

KIRKIN' OF THE TARTAN

The story of the Kirkin' of the Tartan is a modern one. "Kirk" is a Scottish word meaning church, and in Scotland the kirk refers to the (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland. The Kirkin' uses some order from a Scottish church service, but is an American invention and was first held on April 27, 1941, by the late Dr. Peter Marshall, Scottish-born Chaplain of the U.S. Senate and minister of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C. After Dr. Marshall's death the Kirkin' moved from place to place and in 1954 was held at the Washington National Cathedral, where it has been held ever since, and is sponsored by the St. Andrew's Society. Our service today is modeled after this 1941 service and has been approved by our pastors and the session.

With the recent increase in Scottish Clan activities, the Kirkin' of the Tartan has spread across the United States and Canada.

The display of the tartans represents the Scottish Clans. The word Clan, meaning family and identity, came to be attached to the Chief of the Clan. The Parliamentary Act of 1746, following the rout of 1745 of the Jacobites and the departure of Bonnie Prince Charles, banned the kilt, plaid or any tartan garment. The bagpipes were banned as well, and effort was made to destroy Highland Clan identity. This was all part of the dispersal of the Clans and the breakup of the Clan system. People would secretly carry a piece of their tartan to church to receive a blessing or a "Kirkin'" of the tartan.

In 1822, King George IV visited Edinburgh and called all the Clan Chiefs to appear in Highland dress, and the king himself wore the kilt. Great scurrying was done to locate what tartan each chief should wear. The old sets having been lost and forgotten, new ones were developed in a hurry for the royal event.



*The Cross of St. Andrew,
Patron Saint of Scotland*

St. Columba first brought the Christian faith to Scotland in 563. It was John Knox who brought the Christian Reformation to Scotland in 1547 from John Calvin in Geneva, Switzerland, and exclaimed from the depth of his evangelical zeal, "Give me Scotland, or I die."

Tartan Carriers

Randy Ball
Tim Beaver
Ann Briggs
Spencer Briggs
Ellis Cantin
Stephanie Carson
David Hamilton
Richie Henley
Nick Hodson
Marion Homer
Jill Loomis
Jessie Lusk
Mary McCauley
Vicki Parker
Dee Rivers
Mickey Stewart