
CONNECT



Photograph of the Aurora Borealis taken from the north side of Aberlady Church

You are warmly invited to join us in the
SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Sunday 25th February 2024

All church services held weekly at:

Gullane Parish Church **9.45a.m.**

Aberlady Parish Church **11.15a.m.**

**Joint services held at 10.30a.m. on the first Sunday of each month -
Aberlady-March 3rd, Gullane-April 7th, Aberlady - May 5th, Gullane - June 2nd**

All are welcome

MINISTER

Dear Friends,

It seems strange in some way, to be addressing this letter to my 'friends' when I have been your Minister for such a relatively short time, yet I have met with such a warm and loving welcome that I do indeed feel that I have come among friends, and that our friendships will deepen and grow over the weeks, months and years ahead as we get to know one another better. My thanks go to all of you for making me feel so welcome and at home, and thank you also for all the kind words of encouragement and your patience as I try to find my way around the parish and remember everybody's names. I especially want to thank all the Session Clerks, Treasurer and elders for all their help and guidance with moving into the new house and helping me to become acquainted with the church and parish. They have very much helped and guided this 'lost sheep'.

The 'lost sheep' was the theme of my children's address when I preached as Sole Nominee back on Oct 22nd 2023. It seems a long time ago now and it is difficult to believe that I have been your minister for just 2 months. The parable of the lost sheep is a story relevant for all of us as it speaks so strongly of God's love for each and every one of us, his children. It's his love that we think of particularly at this time of year as we will soon enter into the season of Lent on 14th February which is, of course, St Valentine's Day. Over the weeks ahead we will journey with Jesus as he travels to Jerusalem and we will, once again, be bystanders as the events of those last days of his life unfold before us, when we will be led through the darkness of the suffering and pain of the cross to the light, joy and celebration of the glory and love of Easter morning.

As with any journey it's time to get ready, time to prepare, time to plan. Metaphorically speaking perhaps it's time to pack our bags for the journey or perhaps, more appropriately, lessen the load: a time to examine ourselves, a time to clear out what is no longer needed. 'Assess yourselves', says Paul to the Christians in Corinth, 'to check that you are living in the faith. Test yourselves to make sure.' (2 Cor 13:5)

Whether it's time spent in prayer and reflection or meditation, reading the Bible, or attending services of worship or 'giving up' something for Lent - or taking up something for Lent - I am sure that you will all be thinking and preparing for Easter Sunday and the glory of the celebration of Christ's resurrection and the affirmation of God's love. As we journey with Christ towards Jerusalem this Lent, I thought I would share this prayer with you:

MINISTER continued

God,
 journey with us as we remember why your Son turned his back on Galilee and strode towards Jerusalem: journey with us, and open our eyes, to see his mind, his heart, his dedication, his worries, his fears, his questions, his love, his single-mindedness, his sacrifice.

Come by your Spirit and speak to our deepest selves, so that Jesus' friendship and example may be so impressed on our experience that our own dreaming and deciding will draw strength, wisdom and insight.

May this Lent be a time of sacrifice: the making sacred of each moment, hour and day; the making holy of our relationships, in the way of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
(from Seasons and Celebrations compiled by D Hilton).

In all your journeying, know that you are never lost, because you have been found and God is with you every step of the way and holds you always in his love.
 With all God's blessings
 Rev Lis Stenhouse

World Day of Prayer: Friday 1st March 2024 held at 3pm.

Glasmuir Church 3p.m. (page 16)

Palm Sunday - 24th March - Gullane 9.45am Aberlady 11.15am

Holy Week Services:

Monday 25th March: St Baldreds 7.30p.m.

Tuesday 26th North Berwick Christian Fellowship – Abbey Church 7.30pm

Wednesday 27th – Our Lady Star of the Sea Church 7.30p.m.

Maunday Thursday 28th March: Celebration of Communion - Gullane Church 7.30pm

Friday 29th March - Tenebrae Service: Aberlady Church 7.30pm

Sunday 31st March - 8.am Easter Sunrise Service: -

at Aberlady Sea Green followed by refreshments at the Kirk Stables

Christian Aid Week activities [12th – 18th May 2024]

Forthcoming events

Abbey & Dirleton are planning a quiz night

St. Andrew Blackadder are holding a Coffee Morning on the 18th May 2024

Aberlady & Gullane: Plant Sale /Aberlady Community Hall, on 18th May - (see page 16)

PRESBYTERY NEWS

Recently the first Zoom meeting of the new presbytery was held, and seemed to go smoothly. We were grateful to have the expertise of Neil MacLennan and his team from Sanctus Media. The reason we had their help is that at the last meeting of Presbytery Clerks I was asking folks what worked and what didn't at Zoom Presbyteries. because we had discussed the mechanics of a big Zoom meeting at Presbytery Council, recognising none of us had the required expertise. Every single Clerk said the same thing.... Get Sanctus and Neil in to help.

Reflecting on the experience. We had a task to run an online presbytery; we recognised we didn't have the expertise to do it, we went to someone we knew who could, they said they would help, and ultimately we went for it, not knowing exactly how it would turn out. Only afterwards do we look back and say, yup that was ok.

In some ways doesn't this reflect our lives and the gospel?

We have a task, to go into all nations and make disciples.

Matt 28: 18 - 19

We recognise we don't have the expertise to do it

We know the Holy Spirit does.

We know the Holy Spirit will help us

We go for it, and looking back see Jesus was with us

Mark 10: 27

John 14 16-17

Luke 12: 12

Luke 24 : 13 – 35

Whatever this week holds for you, we pray you will know the accompaniment of God. As you fulfil your calling to be God's people wherever you are, we pray you will experience the help of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

As always, there are some things to share!

God Bless and take care

Norman Smith
Presbytery Clerk

SESSION CLERKS

Throughout history, people have been fascinated by the passing of time. Even our centuries old forebears will have had a point in time when the old year passed to a new year. They will certainly have used a different date than the one we use – other cultures celebrate at different times - though I'm pretty sure that on a given day the leader of the pack would stand, raise his equivalent of a glass and toast the coming of a new year. I do, however, have doubts as to whether any New Year resolutions would have been expressed. Focus would have been on survival. Today, we seem to need challenges to recharge our lives. How else can we explain resolutions which many of us make at this time of year.

The importance of a new year to individuals, while different and varied, can essentially be boiled down to hope. Hope that the new year will be better than the one we have left behind, that we avoid the loss of someone dear, that our family and friends will prosper and that the world will experience peace.

Fortunately, 2024 has the makings of being a good year in Aberlady and Gullane Church. We are in the third year of unification, have a new minister in post and live in the villages of Aberlady and Gullane where folk like going to their local church. We now worship together more often than in the past and, with major new housing developments, look forward to reaching out to many more people in the months and years ahead.

The Kirk Session started the new year early, holding its first meeting on 15th January. No new year resolutions were passed, but with a determination to improve and develop what the church offers, we have set out a challenging agenda for change over the coming year. A key priority will be continued investment in our buildings. The heating system in Gullane Church is well past its sell by date and an application for planning permission has been lodged with East Lothian Council to instal Air-to-Air Heat Pumps. The central heating pipes are currently hung from the underside of the pews and their removal will lead us into consideration of how best to use the existing floor space, ensuring that it becomes multi-functional and attractive to wider community use. Add in the necessity to upgrade kitchen and toilet facilities in the Gullane Church Centre and an upgrade of the office at Aberlady Church and it is apparent that a busy time lies ahead for our property team.

SESSION CLERKS

Our Communications team will also be busy in 2024. Work is underway producing a flier for distribution to both new and existing houses in Aberlady and Gullane. The flier will also extend an invitation to everyone to visit our church. The team also plans to pilot the streaming of one of our Sunday services.

Since unification of our churches in August 2022, the existing pattern of Holy Communion services, and whether all or some should be offered jointly, was discussed by Session. Various options were considered and, after debate, it was decided to retain the existing pattern of Communion services and add a fifth new joint Communion service at which children would be encouraged to attend.

Other matters discussed were:

Revised working hours for the Church Secretary

As you know, Tracey Thompson is our church secretary who works part-time (six hours/week). Tracey's workdays are Thursday and Friday afternoons and two hours during the rest of the week. The majority of the working hours are home-based but each week she will visit the Aberlady and Gullane Church Office, situated in the Kirk Stables, Aberlady to do print work and monitor the mail box and telephone.

The date of the next meeting of the Kirk Session will be on Monday 11th March in Aberlady Kirk Stables. If you have any questions or points which you wish Session to consider please contact either one of the Session Clerks or your elder.

Jim Donaldson, Elspeth Walker and Hazel Phisatory

Session Clerks



Congregational Roll

Gullane and Aberlady

Deaths

October	20.10.23	Iain McLean, 12 Muirfield Park, Gullane.
November.	8.11.23.	Georgina (Mary) Cowan. 23 Muirfield Terrace, Gullane
December	15.12.23.	Mrs Patricia Thompson. 4 Muirfield Park
	16.12.23.	Mrs Greta Anderson . 16 The Pleasance, Aberlady
January.	5.1.24.	Mrs Paula Jackson. 19 The Pines, Gullane

TREASURER'S REPORT

Church Finances-Treasurer's update

The Church financial year runs from January to December. I am working on the 2023 accounts and when completed they will be approved by the Kirk Session and the auditor. An Annual Stated meeting will hopefully be held later in the spring at which you will have the opportunity to have the accounts explained. This is an information meeting as members of the Kirk Session are responsible for their approval. 2023 has been a busy year with the purchase of our new manse and fitting it out, maintenance at both Aberlady and Gullane, the vacancy committee and the arrival and induction of our new minister. In addition we are trying to use one supplier for both sites wherever possible. The heating and lighting was a major expenditure during 2023

I am pleased to report that we have a surplus at the end of the year.

I am grateful for your continued support in your giving through your offerings. Please continue to do so. You can do so by cheque or by Standing Order via the bank, or cash in the plate. For further information, please speak to Morag Black at Gullane or to me at church or by phone.

ANNUAL PLANT SALE

The **Annual Plant Sale** will take place on **Saturday 18 May** in **Aberlady Community Hall** - see advert elsewhere in this magazine. This is now a successful joint venture. As this happens near Christian Aid Week in May, Kirk Session has agreed to donate 20% of the profit to Christian Aid

Please get your plants ready! Put the date in your diary! Come along and buy some new plants at very good prices!

Kirk Stables and Gullane Church Centre

At both the Stables and Gullane Church Centre there is some availability during the week for groups to meet there, both during the day and in the evening, and it is also possible to hire them for family events e.g children's parties. The charges are reasonable. Please spread the word and further information is available on the website (www.aberlady-gullaneparishchurch.org.uk) or from Tracey Thomson, our Church Secretary, who deals with bookings either by email: agpcsecretary@outlook.com or by phone on: 01875 870777. (Thursday or Friday pm, or if unavailable, leave a message on the answering machine)

Kaye Macaskill (Church Treasurer)

The Lantern Group invites you to ...

A Morning for Quiet Reflection

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL ...

Please let us know if you plan to attend.

Please phone **01368 850604** or email:

janet.mckinnell@btinternet.com

to indicate whether you will be at Holy Trinity
or will join us on zoom **two weeks later**.

The programme will be led by members of the Lantern Group, who share a common interest in the Ignatian way of prayer and spiritual development.

Sat. 13th Apr 2024

Holy Trinity Church, Haddington

10.00am to 1.00pm

Coffee, tea and biscuits provided. Please bring sandwiches for a shared lunch at the end.

Sat. 27th Apr 2024

Online via Zoom

Room will open at 10.00am
for a 10.15 start

Link will be sent to those who register (see above)
a couple of days before.

Arrange your own coffee/tea!

FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE

The Board and Staff of Faith in Older People would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy new year and advise you of our first events for 2024. We hope you will be able to join us:-

Unfortunately the first event took place on Wednesday 7th February at 4.30pm which was too early for the publication of 'CONNECT'.

The second Seminar takes place on Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 4.30pm

The Place of Hope -*The spiritual care needs of people experiencing mental illness within a church community part two (application)*

1. *How can members and leaders of church communities safely support each other's mental health?*
2. Can expressions of faith be seen as dangerous?
3. When should professional help be suggested for people in the church community?

Timings –

4.30-5.30pm – presentation

5.30-6.00pm – discussion

To book try: www.eventbrite.co.uk

Rev. Peter J. Wood
Mission Officer for Lothian & Borders Presbytery

For some of us, looking ahead into 2024 can feel uncertain or unclear.

This poem from Thomas Merton is one that I have repeatedly returned to, aware that in every moment God can guide me and, that there are new opportunities to move towards the life we are called into.

Thomas Merton, "Thoughts in solitude"

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself,

and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,

though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always,

though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me,

and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

AGPC Worship Team

Sometime around the middle of last year, Rev. Dr. Jock Stein (at that time our Interim Moderator) was fully aware that we would be moving to part time ministry and he approached four of us in our joint church to see if we would be willing to set up a Worship Team to offer support to our new minister (at that time not yet chosen). Although we had very limited experience in leading worship, we agreed to Jock's proposal and so the Worship Team came into being!

From the outset, we agreed that we would work as a Team, with no Convenor. Our decisions on what to include in planning a worship service and on how we should conduct worship we all wanted to be collective decisions. So, it started and so it has continued. We meet either in each other's homes (or sometimes online) the week before a scheduled service and we agree on who should do what, discuss the Bible passages and choose supporting hymns.

We have all found the collective experience of leading worship for you to be challenging but nevertheless exciting. We recognise that we are still very inexperienced and are truly grateful for all your support and encouragement.

As a parting comment, we are keen to see more people join our Team – even if it is simply to offer to say a prayer during one of the services.

Please contact any of us if you feel able to contribute.

Barry, Carol, Alison, Muriel



Children’s Church in Aberlady and Gullane Parish Church

Since Christmas we have had a lovely time in JAM Club. Stories, games, crafts, food, fun and friends. We are following the liturgy using the ROOTS Resources for Churches, learning each week about God in our lives.

December was wonderfully busy for us. First, we had our inaugural movie night in the Gullane Church Centre, the children arrived in their onesies and snuggled down to watch ‘The Star’ on our big screen. Needless to say, the popcorn and pizza were also well received. We hope to show many more films in this way, for both young and old, and are happy to receive suggestions as to what we show next. Our Christmas Craft Afternoon was held on December 3rd in Aberlady Kirk Stables, and was well attended by many families, some new faces from Aberlady too which was nice. By this time rehearsals and plans for the Nativity service were well underway, the costumes were out of the cupboard and jewels being stuck on to the king’s crowns. Some of our children were away this year, so they made a wee film to show as part of the service. I hope you will agree the Nativity Service on December 17th was special. Each one of the nearly 30 children worked really hard, sang beautifully and even our (real) baby Jesus put in a great performance.





Also going on in Church in December, bringing children and young families through the door, was a visit from the Gullane Primary School PIs. The school choir also put on a concert. The Carols on Gullane's Goose Green on the 17th December also ended up in Church due to inclement weather. In Aberlady the School Nativity was performed in the Church. Families also filled the Church at the Christmas Eve 6.30pm service in Aberlady and on Christmas day in Gullane.

We have been delighted to welcome Lis to JAM Club, who came to visit one Sunday morning while the Worship Group led the service in Church. Lis has been spotted at EJAM too. We are loving her fresh ideas and of course the puppets.

We are now looking forward to spring and Easter. We have our Easter Craft Afternoon at 3pm on the 24th of March in Gullane Church Centre. Families are invited to join us for crafts, activities and refreshments. On Easter Sunday, during the service in Gullane, there will be an Easter Egg hunt for the children.

EJAM continues to meet each month, wonderfully led by Hilary, Pete, and also Andrew from St Andrew Blackadder Church. Over 20 youngsters come to eat and meet with their friends whilst learning about the stories in the bible.

We would like to say a HUGE thanks to all the willing, (and not so willing), volunteers who mucked in and helped with our children and families over the Christmas period. We couldn't do it without you.

Rachel, Hilary and Lauren

For more information on Aberlady and Gullane's Children's activities please email Rachel or Hilary at agpcchildren@gmail.com

Please keep in touch by checking our website for updates:

www.aberlady-gullaneparishchurches.org,

as well as Facebook@aberladyandgullaneparishchurch.



East Lothian Foodbank Update

Aberlady and Gullane Parish Church have supported East Lothian Foodbank for many years. Over those years many of our members have volunteered at the warehouse and many more have supported the foodbank, donating financially and by giving food. The Foodbank has had to expand over these years. Sadly, due to increased demand, we are struggling to keep up.

December 2023 brought unprecedented demand. 515 households received emergency food parcels over the 19 days of December that the foodbank was open. Those households were made up of 1311 people, a 13% increase from the month before, 807 adults and a massive 504 children. On the 22nd of December we provided food for 115 people, the most people we have ever fed on an individual day. December's parcels were delivered all over the county. Most went to Tranent, Wallyford and Macmerry (>32%), then to Musselburgh (>26%), but in December, the Foodbank also fed 28 households in our area, that's 72 people, our neighbours, who needed support. The reasons people gave for needing a food parcel is most often the rising cost of essentials, but some also described ongoing impact of physical or mental health conditions. One last statistic for December. Stock in - 15,212kg, stock out in emergency food parcels - 11,516kg.

Some sobering figures. Thank you all for your donations. Please keep giving.

For more information see the website www.eastlothianfoodbank.org.uk

Thank you. Rachel Wallace

CAN YOU DONATE ONE OF OUR ESSENTIAL ITEMS?



Tinned hot or cold meat

Tinned veg

Tinned fruit

Tinned soup

Tinned potatoes

Pasta sauce

Long-life fruit juice

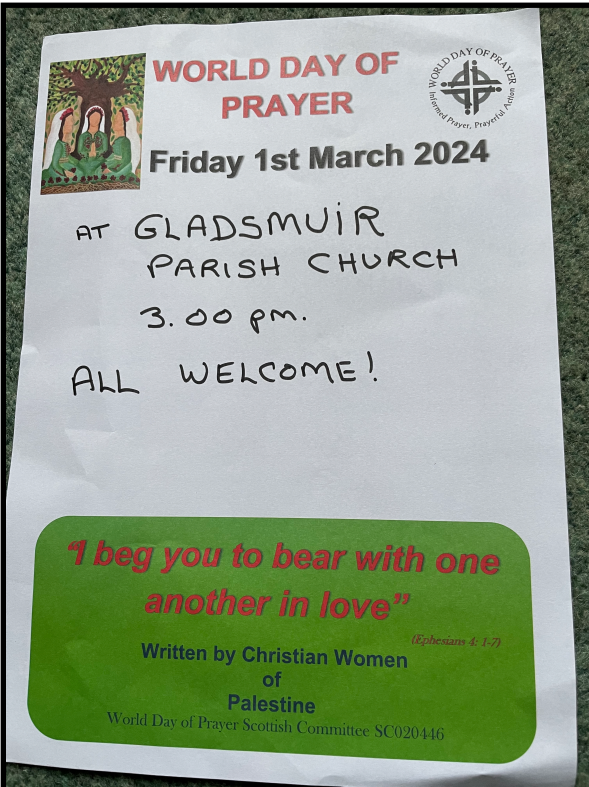
Long-life milk

Tea or coffee

Biscuits

Baked beans

Breakfast cereal



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
Friday 1st March 2024

AT GLADSMUIR
PARISH CHURCH
3.00 pm.
ALL WELCOME!

"I beg you to bear with one another in love"
(Ephesians 4: 1-7)
Written by Christian Women
of
Palestine
World Day of Prayer Scottish Committee SC020446

If anyone would like a lift to the 'World Day of Prayer' please contact Elspeth Walker or Hazel Phisatory.

ABERLADY PLANT SALE

Saturday 18th May 2024 10.00am - 12.15p.m.

ABERLADY COMMUNITY HALL

£1 ENTRY £3 for cream tea ticket

STALLS < PLANTS < CAKE AND CANDY

RAFFLE

ALL WELCOME

Gullane Church Flowers 🌷🌸🌺🌻

HELP PLEASE!! We all enjoy the lovely flowers in our church on a Sunday. Anne Dobie does a wonderful job but her team of helpers is dwindling. There are glass vases available that just need a simple bunch of flowers, no need for any arranging. Perhaps there is a date that is significant to you and you would like to do the flowers, or ask someone else to do them for you. If you feel unable to do the flowers but would like to give a donation please contact Anne Dobie on 01620 842 543 or speak to your Elder. We would be delighted to hear from you. The flowers are given to someone in the congregation who is in need of comfort. This is an important part of our caring church community so your help would be MUCH APPRECIATED.

Flower Convenor

Aberlady Church Flowers

Why not develop your inner creativity in 2024 by joining the flower arranging group in Aberlady Church?

We love flowers and having a bunch (from some of us) or a formal display (from some of our talented team) really enhances everyone's Sunday experience in our beautiful Church.

We have vacancies in June, August and October. You need not be a member or a regular Church attendee to participate.

Please contact:

Liz Forsyth 07880337695 or 01875870120



REPORT ON “CAROLS ON THE GREEN”

Whilst the weather wasn't very friendly and didn't allow us to have the event on the Green, it went ahead inside Gullane Church, where it was very cosy. The Aberlady and Gullane Community Choir, led by Orlando Mason were in great voice, lifting everyone's spirits. It was heartening to see many from our church family, people from in and around the village and young families, new to the village, who came along and enjoyed this community event.

The church centre was busy after the recital as many people, the choir and youngsters, enjoyed fellowship and refreshments. Sincere thanks to members of the choir who donated home baking, wrapped cakes and mince pies. A big thank you to Iain Blakebell and the Communications Team for organising the event, Orlando for his continued support, the wonderful singing by the choir, and Isabel Cameron for helping with the catering. If you didn't make it to this lovely afternoon in 2023, save a space in the diary for 2024 as it's sure to be a great event. All the extra wrapped cakes and mince pies were donated to East Lothian Foodbank.

Muriel Calder





Our Gullane Church Wednesday coffee mornings are well supported and it's a lovely gathering of women and men from in and around the village. There's lots of lively chat, very often with home baking by Alison Nelson and others. We held a little celebration at Christmas. Unfortunately some of our regulars couldn't attend as they had already travelled to be with family over the festive period.

(Note to self: have the Christmas bash at the start of December! 🎄)

If you haven't tried our Wednesday morning coffee, (we do tea as well) chat and catch up, we would love to see you. Every Wednesday at 10.30 - 12 noon, £1.50 as much coffee/tea as you wish, biscuits and if you're lucky home baking.

Nicky Black and I are so grateful for the support from our regulars but would love to extend a welcome to new members.

Muriel Calder

Gullane Church Wednesday and Sunday morning coffee

Nicky Black and I would like to say an enormous thank you to all the Ladies who cover these two rotas, make the refreshments (remembering to bring the milk along), wash the crockery, generally tidy up and wash the tea towels. Without their support the coffee mornings would not happen.

Some of our longer serving volunteers have taken a well earned rest. We thank them most sincerely for all they have given to the church and our community to keep this opportunity for fellowship going forward.

If anyone could spare a couple of Sundays, Wednesdays, or both, it would be greatly appreciated. The more volunteers the better, with fewer shifts for everyone. Coffee making lessons are free!!!

Contact Nicky Black or myself if you can help us to develop this community venture.

Muriel Calder



Garleton Singers

Concerts 7.30 - 10.00p.m.

March 23rd 2024 Performing in St Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh

March 24th 2024 Performing in St Mary's Parish Church, Haddington

June 1st 2024 Summer Concert St Mary's Parish Church, Haddington



Hadley Court Singers

Spring Concert

March 16th performing at Holy Trinity Church, Haddington 7.30p.m.

Editor: Many thanks again to all the companies who support our magazine, 'CONNECT', helping to pay towards the printing costs. Val Barrie - Editor

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For your information:

www.aberlady-gullaneparishchurches.org.uk

Click on “CONNECT” to read the magazine online.

www.facebook.com/AberladyGullaneParishChurches

www.facebook.com/AberladyAndGullaneChurchForChildren

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Diary Dates 2024	
February 25th	Celebration of Holy Communion
	JAM Movie night
March 1st	World Day of Prayer See page 3 for information
March 3rd	10.30am Joint Service at Aberlady led by the Worship Team
March 10th	5.30pm EJAM Gullane Church Centre
March 11th	7pm Kirk Session meeting at the Kirk Stables, Aberlady
March 24th	Palm Sunday Service 9.45am Gullane Church. 11.15 Aberlady Church 3-5pm JAM Easter Crafts - Gullane Church Centre
March 25th - 29th	Holy Week - for information see page 3
March 31st	8am Easter Sunday Service at the Sea Green, Aberlady with refreshments in the Kirk Stables afterwards 9.45am Gullane Church 11.15am Aberlady Church
April 7th	10.30am Joint Service at Gullane led by the Worship Team
April 7th or 14th	5.30pm EJAM
May 5th	10.30am Joint Service at Aberlady led by the Worship Team
May 12th - 18th	Christian Aid Week Activities Abbey & Dirleton are planning a quiz night St. Andrew Blackadder are holding a Coffee Morning on the 18 th May Aberlady & Gullane: Plant Sale in Aberlady Community Hall, on 18 th May - (see page 16)
May 14th - 20th	Christian Aid Week
May 18th - 24th	General Assembly Week
May 18th	Plant Sale - Aberlady Village Hall
May 19th	Pentecost Sunday
May 26th	Celebration of Holy Communion
June 2nd	10.30am Joint Service at Gullane led by the Worship Team
July 7th	10.30am Joint Service at Aberlady led by the Worship Team