



CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

Newsletter

Volume 18, Number 1; January 2024

Services, January 2024

Services held in church and available via Zoom
Request link from sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org

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7 January 10am: Sheena Livingstone
14 January 10am: Steven Whalley
21 January 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley
28 January 10am: Isobel Hunter
4 February 10am: Dr Patsy Campbell

Join us, in the church, and in other activities

We promise you a warm welcome

www.carlopschurch.org

Carlops is one of the West Tweeddale linkage of churches

www.westtweeddale.org.uk

Our Minister



12 Reasons Why I Don't go to 'football games' anymore

1. *Every time I went, they asked me for money.*
2. *The people sitting in my row didn't seem very friendly.*
3. *The seats were very hard.*
4. *The manager never came to speak to me.*
5. *The referees made decisions I didn't agree with.*
6. *I was sitting with the 'plastic fans' who only came to complain about the scarves other people were wearing!*
7. *Sometimes the games went into overtime, and I was late getting home.*
8. *They sang songs I had never heard before.*
9. *The games are scheduled on the only day I get to sleep in or run errands.*
10. *My parents took me to too many games when I was growing up.*
11. *I read a book on football, and I now feel that I think know more than the managers and players.*
12. *I don't want to take my children because when they are older, I want them to be able to choose for themselves what sport they like best.*

Do any of these reasons sound vaguely familiar to you as why you no longer go to other places? In 2024, why not give 'going to football matches' another go.

Peace, Tony

News



Happy New Year

We wish you all a happy and blessed New Year for 2024 and look forward to seeing and hearing from you in the year ahead.

Note from the new Editor

As you know, Rennie McElroy retired as Editor of this newsletter in December. His voice came through clearly in each issue and he created something special while in charge.

Rennie has been thanked formally by the congregation and many warm comments have been sent his way, but I must express my gratitude to him for several hours of detailed and useful tuition on the mysteries of the Carlops Church Newsletter. He has very patiently handled my queries and written extensive guidance, which must have taken considerable time.

Thank you, Rennie!

He is not off the hook yet as I am sure I will be bending his ear at various points, and I expect he will tactfully keep me abreast of my progress too!

I am very much looking forward to producing the monthly newsletter but taking on a task carried out so well by your predecessor can be a bit daunting. I'm very grateful for the support of the congregation in this new endeavour.

It may take me some time to come close to Rennie's editorial prowess (I am yet to invest in a red pen) so, this is your opportunity to send me anything you like and see it printed with barely any changes!

If you were thinking of a column you could write, please put pen to paper or fingers to keys. Your contribution will be gratefully received.

Julie Gamble

Christmas giving - updates and thanks

Women's Aid

Our Christmas campaign this year invited donations to Women's Aid. Thanks to Mary McElroy for organising and publicising. She has forwarded the following notes of thanks.



Carlops Church has supported Women's Aid at Christmas since before 2008. This year WAEML is supporting 293 family groups across East and Midlothian;

In 2023 we donated £705

Dear Mary & Friends,

On behalf of Women's aid East & Midlothian thank you so much for your lovely generous cash donation, and your lovely woolly snoods, hats, scarves and gloves, this will help us ensure that the women and children experience a lovely Christmas.

Thank you for your ongoing support, it means so much to the organisation that you continue to support us. Much appreciated.

Yvonne Irvine
Service Manager

Dear Mary

Thank you so much again for your continued support of our work. I wanted to update you on our Christmas appeal just before I finish up for a few days.

Total donations received this year allowed us to deliver 293 Christmas bundles to families in East Lothian and Midlothian! Our private Christmas movie screening in the community cinema at the Fraser Centre, Tranent for some of the families we support was a welcome treat and Santa even popped by to say hello to the children.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERY SINGLE DONATION - this has made such a huge difference to the families we work with and makes very challenging times just a little bit easier. We would not be able to get these parcels out without your donation!

Please pass on our thanks to everyone at Carlops Church and send our best wishes for 2024.

Kind regards, Julie
Julie Watson CEO, Women's Aid East & Midlothian

Christmas Eve Carol Service

The Christmas Eve Carol Service was well attended again this year with a healthy contingent of younger people present. Thanks to all the musicians involved and everyone else who helped make it happen. Special thanks to Murray who produced another wonderful new carol.

£460 was donated for the work of MSF during the service and we extend thanks to everyone who gave so generously. The following note explains the organisation and its work.

'Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) translates to Doctors without Borders. We provide medical assistance to people affected by conflict, epidemics, disasters, or exclusion from healthcare. Our teams are made up of tens of thousands of health professionals, logistic and administrative staff - bound together by our charter. Our actions are guided by medical ethics and the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality. We are a non-profit, self-governed, member-based organisation.

MSF was founded in 1971 in Paris by a group of journalists and doctors. Today, we are a worldwide movement of nearly 68,000 people.'

Linkage Administrative Assistant leaving

Mark Hepworth, our part-time Administrative Assistant, has resigned and will leave the linkage from 8 January 2024. We thank Mark for the contribution he has made during his spell working in the linkage. He has been a friendly and helpful colleague, willing to use initiative and make suggestions, as well as carry out allotted tasks – a fine blend.

Congratulations to Mark are in order, as he is moving to a new, full-time post. We wish Mark well and extend warm good wishes for future happiness and success to him and his family.

We understand that discussions about how Mark may be replaced in the linkage are in hand. Watch this space!

New Linkage Directory for 2024

A new Linkage Directory is available as a .pdf download for anyone who needs it. Please contact Julie Gamble if you would like a copy.

New Forward Plan for Carlops Church

Carlops Kirk Session approved the new *Forward Plan* for Carlops Church on 28 November 2023. The plan is available on the Church website at [Future plans - Carlops church](#). If there's a problem with the link, visit www.carlopschurch.org and choose *Our work > Future plans*. The plan has also been printed and is being distributed widely in Carlops. In addition, printed copies will be available in the church, and electronic versions from editors Julie Gamble julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk and Rennie McElroy rennie.mcelroy@btinternet.com.

The new *Forward Plan* confirms Carlops Church's established policies and practices: it will continue to work as a positive and welcoming whole-community organisation; and it will provide activities and services open to all, and attractive to all.

The plan analyses and reflects on performance over the period 2016-23, and proposes activities to be pursued in the near- and medium-term future. It emphasises that everyone, without exception, is welcome in Carlops Church, and urges all our supporters to propose things the Church might do, and to be involved in its work.

Rennie McElroy

Messy Church

The next Messy Church Session is on Sunday 14 January'

The theme is Daniel and the Lion's Den

The session starts at 4pm prompt in the New Church Hall at West Linton and finishes at 6pm.

All children from babies to P7 are most welcome to come and join in the fun!

We will start with a Bible Story and then the children will do a range of craft activities, followed by a song and a prayer and finish off with a meal together. All children **MUST** be accompanied by an adult.

Please do consider joining us for an afternoon of fun activities and a family meal together.

For more information contact Jean Howat howatjean@gmail.com

Future dates

Sunday 18 February – Joseph

Sunday 10 March – Moses and the Burning Bush

West Tweeddale Guild

The January meeting of the Guild will be on 17th January in Broughton Village Hall starting at 2pm (please note earlier time). Our speaker is from the Home for Good Project, which is one of the Guild projects we are supporting this year. Home for Good is a Christian charity who are passionate about finding a home for every child who needs one. They work to inspire people to think about fostering and adoption. They also equip the Church to welcome these families and help support people on their journeys. A warm welcome awaits new faces and old to this meeting. If you'd like help with transport or want further information call Fiona on 07944 196234.

From Carlops Kirk Session Tuesday 28 November 2023

Rev Dr Tony Foley convened Carlops Kirk Session. Julie Gamble attended her first meeting as a member and was warmly welcomed by the Minister and all members.

Forward Plan

Julie Gamble and Rennie McElroy presented a revised *Forward Plan*. Session members discussed it, then approved it for implementation and publication. Julie and Rennie were thanked and congratulated on their work. More information about the *Forward Plan* is in the article later in this issue.

Finance matters

Mary McElroy presented a summary budget report for the year 2023 to date. Despite some new expenditure this year (principally to fund the widely welcomed additional social events in the church), she forecast that the likely out-turn for the whole year would be sound.

Session approved Mary's proposal to install a digital giving facility. This will enable people to donate by card to Carlops Church and the charities we support, and to pay for items purchased, eg notecards, Fair Trade goods. The necessary equipment and software is expected to be installed in the first months of 2024. Mary confirmed that the system will operate alongside existing models of donating. Session welcomed the proposal.

Mary McElroy informed the Kirk Session formally of her intention to resign the role of Church Treasurer during 2024, and from 31 December 2024 at the latest. Session noted this with regret and thanked Mary for her contribution.

Safeguarding, data protection and privacy policies

Murray Campbell reported that almost all Session members have completed Presbytery's safeguarding training. He criticised the training provided and has provided feedback to organisers which may help them improve it. Session members agreed with his view; the present programme focuses almost entirely on safeguarding panels and their processes; it fails to provide useful advice about personal conduct and danger signals (of possible abuse) to those attempting to work within congregations.

Session members might undertake a "basic disclosure" process as part of our safeguarding

procedures; further information will be sought. Patsy Campbell agreed to represent Carlops Church on the linkage safeguarding panel led by Pat Graham of St Andrews Church.

Jule Gamble agreed to manage Carlops Church's data protection, data privacy and GDPR practices and to serve as our representative in this respect.

Property

Gill Gold reported that the building is in good order. Minor but essential repairs to the front door have been carried out. The new blinds on the south windows are working as expected. A Fire inspection and a quinquennial electrical inspection are due during 2024.

Eco Group

Anna Woolverton's written report included: successful soup lunches, coffee morning etc; a seminar contributed to Presbytery's conference in Jedburgh in September by a Carlops team; encouraging progress in the developing community garden in the Rock Field. Anna's report also proposed some 2024 activities and suggested a meeting of the Eco Group in January to take these forward. Session welcomed the report and looks forward to future activity.

Presbytery

Murray Campbell reported, noting that as our still-new Presbytery established itself fully, more information and funding services may become available to individual churches; he will keep Session informed. Murray also confirmed that our linkage's Presbytery-led Local Church Review is scheduled for late January 2024. The review team are planning to hold meetings in Skirling on Saturday 27 January 2024, at which they will have opportunity to meet congregation members.

Rennie McElroy

The Column



The Scrape

Perhaps on the way towards Edinburgh you've noticed the shallow water that lies in the field just north-west of the A702 at Nine Mile Burn. It's not always there, it vanishes more often than it used to, even in my short time in the area.

Waiting for the bus there, or coming slowly out on to the main road, I've had small windows to see the variety of bird life using this hangout.

Lapwings are in decline all over the country, but at the scrape you can sometimes see dozens. They wheel above it, sometimes right over the busy road. At dusk they settle in the fields around Marfield Farm, the sound, like old radios being tuned in, travelling far across the flat landscape.

Greylag geese are frequent visitors. Teal, shelduck, curlew, tufted duck, goosander, mallard of course, the odd swan, some gulls, oystercatchers and small waders too far away to identify. Imagine how many others I haven't observed.

When you see various birds thriving around this marshy pool it can be difficult to watch it slowly dry up to a cracked desert and stay like that for weeks, as it has done these past 2 summers. What of the nesting waders, are their nests abandoned? It seems so. The swallows and martins, using the pool edge to gather mud and skimming its surface for food, fly further afield. The birds have chosen this spot, so it must have many of the attributes they seek. But without the water, the nymphs, the insects the bog plants, there is no home here.

While this struggle in nature is uncomfortable to see, it's a reminder of our changing climate and the challenge of taking action to reverse the slide. We can't create a wetland in our back gardens, but we can make small changes to help nature. Anything you can do would help.

This little scrape, a hive of activity at times, is so oddly placed by the A road but that just sums up how nature will take any presented opportunity to thrive.

Julie Gamble

Diary notes



Forthcoming events

Cuppa and company, Thursday 4 January 2024, 2-4pm

Soup lunch, Wednesday 10 January 2024, 12.00-1.30pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 11 January 2024, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 18 January 2024, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 25 January 2024, 2-4pm

Coffee drop-in, Saturday 27 January 2024, 10.30am-12noon

Cuppa and company, Thursday 1 February 2024, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 8 February 2024, 2-4pm

Soup lunch, Wednesday 14 February 2024, 12.00-1.30pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 15 February 2024, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 22 February 2024, 2-4pm

Coffee drop-in, Saturday 25 February 2024, 10.30am-12noon

Cuppa and company, Thursday 29 February 2024, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 7 March 2024, 2-4pm

Soup lunch, Wednesday 13 March 2024, 12.00-1.30pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 14 March 2024, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 21 March 2024, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company, Thursday 28 March 2024, 2-4pm

Coffee drop-in, Saturday 30 March 2024, 10.30am-12noon

Contacts

Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley

Telephone 01968 660 221

Mobile 07793 294 000

Email tfoley@churchofscotland.org.uk

Church Administrator: Mark Hepworth

Telephone 01968 733 112

Email cos1560.tweed@outlook.com

Christian Aid: Mary Levison

Telephone 01968 674 566

Email marylevison@btinternet.com

Church bookings: Sheena Livingstone

Telephone 01968 661 282

Email sheena@deanfoot.onmicrosoft.com

Coffee drop-in and Cuppa & company: Mary Levison and Mary McElroy

Telephone 01968 674 566

Email marylevison@btinternet.com

Telephone 01968 661 042

Email maryhmcElroy@outlook.com

Eco Group: Anna Woolverton

Telephone 01968 660 382

Email annapye@btinternet.com

Flowers: Hilary Watt

Telephone 01899 221 100

Email hilarywatt9lf@btinternet.com

Newsletter and website: Julie Gamble

Telephone 07980 258 381

Email julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk

Session Clerk and Organist: Murray Campbell

Telephone 01968 660 530

Email d.m.campbell@ed.ac.uk

Soup lunch: Nan Buchan

Telephone 01968 678 352

Email nan.buchan@hotmail.co.uk

Sunday School: Julie Gamble

Telephone 07980 258 381

Email julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer: Mary McElroy

Telephone 01968 661 042

Email maryhmcElroy@outlook.com

Material for next issue

To Julie Gamble by Monday 22nd January 2024