

# MAXWEST CONTACT

March 2022



**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 6<sup>th</sup> March - 11am

## CONTACTS

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### Session Clerks:

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**Organist:** Stephen Crosbie: 07540 419905 E: organist@maxwelltownwest.org.uk

**Church Officer:** Tommy Jardine, 07974 104021

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

**The Guild:** Anne Dunbar, 01387 251455 E: guild@maxwelltownwest.org.uk

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**Church Website:** www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk

#MaxWestChurch Tel: 01387 255900

Scottish Charity Reference: SC 015925; CCLI: 1194718

## ✠ CHURCH REGISTER ✠

Our best wishes to Mr Stewart Imlach and Mrs Dorothy Imlach who have moved to Newcastle.

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

Mrs Moira Anderson	24.10.21
Mrs Jean Finlayson	23.11.21
Mrs June Bell	01.01.22
Mrs Elizabeth Shearer	14.01.22

May they Rest in Peace

**Front cover:** Snowdrops in Durisdeer churchyard - Magazine design by Mike Marshall

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Rev  
Johannes



It is helpful to know that you only see what you know. Since we have a very limited knowledge of the world around us – one of the wisest philosophers said “I know that I know nothing” – it follows that also our ability to see is very limited. That means that eyesight is not just simply given to us, but as human beings we have to constantly learn to see. And that is an ongoing process that never ends.

Let me give you one example: Until last Sunday I only connected the name “Lincluden” with the Lincluden Household Waste Recycling Centre. Admittedly, such a place can be very helpful, especially if you have just moved and you are confronted with many boxes and other things you no longer need, but nevertheless, a recycling centre is not a charming place. It is only there because of our waste, and although we know that perhaps our waste is the only thing that will outlive us, it is nothing that



we like to speak about. The name “Lincluden” smelled for me of my grey bin.

Then I heard Anne and David singing Robert Burns' song “Ca' The Yowes” in last Sunday's service. With rapt attention I followed the simple yet mystical melody and the wonderful images of an intimate moonshine meeting within a nature that teaches us to feel. And there was this reference

to “Clouden's silent towers” – no it can't be, I thought, yet it is, the song is referring to Lincluden Abbey - in smelling distance nowadays to the Recycling Centre. And suddenly the name “Lincluden” sounded so sweet and tender in my ears. I learned again that you should not never judge by your first impression, there is always more – much more – when you try to look deeper. The more you know, the more you see. And the more you are aware of how much you do not see. ▶

► There is so much more that this song can tell us. It describes a stroll along the Cluden Water at night, a time where our eyesight is very limited. Why should I go for a walk by night? Burns shows us that in the cloak of the night we can see things that are normally veiled by sunlight. He mentions the dancing fairies. Admittedly, I have never seen fairies – but I have also to admit that I have never been to the Cluden Water at midnight. Poetry opens our eyes to see the world in a new light. And that is why a poet and a priest basically have many things in common. The oldest texts of the Bible are songs, poems. You can even describe God as a poet because he created everything – not with his hands but through his word. Yet, that makes it also so difficult for a poet or a man of God because they speak about something that we normally do not see. No one has seen God – and who has seen the fairies? Faith gives your eyes wings that you can catch a glimpse of the world from God's perspective.

When it comes to faith, we are all children who have just started to learn. If it were simple to live by faith, there would have been no need for such a big book like the Bible. Simple things can be explained with one sentence. Yet, when it comes to God, even all the pages in this world would not give enough space to describe him. There is so much to learn and to discover – and that is exciting. That is why we will have a Faith Course in the time of Lent and in the Easter time to which all are invited. You will find more about it in this magazine.

I have met and seen so many new and wonderful people and things in our last weeks. And I am imbued with anticipation about the future within this congregation. There is so much to learn for me. Just one example: this Burns' song that from now on will always be connected for me with the last Sunday service – it closes with the words "I can die – but canna part, my bonie dearie". I have never heard this expression before – is it not a deep description of faith? For if you really believe in the Easter miracle, in the crucified and risen Lord then there is no need to fear death, then you can die. Death is on the contrary the starting point of the true relationship with God. The only thing that frightens a lover is the prospect of losing the beloved. And if the beloved is the eternal God – what should we fear? It is better to die with God than to live without him because without him there is no life. As Burns says, it is the presence of the beloved that gives sense and purpose to everything. O my soul, praise your Lord professing your love – why not with these words:

*Fair and lovely as thou art,  
Thou hast stown my very heart;  
I can die—but canna part,  
My bonie dearie.*

*Johannes Wildner*

## Kirk Session Reports

**2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021:** A joint meeting of the Kirk Session and Deacons' Court was held. This was the first face-to-face meeting since lockdown began in March 2020, so it was more of an informal gathering to bring everyone together again, rather than a business meeting. It was also Rev. Johannes' first meeting as Moderator and an opportunity for him to meet Elders and Deacons in person.

An overview was given on what had transpired during the last 18 months to ensure the work of the church continued; this included the formation of the Strategy Group. The newly formed Treasury Team had made sure that Gift Aid was still claimed and had worked extremely hard to finalise the annual accounts for 2018, 2019 and 2020. Members of the Fabric Team had inspected the Church buildings and the Manse and various necessary repairs had been completed.

**18<sup>th</sup> January 2022:** At the beginning of this Kirk Session meeting, Rev. David Bartholomew and Geoff Monk of the Church's Ministry & Resources Team were in attendance. Their visit was to discuss possible ways forward for Maxwelltown West in the future. The Church of Scotland's Radical Action Plan means that Maxwelltown West will not be able to carry on as it is now; there will have to be linkage or union with another Church, or group of churches in the area. After Rev. Bartholomew and Geoff Monk had left, the discussion on this topic continued.

There was no firm decision made; Presbytery will be informed that Max West is open to considering any options, and we await their suggestions. The Presbytery Plan is due to be finalised by the end of June. This is in preparation for Dumfries and Kircudbright Presbytery to merge with five of our neighbouring Presbyteries by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, to become the Presbytery of South West Scotland.

**Jane Marchbank**



### Teamwork!

As the Coronavirus pandemic continued, teamwork became increasingly important so that the work of the Church could carry on at Maxwelltown West. Due to the restrictions that were put in place, it wasn't possible for committees to function as they had always done previously.

Firstly, a Strategy Group was set up and they met monthly via Zoom. Then, to oversee the finances, a Treasury Team was formed. Members of the Fabric Committee formed a smaller team to ensure that necessary repairs were carried out on the Church buildings, including the Manse.

Once the Church was able to open again for public worship it became necessary to form other new teams or reform existing ones. These include the "Good Shepherds" who sanitize the church once the congregation have left on a Sunday morning; the "Counting Team" who count the collection after the service; the team that produces the MaxWest Contact magazine and the "Flower Ministry" team who arrange for flowers to be delivered each week.

There are individuals who carry out other roles, and they also belong to the whole team, working together to ensure the continued existence of Max West as a warm and welcoming church for everyone.

**Jane Marchbank**





## Courage to Change

Now in our 91<sup>st</sup> year and following an excellent 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration we must move on looking ahead to the future.

Our church is changing for so many reasons. The Guild as an integral part of the church and one of Scotland's largest voluntary organisations with 800 Guilds and 15,000 members we must also change.

On 12<sup>th</sup> March representatives from National Guilds will meet in Perth to discuss **"The Way Forward"**, perhaps daunting and also exciting. I hope to report on the outcome in the June edition of MaxWest 'Contact'.

Grateful thanks to all who donated to Mathia Church student Bursary fund; 11 students will benefit from this.

**Anne Dunbar** - Guild Convener



Guild **Long Service Awards 2021** were presented by Rev. Johannes Wildner on 10<sup>th</sup> November:

*Left-Right:*

Mrs Doris Paterson 25 yrs.  
Mrs Irene Ogilvie 25 yrs.  
Mrs Olive Geddes 25 yrs.  
Mrs Anne Beggs 28 yrs.  
Mrs Anne Dunbar 31 yrs.

*Above:* Rev. Johannes and Mrs Anne Dunbar at the planting of a crab apple tree to mark the Guild's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*Right:* Mrs May Haining cuts the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday cake.



## Years of the Social Group!



It's hard to believe that the Social Group has been going for 10 years! I remember so well a rabble of like-minded people sitting in a circle in the meeting room discussing, enthusiastically, what we felt our church members would enjoy in terms of social

activities. There were already lots of fantastic, well established and successful groups run by our church, from the Guild to the After Eights, the Badminton Club to Good Companions, and all the Youth organisations. We now have a Film Club, a Walking Group and Messy Church. We are indeed a fortunate church.

What we wanted to do was to offer social activities simply to bring everyone together, despite interests and age, for the joy and pleasure of human engagement and interaction with like-minded people – and some not so like-minded. Fabulous! Like a real family.

The Easter Brunch was the first event we held – and it was such a success. Extra tables had to be set up as almost everyone came through from church to share a celebratory meal and conversation. It was just so lovely to hear the buzz of voices and laughter. The Christmas and Easter Brunches then became our annual 'pillar events' in the church calendar.

It has been great fun, planning and delivering these and other events over the years. Meetings are lively - now usually taking place in Colin's kitchen where there is always home-baking offered. It has not always been free of stress but there has also been hilarity. We were very grateful to those church members who gave our group extra help: making tray bakes, washing up or clearing tables at the end of events. Many hands....!

Since 2012 there have been numerous events that we have initiated or supported: Car Treasure Hunt, Beetle Drive, Burns' Night, Barbecue, Scottish Night, Curry night in Colin Irving's garage and 10-pin bowling in Carlisle. We also catered for many other organisations and events, including CHYPS Talent Night, Guild Lunch, and musical nights with Emily Smith and Jamie McClellan or the Dumfries Male Voice Choir.

It was our intention that we would make enough to cover expenses and finance the next one. However, because of your generous donations, we have been able to support some church initiatives when needed, such as the flower ministry, the purchase of the new organ, and the new video system.

The last two years have sadly put the brakes on all of this. When we put together the wee yellow bags of joy at Easter last year and delivered these to everyone in our Church family, it was because we wanted to remind everyone that we were thinking about them, and that we valued the social contact and interaction with each other - a sense of togetherness and the enjoyment that this brings.

Life is opening up now, moving forward, our Church social life included. We are here for you, and we thank you for your support and attendance at the events we have held in the past. It has been our pleasure and privilege to be part of this group and we look forward to our – your future Church social life. Let us know if there is any event you would like to see happening. Easter is round the corner...



**Julie Smith**

MaxWest's Presentation to David Matheson had been due to take place during the Family Nativity Service on 19<sup>th</sup> December. However, because of Church closure, it had to be postponed until Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January. On that day, it was wonderful to see David and his wife, Bella in Church and to hear David reading the lessons during the service. At the end of the service, Jane Marchbank, Joint Session Clerk, presented a card and cheque to David and a basket of flowers to Bella. Jane spoke about how the collection from the congregation demonstrated our appreciation of David's hard work and dedication during the time he had served as our Locum. David thanked everyone for the presentation and for all the cards and good wishes he had received after his operation.

Kathleen McMillan



## Greetings to all,

First can I thank you all very much for my extremely generous gift presented to me by your Joint Session Clerk, Jane Marchbank. I was totally overwhelmed when I opened the cheque to find it was for £1,020! Thank you also for the beautiful floral arrangement. We will use your gift to help us furnish our new Summer House, which we had built in late 2021. Whenever I sit in there, I will remember Maxwelltown West Church.

Many of you know that I underwent an emergency operation on the very day Reverend Johannes was inducted as your new Minister. Thank you all for your prayers, cards, messages and kind words which greatly helped me with my recovery. I am delighted to say I feel strong and healthy again. Sandy, our 11-year-old Lurcher dog, and I walk around 5-6 miles daily. So, I often refer to him as my personal trainer!

When I first came amongst you in May 2017, little did I realise that my time with you would extend to four and a half years. Of course, at that time, none of us ever dreamt of Covid 19 and all the lockdowns and trials we would have to face. Yet, it helped us to change many of our set ways.

For me, one of the greatest challenges I have ever faced in life, was to prepare and record our online services. I am eternally grateful to Mike Marshall for his amazing camera and technology skills. I can assure you Mike has the patience of a Saint. He so gently led me to drink from the still waters and feed from green pastures of tranquillity and calmness, when I went off script.

Of course, these services saw so many members of MaxWest also rise to the challenge - our Organist, Stephen Crosbie, playing his heart out in his home extension, often to the patter of raindrops; Anne Walter and our Praise Group becoming our Online Choir, and many members reading our weekly Lesson, so brilliantly and assured. During the recording of our first service out of Lockdown, close to Kirkcudbright harbour, as Mike and I were busy recording, I became conscious of an elderly lady watching us. Suddenly, she piped up, "Are you frae the BBC?" Times like that make great memories.

I truly feel so Blessed to have been your Locum and helped MaxWest Church, "Look forward in faith", to the calling of Rev Johannes as your New Minister.

Of course, you have welcomed, not only Rev. Johannes but also his family, and it was a joy for my wife and me to meet with them on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January. I truly believe that you will shine the light of Jesus in Dumfries and beyond, out to Mathia, Kenya. During my final service on 17<sup>th</sup> October I said, "Rev. Johannes will lead you to greater depths of understanding of scripture and mission work than I ever could. He will also undoubtedly look to you all for assistance in Mission work in our Parish, in schools, in Dumfries and beyond - all the way to Mathia and to the ends of the earth".

Please, do not answer him, "Oh, no me!" or "I don't think I could do that." Rather, let your answer be, "I will try my best."

As we begin to return to a more normal lifestyle once again, please do take time on Sunday morning to come and join your fellow members to worship our Lord in MaxWest Church. I can guarantee there will be a warm welcome, friendly faces and chat before and after the services.

So, Friends, thank you all for your loving kindness, and for your generosity of hospitality when I visited you at home. May God Bless Rev. Johannes, and may you all use your God-given talents to help him in Your Mission to become a vibrant Church, sharing the Good News of Jesus with others.

King David reminds us in Psalm 34: 8 "Come taste and see the Lord is good".

God Bless You All

Your Brother in Christ,

*David Matheson*

## Guide Report

What a couple of years we have had! In spring last year, we were allowed to meet up out of doors and after the last previous year on Zoom it was great to meet up again. I would like to say a big thank you to Mark, Sam and Dave at the Veterans' Garden at the Crichton for allowing us to meet up at their facility. As well as the Dock Park, we had a term of relatively good weather and finished with a barbecue at the end of term.

Now we're back indoors to our home in the Church Hall. The Guides are very excited to be back and have been very busy with various activities, meeting up with their friends again and doing things such as baking, crafts and games. They have worked on a few Skills Builder Badges in our Guide Programme, as well as the D&G-opoly Badge which was to introduce the merging of Dumfriesshire, Stewartry and Wigtownshire into 'Girlguiding Dumfries and Galloway County'. The Guides also attended the Remembrance Service and celebrated Christmas.

The Rangers also started back and, in true Guiding tradition, most of the meetings involved eating and chatting, mixed in with the odd bit of Badge work. It has been a challenging time for all units with the merger of Calside Guides and our own unit here at MaxWest, due to the constraints of numbers of leaders. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Fiona and Joanne who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic to keep the girls engaged. Unfortunately, we have lost Victoria who has moved away but gained a young leader, Caitlin and unit helper, Lucy. We are always looking for adult helpers, so if anyone is interested in helping, please get in touch! Finally, I would like to thank the Kirk Session for their support and assistance in helping us to maintain our Guide and Ranger Unit here at Maxwelltown West Church.

Tracey Stewart (Guide/Ranger Leader)





## Brownies Report

Since the October holiday, the Brownies have been meeting again every Tuesday evening.

The girls were pleased to be able to attend the Remembrance Sunday Church

Service and the poppies they had made formed a display in the Church Hall.

During the service, David Johnson announced that the Brownies had just been informed that they were the winners of the recent **"D&G-opoly Challenge"** which was mentioned in the December 2021 edition of this magazine.

We have been working on the Brownie Programme, including Unit Meeting Activity cards: **"Unfantastic Plastic"** and **"Fly your Flag"** and Skills Builder Badge: **"Girls can do Anything"**.

In December, we enjoyed a Saturday afternoon outing to the Theatre Royal to see the Panto of **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs** and eating tubs of ice cream during the interval!

The Brownies were excited that Mike Marshall included their recorded singing of **"Mary Had a Baby"** in the Christmas Eve Service and **"We Wish You a Merry Christmas"** for Christmas Day.



On the final meeting of term, the very first **"Brooke Award"** was presented. This award was given by Gary, Kirsty and Skye Jardine in memory of Brooke who had been a Brownie at Max West, moving onto Guides when she was 10. Brooke sadly passed away in 2019.

We were given a **"Brooke's Box"** into which notes are put if a Brownie has been very kind or has carried out a random act of kindness.

It is proposed that twice a year a winner will be chosen who will be awarded a certificate, a badge, and a gift to keep, plus a trophy to take home for six months. This time, however, we had two winners, Teyah and Bethany, who have agreed to share the trophy!

We have some more new Brownies starting this Spring and are hoping to increase our numbers throughout 2022. Any questions, please get in touch.

Jill McEwan - Brownie Leader



## Maintaining our Church

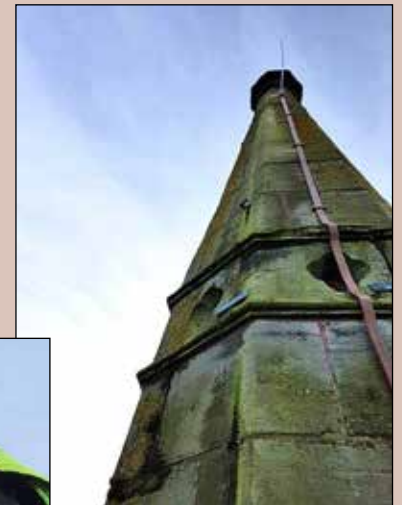
### A New Lightning Conductor

At the end of November, you may have spotted very high scaffolding being erected at the front of the church. This was to install a new lightning conductor. However, Storm Arwen threatened to derail the planned repairs and installation on the church spire. We were fortunate that Lightning Protection Services, having kept an eye on the forecast, managed to repair and arrange for the scaffolding to be dismantled, just before the storm hit Dumfries & Galloway. In their report LPS stated:

- The redundant finial was removed and replaced with a new aluminium finial and section of down conductor.
- Weeds were removed, treated with weedkiller, and pointed over.
- The spire itself was in surprisingly good condition above the chevron section, with a different type of sandstone being used at high level.
- The stone itself was in good order and structurally sound.
- The pointing was good.
- Under the chevron level the sandstone is noticeably softer, however it is still structurally sound.

Some additional work needs to be completed to get a better electrical earth reading. This is in the Fabric Plan for 2022 and will involve digging down, so no worries if gales are forecast!

Patricia Jardine



A head for heights is definitely needed here as repair work gets under way and a new lightning conductor is fitted.

*Pictures taken by LPS.*

# Connecting with you all...



Who would have thought it? Max West with a regular international congregation, largely thanks to Covid and the necessity of 'going online'!

Welcome to our friends in Africa, Europe and the US and possibly elsewhere, yet to be discovered! Please let us know! Welcome too, to our 'local' parishioners.

If you have been following the progress of our services through the pandemic as many have, the 'Good Morning' display seen on the left will be a familiar sight, just before the services 'go live'. If not . . . . . read on.

## If you are using a laptop/desktop PC - On your Internet Browser:



[www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk](http://www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk)

1: This is the starting point of a new adventure and is the address of our web site. When the address is typed in the space as shown above, the Home page of our web site should appear. This will be the front page and on it you will find various entries:



2: By clicking on an entry more information will appear in a separate screen.

3: Each Monday, a link to the latest service will be posted on the front page so you can watch whenever it suits you by clicking on it. This you can do as often as you like.

Whether you're using a PC or laptop, tablet or smartphone, the various tabs give you options to explore and there is certainly lots to find out, from Messy Church to the history of the our earlier ministers, going back to our first minister in 1844! Whatever device you are using, we hope it will help you keep in touch with us, find out about Max West and all the exciting things that are happening now.

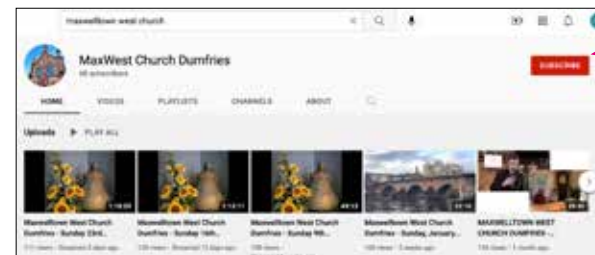
We look forward to you joining us 'online'.  
Margaret Newlands

4: However, if you would like to follow the service in 'real time', simply follow these steps:

Watching 'live' on Sunday mornings from just before 11am, log on as above to the website. The yellow side panel on the front page gives you two options to find the service, both for online at 11am on the Sunday morning or later if you wish.

Click on the red band at the top. This will take you to where our MaxWest YouTube channel is ready to roll.

Clicking on the red text lower down the panel will also take you to the current service.



Rest assured, 'Subscribe' is a free service and your name will not appear anywhere.

5: This is a free facility. Click 'Subscribe' (top right of the page) and you will find, not only the current service but all the others. You can also receive alerts from YouTube that MaxWest is 'on air'. Clicking on this arrow will also let you scroll through all the other services that are available from the archive.

6: Double click on the recording of your choice and the computer will do the rest.

## More Stuff!

7: The various tabs at the top of the website's front page give you access to more information . . . . .

In the 'Services' tab you will find the various 'Orders of Service' with the forthcoming details for each service posted on a Friday.

The 'What's On' tab takes you to the calendar with a diary facility showing regular events in the church and church halls.

Our 'Contact' Magazine can also be found online.

If you haven't yet ventured into the realms of Max West's website and would like further help, please let us know. In the meantime, Happy Clicking!

## If you're using a Tablet or Smartphone

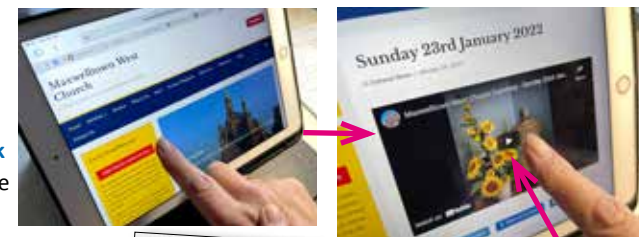
On a Tablet, visit your Search browser using [www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk](http://www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk)

You will find the 'pages' look the same as the earlier illustrations shown and following the same instructions will also lead you to the YouTube channel with all our services.

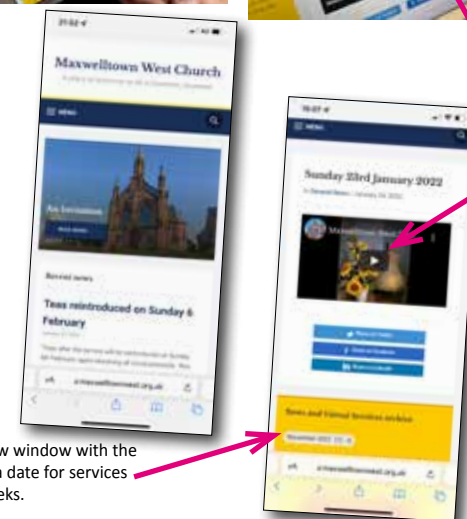
If you are using a Smartphone . . . . .

Whether Android or iPhone, type in the church website address [www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk](http://www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk)

The website will appear and if you scroll down, you will come to the latest service. Tap the picture and the Maxwelltown West YouTube window will appear with the triangle ready to tap to start the service.



Tap the arrow to start the YouTube video.



There is also a yellow window with the option of choosing a date for services held in previous weeks.





## Conservation and Biodiversity on our Doorstep

Remember COP 26? The Glasgow Climate Conference? Held in November last year? Well, there was a new global agreement thrashed out - "The Glasgow Climate Pact" - which aims to reduce the worst impacts of climate change. However, some leaders and campaigners say that it does not go far enough. The agreement, although not legally binding, will set the global agenda on climate change for the next decade.

To mark the end of COP26 on November 13<sup>th</sup> last year, I organised a "Conservation and Biodiversity Walk" in Mabie Forest. We would follow a combination of waymarked paths and trails to give us a comprehensive experience of the forest's many different habitats, starting and finishing with the warm and welcoming habitat that is Mabie House Hotel!

Seventeen walkers, young and not-so-young, including our new Minister Rev. Johannes, his wife Käthe, and daughters Agnes and Adele, set off from Mabie House on a crisp, sunny winter's afternoon. After a slightly false start - my apologies! - we were soon making our way up Dalshinnie Glen on a good forest road, up to the watershed between Marthrown and Craighill Hills. Here we turned south-east, walking through ancient oak woods on a carpet of leaf litter, to reach the viewpoint on Craighill Hill itself. We paused to admire and wonder at the view that had opened up before us: Criffel, Knockendoch, Cuil Hill, the Waterloo Monument, the Nith estuary and the Lake District hills in the background. The sun was beginning to set, the sky a deeper blue. Magnificent! We sang a couple of verses of "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation", to the tune, "Lobe den Herren", which seemed very appropriate, and which must have been a first for visitors to the Craighill viewpoint.

Onwards and downwards, through mixed woodland, this time with views to the north of Dumfries and Queensberry and those now ever-present wind turbines - the green revolution at work. The trail then skirts Dalshinnie Loch where, in the gloaming, "the White Lady of Mabie", a marble headless sculpture hidden in the trees, took on a ghostly appearance. The welcome at Mabie House, where a wedding reception was in full swing, provided a perfect ending to our "Conservation and Biodiversity Walk". However, we did our very best not to conserve the rich biodiversity of the cakes on offer with our teas and coffees, after a ramble through a beautiful part of Scotland, right here on our doorstep. Thank you to all who made this such an enjoyable part of the fellowship that is Max West.

Plans are in hand for our next walk: an ancient wood, Holy Grass, a 13th century medieval fortress, a Roman camp, and a world-renowned nature reserve, plus of course, more cakes!

David Johnson [Cake Convener]



## Faith - it doesn't make things easy - it makes them possible

*Introducing a new, mid-week course with Rev. Johannes who will be our guide on a fascinating journey of discovery:*

When was the last time that you talked with someone about your faith? Perhaps that happens often, but normally it is not something we would do regularly. Yet faith is not something like a stone which once you have put it in its place then it lies there for ever - no, it is more like a flower that constantly needs nourishment, otherwise it would wither. Faith can grow but also fade away. It needs to be nursed, and one simple way to do this is to speak about it.

Maxwelltown West Church is offering a Faith Course from Ash Wednesday to Pentecost. **The meetings will take place on Wednesdays at 7pm in one of the halls next to the church.**

This course is for everyone - those who have no experience with faith and those who for a long time have been on the journey of faith. The idea is to bring people together with many different experiences in order to learn from each other.

Every meeting will have two parts. At the start, we will look at each topic using biblical texts and then afterwards there will be the opportunity for everyone to talk about the subject. At the end of each meeting texts will be provided that can be used to think about the next session, but detailed preparation is not necessary.

Ideally, it would be best to attend the whole course, but it is also possible to attend just a single meeting.

The Course programme:

<b>2/3</b>	<b>God's call</b>	<b>20/4</b>	<b>The Bible</b>
<b>9/3</b>	<b>Faith and Sin</b>	<b>27/4</b>	<b>Prayer and worship</b>
<b>16/3</b>	<b>Jesus Christ</b>	<b>4/5</b>	<b>The Church</b>
<b>23/3</b>	<b>The Holy Spirit</b>	<b>11/5</b>	<b>Baptism and Confirmation</b>
<b>30/3</b>	<b>Death and Eternal Life</b>	<b>18/5</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>
<b>--- Easter Break ---</b>		<b>25/5</b>	<b>Living as a Christian</b>
		<b>1/6</b>	<b>The Creeds</b>

After the completion of the course there will be the opportunity for those who wish to be baptised or confirmed to do this. This will take place in the Pentecost Service on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> June.

*Johannes Wildner*





## *Our Online Ministry - looking ahead*

Nearly two years ago we began an adventure. Despite restrictions, MaxWest and its congregation still managed to spread the Word, not just to its parishioners, but to all those who have discovered us online, including our Faith Share partners in Mathia Church, Kenya. Each streamed service is now regularly achieving 150 to 200 views either directly through YouTube or via our website, where a

considerable amount of hard work is now underway.

Most of us will be familiar with the sight of all the technical gadgetry that's appeared in the Church, and I'm grateful for your forbearance in this - it's certainly enabling us to serve a widening audience. What started as an experiment to find the best way to share our services online on Sundays is working well.

But is all this just for Sundays? Surely our faith is with us 24/7. What happens between Sundays? Shouldn't we be making space for something in between? Can we at MaxWest begin to grow some form of online Midweek Ministry? Our organisations and groups can certainly all play a part. The Guild are keen to see some of their activities represented. Our organist Stephen Crosbie has offered to contribute some of his ideas and skills with music in church. You'll see that on another page in this issue Rev Johannes is opening a new chapter by telling us about a brand-new Faith Course. That's something we should all be excited about - we will find out so much about ourselves, our relationship with God, and hopefully those who will be able to watch online will do so as well. The coming months are going to be both exciting and challenging for us - we'll all need our thinking caps on, and much prayerful thought for this next step along our road together.

**Mike Marshall**

## **WELCOME BACK TO OUR FILM NIGHTS**



At long last we've been able to get back towards a more normal social activity with our Film Nights. When you read this issue many of you will have seen (or just missed!) the hugely enjoyable Bollywood musical romance *'Bride and Prejudice'*, a clever twist on the Jane Austen novel. It certainly brightened up our grey days! On **March 11<sup>th</sup>** we'll be screening *'Schweitzer, A Life for Africa'* - a superbly made feature-drama shot in Central Africa and based on the life and work of theologian and missionary Albert Schweitzer at the Lambarene hospital, and who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952. April's film night coincides with Good Friday, **April 15<sup>th</sup>**: *'Lemon Tree'* is a moving drama portraying a Palestinian widow who takes on the might of the Israeli government when her lemon orchard is seized because it poses a security risk to her new neighbour - the country's defence minister. Make a date for our final film on **May 13<sup>th</sup>**: *'A United Kingdom'* - a drama based on the true story of the heir to the throne of Bechuanaland (now Botswana) - Seretse Khama. A law student in Britain, he meets Ruth Williams; they fall in love and eventually marry. The political intrigues that follow and encircle the couple here in Britain and in Southern Africa make for a tense and emotive outcome.

MM