



Church of Scotland

Presbytery of Lothian & Borders



Full-Time Minister of Word & Sacrament

Five Year Reviewable Tenure

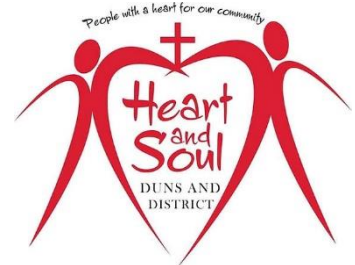


Duns & District Parishes



Mission Specialism

working within Berwickshire
& Berwick parish grouping





Building the Church

“Jesus is the stone the builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone” Acts 4:11

Do you feel called to drive Mission at the heart of a rural community? Will you join us as we rebuild God’s church in this corner of Scotland?

We in Duns & District Parishes aim to be friendly, welcoming, non-judgmental, searching and outward-looking. We’re not afraid of trying new and experimental ways, which is why we have embraced joining a parish grouping – sharing our minister and their mission expertise with other congregations across Berwickshire, while we gain from the leadership of visiting ministers in their specialisms, in a mutual team.

Our worship is welcoming, inclusive, varied and supportive: ranging from traditional to our Early Gathering, Messy and Forest churches. Our priority is to demonstrate Christ – his compassion and love in action. Our missional activities build bridges with our communities, reaching out to long-term residents, newcomers and those who feel they are on the fringes: so all we encounter might feel valued, included and cherished.



“You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church” Matthew 16:18

This is a unique and exciting call to shape a new, evolving form of ministry – in which ultimately 80% of your time will be spent as Mission lead within a team of ministers, working closely together across a grouping of Berwickshire churches, with 20% of your time dedicated locally as minister within D&DP. You will live in the county town Duns becoming a familiar, approachable face in the community. You will lead and inspire through your ability to preach with passion: guided by the Holy Spirit you will interpret the word of Scripture making it relevant to our time and place in the world. You will have skills of sensitivity to understand the social mix of our communities – sympathetic to strong rural traditions, but with vision for the future and confidence to inspire us in embracing new ideas. As a missional minister, many aspects will be a natural extension of your team role.



As the Mission lead you will also be an inspirational pioneer. You will equip people across the Berwickshire parish grouping, including in D&DP, to live out their faith while reflecting the five ‘Marks of Mission’ according to their unique gifts. In the places where you have worked before, you will have trained or mentored others to develop their gifts so that mission did not stop when you moved on. You communicate effectively and sensitively, encouraging others with less confidence to step out in faith with you. You model openness to the Holy Spirit doing new things in communities. You will be able to work well within a team of ministers, where you will endorse the value of each other’s specialisms in building God’s Kingdom across the parish grouping.

... the minister with the Mission brief will seek to support every congregation to be a witnessing community with mission at its heart. The remit will seek to equip congregational members to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom with enthusiasm in their daily lives which is where mission is at its most effective and through special activities designed to enable congregations both to listen to and to share with their communities; the Mission brief will include assisting congregations to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and pursue peace and reconciliation... Berwickshire cluster Presbytery Mission Plan

Duns & District Parishes

Hebrews 3:4

“Every house is built by someone – but God is builder of everything”

Duns & District Parishes was formed between 2014 and 2016 by union of 4 congregations and 2.5 charges. We have since come together as a team – a hub & spokes or planet & moons, working and sharing between town and country. Our vacancy arises after a 5 year ministry cut short by illness – and this plus our original vacancy and the national emergency of 2020-21 has seen us mature both in resilience and self-sufficiency.

We have 20 elders, all active, and 3 board members – but many more people are involved in congregational life. Our kirk session and board now meet jointly and a unitary constitution will likely be adopted; while our vibrant Guild – with 30 members now largest in the Borders – join together for praise, encouragement, faith-building, learning and supporting of good causes. They meet every other Wednesday and occasionally lead Duns worship. In agreeing to the parish grouping and a 20/80% time division, our session desires the 20% local time be primarily used for leading Sunday worship – but this would not mean 2 services every Sunday, nor every Sunday in a month, as we’re blessed with a worship team of a retired auxiliary, a reader and 2 lay leaders (1 of whom is undertaking the funeral celebrants course). We also get help from 3 retired ministers living nearby and most of our churches will lead their own services and ‘Songs of Praise’ from time-to-time.

Berwickshire parish grouping

“We are co-workers for God: you are God’s field and building” 1 Cor 3:9

Under the presbytery planning process 8 former charges in the Berwickshire area are being reduced to 5. After many years development the Presbytery Mission Plan for what is now Berwickshire & Berwick mission cluster outlines a bold vision of congregations taking increasing roles in all aspects of ministry, supported by 5 ministers working as a team in a parish grouping, their time split 20% within their own charge and 80% as a specialist throughout the grouping. Eventually there will be 5 charges... Duns & District, Coldstream & District linked with Leitholm, Earlston with Greenlaw with Gordon with Legerwood, Berwick with Ayton

& District, and Eyemouth with Coldingham; specialising in Mission, Worship, Pastoral Care, Christian Education and Youth respectively.

This autumn the 3 vacant charges based from Duns, Coldstream and Earlston will call. There are also 3 existing ministers on unrestricted tenure: Berwick’s agreed to add Ayton and contribute to Christian Education, initially 20% of his time, while Eyemouth and Chirnside are not participating. This means to begin with the 3 new specialists will undertake all Youth work and most Christian Education in their charges along with the current minister in Berwick. We therefore anticipate our minister will initially spend the majority of their time within Duns & District Parishes, while exploring the opportunities for developing mission within the parish grouping, moving to 80% of their time envisaged in this aspect progressively over a period a time.

There is provision within the plan for designated and trained Elder-Moderators to chair some Kirk Session or other meetings, especially in linkages. Full texts of the plan and bases are available on request.



Mission

“Therefore encourage one another – and

Our new minister will have many ideas for new forms of mission, and the Lord will open doors we have not yet recognised in the years ahead, but we already have several ‘fresh expressions’ to nurture and develop:

Messy Churches

“Where can families with children – churchgoers or not – meet to share Christian celebration? Chill, laugh, cry, learn, grow, listen, share? And all for free!” Messy @ Duns meets every month and is growing in both numbers – up to 30 – and impact. We also have Messy @ Cranshaws for the ‘hill folk’ meeting less regularly. As only 1 or 2 families with children come to traditional Sunday worship Messy is now our key link to school age kids. Many do attend festive services: Duns Christingle on Christmas Eve sees almost 200 present. We also engage direct with families and the local school in our ‘Walk through Easter’ dressed church diorama.

Kirk Kids

Babies and toddlers bring along their mums (and dads!) for a morning of fun, friendship and mutual support every Wednesday in Duns halls: the adults share a cuppa while the wee ones play together but always come together at tasty snack time. Recently a spinoff breastfeeding support group has started up on Fridays. From humble beginnings we sense real opportunity for discipleship: Jesus is working in this space. We are seeing growth in numbers and engagement and some families now visit other events like Messy. Kirk Kids is a chance to get beside our young families where they are. This extends to other areas of our life including a Churches Together ecumenical tent taken to annual County Show with kids activities.



The Early Gathering

Popularly known as ‘TEG’, our café church meets once a month in the upper hall at Duns. It is informal, relaxed all-age worship time: people arrive from around 9am to enjoy refreshments (often bacon butties!), before settling down round small tables to enjoy teaching and praise. Only a minority of occasions are clergy led and we often have a guest from a neighbouring congregation who will speak about their job, faith journey or life experiences. Music is largely contemporary making use of hall projector and sound system. It reaches out to people who may not attend traditional worship but will TEG. It adopts a special theme at certain times of year – ‘TEG on the Beach’ went down to the seaside; ‘TEG at Christmas’ joined our regular 11am service for a pop-up nativity. Separate to TEG we organise regular services with the Episcopal church in 2 sheltered housing complexes.



Cranshaws Forest Church

CFC has its own website: <https://cranshawsforestchurch.co.uk/>

“... on Sunday 25th February 2024 a large group of people aged 4 to 80+ walked along the River Whiteadder to the first gathering of Forest Church in Cranshaws. Taking in the natural world, we reflected on what it can



tell us about the Creator’s nature and of our lives within it...” Developed over the past 2 years with ‘Seeds for Growth’ support and local windfarm funding, a community forest with seating area is literally and figuratively growing on a strip of ground by Cranshaws parish church – ‘the Kirk of Lammermuir’ – within a local network of walks, forestry and orchards. Forest Church is

different. We explore the wonders of nature as a source of faith and hope: explore with others, setting aside our different backgrounds, finding common awe for the world we live in, making sense of our place in it.

build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” 1 Thessalonians 5:11 ●

As well as those formal ‘fresh expressions’ we see missional fruit and potential in other areas of D&DP life:

Prayer Shawl Ministry and Pastoral Care

Our prayer shawl ladies gather each month for fellowship, knitting and a natter... most also work away at home. Since forming in late 2010s they have distributed hundreds of shawls, cushions and ‘prayer squares’ – blessed at services a few times a year – to local people as an expression of Christ’s care and our support. This occurs for illness and bereavements but also happy occasions like births, weddings and graduations.

We also have a pastoral group and an established network of visiting undertaken by our elders. This was reorganised in 2023 into a model based around 3 flexible teams superseding the traditional district system. They also distribute our twice-yearly print magazine – while ‘Good News Friday’ goes out weekly by email.



Until last year Duns Foodbank was part of D&DP and operated from our buildings, but it has now been established as its own charity with premises in an adjacent street. Our members carry on as volunteers and the congregation supports it as we do other causes like Christian Aid and Blythswood Christmas Shoebox appeal. Recently a separate foodbank has been established in Gavinton based in our hall. Various council and charitable support services also operate from Duns hall.



Pause for Prayer

This house group meets on Friday mornings in fellowship, reflection and prayer – to hear what the Holy Spirit has to say to us. We also run annual bible study series and Sat morning online prayer sessions.



Social occasions

We have a vibrant social committee who organise monthly Saturday coffee mornings which are growing in popularity. They act as a setting to meet with the community and a support to those living in isolation. They also arrange one-off events ranging from a prosecco afternoon tea to concerts, pancake suppers, ‘hymn sing’ and a carols singalong. There is also an annual Harvest Supper staged in Preston village hall.

Berwickshire Christian Youth Trust

BCYT have their own website: <https://bcytborders.org.uk/>



We support and work closely with BCYT who are now based at our church office in 6A Market Square, Duns. They are a non-denominational charity affiliated to Scripture Union, set-up 30 years ago, employing 1 full-time and 1 part-time youth workers. In recent years they created ‘Home Together’ online resources which local families use, with an in person gathering called ‘H.T. Live’; ‘It’s Your Move’ school program for P7 leavers; and run residential weekends for older children. BCYT have strong relationships with local schools – including some where traditional institutional church involvement has declined – leading assemblies and supporting SU clubs. Duns Primary and Berwickshire High are both schools in D&DP’s area. In our congregation BCYT facilitate Activity Days for primary kids on school in-service, help resource holiday clubs, support TEG, and have run ‘Creative Explore’ teen evenings.

We expect working with BCYT will be a critical relationship for the Mission lead, especially during the initial years when a Youth specialist based from Eyemouth will not be in post. Support will also be available from Rev Peter Wood, the Mission Officer for Lothian & Borders Presbytery, who we already work with regularly.



Coldstream & District Parishes linked with Leitholm & Eccles

Existing mission opportunities at Coldstream include the Ladies@10, meeting fortnightly for fellowship/discussion; Men's Prayer Breakfast, also fortnightly, attended by men from other denominations; Sunday Sing, regular opportunity for praise & worship before Sunday services; and monthly "Iona-style" services. There is also a non-affiliated guild.

Earlston linked with Greenlaw with Gordon with Legerwood

Greenlaw/Gordon/Legerwood have experience of the new model as Rev Susan Brown ministered there for 3 years as Worship specialist before retiring. Earlston has a Guild, Bible Study and Prayer Support group – existing opportunities for mission include a Messy Church and a Community Café with Foodshare Larder.



Our worship & buildings

Psalm 122:1

"I rejoiced with those who said unto me 'Let us go to the house of the Lord' "

Duns is the heart of our union with worship every Sunday at 11am. Readings & prayers are by members of the congregation. We enjoy CH4/MP and contemporary singing accompanied by organ or electronic music: the church is equipped with a modern sound system, projection suite and TV screens. Communion is held quarterly, while our country kirk folk join us at Duns on 5th Sundays. There are also Scottish Episcopal and Roman Catholic churches in town with a rector and a priest each covering Berwickshire. Recently we have joined with the Episcopal church for Good Friday and Christmas Day, while they joined us for Civic Week Kirking and Remembrance Sunday: both remain major civic occasions which see Duns parish church well-filled. Attached are halls, meeting room and kitchen – hosting refreshments after services, and in daily use by both church and community. Just around corner in Market Square our 6A facility (a former shop) has an office for admin, meeting space for small groups, and a window used by constantly rotating displays based on the Christian year and community life. Following the AMBA process our Duns buildings are categorised A – to retain beyond the life of the plan. We own flats above our halls and 6A which are let for rental income.



Cranshaws church in the Lammermuirs is 20min north of Duns and also A in plan. It is visited by Southern Upland Way walkers, hosts art shows and concerts. It stages both 1 traditional service at 11:15am and 1 afternoon forest service every month. They are mostly led by a retired auxiliary and a reader, with minister visiting every 3-4 months.

Bonkyl and **Gavinton** churches, east and west of Duns, alternate a weekly service at 9:30am. Very late on both were recategorized from A to B in plan with both to close in 2028. Bonkyl has a popular festival choir who rehearse and perform for Easter, Harvest and Christmas; Gavinton with its own hall now hosts foodbank and community soup lunches, plus faith concerts are planned: depending how these grow in years ahead, a case may develop asking to reclassify it back to A.

Edrom church is scheduled to close during 2026 and it now has only 1 service a month. Over the past year a series of meetings have been held by local people to consider taking it over as a community space, including continued use for weddings, funerals and festival services.



Our manse

*“Unless the Lord builds the house,
the builders labour in vain”* Psalm 127:1

Built in 1992 Duns manse is considered to be amongst the best in the Borders and is located on the edge of the town centre. Downstairs are the kitchen with dual fuel 2-range cooker, double sink, dishwasher, microwave, tower fridge-freezer; utility room with sink, washer-dryer; lobby; a large living room with patio doors; dining room with glass wall onto corridor; study with 1 wall fully shelved; and toilet. On the first floor are a bathroom with additional shower; and 4 bedrooms. Both the kitchen and bathroom were refitted 7 years ago to a high standard, together with a scheme of repainting and recarpeting, and we are currently looking at what if any further redecorating or carpets may be needed. Outside is a large gravel drive, single garage, garden with lawns, patio and rockery.



Local amenities & facilities

“Each of us should please our neighbours for their good, to build them up. For even Christ did not please himself” Romans 15:2-3

Duns has all the facilities you would expect in a vibrant county town including supermarket, butchers, post office, garden centre, general and independent stores plus 2 garages serving fuel. There are various cafes, pubs, restaurants and takeaways with more in surrounding villages. Health provision includes GP surgery, cottage hospital, pharmacy, 2 dentists, optician and 2 vets. There are modern primary and high schools, several nurseries, youth centre, extensive playpark plus branches of Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and ACF.

Sports lovers are well-catered by football, rugby, cricket, lawn bowls, tennis, badminton, judo and walking clubs, an 18-hole golf course, driving range, fitness gym, and 25m swimming pool; a nature reserve is just 5min walk away from manse. There is a successful floral gateway & flowerbeds group, community food garden, a Men's Shed and Ladies Collective. Cultural interests include a library, museum, busy community centre, town hall with cinema, thriving U3A and amateur dramatics, opera, pipe band, plus Rotary, Probus and the Rural. There are many other clubs, dance and music groups – plus history, art, photography and wildlife societies.



Duns is under 30min drive from Berwick-upon-Tweed to the east and Kelso to south. Galashiels is around 45min drive west while Edinburgh can be reached in 1hr and Newcastle in 90min. Nearby railway stations include Berwick, Reston, Tweedbank and Dunbar.



History & background

"Your children shall ask you 'What are these stones?'. Tell them what they are." Joshua 4:6-7

Our church and land has a proud history, which provides inspiration for the future. We gave to Scotland and the world important religious thinkers like John Duns Scotus, Thomas Boston, Thomas McCrie the Elder and William Cunningham. In the sixteenth century the famous Covenanter armies based themselves here: and *"Scotland's religious liberty was saved not by civil law, not by canon law, but by Duns Law"*. Previous ministers and elders pioneered psalmody, led great home missions – even introduced rickshaws to India! Victorian attendance and membership was higher here than anywhere, and we once stood in the vanguard of change in the Church of Scotland... the first pipe organ, introducing many worship and decorative innovations, plus amongst the first Christmas and Easter services. We are not quite such rebels and disrupters today but our determination to share Jesus's love is undiminished with a heritage going back 1,000 years. Why not join us as we begin writing the next chapter?



Statistics for Mission for full S4M details click: [Parish statistics](#) [Deprivation statistics](#)

"Fearing the Lord, encouraged by the Holy Spirit, they increased" Acts 9:31

D&DP has a population of 4,800... Duns itself is home to 2,900 'Dingers' with Gavinton (250), Preston (150), Allanton and Longformacus (both 100) the main villages – the remaining 1,300 live in smaller hamlets and the wider countryside. We have just over 400 members on our church roll. Over the last 3 years an average of 2 baptisms, 3 weddings and 17 funerals occurred annually. Last year our 'Giving to Grow' was £47,200.



Coldstream/Leitholm has 3,800 people with Coldstream itself 2,000 plus Swinton (250), Leitholm (200), Birgham (150) and Eccles (100). Earlston/etc has 4,100 with Earlston itself 1,800 plus Greenlaw (650) and Gordon (450). So initial parish grouping and 3-person team will cover 12,700 people. Together the charges not initially participating have 9,600 meaning the eventual grouping and 5-person team will cover 22,300 people, plus responsibilities in Berwick-upon-Tweed.



How to Find out More

Website: www.dunsanddistrict.org.uk Click here for Facebook



Interim Moderator – Rev Bruce Neill

bneill@phonecoop.coop

01890 771569

Nominating Committee Clerk – Fiona Brookes

dunsdistrictnc@gmail.com

