



Houston & Killellan Kirk

The Record

March 2024

**Houston & Killellan Kirk
Church of Scotland**

13A Kirk Road, Houston, PA6 7AS

Scottish Charity No. SC012822

www.houstonkillellankirk.org

INTERIM MODERATOR:

Rev Barbara Ann Sweetin

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MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERIM MODERATOR

Hello Friends,

My name is Rev Barbara Ann Sweetin, and I am the Interim Moderator and Locum for Houston & Killellan Kirk for the foreseeable future.

Many of you will know me already, as I lived in Houston from 1982 to 2011 before I became a minister and moved to take up my position at East and Old Church in Forfar.

I have taken early retirement and moved back to the area and was asked to help out by covering the Sunday Services and working two days a week to cover pastoral issues. This is called locum work, which I am paid for.

My role as Interim Moderator is a voluntary one, and I took it on to help Houston & Killellan Kirk and Presbytery. It sees me become a trustee of the church and I have been appointed to it by the Presbytery of Clyde.

In this role I look after Houston & Killellan Kirk as though I am the full time minister, making sure all rules and regulations are being upheld and preparing the church – the Kirk Session and members of the Kirk – for the hoops they need to jump through to get a new minister.

When new ministers come looking for a church, they want to see an active church that has continued to do God's work even during a time of vacancy, as well as starting new initiatives, so we cannot rest on our laurels.

Houston & Killellan Kirk has lots of attributes that will attract a minister, but we will need to work hard to bring other areas up to a better standard.

If you see me around the area, please come and say hello!

***Barbara
Ann***



ECUMENICAL MEDITATION GROUP

Come and join us
for meditation and
quiet reflection with
Revd. Bernard Lodge
& Frankie Greenwood

11am-11.45am
on Thursdays

at Killellan Halls,
13A Kirk Road,
Houston



WEE BLETHER

We meet every Tuesday morning,
from 10.30am to 11.30am at the
West Halls on Main Street for a
cuppa, biscuits and a chat.
All are welcome and we
love to see new faces.



GOODBYE GARY, WE WISH YOU WELL

IN January we gathered to thank our outgoing minister, Revd. Gary Noonan, for all his hard work over the last five years and to wish him and his family all the very best as they head off to the USA.

Gary's presentation included a lovely picture of our Kirk, a tartan stole and a pair of cufflinks, and there were gifts for Ruth and the boys too.

Adam McCartney also presented Gary with a beautiful Scottish Cross, carved by David, on behalf of the Men's Shed. The cross was made using wood from pews that were originally in

the Kirk when it was built 150 years ago, so a very special piece of our heritage for Gary to take with him. We finished up with a musical tribute to the Noonans, composed and sung by Laura McKee.

Thanking the congregation afterwards, Gary said: "Saying goodbye is never easy and the friendship you have offered will live with us forever.

"We take a piece of Houston with us in our hearts.

"Stick together, be kind to each other, listen for God's call and keep doing the work that you are doing together."



COLLECTORS NEEDED

AS always, we will be doing door-to-door collections during Christian Aid Week and are looking for volunteers to deliver and collect envelopes, from the week beginning Sunday May 12.

This gives every household in our community the chance to donate if they would like to.

Each collector would usually be asked to cover 20-30 hous-

es, helping to raise around £5,000 during the course of the week.

Your time will help raise funds for Christian Aid, who are working to combat the scourge of droughts, which are becoming more common across the world as a result of climate change.

The charity helps with water conservation projects,



The Kirk's hire calling: An update...

HOUSTON & Killellan Kirk is currently in what is known as 'a vacancy', which means that the church doesn't have its own full-time minister and will need to advertise for a new one, once all the necessary boxes have been ticked and we are able to do so. Unfortunately, it is a long process, but we will keep you updated with what is happening.

At the moment there are two stumbling blocks: firstly, under the Presbytery plan for our area, Houston & Killellan Kirk will have to have either a union, or a linkage, with Langbank Church.

Discussions between the Kirk Sessions of both Houston & Killellan Kirk and Langbank Church are underway. Once both Sessions reach agreement – which may take some time – we will seek the views of all our Elders. Both Houston & Killellan Kirk and Langbank Church Sessions will vote on it before the matter goes to a congregational vote.

We will hold a meeting with the congregation ahead of that vote, to make sure that everybody understands what they are voting on, and what the outcome of the vote will mean for our church.

The second stumbling block is the Manse; all manses will soon be required to a minimum of a 'C' rating for energy efficiency and at present our Manse is a 'D'. The good news is that work on the property can be carried out while we are resolving the first matter with Langbank Church.

We will keep you updated on all of this.

DURING CHRISTIAN AID WEEK FROM MAY 12

supplies drought tolerant seeds and helps communities develop irrigation projects.

It helps individuals and communities help themselves, as well as dealing with emergency situations – and offers help to those of all faiths and none.

People will also be able to donate to Christian Aid through our church website, by using the QR code on our

website and Facebook page, or via the collection boxes outside various locations around the village including the pharmacy and the Carrick Centre.

Please contact Caroline on 07711 348423, if you would like to find out more or volunteer to help with the collection.





HALLS FOR HIRE

Our church halls, including the West Halls on Main Street and Killellan Halls at 13A Kirk Road, are available for hire. Both facilities offer great spaces for a range of activities - from yoga and dance classes to arts and crafts or children's parties. They are available for one-off events and short/long-term lets.

Email Carol Rankin at:
hkkhallbookings@gmail.com
for more information.

Book Club: Read all about it

HOUSTON & Killellan Kirk Book Club are a friendly group who get together once a month.

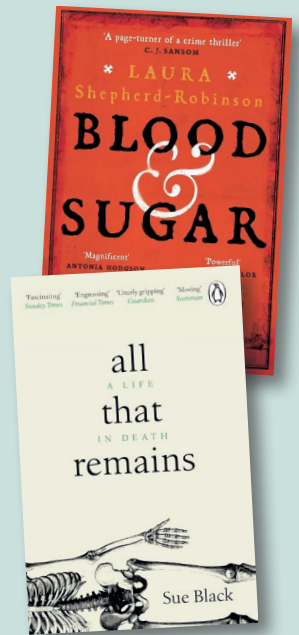
We take it in turns to choose a book for everyone to read - and enjoy lively discussions about what we thought of each one and whether we liked it.

In December we read *Away with the Penguins*, by Hazel Prior, followed by the *Thirteenth Tale* by Diane Setterfield in January.

In February we focused on *All That Remains*, a fascinating book by Professor Dame Sue Black, about her life and career as a leading forensic pathologist.

And in March we are reading *Blood and Sugar*, by Laura Shepherd-Robinson.

We meet at the Killellan Halls from 7.30pm-9pm on the last Wednesday of the month and all are very welcome to come along and join us.





Mwandi plan hatched to help workers

THE money raised recently through our Eggs-ellent Christmas presents (£570.37) and Luxury Pop-Up Breakfast (£1,144.24) has been sent to our Mission partners, Keith and Ida, to help support the Chicken Project.

Unfortunately they had difficulties getting baby chicks, so there was a delay between the previous batch reaching the end of their egg-laying days and their replacements coming into lay. To bridge the gap we covered the costs of the additional feed when they had no income to pay the workers. Happily the chicks are doing well and will soon start laying.

Keith and Ida are coming back to Scotland on furlough in May and June this year when we will look forward to welcoming them and hearing their news. They plan to visit us on the weekend of June 22 and 23.

In Mwandi when disaster strikes there are always willing helpers. Recently the home of a single mum who has five children collapsed – but the church choir stepped in and helped to



build a new one. What a fabulous community!

Our regular parcels of baby clothes are always very welcome, and we can take any clothing items (not shoes) that are used, but in excellent condition, or new, for babies and young children aged from birth to five years and post them to Mwandi. We can send 2kg of clothes for just over £14, so it is well worth it.

Contact Caroline on 07711 348423 if you can help with clothing donations or postage.

Sunday clubs together to cope with Kirk change

AS we welcomed in 2024, we said a fond farewell to the Noonans. We are thankful for the memories we've shared with them and wish them all the best in their new adventure.

During this time of transition Frankie Greenwood, our Families and Community Development Worker, led a helpful workshop for our young people and helped them navigate this time of change, finding strength in our church community.

We're also delighted to welcome Barbara Ann in her role as Interim Moderator. The children are enjoying getting to know her and have already engaged wholeheartedly in her addresses.

Our Nativity Service was a big hit with the congregation; well done to all our Sunday Club children and volunteers

who worked so hard to make it such a success.

We currently have four classes in Sunday Club: for those aged three to P1 we explore the weekly Bible story in a fun way, while children in P2-P4 have opportunities to learn about our Bible stories through craft activities. P5-P7 often used STEM challenges to learn the importance of communicating the Bible's messages. Bible Class for S1 and above often involves hot chocolate and a biscuit as we think about the weekly lesson.

Sunday Club meets every Sunday during term time, from 10.50am – 12pm in the Killelan Halls at the back of the church. We are always happy to welcome new children – come and find us!



HOUSTON & KILLELLAN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY ANNUAL SHOW

SATURDAY 1ST JUNE 2024
HOUSTON PARK

Contact Isabelle Stuart at:
issistuart@gmail.com
or on 07508 905298



GRYFFE VALLEY ROTARY 10K



SUNDAY MAY 19 AT 1PM

The route starts from Houston Public Park and is on country lanes between Houston, Bridge of Weir & Kilmacolm.

All abilities welcome – from serious runners to novices/joggers.

NEW for 2024: 'Chips on Bibs' timing!

Proceeds to local groups supporting people living with mental health issues, dementia and their carers.



Use QR code to pre-register online

WOULD you like to get involved in what we do? There are lots of opportunities to help out with the many groups and activities that we run, which are open to everyone in our community.

Volunteering is a great way to meet new friends, learn new skills, feel part of a community, and even boost your confidence. And nothing beats the feeling you get when you know that you have supported a vital group or activity – or lifted someone's spirits when they needed it.

Could you be the next Boys' Brigade Captain? Do you enjoy working outdoors and would you like to join our brilliant Grounds Team, who keep the area around our beautiful church looking good all year round?

Could you help our Carnival Committee plan and run this year's event? There are plenty of roles – from helping set up to running a stall

If you love singing – even if you can't read music – why not join our Choir? They meet on Thursdays, at 7.30pm at the Killellan Halls, and would love to welcome you.

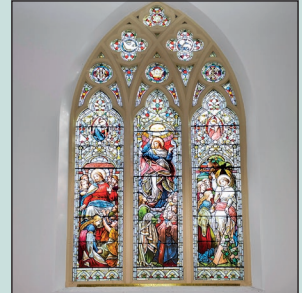
Helping out at groups like Houston Hello, our dementia-inclusive café, or our youth groups – HKK Girls or the Boys' Brigade – is another great way to get involved.

Check out the volunteer section of our website, houstonkillellankirk.org, to find out what the latest opportunities are.

WE N
Y



NEED
YOU!



Join in to celebrate Kirk at 150

DID you know that September 2024 marks 150 years since the foundation stone of Houston & Killellan Kirk was laid – and that next year it will be 150 years since our current church building was completed?

We want to make sure we celebrate this very special anniversary in style, so we are looking for volunteers to help dream up and plan a series of exciting events and activities throughout the year that everyone can enjoy.

These could be anything from concerts to ceilidhs, dinners and dancing to a flower festival, guided history walks around the village or a chocolate morning, with fountains and yummy treats. The sky's the limit!

This is all about celebrating our church, its place in the heart of our community – and us. Rev Barbara Ann Sweetin, our Interim Moderator, said: "This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate who Houston & Killellan Kirk is at present, who we have been in the past and who we are going to be in the future."

Would you like to get involved? Please email Rev Barbara Ann Sweetin on BASweetin@churchofscotland.org.uk.



on your marks...

HOUSTON KIRK CARNIVAL MAY 11, 2024

...get set...

This year our theme is **Paris Olympics 2024** and we have lots of fun activities and stalls including:

- RIDES AND SLIDES ● FACE PAINTING
- FABULOUS RAFFLE PRIZES
- FANCY DRESS COMPETITION
- BOTTLE TOMBOLA ● PLANT STALL
- CHOCCY TOMBOLA ● HOME BAKING

...GO!

SAVE THE DATE now and we will look forward to welcoming you on the day!

If you are able to help before, or on the day itself, please email:

houstonkirkcarnival2024@gmail.com





‘Doorstep donations’ going well

OUR Foodbank Collection Point continues to be well supported and we have even recruited several new volunteers to help collect donations.

The Bee Happy team are now carrying out regular collections of ‘Doorstep Donations’ around the village – rather than waiting for folk to come to our Collection Point, they will come to you instead!

Keep an eye out for the flyer they’ll post through your letterbox before returning to pick up items left out for them.

We are delighted to be working with them on this and very grateful for the real difference their collections make.

A huge thank you to Jason Andrews, 1st Houston & Crosslee Brownies, and The Old Course Ranfurly Golf Club, as well as Bee Happy, who helped us send an amazing 32 crates of food and essential items to Renfrewshire Foodbank in the run-up to Christmas.

Thank you too to our friends at Langbank Church, who regularly donate a large car boot load of items to boost our offer even further.

In church we have reintroduced ‘Bring a Tin a Week’ – please check our Facebook page for an up-to-date list of items that are most needed.



ELDERBERRIES TO SAY HELLO!

WE have had a busy start to the year already, kicking off (literally!) with a great session of movement and dance from Spin Turn Creative Movement which we all thoroughly enjoyed.

Our Singing for Wellbeing Sessions with Daniela are as popular as ever, and we have also been entertained by Michael White from Screen Memories, who hosted a fascinating quiz.

The brilliant Elderberries Ceilidh Band will join us on March 14 for an afternoon of music and dancing.

We have lots of other fabulous activities planned for the next few months and all are welcome.

We meet from 2pm-4pm at the West Halls on Main Street in Houston.

Please contact Frankie on 07817 210777 for more information.



AGM TO END GREAT GUILD YEAR

THE miserable January weather did not deter our members from braving the elements and our first meeting was an in-house affair, with a couple of skits, a quiz and a catch-up over tea.

Alison Balfour gave us an interesting and amusing account of her 22 years in the Army on January 23.

In February we heard from Sophie Ingram, who brought us up to date with the work of Cancer Research UK, and Alex Duncan from The Vine Trust shared progress on the build-

ing of a Village of Hope in Tanzania to house the many children orphaned by Aids.

Our Daffodil Tea on February 10 was very well attended and raised over £780, which is fantastic. Many thanks to everyone who came along to support us and to everyone who worked so hard to make it a success.

The World Day of Prayer service on March 1 was hosted by St Fillan’s,

a lovely opportunity for the whole community to come together.

We are looking forward to hearing from the charity CHAS (Children’s Hospices across Scotland), on March 5 before our AGM on March 19 brings our 2023-24 Session to an end.

We meet on alternate Tuesdays in the West Hall, Main Street, and all are welcome to join us!





For plenty of fun just toddle along

OUR busy group has been having lots of fun this year, with different activities each week, although making cards and colouring in pictures are always very popular ones!

Special events we are looking forward to this session include World Book Day on March 7 and Mother's Day on March 10.

We meet at the West Halls, Main Street, from 9.30am to 11.30am on Thursdays during term-time and the group is for everyone, from newborn babies to pre-schoolers.

Sessions are £3 per child and £1 for each additional child, which includes a snack.



SWI Charity evening to end session

HOUSTON & Crosslee SWI have had an excellent year so far with interesting speakers and activities.

We will hold our penultimate meeting on Wednesday March 13 when we will have a talk on 'Legal Matters that Affect us all'.

Our final meeting will be our AGM and Macmillan Charity Evening on April 10.



We meet in The Carrick Centre, Main Street, Houston at 7.30pm on the second Wednesday of the month.

We look forward to welcoming you to our friendly meetings.

For further information, please contact Barbara Ann Brown on 01505 325452.

Hop along for this shed load of bunnies

DESPITE the cold, wet and windy weather the hardy Shedders have still been attending in force, working away on our Easter bunnies.

These were such a success last year and graced lots of doorsteps, homes and gardens around our village and further afield too.

They are now available to order at £10 each – please private message our Facebook page or email Bob McNair at the address below if you would like to place an order.

Every penny that we make goes straight back in to the Shed.

We have also been busy completing a clothes line, commissioned by Houston Primary School, and tackling various ongoing projects.

The Men's Shed meets every Wednesday, at the West Halls, Main Street, from 10am – 1pm.

Contact Bob at bob.the.train@gmail.com if you would like to donate timber or tools, or commission the Shed to make something, or repair a treasured wooden item for you.



DEFICIT CHALLENGE FOR KIRK

THE finance team would like to extend a massive thank you to everyone who supported the work of our church throughout last year.

To have raised £12,259 for our chosen charities is a fantastic result, and we were also able to raise further monies, through grants and donations, to support the invaluable work of our Local Mission Team within our community and beyond.

However, the challenges of the day to day running of our church remain and the impact of rising costs, primarily in terms of gas and electricity, have pushed us into a deficit position for 2023. There seems little doubt that these

challenges will continue into the year ahead too.

We very much recognise the difficulties everyone faces at this time, with the current cost of living crisis, but if you have not done so recently, and are able to review your givings, your support would be much appreciated.

This will help to make sure that we can properly maintain the fabric of our buildings and keep an active church community with our various groups and activities which are open to everyone to enjoy.



Details of the various ways of giving, including standing order information, are available through our website www.houstonkillellankirk.org and any questions should be directed to our Finance Convener, Eric Richardson, or our Treasurer, Kay Farley.



Brownie Ellis goes for Gold

CONGRATULATIONS to Ellis Duncan, 10, who recently achieved her Brownie Gold Award – making her the first Brownie in Houston to do so.

Ellis did much of the work on six theme awards – including learning about her local community, raising money for charity, exploring our environment, astronomy and healthy eating – at home.

She was determined to complete the award, which was disrupted by Covid, and spent extra time at 4th Houston Brownies in order to do so. Well done, Ellis!



DONATIONS MAKE DIFFERENCE

WE are so grateful to everyone who supported our chosen charities last year via Retiral Offerings after certain services, our website, or by attending one of our many fundraising events – thank you.

Together we raised an incredible £12,259 and we know that the organisations we support really appreciate this help, which makes a real difference to the people they work with.

Once again, Christian Aid Week was very well supported, raising more than £5,000. Our Kirk Postie was as popular as ever, helping to raise £953 for St Vincent's Hospice.

Donations also included food, cleaning items and toiletries for our Foodbank Collection Point and Easter eggs and warm winter clothing for Barnardos Threads, who support families in Renfrewshire. We also collected hundreds of Christmas gifts for prisoners' children and posted 20kg of children's clothing to Mwandi.

DONATIONS LAST YEAR WERE:

Erskine Hospital	£382
SAAFA	£382
St Vincent's Hospice	£780
Scottish Huntington's Association	£780
Mwandi Milk Project	£780
DEC Appeal (Turkey/Syria)	£619
British Red Cross appeal (Morocco/Libya)	£396
The Foodbank	£112
Kiltwalk charities	£35
SAAFA	£382
Christian Aid from Houston collections	£4,937
Christian Aid from boxes	£69.43

MWANDI COLLECTIONS:

Chicken project	£1,000
Brick Worker project	£520
Baby clothes	£214
Incontinence pads	£369

CALENDAR OF SERVICES

3 March	Holy Communion, 11am and 6.45pm <i>(Retiral Offering in aid of charities)</i>
10 March	11am Morning Worship
17 March	11am Morning Worship
24 March	Palm Sunday 11am Morning Worship
28 March	Maundy Thursday 7.30pm, Sacrament of Holy Communion
29 March	Good Friday 7.30pm, Houston & Killellan Kirk
31 March	Easter Sunday 8am Holy Communion outdoors in Kirk grounds <i>(weather permitting)</i> 11am Morning Worship <i>(Retiral Offering in aid of charities)</i>
7 April	11am Morning Worship
14 April	11am Morning Worship
21 April	11am Morning Worship
28 April	11am Morning Worship
5 May	11am Morning Worship
12 May	Ascension Sunday, 11am Morning Worship
19 May	Pentecost 10am Morning Worship <i>(please note earlier time)</i>
26 May	Trinity Sunday 11am Morning Worship
2 June	11am Morning Worship

All services are live-streamed and available on YouTube.

CONGREGATIONAL REGISTER

DEATHS

Mary (May) Fanning, Houston - 1 January 2024
Alexander (Sandy) McIntosh, Houston - 30 January 2024

“I am the resurrection and the life.”

SAVE THE DATE

19 March: Houston & Killellan Kirk Guild AGM, 2pm-4pm, West Halls

31 March: Clocks go forward by an hour

10 April: Houston & Crosslee SWI AGM and Macmillan Charity Evening, 7.30pm at the Carrick Centre, Main Street

Mid-April: Look out for our lovely team of Carnival Programme Sellers who will be coming to your door – then fill out the luxury prize draw slips and have a go at the competitions inside to be in with a chance of winning a host of fabulous prizes. You’ve got to be in it, to win it!

11 May: Houston Kirk Carnival

12-18 May: Christian Aid Week

19 May: Gryffe Valley Rotary Club 10K Run in aid of local groups supporting people living with mental health issues and dementia, and their carers

24 May: Tractor Run

1 June: Houston & Killellan Agricultural Society Annual Show in Houston Park

23 June: Congregational Lunch at the West Halls, Main Street

24 August: Car Treasure Hunt – fun for all the family, with food and children’s entertainment afterwards



CONTACTS

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The Record is distributed to most homes in the parish. If you are able to help with distribution, please contact Sandra on number above.

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