



NEW HORIZONS

Innerleithen, Traquair and
Walkerburn Parish Church

Spring Edition

2026

Charity No:

SC001100

www.itwcos.org

EDITORS NOTE

I have been asked many times what Gifts That Give Back (GTGB) really means I have answered each time and probably with a different answer each time. But I want to share with you all a real example of what it means.

You all know well the big sweetie jar that sits at the back of the church and it is mysteriously filled with small change through the months 😊 We thank John Taylor for this initiative as this is the Change for Malawi and we send it to Thondwe to help pay for health bills, we have had a few occasions that you may remember such as Blessings with his wheel chairs, Gift with the operations on her jaw and Lameck with his old leg Calliper, all of which showed how we can help with these issues.

Well when trawling through the old magazines I found another example that really shows the GTGB principle. In the Summer of 2018 we were asked to help pay for a young girl to travel to India for an operation to fix a "Hole in the Heart" The name was Deborah Njala, I suddenly thought that name is one I have seen recently and sure enough Deborah was one of our GET-IT GIRLS that graduated last summer from Secondary school. The Gift we gave 6 years ago has been paid back in a big way when we see the difference it has made to her life.

Dave Kerr



Fellowship and Care Team

On Sunday 30th November we held our annual Lives to Remember service, and it was well attended by those who had been invited as well as members of the congregation. The service was very carefully and thoughtfully planned and the Fellowship and Care Team helped with readings, lighting and providing tea and coffee. Almost everyone lit at least one candle which was lovely.

The feedback received was that those who came appreciated the time to sit and listen and reflect. One couple who came said that they felt they now had closure after their bereavement which was encouraging.

We held a Place for Peace morning on Thursday 8th January and another one on Thursday 19th February. People who came were able to sit quietly on their own or with a friend and have that little bit of space to sit and think or pray. Some came for tea and coffee in the Hall of Friendship.

SPRING

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

I'm writing at the beginning of March and it appears that at long last Spring is on the way! After endless weeks of rain, we begin to have something to look forward to. Spring has a way of lifting our heads. Even though we still have cold days, there are signs that the world is waking up again.

It's often the same in faith. Changes can begin in us quietly, long before we feel it fully. If you've been in church recently, you'll know we are working our way through the book of Romans. One of the key themes in Romans is grace.

It's grace that we need when we're tired, unsure, or starting again for the tenth time. It's the grace that lets us know we can be forgiven and start afresh. Paul reminds the church that God doesn't wait for us to get everything right. God moves towards us first. Like sunlight creeping back into the mornings, grace arrives before we've earned it.

Romans also gives us a picture of what a Christian community looks like. Paul talks about people who learn to live with patience, who respect one another, who choose encouragement over criticism, who each use their different gifts for the benefit of the whole body. These small habits can shape our church family and help us to have a church where people can belong.

As we go on into Spring try to notice the quiet signs of hope around us: someone offering a helping hand, a conversation that brings comfort, a small step forward taken by someone who's been struggling. These are the places where God is at work and where we are called to join in.

My prayer this spring is that we stay open to that work of God: in our homes, in our church family, and in the wider community we serve. And as we look ahead, I wonder what signs of new life you're already beginning to see?

Fraser



PRAISE NIGHT

On the evening of 1st March we welcomed folk from across the Presbytery to a special Praise Night in Innerleithen Church. The gifted worship band was made up of people from various different churches and sounded great through our sound system. Our new coloured lights also added to the atmosphere.

The preacher for the evening was David Hill, founder of Trypraying and David gave an encouragement to share our faith in ordinary ways. We'll look at bit more at Trypraying in the coming months.



It was great to join with Christians from all over the presbytery for this special evening.

FROM THE TREASURER

By the time you read this article:

- The Auditor Braidwood Graham will have finished their inspection of 2025 accounts
- The Annual Financial Statements approved by the Trustees (aka Kirk Session)
- The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) & ITW organisation reports have been circulated
- Annual Stated Meeting was held after service on 22 March.

The 2025 finance results are in and based on the draft figures at the time of writing a few things to note:

Income

- there was a surplus of just over £7,000 in 2025
- offerings increased by 12% from 2024
- income from use of premises decreased by 15%

Expenditure

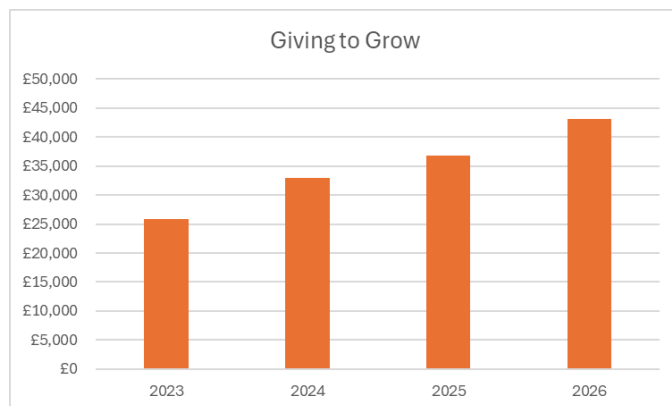
- 2025 Giving to Grow contribution £36,823*
- fabric repairs & maintenance significantly less in 2025
 - this reflects completion and cost of major dry rot work in 2024
 - -electricity £3,000 less than 2024 due to less heating to dry plaster.
 - increased use of sanctuary space whilst organisations decanted from hall of Friendship

At the Annual Stated Meeting, Treasurer reported on the future plans, including

- noting increase in 2026 Giving to Grow Contribution of £43,099 - *Giving to Grow contributions are paid to Church of Scotland Central Office.*
- appeal for members to review offerings
- budget increase of offerings by 6%
- anticipate no major fabric repairs

Can you Give More?

An article in the Winter magazine asked you to consider your weekly or monthly giving. Many thanks to those who have already responded to that appeal. Below is some more context to that appeal.



Each year we pay an annual amount to Church of Scotland for 'Giving to Grow'. We have faced an increase year on year since 2023 (see graph). In 2026 we'll be paying **£43,099 – equivalent to £3,592 per month**. The amount paid is different for each church depending on income so that churches who pay more subsidise less well-off churches.

Giving to Grow income covers the costs of employment of Ministers across the Church of Scotland. Whilst our Giving to Grow calculation is a sizeable amount, we are still one of the 70% of churches being subsidised by other congregations who pay more.

The Finance/Fabric Committee aim to encourage an increase in our weekly/monthly giving so that in future we move towards no longer being subsidised. If you have not reviewed your giving in the last year or two, we are appealing to you to think about increasing what you give, whether that's cash in the weekly plate, collection envelopes or standing order – offerings are all part of the same fund however they are given.

We want ITW Church to continue to thrive in the future and if you are able to give more, please do so.

Thank you, Ruth Kerr Treasurer on behalf of Finance/Fabric Committee

SCOTTISH MALAWI PARTNERSHIP (SMP)

A Scottish government funded organisation, which is totally independent and our group ITW Thondwe Partnership are a member of SMP. There are some 1200 member groups and they all do various charity and community work in Malawi, the exhibition was a collection of photographs from many of the groups, showing their work, with a short description beside the Photo.

SMP are taking this photo exhibition on a tour of Scotland, ITW was chosen as the third venue and we welcomed the team to Innerleithen on the 27th and 28th Feb. On the 27th the schools had an opportunity to visit and learn about Malawi and on the Sat 28th the exhibition was open to all for free.

Photographic Exhibition

Free & All Welcome!



Showcasing Scotland-Malawi Links
"Anthu Pamodzi"
People Together

28 February 2026
10:00-16:00
Innerleithen Church of Scotland
Leithen Road
Innerleithen
EH44 6HX



CHRISTMAS DONATION THANK YOU'S

FROM



"On behalf of **PEEBLESHIRE YOUTH TRUST**, we would like to thank Innerleithen, Traquair & Walkerburn Parish Church of Scotland for your generous support of this year's Christmas Hampers project.

All of the hampers were packed and delivered on Sunday by an army of volunteers and the families who received them were extremely grateful. In total, we delivered a wonderful range of Christmas treats to 122 families, including 225 children across the whole of Peeblesshire. Please pass on our sincere thanks to your congregation for their support.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful 2026.

With our warmest thanks", *Helen and Sharon, Peeblesshire Youth Trust*



ST CATHERINE'S IN EDINBURGH

"Thank you once again to everyone for being so generous. We have collected 90 hats 38 pairs of gloves and once again too many scarves to count. This week they will be taken up to St Catherine's in Edinburgh where they will be given out at the Christmas meal for the homeless.

Thank you so much"

Bob Scott



£900 of vouchers were donated to the **SOCIAL WORK FAMILY CENTRE**. We received the following message.

"I hope you are well and have had a lovely time over Christmas and New Year.

I wanted to pass on our appreciation within social work to your Church and congregation for your kindness in your donation of supermarket vouchers.

This year we had a large number of families present as in need following the cut off date for referrals to Mission Christmas. We were, through your donation, able to ensure that we were unaware of any child that missed out on Christmas. We have also been able to keep some vouchers back to ensure we can help support our families throughout the year. We have in previous years been able to use your vouchers to help with birthdays, easter, back to school preparation and days out.

Thank you so much for your care and support. Many Thanks".

Sheona, Team Leader



SAMARA'S AID APPEAL

The latest news from the charity arrived in January but I hope this still gives encouragement, especially to keep praying and donating when you can. The support is important particularly when the main news stories focus on other equally needy places that need our help.

The good news starts with the opening of a fourth outreach centre based in a mountain area. It's small but has already welcomed 30 – 60+ children. The desert centre sees a similar number of children regularly attending. Although these centres were ready in 2024, they were unable to open until the situation became more stable towards the end of 2025. The children always come hungry and these centres are vital to keep them fed at least once a day, help them keep up their education and give them a sense of hope for the future.

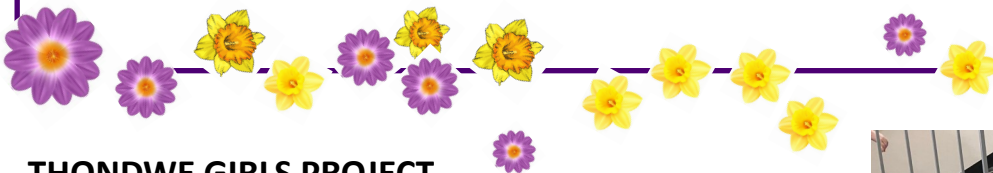
Please pray for a fifth outreach centre and for the right time for it to open its doors with the right dedicated team.

Please pray for rain to fall at the right time to help with the crops in the fields. It's an issue that's shared with our friends in Thondwe.

If you can help financially to support these centres then please donate to Samara's Aid Appeal:-

<https://www.samarasaidappeal.org/>

Registered charity no: 1171707; Address: PO Box 5490, Brighton, BN50 8PE



Thank you, Heather Martin

THONDWE GIRLS PROJECT

Thondwe Girls Project set up a craft and cakes stall at BGH on 27th Nov 2025. We raised awareness about the plight of girls in Malawi who do not have access to period products and so miss school on the days of their period. We raised £690 for TGP which will help with the costs of providing 150 girls each year with a solution.

Note some of the unsold items were sold to the congregation on the following Sunday and this added to the total raised.



On 27th February 150 girls received Menstrual Hygiene Management kits sewn by the Thondwe Sewing Group. These kits are washable and so should last for 3 years. The girls are grateful for the pads they receive as they know this means that they will be able to attend school every day of the month.

Rabecca Pengani organises the distribution of the MHM kits. These girls gather in the church while she explains about menstruation and the reproductive cycle. This education enables them to make informed decisions about choices for the future.

Note, Rabecca does a lot of work in Thondwe, helping to buy the material and inform the girls as seen above, while the Thondwe sewing group do all the sewing to

produce the MHM kits to a very high standard, we thank them all.



Lois Hindley



THONDWE NEWS APRIL 2026

www.itwcos.org

Charity No: SC001100



EMAIL itwparishmag@outlook.com for any comments or questions

Fixing the School Borehole

After an absence of 2 years drinking water is flowing again at the school borehole! Cause for celebration for 2000 children and neighbouring villagers. Head Teacher Cryton praises St Ronan's their partner school for providing funds with the production and sale of a recipe book!



Tech Equipment Security

Head Teacher Cryton confirms he can now get a good night's sleep thanks to the Partnership stepping in to provide Burglar Bars for the windows and doors. Funds provided by an IWT Rotary grant will protect their BEFIT (Building Education through Innovation and Technology) solar powered tablets to improve arithmetic and reading.

St Ronan's School Christmas Fundraiser

The school Malawi group took a stall at the Christmas Fair to sell handmade cards to raise money to buy an item from the Church's Gifts that Give Back appeal. They purchased some rice for the needy families, Maize seeds for the church Garden and a chicken with money from visitors to the fair. Well done Team Malawi!





St Ronan's School Visit

A visit to the David Livingstone Birthplace in Blantyre was always going to be one of the highlights on the school Malawi group's calendar. It did not disappoint! The museum tour and story of the missionary explorer's life will perhaps inspire them to make their own lives and the world a better place. It will certainly strengthen their link with twinned school Thondwe primary.

New school Partnership

We received 10 boxes of surplus uniforms from St Mary's school Melrose and funds to cover the transport costs through the Bananabox Trust container service. They will arrive in Thondwe in September and be distributed through the church.



The elderly were not forgotten as they can face difficulties getting food at this time of year. Meet Mrs Bella Binali who received a Christmas food parcel fostering hope and community spirit with our church.

Children's Christmas Party

Christmas Day with Thondwe CCAP villagers now means a joyful church service and a party for over 100 children and volunteers.



Thondwe CCAP welcome's Rev Osman Limani

The induction service on Sunday 11th January for the new minister Rev Osman was a lively affair! A ceremony of singing, dancing and heartfelt praise officiated by our friend Presbytery Moderator Rev Pickel Chafulumira.



Church Garden

This year we invested a little more money in the Church Garden, to pay for the weeding to be done, before the crops were planted, the result is that the corn (Maize) is looking big and healthy, we must keep praying for good weather to allow the Cobs to ripen and dry out before Harvest time late April or early may. The corn stalks are now as tall as a man at about 6 feet.

END OF THONDWE NEWS

THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT ...THE SERENITY PRAYER ...S E N I L I T Y A Smile or Two :from the Very Ancient Rev. Jack Kellet

The first smile comes from a Church Service in Carlops a year or two ago. During the normally private and thoughtful business of giving their personal Offering to play their part in God's love for poor souls and bodies across the world, members of the congregation suddenly looked round at each other and actually burst out into laughter: the organist had started playing "You've got to pick a pocket or two!"

I myself got an extra smile because I recalled wise words that came from a campaigning missionary in apartheid South Africa when asked how he managed to remain sane. " Oh, I keep the Eleventh Commandment: Thou shalt not take thyself too seriously!"

And then, that very same week, the morning post included a letter from a minister friend in Australia to mark the golden jubilee of my ordination, and she enclosed a copy of the SENILITY prayer! "God, grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones I do like, and the eyesight to tell the difference." So some imaginative soul in the thick of things had had fun even with the sacrosanct SERENITY prayer, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things that cannot be changed, the will to change the things that can be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference."

The late Fred Edwards of Carlops Church - by then a preaching elder but with so many years' involvement with hurt people as Strathclyde's Director of Social Work behind him - once told me that this prayer was so helpful for all of us that he used it in every service he conducted.

And I can tell you that my wife and I have always found it invaluable for working our way through life. Indeed, so central did the Serenity Prayer become that I looked up its origins. I read that our debt was to the American theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, who had used it impromptu to open a service of worship: afterwards, a member of his congregation spoke to him and together they worked out his actual words.

Niebuhr was an adviser to President Roosevelt at the time of the Wall Street crash and the New Deal rescue package. His best-known book is Moral Man and Immoral Society (1932). And his influence did not die with him. When President Obama was elected, he declared Reinhold Niebuhr to be his favourite theologian too!

Today, the serenity prayer is well known as a therapeutic tool in Alcoholics' Anonymous. In their 1960s book on alcoholism, Neil Kessel and Henry Walton cited Friedrich Oetinger, an 18th century German theologian, as its originator - and interestingly - used detachment for serenity in their English translation.

Given that human nature has not changed much, if at all, from the beginnings, my own guess is that the serenity prayer was first found carved on the tree of life in the Garden of Eden and, doubtless, erected on a signpost at the gateway to the wilderness by a concerned minister or elder

John Kellet

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 29 March 10.30am Palm
Sunday, Innerleithen church

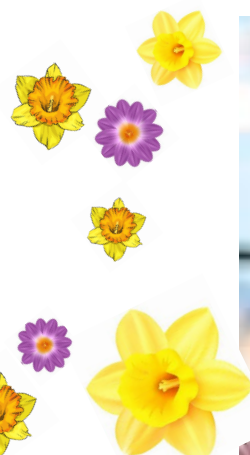
Thursday 2 April 7.00pm Maundy
Thursday Traquair Kirk

Friday 3 April 7.00pm Good Friday
Innerleithen church



Easter Sunday

Sunday 5 April 8.30am short outdoor service Alexandra Park, Walkerburn (near Car Park)
Sunday 5 April 10.30am Innerleithen church with St Ronan's Silver Band leading praise





Gifts That Give Back (GTGB)

615 Text Books delivered to Thondwe Primary school

Head Teacher Cryton Mbanira is on the left.

WHAT A FANTASTIC TOTAL, Well done ITW congregation!!!



The generosity of the congregation and friends of ITW Parish Church once again astounds me!
Together we managed to raise the funds for

- PORRIDGE CLUB (already sent)
- 100 Bowls of porridge for the first 13 Sundays of 2026 (the Hunger Months)
- Rice for the needy Families (already sent)
- Approx 300 kgs of rice
- Seeds for the Church Garden (already sent)
- 20 Bags of Maize seeds that is 800 kgs of seeds
- Fertilizer for the Church Garden (already sent)
- 20 Bags of Fertilizer 1000 kgs of Fertilizer
- TEXT BOOKS for the Primary School (already sent) - not 270 books they hoped for but **615**
- Chickens we exceeded the planned total, we are discussing the way forward, with ways to protect the flock (inoculation) and maybe some new koops.



£4516

The TOTAL raised was:

This total allows us to also add substantially to the education program for both Thondwe Primary school and ST Antony's Secondary school.

You will hear more as the year progresses and in the Church Magazine.

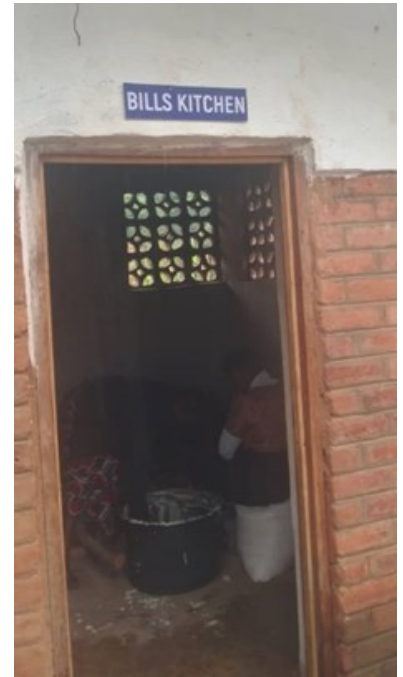
Dave Kerr



IN MEMORY OF

one of our own congregation members and our great friend Bill Harvey who was also a great friend to Thondwe in Malawi, Bill donated the collection at his funeral to the refurbishment of the kitchen to help feed the children in what is now an institution "Porridge Club" feeding up to 100 kids each Sunday during the Hunger months (Jan to end of Mar).

The IWT Rotary club organised a concert with the Rolling Hills Barber shop group, of which Bill was actually a founding member, which completed the funding of the refurbishment work including new pots and ladles, new doors with strong locks, lattice stone work for windows, improving security whilst giving good ventilation.



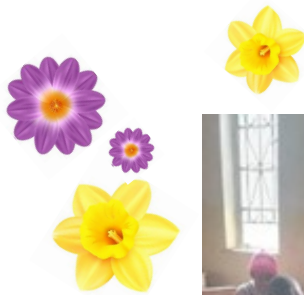
BILL'S KITCHEN



PORRIDGE CLUB



Of course It also rains in Malawi and when it does the children eat inside the church or find the lee of a wall and we must not forget the volunteers that come early to light the fires and do the cooking and cleaning afterwards.





DEATHS

Henry Sommerville	21/12/2025
Dorothy Laurie	27/12/2025
Stuart Dick	01/01/2026
Lilian Armstrong	05/01/2026
Ann Caldwell	16/01/2026
Rita Bean	24/02/2026

ADVANCE WARNING

Articles for the next magazine our Summer Edition!... need to be submitted by **Friday 22nd May 2026**. These can be sent to Karen or David at any time before this date. Email is great if it is possible.

Who's Who?

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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.