

MAXWEST CONTACT

March 2023



Maxwelltown West Church - Dumfries
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 5th March - 11am

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Front cover: Celebrating Christmas with our Ukrainian friends - article page 11

Above: Traditional Ukrainian needlework

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Rev Johannes



What do you see in the picture below? An old lady? Or a young woman? In fact, both of them are in this cartoon. For what is the nose of the old lady also serves as the chin of the young woman. And the old lady's left eye is also the left ear of the young woman. The picture is an optical illusion that contains more than what can be seen at first glance. But you cannot see both women at the same time. They are on two different layers. Like always, it simply depends on the perspective and your own stance. For example, regarding the picture in question a study has revealed that the person you see first in this picture could be affected by your own age.

But now – and that is the real challenge – think of everything you see around you as something that has different layers and different meanings. The cartoonist William Ely Hill gave his work from 1915 the meaningful

title: “My Wife and my Mother-in-Law”. It is not just a play with different perspectives but also a reference to the underlying truth that every old lady was once a young woman, and that a young woman cannot simply stay young. A seed bears a new plant, and the plant was once a seed. Only time separates in front of our eyes what is intrinsically connected. And by the way – what is a young woman or man? It is sometimes strange at my age, that older people regard me as young and young people as very old. So sometimes I am young and the next moment I am old. It just depends on the perspective. What is grey at night can be flamboyant by day. And a poor person in a rich country can be a rich person in a poor country.

Everything depends on the perspective. In leaving your old ways behind, you can experience unexpected new situations. Just try to look at things in a new way and then you will see new things. ►



► That is the promise and the challenge of following Jesus. Ash Wednesday is this year on the 2nd of March. This day marks the start of the season of Lent. The 40 days of Lent connect us with the 40 days of Jesus in the wilderness, being tempted by Satan. Jesus passed the test. In the cold and the heat of the desert he was forged and harnessed to start his public mission. He starts with the words: “*The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!*” (Mark 1:15) Jesus begins like John the Baptist with a call for repentance.

The Greek word that is rendered as “repentance” is *metanoia*. “Repentance” has undoubtedly a negative connotation, especially in our modern society. It relates to the past and sounds like admitting guilt and feeling bad. But that is not so much intended by the Greek word. “Metanoia” is more related to the future and has a more positive sound. It means a transformative change of one’s mind and heart. It can be translated as “conversion” or even “reformation” – and the latter has in our Reformed tradition a superb connotation! Metanoia means that you leap at a chance that is given to you. The focus is not on the botched past as a burden but on the new future that starts today.

How does this new future start? Not in the way people would normally expect, because we usually think that it depends on us and that we have to take action to pave the way for a better future. But regarding the gospel, Jesus himself is the new future. God has already taken action to pave the way for a new world. And this becomes a reality in our lives through our faith. Therefore, “repent and believe the good news!” Change your perspective, see the world differently. Do not see just the old things you are used to but start to see the young woman as well in the picture. Do not be distracted and frustrated by all the signs that this world is utterly doomed but believe in the new heaven and the new earth – and the new world has already started in Jesus. Do not allow yourself to be lulled into simply repeating what you hear in the news and around you but believe the good news of the gospel. Seize the chance and start anew! Your past is buried with Jesus, you can now jump into a new life, like the butterfly that leaves its cocoon.

Repent and fly – and do not say “I am too old for this”.
For in every old lady is hidden a beautiful young woman.

- Dates for Your Diary -

Sunday, 5th March - Holy Communion - 11am

Tuesday, 14th March - Fabric Committee - 7pm

Friday, 24th March - MaxWest Movies night - 7pm
“The Guardians”

Thursday, 6th April - MaxWest Movies night - 7pm
“El Baño del Papa” [The Pope’s Bathroom]

Friday 7th April - Good Friday Service - 3pm

Friday, 12th May - MaxWest Movies night - 7pm
“The Rocket Post”

✚ **CHURCH REGISTER** ✚

Church Membership
Admitted by Resolution

Mrs Margaret Stenhouse
Mr Michael Stenhouse

Transference of Lines
Mrs Jean Mason

*Our condolences to
the family and friends of:*

Mrs Margaret Holmes
7.12.22

Mrs Muriel Donkersley
9.12.22

Mr James Gracie
9.12.22

Mrs Anna Johnstone
16.1.23

Mr Ian McLauchlan
21.1.23

Mrs Morag Thomson
21.1.23

May they Rest in Peace



Guild Report

by Anne Dunbar

Now into 2023 and the 92nd year of Maxwelltown West Guild, members are reflecting on their successful Christmas party when many members

entertained with poems, songs and musical items. The request was for a similar event next year.

Veteran Robin Hood braved the weather in January to speak of his family history of traumas, rising above losing a young daughter to a rare skin disease, and then a son, a retired Royal Marine with health problems, so he began fund raising for connected charities. Many know him as the man who walked from Dumfries to London pulling a statue of a soldier. Several years later his main focus is raising money to assist

veterans through HGV training to find a job. Our Guild collection in January went towards this.

At February's Guild meeting we will learn about Defibrillators and how to use them.



In March the Guild will be focusing on this year's project **"Starchild"**, founded by a Scottish girl, Michaela Foster Marsh, in memory of her adopted Ugandan brother Frankie. The aim is to complete



an education centre for children and young people with disabilities and to address the stigma and myths attached to them. Several have never left their home, have been locked up, even tied up, and of course had no education.



MAX WEST PRAISE GROUP

*"Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord all the earth"*

Psalms 96 v1.

The Praise Group is a mailing list of musicians who enjoy singing or playing a musical instrument to enhance worship.

The main aim is to share the pleasure of making music with those who enjoy listening, and in the process learn new hymns, aid reflective praise and add new genres of music to the Sunday services.

This is a very flexible group with no obligation, no need to be able to read music, and definitely no auditions.

Since regrouping after lockdown, we have trialled different meeting times - currently once a month on a Sunday evening to practice, then involvement in the following Sunday morning service.

Next Praise Group Dates:

Sunday 19th February - 10am practice in church for 11am service

Sunday 12th March - 4.00 – 4.45pm in church

Sunday 19th March - 10am practice in church for 11am service

New members are always welcome. Drop me an e-mail or speak to me at Church on a Sunday.

Anne Walter

Max West Praise Group Lead praisegroup@maxwelltownwest.org.uk



Christmas Brunch

A soup and sandwich brunch was held after the Family Service on Sunday 18th December. Unfortunately, it was very icy underfoot that day which made walking dangerous, so there was not such a large attendance as had been hoped for. However, around 50 people did brave the wintry conditions, including some Ukrainian guests. A wonderful time of warm fellowship and good food were much appreciated by everyone. The members of the Social Group were delighted to be able to host the Christmas Brunch once more, after having been unable to do so for the last two years because of the pandemic.

Social Afternoon for Office Bearers

On Sunday 15th January, Elders and Deacons met together in the afternoon for a leisurely chat over tea, coffee and biscuits. This was an enjoyable opportunity to meet without a business agenda, allowing everyone to get to know each other better. The high level of noisy chatter emanating from the 30 guests was a clear indication that the afternoon had been a success.

Jane Marchbank

MATHIA NEWS

from Anne Dunbar - World Church Team

Greetings for 2023 from our Faith share friends in Mathia Kenya. Great Joy is reported from Mathia as rain arrived in mid-December. New hope for crops to grow again since food has been scarce with prices very high. Rain was short lived !

Before New Year the church held a "Children's Ministry" when Sunday School teachers were dedicated into Mathia Church.

They also celebrated a founder church member's birthday of 105 years.

Grateful thanks to our Maxwelltown West members who again supported our Christmas Bursary Appeal;

"God Bless You" from the students.

In January this year our World Church Team Treasurer sent £2,000 for the students

and £500 for the children who are most needy. A letter received very recently from student Lawrence Gathinji giving "esteemed gratitude" on behalf of the students for our continued support. They are all back at University now. I asked him if he could find time to let us know the subjects this year's seven students are studying, and how many will graduate in 2023.

PS. Sad news of the death of Lucy Merangi, the wife of James who visited us; some WCT members stayed with them in Mathia. A donation was sent to James recently in her memory. We continue to pray for them and send them God's blessings.



Giddy Up!

£187, collected at the Christmas Candlelight, was donated to 'Sports Driving Unlimited', a horse carriage driving centre based in Lockerbie. Children and adults with disabilities are encouraged to participate in this sport, allowing them to develop confidence and benefit from the therapeutic contact with ponies.



Brownies

Jill McEwan
Brownie Leader
reports



The Brownies have been very busy with a variety of activities at our Tuesday meetings in the Church Hall and at other times and places.

At the end of October, we held a Hallowe'en party with traditional games and great costumes.

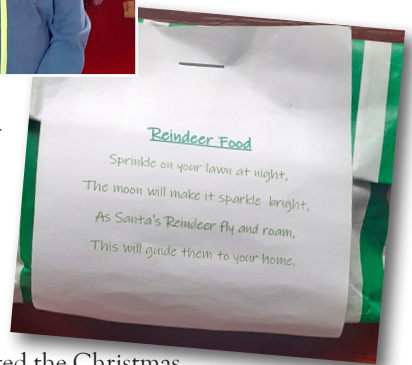


The Brownies were pleased that they could be part of the Church Service for Remembrance Sunday. They were happy the flags could be paraded again, after a break due to Covid restrictions.

After one of the Brownies suggested making Reindeer food to raise funds for a charity, the girls put it into bags and sold them. They voted to donate the £78 raised to Dumfries and Galloway Canine Rescue.

In December, Reverend Johannes came along with us to Lochduhar where we sang some Christmas carols and songs to the residents and gave them 85 Christmas crackers that we had made. We walked back and decorated the Christmas tree in the Church Hall before we went home.

We had a visit to the Theatre Royal and enjoyed seeing the pantomime, 'Rapunzel' and eating ice cream at the interval. Girlguiding arranged for us to see 'Matilda the Musical' at Loreburn Hall. Popcorn and juice were provided!



At the last meeting, before the Christmas holidays, parents joined us to enjoy the Christmas carols and to see Summer (photo R) being presented with the Brooke Award and the Kelpies being made the Six of the Term.

2023 has seen us starting to work on the 'Skills Builder, Make Change' which is part of our 'Take Action' theme. We have been thinking about opinions and how people may have different opinions to your own.

A special Promise Celebration was held for Izzy, supported by the other new girls who renewed the



Promises they had made just before Christmas. The hall was lit with tea lights that we had borrowed, creating a special atmosphere.



Learning about Chinese New Year and its traditions led to the making of origami rabbits (Photo R).

We are looking forward to welcoming some new Brownies in the Spring and happy to receive enquiries from others.



Christmas 2023 at Maxwelltown West

Happy Christmas!" was the greeting for Anita, Heather and myself on Saturday morning January 7th 2023 as we surveyed the aftermath of the Ukrainian Christmas Eve dinner held in our Centenary Hall on the previous evening. There was a lot of clearing up and washing up in front of us!

"Happy Christmas!" came from Oleksandra Novatska (*photo opposite*) and her helpers, all Ukrainian refugees, who the previous day had prepared, cooked and served a traditional Ukrainian Christmas Eve family dinner for 40 guests, with one space at the large table left unoccupied, a symbol for those not able to be with us because of the continuing unprovoked invasion of their home country. You may have met some of our Ukrainian friends at our "Scots' Night" in November last year, or at our Christmas Brunch. Peter Kormylo, the Ukrainian contact in Dumfries and Galloway, and a friend for many years had asked about the possibility of using our church kitchen and Centenary Hall for their Christmas Eve meal. Some hurried phone calls later and the event was on, and Oleksandra, an enthusiastic P.R. expert, subsequently appeared on BBC Radio Scotland, Radio Solway, D&G Standard, and Border TV – and her team set to work.

Thursday 5th January was spent preparing for the big event, and at 10am the Centenary Hall and the kitchen were a hive of activity. I have never chopped so many onions in my life before! My tears flowed, not because of the onions, but from listening to the women singing Ukrainian carols as they worked and thinking about all that they and their loved ones must have gone through in this past year. One could not help but be moved by their beautiful voices.

Ukrainians celebrate Christmas on the night of January 6th to 7th. The evening is called *Holy Eve* or *Rich Eve*. Traditionally all the family gather at the table with 12 different dishes on it, each dish symbolising one of the Twelve Apostles.

Kutia – made from grains [resurrection]; grated poppy seeds [fertility]; nuts [health]; honey [eternity], and dried fruits.

Uzvar – a drink made from apples, pears, rose hips, cranberries and raisins.

Borsch – beetroot soup.

Pampushky – small doughy buns.

Varenyky – dumplings stuffed with mushrooms.

Holubtsi – cabbage leaves stuffed with rice, mushrooms, onions and carrots.

Stewed cabbage cooked with onions.





Vinaigrette – beetroot, onions and pickled cucumbers.

Pickled vegetables; pickled herring.

Christmas bread – braided into a ring with three rings on top to symbolise the Trinity.

Sweet Varenky – jam doughnuts dusted with sugar.

After the meal our Ukrainian friends sang traditional Christmas carols and we sang some of our own favourite carols. “Silent Night” had a special significance because of its association with wartime. Despite my lack of Ukrainian, conversations with Lyudmyla and Olena were made possible with the help of the phone app. “SayHi” and the time-honoured use of hand gestures. It was a wonderful occasion for us all, with happiness and sadness too. We were lucky enough to be part of a memorable second Christmas, and our thanks go to Peter, Oleksandra and all our Ukrainian friends for asking us to share their Christmas with them.

We will never forget our Ukrainian Christmas 2023.

David Johnson

After Eights - news from Anita Stott

The ladies from the After Eight's group have had several social get togethers over the past year. Instead of having our Christmas get together we decided to wait until January. There were twenty-four of us who got together for lunch at the Edenbank. Everyone who came along had a good time catching up with friends and getting to know and make new friends too. The food was good too as can be seen in the pictures. For further information about the After Eight's you can phone Anita on 01387 255080. I wish all the ladies a very happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.



A GUID SCOTTISH NIGHT!



On the last Saturday of November, there was music, dancing, fun and laughter in the Main Hall at a Scottish Night organised by the Social Group. Colin and August played traditional Scottish tunes on the bagpipes to welcome everyone as they arrived, and again as they left to go home, after a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Music was played by Ian and Willie Robert. John Caskie was the MC for the occasion and did a splendid job of introducing the entertainers and making sure the floor was filled for the ceilidh dances. We were joined by some Ukrainian guests. They were encouraged to join in the dances, which they did with enthusiasm. Talented members from the congregation provided more relaxing entertainment. We enjoyed songs from Anne and David and poetry recitations from Mary and Colin. At the interval, traditional Scottish fare was served, including oatcakes and cheese or smoked salmon, tablet and shortbread.

It was a wonderfully joyous evening - made more special by the fact that such a large social gathering hadn't been possible during the pandemic.

Jane Marchbank & Jill McEwan