

CANONBIE CHRONICLES

Edition 31

www.canonbiechurch.org.uk

Winter 2016-17

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Christmas and New Year services and events at Canonbie & Liddesdale Churches

Friday 3rd December, 5pm. Lighting of the Christmas Tree, Newcastleton Square.

Friday 9th December. Christmas Concert in Canonbie Church. Langholm Sings. 7:30pm. Tickets £5.

Friday 16th December. Community Carol singing Liddesdale, 6pm.

Sunday 18th December. Childrens Nativity Service with Refresh Church. Liddesdale Church, 10am.

Sunday 18th December. Family Service. Canonbie Church, 11:30am.

Sunday 18th December. Saughtree Church Carol Service, 6pm.

Thursday 22nd December. Liddesdale Primary School End of Term Service. Liddesdale Church.

Friday 23rd December. Christmas 9 Lessons and Carols. Liddesdale Church, 6pm.

Christmas Eve Watchnight Service with 9 Lessons and Carols. Canonbie Church, 8pm.

Christmas Day. Worship at Liddesdale Church, 10:30am.

Christmas Day. Short service of worship at Canonbie Church, 11:30am.

New Years Day. Joint service of worship, Canonbie and Liddesdale churches. Canonbie Church, 11:30am.

Monday 9th January. 2 o'clock Club. Community Room, Newcastleton Health Centre. Rev'd. Ian Murray to talk on vintage cars.

From the Manse....

As a youngster, I thought it strange when my grandfather told me that the older you become, the faster time flies. But now that I'm in the throes of mid-life, I understand exactly what he meant! It's almost 4 months since I arrived in Newcastleton, and in some ways it feels just like a couple weeks ago. One of the many reasons that time has passed quickly is that I've been made to feel very welcome and people in general are very positive about the future. Time flies when things are going well!

And we are making progress.

Several weeks ago, representatives from the Presbytery, the Ministries Council in Edinburgh, and one other Interim Minister met with the congregations of Canonbie United and Liddesdale, in Newcastleton. I'd told them to expect around 30 – 40 people but there were 105 in attendance, which was absolutely wonderful! It gives the right message that people want to see their churches thrive and move forward. The Aims and Objectives, set following that meeting are printed here in this month's Newsletter. I found it encouraging that most of the objectives refer in some way or other, to building bridges and stronger links with the wider community and our neighbours in Liddesdale.

As a Christian and a Minister, bridge building is a principle of my faith. I don't always succeed, but I try to live my life in a way which enables others to connect with Jesus Christ; to bridge that gap between where we are and where God wants us to be. Bridge building is also central to Interim Ministry. In some situations we build bridges between people, congregations and Kirk Sessions where there's been conflict and division. We help bridge that ravine or rift which sometimes seems insurmountable.

Advent is a great time of year to be thinking about bridge building. We've John the Baptist who builds bridges in the wilderness preparing the way for the Lord; Mary who bridges that gap between The Almighty and a humble maidservant; And of course Jesus, who bridges the greatest gulf between God the Father and humankind.

As we celebrate the wonder and beauty of Advent and Christmas, may we all play our part in bridging the gaps with love, forgiveness and peace. And may God Bless us all in our journey together throughout these days and beyond.

Ian Murray (Interim Minister)

Where are we at present?

Presbytery of Annandale and Eskdale.

Canonbie United Church and Liddesdale Parish Church

Interim Ministry Transition Support Group (TSG) meeting 3rd November 2016

Canonbie feedback from the groups highlighted the following:

- There was overall a very positive feel from the congregation at Canonbie, enjoying their refurbished Church, a welcoming congregation, good leadership and self-sufficient during long vacancies.
- The Community Café – although a great resource for the community the Church could not manage the Café by themselves.
- Communication – not as good as it could be.
- A desire to make better use of their building and that it would be good to offer more social opportunities to meet one another. Worry over the lack of young people - need to look for ways to encourage new and younger leadership.
- Concern about the number of short term ministries there have been and a need to understand why ministers don't stay. How can the congregation support any future minister.
- There was overall a positive approach to the linkage with Liddesdale and a desire to see it work as well as possible, recognising the geographical distance and the different communities.

Aims and Objectives for Canonbie

- Look at relationship with Community Café and explore ways of improving the opportunities that the Café offers.
- Consider how communication may be improved within the congregation and across the linkage.
- Continue the work of building up lay leadership, in particular in areas of pastoral care, outreach and worship.
- Consider how the congregation might best support any future minister, including reviewing the location of the manse.
- Explore how relations with Liddesdale might be improved and strengthened

Liddesdale feedback from the groups highlighted the following:

- A real sense of pride in the community of Newcastleton and a sense that the community was supportive of the church. Newcastleton is seen as a close community that offers support in times of difficulty or sadness.
- A worry that the congregation was elderly as the younger people who were part of the church attend Refresh. There were lots of questions about the relationship with Refresh, where the boundaries were and how/where/when they could work together or apart.
- There were real concerns over the shortness of previous ministries and a lack of openness as to why the ministers left.
- Times and style of worship was an issue for a number of groups.
- There was a great deal of concern over the shortage of elders and other leaders within the church.
- On the whole a positive approach to the linkage with Canonbie but recognition that they are two very different communities and distance makes close working more difficult.

Aims and Objectives for Liddesdale

- Consider how Liddesdale and Refresh can work together, including style and times of worship.
- Building up the leadership of the Church, making it clear what the role of the elder is and other office bearers within the church. Consider short term appointments so they are not seen as lifelong.
- Communicating better within the congregation, the community, across the congregations and also with Presbytery.
- How the congregation might best support any future minister, including reviewing the location of the manse.
- Explore how relations with Canonbie might be improved and strengthened

Where are we going?

In Liddesdale, the quest for finding new elders has not been entirely successful and without a stronger Kirk Session, it is going to be very difficult to move forward.

As a result, I've explored several options including severing the linkage and uniting Canonbie United with The Border's Kirk in Carlisle and Liddesdale revert to Jedburgh Presbytery; Sever the Linkage, again, Canonbie United links with the Border's Kirk and Longtown and Liddesdale links with Langholm et al. However, none of these options looks possible.

Understandably, it's a lot to ask neighbouring parishes to "re-adjust" when ministers are already working at full capacity. The other option which I presented to the joint meeting of the two Kirk Sessions on Tues 22nd November is the possibility of a Union rather than a linkage. Canonbie has a strong Kirk Session with good leadership which would benefit and give support to Liddesdale. Further to this, I believe you stand a greater likelihood of attracting a new minister with a Union rather than a linkage. Both previous ministers complained about being pulled in different directions, this could this be resolved with one Session working together with a stronger focus, shared finances, shared news-letters, social occasions and other activities. Both sides would be stronger as a result. However, this must not be a move which is in anyway forced or seen as a last alternative. There could be provision for the following groups: -

Fabric and Finance Group; Mission and Outreach Group (which would include bible study, prayer groups, etc). Worship and Music Group; Pastoral Care Group; Fundraising and Social Events Group; Communications Group (which would include parish magazine, joint weekly notices/orders of service, and publicity – posters, newspapers, magazines etc.

Rather than individuals retiring or "stepping down", we would be looking at using their skills and gifts in different ways.

Both Kirk Sessions will independently look at the latter option in greater depth and another joint meeting will be arranged early in the new year.

Communion

On Sunday 4th December, 11:30am.
Please join us.

Canonbie Church Soup Kitchens

28th January 2017; 25th February 2017
Canonbie Village Hall. 11:30am-1:30pm. £5

Other news....

Canonbie Church Film Night: **The Gods Must Be Crazy**. Saturday 21st January, 6:30pm. Admission free. Tea & coffee served. Bring your own supper, beer & wine. The funeral of **Catherine Lightfoot** was held in our church on 16th November. Representatives from **CADRA** and our church have been meeting to develop a secure future for the **Community Café**. We are also looking to further develop the partnership and find more use of our church building. Our **Bible Study Group** meets every Monday evening in the Community Café. Ring Ruth on 71583 for more details. The Group are currently undertaking a **survey** on how people feel about Bible Study activities. Pick-up a questionnaire in church. Please remember our Christian brothers and sisters in **Malawi** which has suffered a devastating drought this year. See more here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-36037414>. More news on our links with the country in the next edition of **Chronicles**.

Canonbie Chronicles is compiled by Anthony Lane. Tel. 013873 71386. E: antolane@hotmail.com