



NEW HORIZONS

Innerleithen, Traquair and
Walkerburn Parish Church

Spring Edition

2025

Charity No:
SC001100



www.itwcos.org

EDITOR'S LETTER

... Winter has gone (but whisper it, in case he hears you and comes back!) it was great to be able to work in the garden last week, and amazing to be able to stay out to tidy until nearly 8 o'clock on Sunday evening and this evening (Monday 31st) there is a warmth to the air that we have not had for more than 6 months! By the time you get this edition it will be 1 week to EASTER!, my favourite time of year for the Church and for all Christians, (see Fraser's letter).

In this edition of the Magazine we are trying something new, a self-contained "pull out" of the Thondwe Partnership News. This has two purposes, first; it makes a compact news sheet of what is new and going on in Thondwe, you see it all together. The trial we did of this at the start of the year, suggested the readership enjoyed this and found it easier to read all the news together. Second, it allows us to pull the news section out and send it separately to the wider "global" audience that are interested in what we are doing in Malawi, but don't know or follow our church news. As I said we are trying this, so ANY comments are welcome. If you like it let me know, if you don't let Denis know. 😊

Talking of Malawi, I am sure the worst kept secret is out there already, but I can confirm that Fraser and Anna (his daughter) are joining myself and Helen Taylor (from Heriots & Stow Church) on a trip to Malawi early in June. We are still working on the agenda and consulting with our good friends in Thondwe. Helen is planning her trips to Luwatala a Church not that far from Thondwe that Heriots and Stow are partnered with. (We will all be staying in Zomba in the same accommodation).

We will report our exciting trip once we get back and it certainly should be a large part of the Autumn Mag edition.

Dave Kerr, Editor



TRAQUAIR KIRK UPDATE

Over the last year we know there has been some uncertainty about the future of Traquair Kirk. We're hopeful that we are now very close to securing the future of the building and continuing to worship there. More details will be shared as soon as we can. However, in the meantime please add the afternoon of **Sunday 11th May 2pm** to your diary for a special service to celebrate Traquair Kirk and to hear more about the future plans.

"WITH THANKS" from the Scottish

Borders Children and Families Social work for the Christmas and the rest of the year vouchers donated by the Congregation of ITW Parish Church

Good Morning

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and the congregation of Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn Parish Church our heartfelt thanks for the kindness offered in your donation.



GAZA/SYRIA : MARCH 2025

Your words - the poor always with us;
But You are in their midst.
Rumours of wars -
smashed bodies
blood splashed streets;
And You are in their midst.
A terrible Eucharist -
Body broken; blood poured out;
Can we re-member the smashed and poured out?
How long? Have mercy.

Heather Martin

I wrote this after receiving an email from Samara about the terrible violence in Syria and seeing the news on TV about the restarting of air strikes on Gaza.



The vouchers that you donate are very much appreciated throughout the year and many families benefit from your kindness. We are able to utilise the vouchers with often great imagination to ensure that children's wants are met as well as their needs in ways that bring a little joy.

We would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas.

Many Thanks
Sheona Newton
Team Leader/MHO
CFSW LTT West



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Easter arrives very late this year and so we celebrate

Easter Sunday on the 20th April. Due to this our children will be ending their holidays with Easter weekend and actually returning to school on Easter Monday!

Two different friends have asked me recently why the date of Easter changes and how it is worked out. I have to admit that I didn't have a good answer ready so I had to go and do some research.

The Bible teaches us that Jesus' death and resurrection happened around the time of the Jewish Passover. Jesus had gathered his disciples for the Passover meal in the events we retell on the Thursday before Easter (Maundy Thursday) so the date was linked to Passover.

However, the Passover date was determined by the lunar calendar so some work is needed and there is a lot more you could read about the different approaches to the date of Easter in history. The short answer now is apparently "The simple standard definition of Easter is that it is the first Sunday after the full Moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox."

When I sent this to one of my friends, they replied to say this was something like a question from "The 1% Club" game show which I thought was a fair response! You might start to debate when the 'spring equinox' actually falls or how you decide when it's a full moon and what happens if you want to decide that from a different time zone.

It can be complicated but I'm content to leave these calculations and focus instead on the real meaning of Easter which never changes and is something we can all understand.

Easter is a time to remember that Jesus went to die on the cross and then rose again. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

This is what is important about Easter and this is what is unchanging.

Never too early, never too late but always something worth celebrating.

So I invite you to join us for our Easter services this year and then looking beyond Easter please

consider our ALIVE course. This is an opportunity to consider how following Jesus, who rose again, changes our everyday life.

Fraser

HEAVENS VERY SPECIAL CHILD (FOR IAIN)

A meeting was held quite far from earth,

It's time for another birth!

Said the Angels to the Lord above,

'This special child will need much love'.

His progress may seem very slow,

Accomplishments he may not show,

And he'll require much extra care,

From the folk's he meets away down there.

He may not run or laugh or play,

His thoughts may seem quite far away;

In many ways he won't adapt,

And he'll be known as handicapped!

So let's be careful where he's sent,

We want his life to be content,

Please Lord, find the parents who

Will do a special job for you!

They will not realise straight away,

The leading role they're asked to play,

But with this child sent from above,

Come stronger faith and richer love.

And soon they'll know the privilege given,

In caring for this gift from heaven,

Their precious charge so meek and mild,

Is heavens very special child.



THONDWE NEWS APRIL 2025

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EMAIL itwparishmag@outlook.com for any comments or questions



Sunday Porridge Club

In response to an appeal by the school children in Thondwe, that hunger was their greatest concern we explored the possibility of a large-scale feeding programme at the school. After due consideration and calculating the costs of feeding 2000 children daily we felt it was beyond our means and referred the school to Mary's Meals. Let's see what develops. Meantime the twinning committee requested us to reconsider urgently, so we opted for a church porridge club on Sunday mornings during the "Hunger Months" until the end of April.

So, 100 children are provided with a bowl or cup of porridge every Sunday morning and for many this modest meal may be all they have to eat that day. It is known that it will improve the children's ability to concentrate and learn. This is being trialled as a possible feature of the partnership calendar during future Hunger Months.



Gifts that Grow

The partnership wanted to develop sustainable feeding programmes and responded to a twinning committee discussion on the value of providing fruit bushes and trees. These were popular and many families turned up to receive 100 banana plants (2 each) and 25 people received 50 mango trees (2 each), that will produce nutritious fruit for home consumption or be sold for income.



Bibles for Thondwe Youth

The students at St Anthony's secondary school were delighted to know they will receive 30 Good News Bibles sent to Thondwe through the BananaBox Trust, a Dundee based charity. Following the success of this donation from Teviot Church we have received another 50 new Bibles from Earlston church that will be sent in the next container.



Learning Together

This year on the traditional *Warm Heart of Africa Day*, St Ronan's Primary school shared their learning at the whole school assembly. Each member of the school's Malawi group shared their thoughts about life in their twinned community using photos and videos. The group also prepared a list of tasks, activities and workshops for classes to work on during the rest of the morning to celebrate this special day in the school calendar, plus making a football from recycled material that was used during the break!



Two More Wrinkly Roofs

Meet Annie Chipatala, a member of the Thondwe sewing group and young single mum Ethel Malekabu with her daughter Falida. Both are now enjoying much improved shelter provided by the Wrinkly Roof campaign, surviving the recent cyclone storm Jude. Thanks to the 3 ITW church members who sponsored these home improvements.

Talking with Texts: Mobile phones Empower Deaf Youth in Malawi



Imagine how surprised we were to discover that 10 phones sent out to Malawi with our shipment of Bibles were "intercepted" by our friends in Ekwendeni. With our permission they were diverted to profoundly deaf young people who do not have access to sign language teaching. We might find it annoying that kids text each other all the time, even when you're trying to talk to them. But imagine if a child couldn't communicate at all, that's when a mobile can become a lifeline. Please share this story with friends and collect phones to empower hard of hearing children in Malawi.



Moderator Comes full Circle

The Moderator of the General Assembly, Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson worshipped at our church on 2nd March to share his experiences with us following his visit to our twinned congregation in Thondwe in August 2024. He congratulated us on our twinning highlighting the importance of our two-way process- it's not just about giving; it's about celebrating what we receive from Thondwe.

He recalled visiting Thondwe primary school where classes were on average about 80 and it had no lighting due to the lack of electricity. Head Teacher Annie showed him the solar powered study lights, rented and taken home by the learners allowing them to do their homework by night. This inspired his Moderators Challenge, *"so simple but life changing and I thank the good people of the village for bringing me down to earth from the lofty heights of being Moderator, bringing me down from the mountain and recognising that God has a job for me to do"*

Representatives from St Ronan's school Malawi group and their teacher Ms Nicola Watt shared a little about their learning at the service.

The Moderator presented the church with a tile and tartan cloth Tote that will be mounted in a wooden frame by a member of our congregation.



TGP (Thondwe Girls Project)

Another successful year making, distribution and education of a class of approx. 150 girls from Thondwe Primary School receiving their Menstrual Health Kits. These kits are a way to Let the Girls attend school every day, even during their periods.

The distribution team shown to the right are Rabbecca (Project lead on the left) Catherine and Annie from the Local Church sewing group and Ethel, who is a community worker Ethel is the chair of a 10-women community group, put together to help educate the girls guiding them in making good choices that will allow them to have a good education which can give them more choice in their lives. Both groups working to help keep the girls in school.



Garden of Learning

Malawi's economy is based on agriculture with 85% of the population living in rural farming areas. This is why the partnership created a school garden to provide training sessions on growing food and simple farming techniques, supporting the classroom part of the curriculum. The learners prepare, weed, water and sow the seeds to grow maize, peas, potatoes, okra and tomatoes. It's an encouraging harvest this year despite the boundary fence being destroyed by Storm Jude. A "live" fence is planned.



Growing Food for the Community in the Church Garden

The church Garden is a 3-acre field that our church bought for the Thondwe church. The field is prepared, sown and harvested by the congregation for the benefit of those who need support for food. This year the partnership worked together to diversify the crop varieties, hopefully offsetting the impact of any climate events. The team reporting on the trial were happy with the results of the maize and pigeon peas but too much rain at the wrong time affected the ground nuts. The harvest will begin in earnest in 2-3 weeks when everyone comes together to do their bit.



Repairing the School Water Bore Hole

The current priority is to repair a bore hole to provide water for the school and local community. The District Council does not have funds to do the repairs, and its absence is putting pressure on the other working borehole. We will provide funding for a local contractor to purchase the spare parts to enable a team to carry out a repair at a total cost of £475

St Ronan's Primary school raised £175 through sales of a cookbook, and it is hoped that the provision of another borehole might enable a feeding programme to be set up.

F.A.C.T

On 1st December 2024 the Fellowship and Care Team hosted another Lives to Remember service. Invitations had been sent out in November and there were over 30 people who came to the service. This was a mixture of those who had been invited and those who wanted to come. We decided this year to only have the side lights on and this created a nice, cosy feeling. People were invited to light a candle during the service and most people did. At previous services people came and lit one candle however this year they seemed to light a candle for everyone that they were thinking of. In the end we had a beautiful display of burning candles, which was lovely. The feedback from the service was positive and people seemed to have appreciated having a time to sit quietly and reflect before the busyness that is December.

We hosted another Bereavement Cafe on Thursday 9th January. Again, it was well supported with some people coming back and new people coming along too. Heather Martin has become involved with the cafe in her role as a listener, should anyone want to have a one-to-one chat.

There are more dates for the Bereavement Café. We decide to host one Café in the evening for anyone who can't come along during the day. The next block of dates are –

- Thursday 20th March 2 – 4pm
- Thursday 10th April 2 – 4pm
- Tuesday 6th May 6.30 – 8.30pm
- Thursday 12th June 2 – 4pm

We have begun making plans for another afternoon tea event in the church on **Thursday 22nd May, 2 – 4pm**. It will be an opportunity to come along and enjoy a cuppa and some home baking with good company. There will be more information about this nearer the time

PRAYER CORNER

Sometimes after a church service we have people in the congregation who are either looking for a quiet space to say a prayer or who would welcome someone praying with them. This can be difficult with folks milling around and can get interrupted by others who haven't realised what they are doing. The Fellowship and Care Team thought it would be lovely to have a Prayer Corner to allow people to have a place to pray without interruption. The area chosen is in the front corner of the church on the right, where the tech desk used to be. It will also be possible to leave a written request for prayer which will be totally confidential. This area will have the cross from Howgate Church on the wall and the prayer tree from Traquair Kirk on the table.

INSTEAD OF SAYING

Instead of saying, 'I know what it feels like, let's say "I cannot imagine your heartbreak."

Instead of saying, "You're strong, you'll get through this," let's say "You'll hurt, and I'll be here."

Instead of saying, "Healing takes time," let's say "Healing has no timeline."

Instead of saying, "You look like you're doing well today," let's say "How are you holding up today?"

Instead of saying, "Everything happens for a reason," let's say "This must feel so terribly senseless right now."

And when there are no words to say at all, you don't need to try and find some. Love speaks in silences too.

Words by Ullie Kaye

(Submitted by Rev Jack Kellet)

ITW CHURCH HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES

Sunday 13th April - Palm Sunday Service

10:30am Innerleithen Church
Very Rev Colin Sinclair

Thursday 17th April - Maundy Thursday

7pm Traquair Kirk Communion Service

Friday 18th April - Good Friday

7pm Innerleithen Church - Good Friday Service

Sunday 20th April - Easter Sunday

8:30am Walkerburn Outdoor Service, Alexandra Park

10:30am Innerleithen Church
Easter Celebration with St Ronan's Silver Band



IS JESUS ALIVE?

One of the things that seemed to 'go viral' at the end of December was the horror of seeing Easter eggs in shops on Boxing Day. Maybe you were one of them? It's easy to assume that for most people Easter is just a time to consume copious amounts of chocolate and enjoy the fact that it is or is nearly spring! Who, after months of winter rain and cold, isn't ready to celebrate cute lambs, bunnies and baby chicks when it gets to spring time? However, the Talking Jesus research suggests that 45% of people in the UK do think that Jesus is alive and that he came back to life after he died on the cross. Surprised? You can check out the research for yourself on www.talkingjesus.org



If Jesus is Alive then what does it mean for our everyday life? We're going to be looking at that question on Wednesday nights through a course called ALIVE.

ALIVE is an opportunity to explore the life-changing implications of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You can journey alongside the first followers as they encountered Jesus after he'd risen from the dead, and discover how he met their deepest needs. More importantly, how he can meet yours.

Imagine how much richer your life would be if:

- instead of living with a sense of rejection, insecurity or a lack of self-worth, you knew at a deep level what it was to be completely and unconditionally **loved**.
 - instead of being weighed down by past disappointments, you were filled with a new sense of **hope**.
 - instead of feeling overwhelmed with fear and anxiety, you experienced a tremendous sense of **peace**.
 - instead of being burdened by guilt, shame and failure, you enjoyed a new sense of **freedom**.
- instead of living without a real and clear sense of meaning, you found and fulfilled your true life **purpose**.

We'll be launching this on Easter Sunday and beginning with a social evening on **Wednesday 23rd April in Innerleithen Church at 7pm**. *If you want to find out more then please feel very welcome to come along to this free course. The ALIVE course will then run for 5 Wednesdays from 30th April until the end of May.*

Please come and join us and find out more about what it means to be truly Alive.

Fraser Edwards

The ASM (Annual Stated Meeting) ... happened after the service on Sunday 23rd March

The reports are now always delivered beforehand and so people can read it and come armed with questions (which they rarely do!)

Anyway, I wanted to highlight one report that helps to explain one of the drivers expanding our faith and church, in my opinion!

CHURCH WEDNESDAYS

We found it encouraging that people who had attended Alpha, were not only attending Church on a Sunday but were also wanting to keep on meeting on a Wednesday Evening. We also knew that there were people from the congregation wanting a mid-week meeting. It was decided that a mid-week meeting, open to everyone would begin.

'Church Wednesdays' was formed, an opportunity for us to meet, have fellowship, worship (led by Lucie and John Allan) and a Bible Study/Discussion Time.

We met almost every Wednesday night throughout the year, taking breaks for holidays.

From May-June, two groups met. One to study 'Galatians', the other to do 'The Bible Course'. We all met for a time for fellowship before splitting into our groups. This gave the opportunity for people to choose an option best suited for themselves.

In September, we ran the 'Fruitfulness on the Frontline' course, from LICC.

The course coincided with Fraser's Sermons, which he preached on the previous Sunday. This proved to be very helpful and beneficial which added to the discussion time.

During Advent, we also met for a wonderful time of worship, bible readings, prayer and reflection. A time of quiet and peace before the start of busy Christmas preparations begin. It was well attended and appreciated, a time to ponder and to 'be still and know that He is God'.

Throughout the year we also had a couple of social evenings. Opportunities to meet, chat, get to know one another better - a time where relationships and trust are formed.

Church Wednesdays will continue again in May 2025, look out for more details to come. Everyone is welcome!

Dave Kerr (editor)

SAMARA'S AID APPEAL

"This is the hardest of all the emails I've had to write in recent months. Our hearts are filled with sorrow. There are no words to express the tragedy that has taken place in Syria in the last two weeks, in front of and around our team. Thousands have been massacred around the place we have been building our new medical centre/hospital and outreach centre for orphans and vulnerable children. Family members of our team fled from their homes, weeping about what they saw happening to their neighbours, friends and acquaintances."

I received an email last week from Samara telling the appeal's supporters of the things her teams in Syria had been witnessing. The level of violence has been horrific as one section of Syrian society takes revenge on another and back and forth it goes. Thankfully, the teams and their families have not been targeted for the killings though there have been cases of theft. Miraculously, some team members have reported being spared but villagers and whole villages around them have been wiped out. We can only weep with those who mourn and pray for those who remain.

Please continue to pray for:-

- a new outreach centre needing to be completed as soon as possible; it's in the centre of one of the worst areas hit by the violence.
- give thanks that Christians are viewed as 'neutral' in this time of violence; pray for the teams as they try and plan for reconciliation work to start at an appropriate time; pray for protection for the teams and their families.
- for newly orphaned children; the outreach centres want to be able to support them and other poor families as soon as its safe to do so.
- for God's grace and mercy to reach those who have only revenge in their thoughts and hearts.


Heather Martin

March 2025



RETREAT/QUIET DAY – SATURDAY 17TH MAY 2025

WHITCHESTER CHRISTIAN CENTRE



We are organising a one-day retreat at Whitchester, near Hawick. There is capacity for around 15 people to attend and the cost will be £21 for the day. This will include lunch and refreshments on the day. Car sharing will be available.


This is an opportunity for us to be together to have a time to slow down, reflect and listen to God. The programme for the day will be finalised nearer the date but there will be times for us to be together or times for personal reflection. Whitchester has several spaces for members of the group to be together or alone. There is an art room, a chapel room and a spacious simple garden. There are also footpaths around the grounds that can be explored.

To book, please contact Ruth Kerr (m.kerr6813@btinternet.com or 01896 833994). Please also mention if you have any dietary requirements. Ruth will advise you how to pay the cost of the day when you book your place. If the cost would prevent you from attending or if you have any questions, then please speak to Fraser.



THANKS William and Pauline Holmes

Would like to thank the Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn Church community for the Love and kindness they have received since they came to the area.



FUNERALS

Petro Oleksienko	11/12/2024
Margaret McGinn	08/01/2025
Susan Kurowski	23/01/2025
Eric Scott	07/03/2025
Bill Harvey	13/03/2025
Ella Smith	03/04/2025

ADVANCE WARNING

Articles for the next magazine our SUMMER Edition!.... need to be submitted by **Friday 30th May 2025**. These can be sent to Karen or David at any time before this date. Email is great if it is possible.



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The Editor reserves the right to edit or omit letters, but only if it's really necessary! If appropriate (and there's enough room), any submissions omitted may appear in a following edition.