

Parish of Upper Tweeddale

KIRK MATTERS



Christmas 2025

CHURCH'S VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Church of Scotland is to be a Church which seeks to inspire the people of Scotland and beyond with the good news of Jesus Christ through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and serving communities

UPPER TWEEDDALE WEBSITE

www.uppertweeddale.org.uk Charity No. SC004728

Part of the West Tweeddale Parishes linkage (www.westtweeddale.org.uk)



@parishofuppertweeddale

SUNDAY SERVICES

Occasionally we hold joint services for instance for a breakfast church. Advanced notice will be given at church services and on the website and Facebook.

In Broughton Village Hall at 11am
In Tweedsmuir Church at 9.30am
In Skirling Church at 11.30am



A letter from our Minister

Emmanuel – the oft forgotten and unwrapped gift

It is sometimes hard to remember, and so easy to forget, especially amongst all the shopping lists, the present wrapping, the food preparation and the over-eating, what a monumental event Christmas actually is. Christmas is *'Emmanuel - God with us'*. When we forget that, well Christmas just becomes an odd and weirdly displaced and yes a very expensive reason to indulge in maudlin sentimentality. (Anyone ever watch the Christmas channel?)



But to Christians Christmas is a time when we remember the immensity of God entering into the littleness of human history. And why did God do that? Not to critique us, not to judge us, not to assess our morals, but to simply be *with us!* And God did this in such a counter intuitive way. In other words, he didn't do it like a god, at least not the way we think gods should act when we think of gods. The Son of God was born into a little town, among a little people, in a little nation that was of little importance especially by comparison with the great powers of the day. Now *why* did he do that?

Some people think that when God *'became a human being and lived amongst us'* JOHN 1:14 it was simply part of an emergency plan to tidy up and forgive our sins. But the Christmas gospel tells us that God did all this to be *with us*, more than that he did it to release us all into becoming what we all were always made to be. Left to ourselves we humans so easily fall into the habit of living small, shrunken, short-term lives. But the *"repair"*, (or salvation to give its theological name), involved God coming in human flesh to live among us and to repair not just our relation to him, but also our relation to ourselves. Jesus described his mission among us this way.

'I have come that you might have life and have in abundance'. JOHN 10

The gift of God to us at Christmas is not more stuff (or stuffing) but a gift that would allow you and I to have *'life and life more abundant'*. And this gift is wrapped up in a baby, born of Mary, whose name was *Emmanuel*, which means *God with us!*

I do hope you all have a wonderful time this Christmas unwrapping that gift.

Peace, Tony



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Skirling and Tweedsmuir
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For the Parish of Upper Tweeddale



Front cover picture: Christmas in Broughton Church

National Day of Prayer 29th November 2025

Rt Rev Rosie Frew, Moderator of the General Assembly, is encouraging Church of Scotland congregations to join together in a special Day of Prayer on Saturday 29 November, the eve of St Andrew's Day. The Moderator said this is a good date for the Church of Scotland to gather in prayer. "There is very little about St Andrew in the Bible," she said. "He's remembered as the disciple who brought people to Jesus - his brother Peter, the boy with the loaves and fish, the 'inquiring Greeks'. This year on the eve of St Andrew's Day can I encourage you to take part in the Church of Scotland Day of Prayer 0800 to 2300 and come together to bring your prayers to Jesus?"

Resources, flyers etc can be found at <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/prayers/national-day-of-prayer>

To get you started, The Five-Finger Prayer



Thumb - Pray for those closest to you, closest to your heart, your family and loved ones. (Colossians 4.2)

Pointer finger - Pray for those who instruct/teach you, the people who point the way. (1 Thessalonians 5.25)

Tallest finger - Pray for those who lead and instruct us including our government and our church. 1 (Timothy 2.1-2)

Ring finger - Pray for those who are struggling or are in trouble or pain. (James 5.1)

Little finger - Pray for ourselves and our own needs (Philippians 4.6)



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Remembrance Sunday in Upper Tweeddale 9th November 2025

This year, Remembrance Services were held at all three of our parishes – Tweedsmuir, Broughton and Skirling. All three services were very moving and emotional.

It's more than a century after the end of WW1, and 80 years after WW2, so why do we still remember? Why do we still honour the men and women from Upper Tweeddale who gave their lives in the service of their country during these World Wars and in all the subsequent conflicts? We remember them both in honour of their memory and because the very act of remembering them shapes our community and helps us think about how we should live on this small planet.

None of them left Upper Tweeddale expecting to die but when the reality of war became apparent, they still did their duty and many never returned to their home. Most of them were buried in the cemeteries near the battlefields and some were never able to be buried at all.

Have you ever wondered what was it like? To be in battle in WW1? We can get an idea of the conditions of war from this account the second battle of Ypres in 1915 from John Buchan's "A History of the First World War". Buchan wrote this as the war was progressing.

"The evening of Thursday, the 22nd April, was calm and pleasant. About 6.30pm our artillery observers reported that a strange green vapour was moving over French trenches. Back through the dusk came a stream of French soldiers, blinded and coughing and wild with terror. Behind them they had left hundreds of their comrades stricken and dead, with froth on their lips and horrible blue faces."

Buchan also commented on the plight of the civilians caught up in conflict:

"Someday the world will find the essence of war not in gallant and heroic charges, but in those pale women dragging their pitiful belongings through the Belgian fields in a raw October night."

They discovered there is no glory in war – only misery and more misery.

We should not forget this commandment from Jesus: **"My commandment is this: love one another, just as I love you. The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them".**
Peter Worthington



An Interview with Anne Dawson - one of our hard-working organists in Upper Tweeddale

Brought up in Edinburgh, but spending most of her adult life in South Lanarkshire, Anne has had long connections in the Biggar area.

How did you get involved in the church?

From an early age, I was a regular attender at church with my dad joking that I would grow up to be either a "communist politician or a nun!" Neither was the case as I went to Edinburgh University to read music, got married and stopped attending church until a desire to be involved in the church again led me to attending Skirling church whilst Rachael Dobie was our minister.



And the music bit?

Fairly quickly after going to Skirling, I was asked to occasionally play the organ there and things progressed from there. I had never played the organ before that, so had to learn quickly, especially what to do with my feet and to this day am still not good with the feet bit. Over the years I've played in all the churches in Upper Tweeddale at one time or another and now play in Tweedsmuir and Stobo every week.

How different is playing an organ to playing a piano?

In a piano you have a sustain pedal which makes your playing very smooth no matter how choppy you play. Organs don't have that. Also, when you play a note on a piano it gradually fades away, whereas on an organ there is no fading, it stays a constant sound till you lift your finger off the note.

Did music bring you back into the church?

Not really, it was more wanting to be there but certainly music kept me there once I went back. About the same time, I started singing in St Mary's cathedral choir in Glasgow, initially as a stand in but then singing every Sunday evening for 8 years. Music was always a passion, but not a full-time job.

Why is music important to you?

It's part of who I am, it's just something inside of me that's just there and important. My mum's family were all very musical so I grew up with music in the house. My mum was into big band music but also classical music. She had a good voice but never sang in a choir. My dad on the other hand was tone deaf so I'm glad I took after my mum!

Do you have a favourite type of music?

I love hundreds of types of music but my very favourite is sacred, choral music. I can't say why but I suppose there is a sort of subconscious connection to faith in the music. Music can be a very effective way of expressing faith, the same as art can as well. It can also bring out faith in people. When you see people enjoying and really believing in what they are singing, you can see that it is having an effect on their faith.

And praise bands?

I'm not a fan of praise bands giving a performance as the worshippers can end up as an audience rather than participants. It's more like a rock concert. If you have a strong singer in the band who can lead the singing, that can be helpful, but I get more from worship songs where everyone is singing. There are a lot of people who get a lot out of band led worship, and there should be space for both but I prefer joining in the singing rather than just listening.

Why do we still sing hymns?

The words we sing have to mean something, I think people write and sing hymns because it is an expression of their faith. A good hymn is one that has a good tune and meaningful words. The tune has to go with the feeling of the words. The words also have to make people think or give people some sort of inner feeling as they are singing them. And that is true for modern ones as well as the favourite oldies.

And the future for church music?

I think the experience of church music depends on your age. The older generation was brought up with school assemblies where hymns were sung. Not so common now so probably the praise band type of music will be more important going forward as it is very popular with the younger churchgoers. However, especially at Christmas, people still like to gather to sing traditional carols, like the event in Skirling Village Hall. Singing brings people together and it may or may not lead to people asking questions about the meaning. In all the activities I do around music, I try to link it to my faith and talk about that in the setting where I am. Who knows where it might lead but we all have to try to link what we do to our faith. And music is maybe a good place to start.

Thanks, Anne, for your thoughts and also all the hard work you put in to make the services in Upper Tweeddale more meaningful and enjoyable. It is much appreciated as are all the other organists we call upon.

Fiona Burnett

Christingle and Gift Service

Threading sweets onto cocktail sticks and sticking them into oranges is maybe not your first image of church, but that's what will be happening on Sunday 7th December in Broughton Village Hall! We're celebrating the second Sunday in Advent by having a Christingle service and you are all invited to join us. There will be carol singing, some storytelling, some crafting, some prayers and some more carol singing (because we like singing carols). And then we'll finish it off with a soup and sandwich lunch. Come for coffee and cookies from 10:30 with the service starting at 11. And if you haven't heard about Christingle before, there is a wee explanation at the bottom of this article.



Christmas is a time for giving and the Parish of Upper Tweeddale has a long tradition in collecting gifts and tokens for two causes mentioned below. If you can, please bring a gift to the service on the 7th December which we can then pass on in time for Christmas. We know your gifts are much appreciated and help share the joy of Christmas. If you can't make it on the 7th but wish to donate, contact Fiona to arrange collection.

The two organisations are

- 1) The Scottish Borders CHIMES service which offers emotional support, group sessions and respite activities to young carers aged 7-18 and to young people affected by parental substance abuse. Tokens of any variety are very welcome to let the young carers choose their own gifts.
- 2) Edinburgh Old Church in Muirhouse. They are looking for tokens and presents for children up to about 8 years old to help support needy families in their parish.

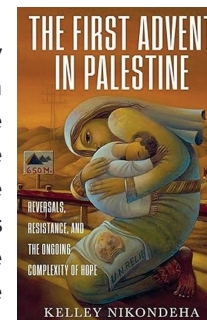
What is Christingle?

At a children's service in Marienborn, Germany in 1747, Bishop Johannes de Watterville of the Moravian church looked for a simple way to explain the happiness that had come to people through Jesus and created a symbol, the Chistingle, to do this. Christingle is a joyful celebration that brings families and communities together to share the light of Christ and a message of hope. The orange symbolizes the world, the red ribbon represents the love and blood of Christ, the sweets and fruits symbolize God's creations and the four seasons, and the candle stands for Jesus's light bringing hope.

Advent Studies – The first Advent in Palestine


Traditionally, when we think of that first Advent, we see that Christmas card picture of Mary and Joseph huddled by a manger in a stable, the Angel Gabriel, Wise Men, and shepherds tending their flocks, and a shining star against a night sky. But our study this year draws us into the sharp reality of life in Palestine at that time and the real darkness that had to be navigated to reach the hope that shining star announced.

Our advent studies will be based on the book by Kelly Nikondeha, "The First Advent in Palestine". We'll take a fresh look at the Advent narratives of Luke and Matthew, to see the true story of resistance, abusive rulers and oppression, and the real economic hardship of the time. And throughout all this the author also weaves in her personal stories of her relationships with those living in Israel-Palestine. She contrasts the hope and joy of Jesus' coming with the very real struggles of the marginalised and oppressed.



Starting on Tuesday 25th November until Tuesday 16th December at 10am, come and join us each week in the Laurelbank, Broughton for refreshments and discussion. You'll be made very welcome and we'll be finished by 11am. If you can't make this but are interested in joining in the discussion, there will be another 2 groups meeting during Advent. On Wednesday evenings starting 26th November, at 7.00 pm there will be a Zoom group — the Zoom link will be available nearer the time. On Thursday mornings starting 27th November, at 10 am, there will be another in-person group at Colin Herd's house in West Linton: Carradale in Deanfoot Road. Come join us for any or all!

Fiona Burnett




UPPER TWEED COMMUNITY DRIVERS

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Available to any resident of Upper Tweed –

**Broughton, Tweedsmuir, Skirling,
Drumelzier, Stobo and Manor**

The person using the service will be invited to make a donation which depends on the destination. Due to generous donations we now have *suggested* donations of £5 to local health facilities, £10 to Lanark, £15 for all hospitals



www.utcddrivers.org.uk

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Café Church – Broughton Village Hall

On the first Sunday of each month in Broughton Village Hall we are enjoying what we are calling café church. It's still church, because we, the people who come each week, are the church; no matter where we meet. We still like to sing and pray and reflect on what we can learn from the Bible, but we are doing it a bit differently. Within the service will be opportunities to talk and listen to one another; to think together about how to be the church in changing times, and to think about how we might practically follow the teachings of Jesus – here, now, in this place.



We begin, as we do every week with coffee, cake and chat. We sing, because we like to sing. We might discuss a Bible passage, or engage in creative activity, or watch a short video and discuss it. Then we will probably sing some more, because we like to sing.

We bring soup and sandwiches to share after the service and we would welcome anyone who wishes to join us – even if you don't want to sing and pray beforehand!

In Broughton we are fortunate in not having to worry about a building anymore. It felt like a huge loss, but it has freed us to explore new ideas and we are enjoying that freedom. Why not join us sometime?

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Having been Wandering for a year now, we have decided to start Wanderings specially designed for pre-school age children and their carers, called **Welly Wanders**. At Welly Wanders we will be going on a fun, woodland journey together exploring how we can connect life and faith in the forest. If you'd like to join us, bring an adult and a snack and meet us at the main layby carpark at Broughtonknowe woods 10.30am Fri 19th Dec, we aim to be back to the cars by noon. It is essential folk wear suitable boots with good grip and weather appropriate, waterproof clothing. Some of our routes are "off-road" and buggies would struggle; baby carriers and wellies are best! Please note event will be cancelled if the weather is not safe. For more information search Wanderings-Scotland on Facebook, you can also keep up to date by signing up for our mailings here <http://eepurl.com/iMttSs>



What's happening in Upper Tweeddale this Christmas Season

Look out for updates on noticeboards and websites for the events listed below

Advent Studies – The first advent in Palestine

Laurelbank tearoom, Broughton Tuesday 25th November and every Tuesday until 16th December 10-11am. Join us for a cup of coffee or tea whilst we pause for thought in a busy December. For more information see pg

Christmas Fayre

Broughton Village Hall Saturday 29th November 2-4.30pm. An opportunity for some Christmas shopping and to enter a draw or two for hampers and other prizes

Bite and Blether

Broughton Village Hall Wednesday 3rd December 10-12 noon. Bacon rolls, traybakes, tea/coffee. This month is free - an early Christmas gift to the community

Christingle and Gift Services

Broughton Village Hall Sunday 7th December Coffee from 10.30am, service from 11am. Followed by soup and sandwich lunch. See pg for more details

Skirling Lunch Club – Christmas Lunch

Skirling Village Hall Thursday 11th December from 12 noon. Turkey and cranberry rolls followed by Christmas pudding or trifle. Donations from £3. All money raised to go to Cyrenians Homeless charity

Stobo Community Coffee Morning

Stobo Village Hall Saturday 13th December 10.30-12 noon. The speakers will be Rachael Forsyth and Caroline Zazonby who will show us how to make Christmas table decorations, with audience participation!

Broughton Choral Society Christmas Concert

Broughton Village Hall Saturday 13th December 7.30pm. Puccini Messa di Gloria, a selection from Frostiana by Randall Thomson, Monteverdi Cantata Domino, Carols and some Christmas carols. Tickets £18, to include mulled wine and mince pies. from Broughton Village Store or email secretary@broughtonchoralsociety.co.uk

Guild Christmas Party

Broughton Village Hall Wednesday 17th December 2pm. Come join us for carol singing and Christmas themed entertainment. Mince pies, home baking and drinks to keep everyone going.

Skirling Village Carols and Mince Pies

Skirling Village Hall Wednesday 17th December 7-9pm. To get you into the festive spirit, an evening of carols, mince pies, mulled wine and yes, a quiz or two.

Broughton Primary School Nativity Play

Broughton Village Hall Thursday 18th December 6pm. An open invitation to the community to join the school in this Christmas Nativity celebration.'

Christmas Concert in Skirling Church

Skirling Church Saturday 20th December 7.30pm. Scratch choir performing Haydn's St Nicholas Mass followed by carols. For more information see pg

Drumelzier Candlelit Service

Drumelzier Church, Tuesday 23rd December 6.30pm. A service of lessons and carols. Please bring a torch as there are no streetlights,

Christmas Eve Candelit Service of Carols and Readings

Tweedsmuir Church Wednesday 24th December 6.30pm. The Christmas story read by the young people of Tweedsmuir, A mix of traditional and modern carols, all whilst bathed in candlelight. Don't forget your torch to guide you from the car park to the church.

Christmas Morning Family Service

Skirling Church Thursday 25th December 11am. With coffee and mince pies before the service and carols aplenty, to sing, come and celebrate the happy morn, the birth of the Christ child, with your church family. Please note that there will be the usual services in each of the churches on **Sunday 28th December** at the usual times,

Skirling 750

An exhibition celebrating Skirling's long history attracted a steady stream of visitors to Skirling Village Hall on Saturday 25 October. Of special interest to Kirk Matters readers were the two panels devoted to the Kirk in Skirling.

Earliest Mention – 1275

In the late 1200s William de Lindsay was both Archdeacon of Glasgow and priest of Skirling. His unorthodox theology brought him into conflict with the cathedral authorities, resulting in the first documented mention of Skirling in 1275 – hence Skirling 750 in 2025.

Two Churches in a Small Village

The first panel traces the history of the church building and of the 19th century Disruption that led to such a small parish having two churches. In 1843 we are told only four of two hundred "sittings" were free, and there were complaints of a "want of accommodation." The fact that the Laird required villagers to explain any Sunday absence may have helped to fill those pews.

Skirling Church History and Heritage



Skirling Church
First recorded in 1275, the church was dedicated to St Mary. The present building, set on the site of an Iron Age fort, was built in 1720 overlooking the village. Renovations in 1836 and 1893 removed the laird's loft, added a porch, and installed the distinctive floral stained-glass window in the east wall. From the 18th-century structure only the walls and bell tower survive, with its sundial and bell inscribed "Bell for Skirling Kirk 1748."

The Graveyard

Approached through wrought-iron gates by Thomas Hadden and shaded by Scots Pines, the graveyard holds many local names. The Minister's Gate once led across the glebe to the manse at Castlestones. Notable memorials include the artist James Howe (d.1836), whose stone is marked with a painter's palette, and the Carmichael enclosure (1903), designed with Robert Lorimer and guarded by stone angels by Meredith Williams.

The War Memorial

Designed by Robert Lorimer, the 1920 memorial honours 10 men of WWI and 3 of WWII. A square shaft with cross rises from a red sandstone plinth, bearing Lorimer's heart-and-L monogram. These were young men of local farms who never returned. In 2016, a commemorative bench by Garry MacDonald, made by David Gardner and funded by the SSE Community Fund, was added beside the memorial.

The Disruption From the 1840s to 1930s

Skirling had two churches, following the national Disruption. The minister, Rev. William Hanna – son-in-law of Thomas Chalmers, leader of the Free Church – left with many parishioners. Sir Alexander Carmichael funded a new Free Church (now a house), while Hanna and friends built the manse, Hanna House. The congregations reunited in 1936 in the "Auld Church".

From the 2nd Statistical Account of Scotland (1843)

The parish church is very conveniently situated, and has sittings for upwards of 200 persons; four of these are free, but as the people are very regular in their attendance, some families are complaining of a want of accommodation. Perhaps something might be done to remedy this evil, by a slight alteration of the allocation of seats.

The Skirling Kirk Session Minutes

The second panel, based on 17th-century Kirk Session Minutes, lists payments to those in need – soldiers, widows, travellers, scholars, victims of fire, and victims of marauding Highlanders – all helped from the Sunday offerings.

This panel also tells the story of Covenanter Peter Gillies of the Waulk Mill, hunted from his home by the Laird and the Curate in 1674 and on the run until his capture and execution at Mauchline in 1685. Both sides of the Covenanter struggle were represented in Skirling: the barony was briefly held by Colonel James Douglas, commander at the Battle of Bothwell Bridge, who is said to

have taken part in the execution of the five "Mauchline Martyrs," one of whom was Peter Gillies.

Mali Lithgow and the Well of Skirling

Skirling did not escape the 17th-century obsession with witchcraft. In 1641 Mali Lithgow was reported to the Presbytery of Lanark as guilty of "charming" in the parish of Skirling. Charming meant reciting spells or psalms, or using healing water from a holy well such as St Mary's Well. These older Catholic or folk traditions had once been tolerated or even blessed, but the reformed Kirk now condemned them as "superstitious," unlawful invocations of spiritual power outside Scripture.

"Meyld Lithgow in Skirling, delated for charming, compeired, and confessed that she went to the Well of Skirling; ordained to go before the Session of Skirling, there to be tried."

There is no further mention of Mali in Presbytery records, and Skirling's own Kirk Session book for 1641 has not survived. The distinction between charming and a witch's pact with the Devil sometimes spared people like Mali Lithgow from execution, though it could still lead to public humiliation or penance.

From Skirling to Biggar Museum

If you missed the one-day exhibition in October, you'll be glad to hear that much of it will come together again in Biggar Museum from the 6th to the 21st December. There are many more stories to discover about the long and fascinating history of the wee village of Skirling.

Charity and Struggle Skirling in the 17th Century

The Skirling Kirk Session minutes from 1657 and 1673, record that offerings collected at Sunday worship were often distributed to those in need – soldiers, widows, travellers, scholars, and victims of fire or war.

1657
Sums given to 2 poor lame soldiers. A poor blind man.

1661
Sums given to 6 poor soldiers. These were veterans of the Civil Wars, Cromwell's conquest, or the Anglo-Dutch wars. Maimed or destitute, they sought help from parish churches like Skirling. To a gentleman who had a testimonial from Elin, for helping to build the boat at Thankerton. This refers to the Clyde ferry at Thankerton – a vital crossing maintained by local subscriptions. In 1778 a new "Beau Bridge" replaced the ferry, the name stuck.

To poor supplicants: to a poor sick lassie, to an old man.

Given to John Hay whose house had been burnt.

Given to a man with his house and his head and his new beasts burnt.

Given to a poor woman of England and her son who were attacked by the Highlanders in the late war, lost her money and most of her goods, the daughter in law dying immediately on the news – attested by the presbytery of Kirkcaldy. The poor came with testimonials from other parishes from Dumfries, Elin, Linon, Kelso, even England.

To a man who had his house burnt, a child burned, and his wife distracted. Thatched roofs meant fires were common.

To a travelling man to buy a shirt.

To a robbed man.

To a poor lassie to buy shoes.

To a poor lad for buying shirts.

To a poor scholar. Shoes, shirts, and schooling for children were common needs. Small sums made the difference between bare survival and dignity.



Typical 17thC ferry boat

1651 Cromwell conquers Scotland

1652-54 – First Anglo-Dutch War

1660 – Restoration of Charles II

1665 – Great Plague in London

1666 – Battle of Bullen Green (Covenanter uprising)

1670 – Act against Conventicles

1672-74 – Third Anglo-Dutch War

Southwest Scotland was a Covenanter stronghold, and the repression extended into Skirling.

In the disastrous days of the persecution under the cold-blooded Stuarts, Peter Gillies, of the Waulk Mill, Skirling, was one of those who were devoted unto death in the sacred cause. Having had a presbyterian

minister preaching in his house, he was, in 1674, hunted from his home by Sir James Murray, the laird, and Mr James Buchan, the curate. For several years he wandered about from place to place. At last he was apprehended in the month of April 1685, at Muiravonside, was carried by the lawless soldiery to the west country, and

after enduring many insults, and much cruelty, was, on the 14th of May, executed at Mauchline. No coffins were allowed, nor dead-clothes, but the soldiers and two countrymen made a hole in the earth, into which they cast him, together with other four, his fellow-martyrs.



Upper Tweed Community Drivers – Can you help?

The Upper Tweed Community Drivers is a volunteer group, helping locals to get to medical appointments. It's a lovely way to meet new people, while helping a worthwhile cause. Our drivers are reimbursed mileage, and there is no commitment to regular driving – if there's a drive you're available for and willing to do, then great, but there's no obligation to say yes every time. Some drives are very local, others a bit farther afield, and you only need to help out with any you're comfortable with. When the email arrives, just click on 'yes' or 'no', it's that simple.

Here's what some of our volunteers have to say:

Gwen is one of our drivers, and says "After moving to the area, I saw an article with an attached picture of the UTCD team, which looked like some very nice people doing something of great value in the community. I thought it would be a great way to meet nice people and I have now been driving for two years, have met some very interesting people and thoroughly enjoyed giving back."

Ann is our co-ordinator, manning the phone and making arrangements when people call to request a drive. She says "It is really wonderful that so many of our service users are so grateful and give us lovely feedback which I try to pass on to our drivers - all the credit should go to our volunteers, they really are the key" – we really do make a difference to so many people!

One local resident who has used the service commented "I can't think of the words to describe how much I have appreciated my lifts to hospital visits etc. The ladies were just so kind and helpful and made the experience a lot more bearable."

Personally, I joined as a driver but had to take a break from the actual driving for a hip replacement, so I became the treasurer – even if you are unable or just don't want to drive, there are other ways to help out. Please get in touch if you're interested in helping in any capacity, we'd love to hear from you. Perhaps you have a skill or talent we don't even know we need yet!

Wendy Sethi, Treasurer UTCD

Tweedsmuir Update

Tweedsmuir hosted the Parish of Upper Tweed Harvest Thanksgiving on 26th October and following on from last year's success, we offered coffee and cake throughout the day. The doors were open from 9am until 4pm and the first visitors arrived at 9.10am with donations for the foodbank. They were one of three families who had forgotten to put their clocks back that morning but we will not laugh about that until we get our fiddly heating timer correctly programmed! It was a lovely relaxed day chatting to visitors about our Kirk, the history, what happens during a service and how we manage with the Worship Workshop to have a service every week when our minister has 6 churches. Peeblesshire Foodbank were extremely grateful for all of our donations which were gathered from across our Parish.



On 31st October, Celebration of the Tweed, an excursion group led by Connecting Threads came to listen to the Jeanie of The Crook's story in the Wee Crook Café, then experienced the sounds of the wind and rain in the Crook Garden (forgoing the walk to the river because of horizontal rain) Calendula flowers were gathered from the garden and the group travelled to the warm and dry Tweedsmuir Kirk and Jeanie's grave. Calming, Calendula tea was shared, local wool was woven into a wheel while we listened to Sarah playing gentle music on her violin and then teaching us the Jeanie O the Crook song. The most amazing orange sunset filled the valley with colour when we left. Visitors were interested in what is going on, the history and asked if there were walks around the area - if you can't visit Tweedsmuir Kirk – please visit www.tweedsmuir.scot



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Upper Tweeddale Services

Date	Broughton (11.00)	Tweedsmuir (9.30)	Skirling (11.30)
7 Dec	Fiona Burnett (Christingle Service in Broughton Hall at 11am)		
14 Dec	Rev. Tony Foley	Rev. Tony Foley	Isobel Hunter
21 Dec	Peter Worthington	Peter Worthington	Steven Whalley
28 Dec	Murray Campbell	Murray Campbell	Rev. Tony Foley
4 Jan	Café Church	Rev. Tony Foley	Rev. David Bartholomew
11 Jan	Isobel Hunter	Isobel Hunter	Peter Worthington
18 Jan	Rev. David Bartholomew	Rev. David Bartholomew	Rev. Tony Foley
25 Jan	Rev. Tony Foley	Rev. Tony Foley	Rev. Chris Levison
1 Feb	Café Church	Fiona Burnett	Julian Birchall
8 Feb	Julian Birchall	Julian Birchall	Rev. Tony Foley
15 Feb	Rev. Tony Foley	Rev. Tony Foley	David Henderson-Howat
22 Feb	David Henderson-Howat	David Henderson-Howat	Colin Herd
1 Mar	Café Church	Fiona Burnett	Rev. Tony Foley
8 Mar	Rev. Tony Foley	Rev. Tony Foley	Isobel Hunter
15 Mar	Murray Campbell	Murray Campbell	Rev. Chris Levison
22 Mar	David Henderson-Howat	David Henderson-Howat	Fiona Burnett
29 Mar	Café Church	Fiona Burnett	Rev. Tony Foley



Messy Church is for young families throughout West Tweeddale and is held each month from November through to March. Each session starts at 4pm prompt in the New Church Hall at West Linton and finishes at 6pm.

The theme for this winter is "Meeting Jesus". We meet on the following dates:

Sunday 14 December

Sunday 11 January

Sunday 8 February

Sunday 8 March

All children from babies to P7 are most welcome to come and join in the fun! We usually start with a Bible Story and a song and then the children will do a range of craft activities. We will say a prayer and finish off with a meal together. All children **MUST** be accompanied by an adult.

Please do consider joining us for an afternoon of fun activities and a family meal together.

For more information, please contact Jean Howat at howatjean@gmail.com

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Christmas Concert in Skirling Church

On Saturday 20th December at 7.30pm there will be a performance of Haydn's St. Nicholas Mass given by a scratch choir. The choir will meet for the first time on Saturday morning and rehearse all day in preparation. Soloists from Biggar Singers and Broughton Choral society will be joined by two professional soloists, and the organ will be played by David Turner, ex-president of Edinburgh Society of Organists.

The second half of the evening will comprise a selection of well-known and well-loved carols for everyone to join in with, along with a couple of other Christmas pieces composed and arranged by Harold Darke and John Rutter. There will also be some recitals of Christmas themed readings and poetry.

There is no ticket or entrance fee, but a donation is suggested upon leaving as the event is aimed at raising funds to cover the cost of having moved the organ from Broughton Kirk when it closed, and to support music in the Parish of Upper Tweeddale.

SCRATCH PERFORMANCE



If you wish to take an active part in the performance, please see the details on the poster and contact Phillip as soon as possible at scratchchristmas25@gmail.com or in person at any of the upcoming services at Skirling Kirk. An ability to read music is a general requirement if wishing to sing.

Philip Gill-Simmons

Broughton Village Hall



It's over a year now since the Broughton congregation moved from Broughton Church at the far southern end of the village to Broughton Village Hall. The old church building is now under offer and, having declined in number over many years, our congregation is enjoying a

new lease of life in a more comfortable, more flexible setting with much better facilities. Our regular Sunday morning services are more relaxed and less formal, and Linda Hill's article in this magazine will tell you more about our monthly café church.

None of what we do would be possible if we didn't have as good a venue as the village hall, so this feels a good opportunity to sing its praises and let you know a little more about the Hall. Firstly, thanks to the excellent cinema quality equipment in the small hall, we have been able to run regular film shows as part of our Films That Make You Think programme. Few halls have such a good system and of course this is also used each month during the Winter months by Broughton Film Club. It also makes the small hall a great place for large presentations.

Twice a month a small group of us from the local church and beyond have also been using the small Meeting Room at the far end of the hall for prayer and to explore and discuss the work of Julian of Norwich. The Meeting Room is the perfect venue for such gatherings and meetings (we hold our Parish of Upper Tweeddale Kirk Session meetings there too), games nights and even small presentations.

Occasionally we hold joint services for all three congregations in Upper Tweeddale in the hall but thanks to the larger Main Hall being available we don't have to venture further afield to host such services. If you have used the hall recently you may have noticed the new windows throughout the hall which have certainly helped the hall to be more energy efficient.



We're aware that having such a good facility in the community is down to the hard work of the village hall committee for whom we are very grateful. If you want to know what's going on in the hall you can view the hall diary online:

broughtonhall.org.uk/add-bvh_Diary.asp

Neil Robinson

Pastoral Update

Funeral

We offer deepest sympathy to the family assuring them of our prayers

Anne Davidson

Died on 3rd September 2025 aged 86 years, in Edinburgh

Interred in Tweedsmuir Cemetery on 2nd October 2025 following service in Kirk



A tribute to Anne Davidson - 22nd July 1939 to 4th September 2025



Anne Davidson moved into the family home at Oliver with Duncan in 2005 and both very quickly became immersed in community life and regularly attended Tweedsmuir Kirk. Anne loved music and if she wasn't in Kirk, she would excitedly tell us about going to listen to Classical music concerts in Edinburgh. When we were short of an organist Anne offered to learn how to play the organ in Tweedsmuir Kirk and we were grateful of her key notes and introductions encouraging us to sing hymns in tune.

The whole community was invited to Duncan and Anne's 50th wedding Ceilidh in 2014 and despite midgies - the doors had to be opened to cool down the dancers. It is an understatement to say that Anne was a very keen gardener, and she organised the Kirk Flower Ladies Rota who keep flowers in the Kirk all year round. Anne was very proud of her garden and freely gave invitations to come and see her walled garden, take flowers and share plants.

The Bluebell morning coffee and cake at Oliver was an annual event but Anne was also keen on a regular G&T after Kirk with her friend Anne-Patricia – and laughed when asked if the earlier start time of a 9.30am service was a deterrent. During Covid lockdown, Duncan and Anne invited Anne-Patricia to be part of their family unit and together they kept up with the community via zoom. Anne is much missed by Duncan, her family, friends and her rescue dog Dea, but leaves us with lasting memories and an amazing walled garden.

PARISH OF UPPER TWEEDDALE

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