

November 2019



MAXWEST CONTACT



2020

VISION

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 Services: Sunday 1st December - 11am

End of Year Communion: Sunday 29th December - 11 am

Sunday Club: 11 am during term time.

CONTACTS

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

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#MaxWestChurch Tel: 01387 255900

Scottish Charity Reference: SC 015925; CCLI: 1194718

Session Clerk

Andrew Crossan, (01387 264569) E: andrew@ahrcrossan.co.uk

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

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Treasurer: Arona Allan (01387 850485)

Church Officer: (Situation vacant)

Fabric Convenor: David Miller (01387 268602)

Editor 'MaxWest Contact' Mike Marshall (07710 176567) E: mike@breathingspaceproductions.co.uk

The Guild
Sunday Club
Messy Church
Brownies
Guides
Church Youth Policy Group (CHYPs):
Good Companions
Badminton Club
After Eights Group
MaxWest Movies
Parish Visitors Group
Missionary Correspondent

Anne Dunbar
Dawn McLeod
Anita Stott
Jill McEwan
Tracey Stewart
Anne Walter
Eileen Riddick
Jane Marchbank
Heather Johnson
David Johnson
Eileen Riddick
Margaret Young



Advent window at Glasserton Church, Whithorn

MaxWest Contact is published four times a year by the congregation
of Maxwelltown West Church of Scotland, Dumfries

Issue No 40 - Cover Picture: Blair & Georgia - our two new Bible Explorers



Frae Your Locum -

David Matheson writes:



How quickly summer seems to come and go. As I write this I am sitting with our log burner on for first time since April. Autumn has surely come. I do hope many of you enjoyed some of the summer sunshine and the wet days didn't dampen or spoil your holiday. I have been asked to write about 2020: many of you will have heard the saying 20/20 vision. But what is it?

20/20 vision is a term used to express normal visual acuity (the clarity or sharpness of vision) measured at a distance of 20 feet. ... If you have 20/100 vision, it means that you must be as close as 20 feet to see what a person with normal vision can see at 100 feet. If you Google 20/20 vision you will find hundreds of churches looking ahead to year 2020 using the tag name 20/20 vision.

But I've chosen three Bible passages each from chapter 20 verse 20, to reflect upon. I am using the Good News Translation Bible

1. *Ezekiel chapter 20 v 20*

“Make the Sabbath a holy day, so that it will be a sign of the covenant we made, and will remind you that I am the LORD your God.”

Surely this is something we as church members must feel called to do. For today in Scotland recent survey tells us “Most people in Scotland self-identify as non-religious (59%)” Let us as Maxwelltown West Church rise up to the challenge of offering people IN OUR Parish and Dumfries the opportunity to “*come, taste and see The Lord is Good*” Ps 34. Your Parish Profile is the beginning of a new journey for Maxwelltown West Church and we can and must all be willing to support our next Minister.

2. *Gospel of St John ch 20 v 20*

“Then Jesus came and stood among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord”

As we come to church on Sunday as Ezekiel calls us to, let us come with the same joy as the Disciples had when they first saw Jesus was alive and amongst them. Sure we have all had Thomas's doubts, but equally so we also have proclaimed as Thomas did “My Lord and My God”. Let us feel the awe of God as we approach him and be filled with joy as Jesus calls us to him.

3. Acts ch 20 v 20

“You know that I did not hold back anything that would be of help to you as I preached and taught in public and in your homes.”

Here we meet St Paul as he speaks to the Elders of Ephesus. He was sad and left them in tears. St Paul reminded them that he gave his all to the Mission of sharing the Good News of Jesus to the people in Ephesus. And so it is with us in 2020 as we approach the New Decade and indeed New Year. Our much loved MaxWest Church is in the early stages of planning for our future: probably fewer Presbyteries, fewer Churches, but armed with the power and love of Jesus, and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit I for one look positively to the future of our beloved Church of Scotland. The Trustees of the Assembly are already working hard to map out the journey ahead. Sure the road will be rough and sometimes steep to climb or accept but let us never forget Jesus suffered the humiliation, agony and ultimate death upon the Cross for our sake. He died so that we might live “Life in all its fullness”. Let us “Look Forward In Faith” as Rev. Scobie wrote in his uplifting hymn of the same name.

Here is a prayer I invite you to pray over the coming year.

Send your Spirit, O God,

**To open our eyes...That we might see clearly your gifts and blessings, past and present,
And so be filled with gratitude.**

**To open our eyes... That we might see clearly where we have failed to proclaim the
Good News and welcome the stranger, and so be moved to ongoing conversion.**

**To open our eyes... That we might see clearly the signs of the times, and where your
Christ lies hidden at the margins, and so see where and how we are being called to
serve.**

**To open our eyes... That we might see clearly the vision that you, O God, have for us,
as Maxwelltown Church.**

Yes, O God, send us your Spirit In a new Pentecost:

Renew our hearts, Renew our Church, Renew our world.

Through Christ, our Lord. Amen

So as 2019 draws rapidly to a close we come once again to the season of Advent leading to Christmas. I can hear you all singing *Away in a Manger* as you read ‘Christmas’, and indeed please come to church and join us as we joyfully gather in Maxwelltown West to sing our favourite Carols and remember the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem and God’s greatest gift to humankind - Baby Jesus. May 2020 bring you great joy and good health.

God Bless you all,

David Matheson



RICE ONE!



The recent 90kg Challenge at Harvest Thanksgiving and beyond was very successful due to a magnificent response from the congregation, friends and visitors. At time of writing there are 11kg left and we have paid the whole of the price over to the charity - £288.00. Well done everyone - you have assisted Malawi farmers to educate their secondary age children.

Drew Crossan

THANK YOU!



Millicent Gemmill, who's looking forward to her 98th birthday would like to thank all who sent cards or visited her on her recent stay in DGRI and later Kirkcudbright Cottage Hospital for their kindness. She is now home and being well

looked after by her carers and not least by her loving sister, Olive Woods. A recent visit and flowers from the congregation has meant a lot.



Our youngsters weren't shy at coming forward to show off their many talents in late September - *MaxWest's Got Talent* looks like becoming a regular event in our calendar!

Hello from the Editor: Mike Marshall

Welcome to this new edition of *'MaxWest Contact'*! As a relative newcomer to this Congregation (although my wife Jean has been associated with MaxWest ever since she was a wee girl), if there's one thing that has been so memorable for us both, it's the marvellous welcomes coupled with the warm Christian fellowship that we have received.

Your previous Editor, Fiona Saddington, is to be congratulated on the incredible job that she's done over many years, cajoling articles and reports and making sure that *'Contact'* always appeared on time. Having spent almost twenty years at the Isle of Whithorn and involved with the church there in a similar function, I know well the challenges that will face me in the Editor's seat here at MaxWest! I'm really looking forward to the task, and I know that with your encouragement and with God's help we can continue to spread the Good News in this parish and elsewhere in Dumfries, and in particular what a vibrant and forward-looking congregation we are.

Greetings from the sponsors of this issue of

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Max West Movies - Autumn Season

Our November film **'Fishermen's Friends'** (2019) is not about the lozenges for sore throats and coughs, but an uplifting film that tells the true story of how an acappella sea-shanty singing group of men hit the big time after starting singing in pubs during the mid 1990s in Port Isaac. Starring Daniel Mays, David Hayman, James Purefoy and Tuppence Middleton. In December, St Bernadette's Junior School in Coventry romp onto the screen in **'Nativity'** (2009) starring Martin Freeman and Ashley "Annan" Jensen. "A Hollywood company are coming to see our school's Nativity and we're all going to be famous!" Wow!

Plans are already well in hand for our spring 2020 screenings, and which will include some first-class classics as well as one or two lesser known titles that will bring some great screen entertainment. Watch out for announcements in December!

There is no admission charge for entry to these films, but we encourage donations to help offset the cost of our Church Screening Licence.



MY INVISIBLE FRIEND

Ron Thomas has reason to be thankful

People often ask me if I get lonely when touring alone on my summer holidays, it's by choice and not circumstance that I ride my high powered BMW motorcycle without a visible pillion passenger. People think I may be lonely and therefore approach me and ask such things as

'where am I heading? Am I camping, and if so is the trailer that I pull behind the bike a Trailer Tent? How does it effect the handling of the bike? Many times I've been given visiting cards and been asked to keep them informed of my journey.

Back to my statement that I ride without a visible pillion: at the start of each day's journey I talk with my invisible pillion - The Lord. He is with me every day and I always start my journey by asking Him to keep me safe and I promise to keep alert and ride to the high standard I was trained to. Sometimes we may have a wee 'glitch', but I always manage to keep calm as I know The Lord is with me.

This summer I was in France near Besançon, and experienced a glitch'. Oh boy, was it a big one! My bike weighs in at just under half a ton, not including the trailer. It was a very hot day - 34°C. The sign said 'Detour' so after following it for half an hour I decided to take a unclassified road, and after a few kilometres the road surface changed to newly laid chippings. Within minutes the rear wheel was wobbling on the loose gravel; I stopped and placed the bike on its stand. But as I stepped off the bike and stood beside it the machine fell over on top of me. I was trapped by the legs and unable to free myself. I lay and called out to my invisible pillion for help, and it came in the form of a strong young man that pulled at the machine. But it wasn't enough to free me, so I cried out: "Please LORD free me!" My surge of strength shocked me at the time but now, when I think about it, it was my pillion that pulled my legs out and took the pain away.

We are always on a journey together, and every minute it's another journey.

Diary Dates

Friday 15th November: Film Night at 7pm: *'Fishermen's Friends'*.

Saturday 16th November: MaxWest Guild: Afternoon Tea & Gift Envelopes 2pm - 4pm

Thursday, 28th November: After Eights: "An Experience Down Under!" Jean Marshall shares her 8 months spent on a Young Farmers' Exchange and sampling Australian life in the '60s.

Tuesday 3rd December: MaxWest Guild Christmas Lunch - Edenbank Hotel 12.30pm

Thursday 12th December: After Eights Christmas Dinner

Friday 13th December: Film Night at 7pm: *'Nativity'*,

Tuesday 7th January: MaxWest Guild 2pm: Lorna Kempshall - SS Wildlife Hospital

Thursday 30th January: After Eights: *Archaeology of Nithsdale* - Andrew Nicholson reveals some of hidden past.



TO BE A PILGRIM... David Johnson considers the benefits of a good walk

As a squeaky-voiced probationer chorister in Derby Cathedral choir, I loved singing “To be a Pilgrim”, also known as “Who would true valour see”. It is the only hymn that John Bunyan is credited with writing, sung to the tune “*Monks’ Gate*” by Ralph Vaughan Williams. I think that it was the reference to “hobgoblins” and “foul fiends” that captured my imagination at that early age: what do “hobgoblins” and “foul fiends” look like? Later, hearing the hymn sung by a packed congregation in St Paul’s Cathedral at the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill in 1965, it sent a shiver down my spine. The version sung and played by Maddy Prior and the Carnival Band on their album “*Sing Lustily with Good Courage*” is an altogether more rollicking interpretation. They’re obviously having a great time singing and playing it, and the quaint sincerity of Bunyan’s words stirs us, the listener, out of our easy-going Christianity to the thrill of a great adventure.

The Church of Scotland’s Annual Report and Accounts for 2015 had the title “*People of the Way*”. The Moderator of the 2016 General Assembly, Rev. Dr. Russell Barr, chose this as his theme for the year. It’s a description given to the followers of Jesus since the time of St Paul, people who were notable for their worship, the generosity of their welcome and the care that they provided. And they did a fair bit of travelling, mainly on foot, just as Paul did. During her Moderatorial Year, the Rev. Susan Brown, exhorted us to “*Walk with Me*”. That was when I decided to start a series of small-scale Pilgrimage Walks at Maxwelltown West. So far we have visited the Ruthwell Cross, Sweetheart Abbey, Dundrennan Abbey, St Queran’s Holy Well and the site of the Martyrs of the Solway memorial at Kippford.

Rev. Dr. Richard Frazer is minister of Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh and founder of the Grassmarket Community Project which helps vulnerable people. He has been very influential in the revival of pilgrimage in Scotland and in the Church of Scotland’s decision officially to promote and revive pilgrimage after 450 years of opposition from the church. I caught up with Richard at this year’s Wigtown Book Festival where he was speaking about his recently published book describing a pilgrim’s journey to Santiago de Compostella. On his 700-mile walk from the French town of Le Juy-en-Velay to the shrine of St James the Great, Richard discovered that a journey, however it is made and undertaken with an open and hospitable heart, can provide spiritual renewal and transformation, filling what many people see as the “spiritual void” of 21st century life.

He told me, “I would urge everyone to get outdoors and into nature. When walking it’s almost as if the landscape starts to read you and you become part of the landscape.” Richard says that you don’t need to start with faith. “It’s very accessible: it’s a physical experience which becomes spiritual.”



"You'll have had your tea..."

By the time that you are reading this we hope to have undertaken two more walks. The first, a Heritage Walk taking in the crypt of the Crichton Church, the Crichton Estate, Castledykes Park and Maidenbower Crag. The last walk of 2019 follows the Old Torr Path to Red Haven near Auchencairn, where we hope to witness the annual "pilgrimage" of thousands of pink-footed, greylag and barnacle geese to the largest saltmarsh in the Stewartry.

Our walks always end with a pause for refreshment and a chance to confirm our commitment to *"People of the Way"*. Please join us as we walk into 2020; you will be most welcome. Be assured, we've not yet come across any "hobgoblins" or "foul fiends"!

Interim Moderator at Maxwelltown West, Rev. Sally Russell:

**LOOKING
FORWARD TO**

It is my hope and prayer for 2020 that the congregation of Maxwelltown West will continue moving forward and developing themselves and the work that goes on here.

There are big changes ahead for the whole Church – not just the churches in Dumfries – and I see this as exciting times ahead. There will be great opportunities to do things differently, to really become more involved with the community and our ecumenical friends and neighbours.

It is my hope that, as the people of God in this place, we are willing and able to follow where we are being called to go.

Our traditions of the past give us a great platform to work from – but we must look forward and not back. In 2020 I hope and pray that we will be excited and enthusiastic about spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ in whatever way we can, so that the Kingdom of God continues to grow.



Anne Walter:



As the human race evolves people and society are ever-changing while the centre of our faith, the love of Christ, remains constant. My 2020 vision is about seizing the opportunities we have while learning from our mistakes; sharing experiences and working together across historical divides; celebrating diversity; nurturing our youth; protecting our planet and embracing social and technological advances so that the church maintains relevance with the changing world around us.

BOB BOWS OUT

After nearly three decades of sterling service to MaxWest kirk, our Church Officer Bob Wilson has taken his leave for a well-earned retirement. There isn't much that Bob doesn't know about the church, its innermost workings whether under the floorboards or high up in the lofty roof. He's grappled with temperamental printing equipment, reluctant heating systems, making sure that all our various needs for services, weddings and funerals, not to mention concerts for visiting choirs and seating for film nights are all in place. Presenting Bob with a token of the congregation's esteem in the form of a cheque - our locum David Matheson praised his unstinting efforts, and hinted that Bob will more than likely return once in a while - 'just to keep an eye on things'! Keep an eye out for his trusty bicycle at the church, Bob will be continuing to be writing his excellent and informative articles about MaxWest and its history for us.



Dumfries Christian Network

Spreading the good news of Jesus Christ in Dumfries and the surrounding area

John Love is our representative on the Network, and he tells us of its role and function:

Dumfries Christian Network (DCN) is an association of churches/organisations from within Dumfries and the surrounding area. Currently there are 15 member churches/organisations in the Network. The purpose of the DCN is to encourage and enable Christian Organisations to communicate with each other and act together in the community with particular regard to the following objectives:

- To promote Christianity.
- To build relationships between Christian Organisations and between these organisations and the local community.
- To encourage and facilitate 'groupings' within the Network to undertake joint Christian action and help with publicity.

It's an organisation that enables all of us to be part of the vision of a truly embracing Christian community. We would therefore appeal to everyone to support it by, for example, attending the joint services/events during Advent and Holy Week - it really is so uplifting to see members of various churches coming together in worship and fellowship.



CHURCH FLOWERS

	Church	Memorial Vase
Jan 5	Mrs E Riddick	Mrs L McWhan
12	Mrs O Woods	Mrs A Milligan
19	Mrs M McLeod	Mrs M McLeod
26	Mrs R Slack	Mr R Wilson
Feb 2	Mrs M Wallace	VACANT
9	Mrs Mgt Wallace	Mrs F Saddington
16	Mrs M Kingan	VACANT
23	Mrs M Wallace	Mrs S Aird
Mar 1	Mrs I Johnstone	Mrs P McKenzie
8	Mrs J McEwan	Mrs C Muir
15	Mrs E McNay	Miss J Marchbank
22	Mrs O Woods	Mrs E Riddick
29	Miss E Beeton	VACANT



If you would like to take a vacant date or help to arrange church flowers, please contact
Anne Dunbar. Tel: 01387 251455

Maxwelltown West Church Register

Baptisms

06.10.19 Alex Armstrong, son of Jen and Ian Armstrong.

Marriages



01.06.19

Amelia Grace Wears
to James William Kerr



14.09.19

Alasdair Thomas Savage
to Mhairi Elizabeth Watson

Deaths

15.08.19

Mrs Sybil Cunningham

23.08.19

Mr David McNay

4.09.19

Mr David Drynan

9.09.19

Mrs Wilma Wardrope



NEWS FROM ALL THE GROUPS

Maxwelltown West Brownies

In 2020 we will be celebrating 75 years of Brownies at Maxwelltown West. To celebrate, the Brownies have planted 75 daffodils in October beside the wooden seat at the front of the Church. In Spring 2020 we can all keep an eye out for the daffodils breaking through after winter. We have also enquired about planting a tree to celebrate our anniversary in Dock Park.

Our hopes for 2020

- Brownies and Leaders will have fun at Brownies whilst following our Brownie programme.
- Some Brownies will be able to achieve the Brownie Gold Award.
- The Unit will continue to be involved in the Church family whether by being at Church parades or being involved in activities e.g. Youth Concerts.

Girlguiding has said:

'With guiding girls have fun, adventure and the space to discover their potential...Girlguiding is dedicated to creating a better world for girls and young women. We empower girls, we give them space to grow and we ensure that each one of them can get involved - no matter what their background or ability'.

We will continue to use these quotes to inspire us in 2020 and beyond.

For example, this term we have had 5 girls make their Promise at Dumfries Museum, we had great fun exploring all the museum has to offer. This helps the Brownies learn about their community and explore places they might not have been. In 2020, we hope to do more of this but what Brownies will do is yet to be decided, watch this space!

Why do Girlguiding members make a Promise? Our Promise links us to other Girlguiding members and the ten million people involved in guiding across the world. Although we may have different languages, cultures and beliefs, each member makes a commitment to do her best. Our inclusive Promise for all is a shared commitment for every member – from all faiths or none. This unity is what makes guiding so special. If you'd like to know more about Brownies, please get in touch.

Jill McEwan, Brownie Leader

Scout Group

Moves are ongoing with the link to 10th Dumfries Scout Group. There will be a joining event on the appropriate 28th day of the 10th month, the group numbers.

We'll bring you pictures in the spring issue of 'Maxwest Contact'. *Hamish MacDonald, GSL*

Good Companions

We're all enjoying our new session and look forward to a variety of speakers between now and Christmas. Bob Wilson spoke to us at our meeting in October. He gave us an in-depth history of the church, detailing christenings and weddings and how the procedures had changed over the years. Planning is now underway for speakers for the New Year, with members providing their suggestions. As we did last year we are having our Christmas lunch on the first meeting in January. Please consider joining us for our afternoon sessions on alternate Wednesdays - 2pm in the Committee Room. If you would like a syllabus please speak to me.

Eileen Riddick

Parish Visitors Group

We continue to visit our housebound members in the parish. At our last meeting we considered whether or not we should continue to visit members who were unable to communicate or be aware of our visit. Following discussion and sharing of views we agreed that these visits should continue as before. Our next afternoon tea will be on 18th November, when we hope to bring together as many of our group as possible. Please let me know if you are aware of anyone who would welcome a visit.

Eileen Riddick

Messy Church

meets on the last Saturday
of each month at 4pm



I'm having a wee break after a busy Messy Harvest!



The Guild

The Guild resumed again in October with a social evening of hilarious entertainment by John Glover. Many friends from other Guilds joined us, fulfilling this year's theme **"Companions on the Road"**. As usual, lots to look forward to with a fund raising Afternoon Tea on 16th November in Max.West, followed by a **"BIG Sing"** on 29th November in St George's Church with **"Nithsdale Guilds Together"**, then Christmas celebrations in December. In January and February we meet in the afternoon.

We are still collecting used stamps for charity and unwanted toiletries for the local Womens' Aid. These can be given to Anne Dunbar or any Guild member to pass on. Everyone, ladies and gentlemen, are very welcome to come along to any Guild meeting, details in church intimations and on church notice board.

Anne Dunbar, Guild Convener



Our new project for 2020 is to support the **"Free to Live Trust"** which helps children and brothel girls in Pune, India.

Known also as Seema's project, it started initially in 2014 with the aim of building a home for abandoned street children from the red-light district of the city of Pune, and to build a rehabilitation centre for rescued victims of the sex industry. The inspiration for this work comes from Dr. Seema Waghmode, a Christian lady, who has worked to improve the sexual health of the prostitutes for over 25 years, as well as rescuing their children. **Seema tells us that the motivation for this difficult and dangerous work is her faith.**

Since 2018 with the help of the Church of Scotland Guild, Seema's project has now completed the building of the first Children's Centre in the rural village of Bori, with a second home for older boys recently completed a few weeks ago. The children now go to school and one senior girl who has passed exams will soon go to training college. A market gardening project has also been started.



Dr Seema Waghmode



*Seema's Project
Child Development Centre*

MaxWest Guild is holding a Soup and Sandwich lunch for this project after church on Sunday 16th February, so we hope you will join us for this very deserving cause, which has so far raised over £42,000 nationally.

Posting the Christmas Message



Maybe some of you will remember the stamp opposite? Hard to believe perhaps that it's over 50 years since special stamps were first issued by Royal Mail to celebrate Christmas. 'The King of the Orient' was one of two designs entered by six-year olds in a competition in the children's TV show *Blue Peter* to help create Britain's very first Christmas stamp. More than 5000 entries were received, and it started a tradition that, just as we go to press with this edition of MaxWest Contact, continues with this year's flurry of gummy and sticky squares. This year, the robins

and pantomime characters; the bright red santas and letter-boxes have been filed away till Christmas 2020; stamp designers have returned to a religious interpretation - and for my money, I'd choose representations of the Nativity story at any time. There have been some superb examples over the years - all the more wondrous when you consider just how much detail has to be compressed into such a tiny scrap of paper.



Perhaps the most memorable issue for me, and one which portrays just how universal the Christmas story and the birth of Our Lord is, appeared just a few years ago. Six stamps, vividly featuring paintings of the Madonna and Child in the style of many indigenous cultures - from the Caribbean to a North American Indian reservation; from the Indian sub-continent to the original peoples of Australia.



But it's the 1st Class stamp, Marianne Stokes' inspired portrait painted in Dubrovnik in 1905,



that is the most telling. There is a threatening background of almost icy thorns - portents of the Crucifixion and, in the light of events, somewhat prescient of the many decades of troubles, anguish and genocide that were still to come in that region.

Here at home, in these uncertain and fractious times, Christ's message of Peace is more important than ever. Let lasting Peace be with us all this Christmas and in 2020.

Mike Marshall



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



Over the past six years Maxwelltown West Church members have provided bursaries for over 40 Mathia Church young people to assist them in their education costs. This has been greatly appreciated and helped them into good jobs and careers.

above: Rosemary Slack, a member of our World Church Team, on a recent visit to Mathia Church in Kenya.

opposite: The Reverend of Mathia Church with delighted parents and students.



Mathia Church Bursary Fund 2019/2020

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