Anne Dunbar - World Church Team

"Receive Christian Greetings in the mighty name of Jesus Christ who is our Lord and Saviour"

So began the email from John Njeru and the Elders of Mathia, our partner Church in Kenya, thanking us "on behalf of the Mathia community" for the £500 that World Church Team Representative, Anne Dunbar, had sent from Max West to help them buy essential foodstuffs and other items for "needy families".

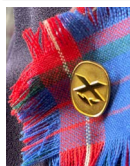
The list of items purchased: rice, cooking fat, maize flour, salt, maize and beans totalled 69,250 Kenyan Shillings (around £400) - helping to alleviate the suffering of those in the community, struggling to cope with the expense and shortage of basic foodstuffs.



John ended this email with the words: "Again, pass our most sincere gratitude to all those who heard our cry and did something. May the almighty God enrich you with his many blessings and when you call Him in times of need may it not be in vain".

John's next email sent at Easter told us that they are doing well although food shortages and the high cost of living remains a problem for many. Nobody was paid their dues this month for their delivery of harvested tea bush leaves and some workers have not been paid either.

On a more celebratory note, John sent us this photograph (left) from the Ordination ceremony of a student minister, Reverend Ephantus Thandi Kariuki which took place recently at Mathia Church.



## Guild Report

The Guild is now on its summer break, however I can report on some interesting events. In February, a member of the Ambulance Service came to demonstrate a defibrillator and how it would benefit us to have one nearby in the event of an emergency. (See report on opposite page). In March, a film presentation about our project "Starchild" showed how the new building was progressing in Uganda. This will accommodate families with disabled children, allow them to meet others, access education and hopefully reduce the stigma they suffer. Many thanks to everyone who donated - a total of £450 was raised, which was sent directly to the project.



I have been extremely well supported by the same Leadership Team over the past several years and am delighted they are staying on for another session starting in September. However, we need some new people with new ideas to help us move forward, so please consider coming along and find out what we do.

**Thursday 15th June:** Summer Outing to Celebrate the Coronation. This will take place at 2pm at Hetland Garden Centre for a special Afternoon Tea.

If you would like a lift please do not hesitate to phone Anne Dunbar. Tel: 01387 251455 or Mary McLeod 01387 255721.

# The After Eights



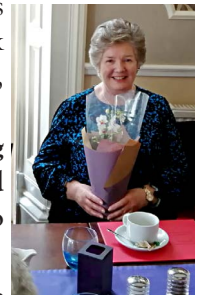
We celebrated 30 years of friendship at our monthly meetings held during autumn and spring by having a lunch at the Edenbank Hotel. The meetings first began as a Young Mothers Group who met on Thursday mornings, with a creche provided by some wonderful aunties from the Guild members. After many of the ladies returned to work it was easier to meet in the

evening. The group then changed the name to The After Eights. It was back in September 1993 when the first meeting of this group took place. There were various speakers who came to talk, demonstrate, show slides and inform us on many topics over the years.

The After Eights would like to take this opportunity to give a long standing founding member our very best and sincerest wishes and Blessings for a very happy future to Mairi and Colin who moved to new beginnings at end of April.

If you would like to join us please contact me on 01387 255080.

Thanks to Heather Johnson, and Jill McEwan for currently helping me to keep the group running.



Anita Stott

We asked members of our congregation:  
"Where in Dumfries & Galloway, Great Britain  
and the Rest of the World are your  
favourite places?"

LOCATION



Southernness - happy memories  
of childhood fun

LOCATION



John O' Groats - wild and windy  
but great to visit on holiday.

LOCATION  
No 1 in a new series



Bruges - where I went  
on honeymoon



# Easter at MaxWest



On Easter Sunday, as well as celebrating the joy of Jesus' Resurrection, there was the added joy of welcoming baby Julia Kay Vevera as she was baptised. This uplifting service was followed by the Easter Brunch in the Main Hall, hosted by the Social Group. Soup, crusty bread, hot cross

buns and other goodies were enjoyed by over 50 people. As usual, the atmosphere was lively with lots of chatter. The Social Group have catered for so many events now that they have a well-established routine, so the setting up, serving and clearing away was done with ease and efficiency; and fun and laughter too!

*Jane Marchbank*



# THE BLESSING OF THE BASKETS

**Margaret Newlands &  
David Johnson describe  
this remarkable occasion at MaxWest**

Unlike our Easter Service, the Orthodox Ukrainian celebration of Easter, according to the Julian calendar came a week after ours and included several features very different to what is familiar to us. Although there was to be a traditional service at the Ukrainian POW Chapel in Lockerbie, the Dumfries community of Ukrainians were not all able to travel there and Johannes and the Session agreed it would be wonderful to welcome them and their priest to Maxwelltown West Church, where they had previously visited when celebrating Christmas.

An acknowledgement came from Bishop Kenneth of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of the Holy Family in London, expressing his gratitude for the offer and Rev. Fr. Andriy, Vicar in Scotland, came down from Glasgow to celebrate, among other elements, The Blessing of Food, Easter Cakes and Easter Eggs.



A steady stream of Ukrainians started arriving at Max West for the 1.30 pm service carrying with them decorated baskets of food and wearing beautiful embroidered garments. After the main part of the service in which our minister also participated, everyone moved forward with their baskets to have them blessed. Traditionally this would be followed by a picnic or communal



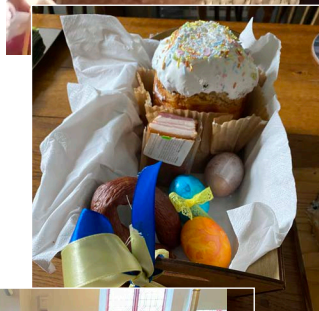


gathering and indeed, after the service at the Chapel in Lockerbie (*above*) where more baskets were blessed, a buffet meal was shared by one and all. This ritual has been cherished among Ukrainian families for centuries as they enjoy this richly symbolic custom.

What goes in the baskets depends on the region that the family is from originally, but the basket usually contains specially baked bread, smoked meats, sausage, butter, cheese, salt, salo (lard) and decorated coloured eggs - *pysanky*.



A white candle symbolising Jesus, the Light of the World, is placed in the basket and lit during the blessing. Another tradition is to tie two nails together in the form of a cross and place them in the basket. Linen, possibly embroidered specially for the occasion lines the basket and also covers the food, symbolising the covering of Christ's burial shroud. Some baskets were decorated with coloured ribbons and greenery, pussy willow which is linked with health and strength, or dried flowers to represent spring, renewal and the Resurrection.



We were truly honoured and humbled to be a part of our Ukrainian friends' celebrations at Easter time.

*"...Certainly an ecumenical celebration of faith indeed."*





# COVERING THEIR ASSETS...



Camouflage nets are in great demand in Ukraine and have many life-saving functions. With critical infrastructure under threat it's not only soldiers and equipment that need protection. Generators, fuel storage tanks, food stores and temporary medical facilities all need safe-guarding and for those left behind, a cottage industry has sprung up in Ukraine with many households busily doing what they can to create nets to help protect those who are in areas of greatest danger.



As Dumfries is one of the three main hubs for receiving refugees in Scotland, many Ukrainians have arrived in our area. Not wishing to forget the struggles of those left behind, they have mobilised themselves and enlisted local support to start making their own camouflage nets. You might recognise where this first net was made! With redundant fishing nets donated from the fishing community in Annan and



Charity Shops proving to be a fruitful source of fabric, the various elements gathered were soon in production with a team of willing volunteers. The first net is already in Ukraine and heading east to the area of worst trouble and a second is almost finished and a third underway. There is a constant flow of traffic heading from Scotland to Ukraine providing free transport so already a supply of knitted beanie hats and socks, first aid kits from the emergency services, winter boots and medical supplies have been dispatched from Dumfries. It's all a drop in the ocean compared to what is needed there but at least for those refugees, separated from friends and families, we've been able to help them make some small gesture of assistance for fathers, sons and volunteers on the front line.

*Margaret Newlands*



**Jill McEwan**  
Brownie Leader  
reports

We have enjoyed another busy term!



To celebrate **Thinking Day 2023**, we attended the Church Service when our flag was paraded and the Brownies made some cards with Thinking Day wishes to give out after the Service.

We took part in **“Walk The World”** as part of the Thinking Day theme. Girlguiding says it is 66 million steps around the earth and each step we take together is a step towards protecting our planet and a peaceful future.

We completed 10 laps of the Church and

halls, achieving as a group, 34,500 steps to help towards the 66 million. Donations received were divided between the Turkey/Syria earthquake appeal and WAGGS to support Girlguiding worldwide.

As part of one of our Girlguiding programme themes, **“Have Adventures”**, we went for a walk to look for stars. However, the sky was too cloudy and no stars were seen. But it was Rev Johannes’ birthday so we sang *Happy Birthday* to him in the Manse garden!



A visitor this term was Emma from **Dumfries and Galloway Canine Rescue** who told us about their work and how the money raised from selling reindeer food was used.

The Brownies enjoyed making Chocolate Krispies with hearts and decorating biscuits with flowers. Crafts have included making a flower in a jar and a photo frame with a

drawing of their Mum for Mother’s Day and a collage egg and card for Easter. Our term finished with an Easter Bunny Drive which was great fun.

Congratulations to Mrs Irene Johnstone who was recently presented with her **50 Years Long Service Award** from Girlguiding. Mrs Johnstone retired from Maxwelltown West Brownies in 2003 but has still helped with badge testing and at other special events.

Congratulations also, to Gemma, our Brownie Helper, who achieved her Guide Gold Award in March. Gemma also achieved her Brownie Gold Award in 2019. Well done, Gemma!

Our plans for the next term include celebrating the **Coronation of King Charles** and a **Promise Celebration** at Dumfries Museum.





## Badminton - Jane Marchbank reports

Covid restrictions had been lifted before the start of the season last September - much to everyone's delight! However, remaining cautious, touching racquets at the end of a game, rather than shaking hands with partners or opponents has become the new norm! We were joined by several new members this year, some of whom had found us through the church website which is encouraging.

**The Ian Wilson Memorial Trophy was won by Jamie Routledge and Kayleigh Witts. (Photo left)**

By popular request the annual dinner was reinstated. It was held at the Edenbank Hotel in March. Everyone who attended agreed that it was

wonderful to be able to socialize with each other once again.



Another annual tradition was also resumed when a ten-pin bowling evening took place at Carlisle in April. The scores for the first game were rather poor, because nobody had played since the last event 4 years ago! By the second game however, previous skills had come to the fore, resulting in much higher scores. Everyone had fun and agreed that it was good to be back. The overall winner was Gordon Little, and highest scoring lady was Debbie Higgins.

It was with sadness that we learned of the death of one of our Honorary Members in March. Beatrice Wilson had been a stalwart member of the club for nearly 40 years and was still playing to a high standard well into her 80s. She was the club treasurer for many years and kept the accounts in meticulous order. Beatrice had a great sense of fun and you could be sure that there would be laughter when she was present. She was greatly missed when advancing years meant that she had to stop playing, but she still kept an interest in what was happening in the club. She will always be fondly remembered by all the members who knew her.

The season ended on 24<sup>th</sup> April. The new season will begin on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September. New members are always made very welcome - whether they have played previously or not.



## Lenten Lunches 2023 - Heather Johnson reports

After an enforced break of three years the annual Christian Aid Lenten Lunches at St. John's Church, Dumfries resumed on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. The enthusiastic team of Max West volunteers set to work on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March, to provide a variety of tasty nutritious soups, filled rolls, tea and coffee, and cake.

The Lenten Lunch was very well attended, with an "overflow" space from the hall being required in the church. More than £900 was raised for Christian Aid, with over £3000 raised during the Lenten Lunch period.



Many thanks to all the  
Max West volunteers.  
What a great team!



**M**axWest Movies is 'on holiday' at present, but we're planning to be back in September -

having spent quite a few evenings looking at dozens of films both classic and contemporary! Maybe you have a film in mind that you'd like to share with fellow lovers of the silver screen? Please let us know, and we'll try to organise that. We aim to make our screenings very social occasions, and we look forward to trying out one or two ideas to add to the experience.

**Mike Marshall will be delighted to hear from you!**

### *- Dates for Your Diary -*

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June -  
Holy Communion - 11am

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June - 7pm  
Joint Kirk Session & Deacons' Court

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June -  
Family BBQ at The Manse

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June -  
National Youth Choir Concert  
7pm



# A FIRST CLASS KING

So, we have a new King and, for quite a few of us for the second time in our lives, all the pomp and ceremony of seventy years ago when, as youngsters, we thrilled at the celebrations that took place in our schools and streets and homes to herald the arrival of a new era for us all.



Maybe you remember the first postage stamps that appeared of the late Queen Elizabeth in 1952, bearing the graceful photographic study by Dorothy Wilding? It was a welcome departure from the somewhat austere portrayals of earlier monarchs. Perhaps this was a sign that our new Royal family might be more visible in the years ahead.

Intriguingly, it was New Zealand that had already started that trend in 1950 with an issue of the then Princess Elizabeth with her first-born, Prince Charles – his first appearance on a postage stamp. It wasn't until 1953 that the growing heir came to our attention here in these islands, when he popped up in the first of a series of images on National Savings stamps. (His sister, Princess Anne appeared on a companion stamp).



David Gentleman's designs for Prince Charles' Investiture in Caernarfon as Prince of Wales in 1969 followed, as did his marriage to Lady Diana Spencer in 1981. There were strings of issues from other Commonwealth

a few other, mainly third world countries, jumping on their philatelic bandwagons to raise hard currency!

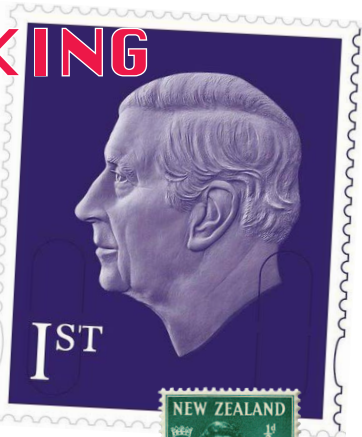
King Charles' passion for art, which began at school in Scotland, showed his skills with landscape subjects and these came to the fore with five of his paintings appearing as stamps in 1994. Milestone birthdays followed, as did his



marriage to our new Queen, Camilla. The appearance last April of the new definitive postage stamps featuring the profile of His Majesty are striking, if only because of a new austerity when compared to the radiance that shone out from the classic Machin design of Queen Elizabeth II, and which was to last for 55 years.

It could be the new style reflects the worries and difficult times that we are all facing just now, and we should perhaps rely on Royal Mail's regular commemorative issues to brighten our envelopes. The recent garden flowers issue with the first profile of the King is certainly welcome. Always assuming that we continue to write and post letters!

Mike Marshall



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