

West Linton St Andrew's Parish Church

December 2025

Scottish Charity No SC003938

Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley

O come let us adore Him



Emmanuel – the oft forgotten and unwrapped gift

It is sometimes hard to remember, and very easy to forget, amongst all the shopping lists, the present wrapping, the food preparation and the over-eating, what a monumental event Christmas actually is. Christmas is '*Emmanuel - God with us*'. When we forget that well Christmas just becomes an odd, overpriced and weirdly displaced reason to indulge in maudlin sentimentality. (Has anyone ever watched the Christmas channel?)

But to Christians Christmas is a time when we remember the immensity of God entering into the littleness of human history. And why did God do that, not to critique us, not to audit our moral accounts, but to simply be *with us*! And God did this in such a counter intuitive way. In other words, he didn't do it like a god, at least not the way we think gods should act when we think of gods. The Son of God was born into a little town, among a little people, in a little nation that was of little importance especially by comparison with the great powers of the day. Now *why* did he do that?

Some people think that when God '*became a human being and lived amongst us*' JOHN 1:14 it was simply part of an emergency and forgive our sins. But the Christmas gospel tells us that God did all this to be *with us*. Even more than that, he did it to release us all into becoming what we all were always made to be. Left to ourselves we humans so easily fall into the habit of living small, shrunken, short-term lives. But the "*repair*", (or salvation, to give it its theological name), involved God coming in human flesh to live among us and to repair not just our relation to him but also our relation to ourselves.

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Jesus described his mission among us this way.

'I have come that you might have life and have in abundance'. JOHN 10

The gift of God to us at Christmas is not more stuff (or stuffing) but a gift that would allow you and I to have *'life and life more abundant'*. And this gift is wrapped up in a baby, born of Mary, whose name was *Emmanuel*, which means *God with us!*

I do hope you all have a wonderful time this Christmas unwrapping that gift.

Peace,

Tony

Advent Study

Our Advent studies this year will be based on the book by Kelly Nikondeha, ***“The First Advent in Palestine”***.

Studies will be held on **Tuesday** mornings in the **Laurel Bank Tearoom** in **Broughton**,

on **Wednesday** evenings at 7.00 pm by Zoom — the Zoom link will be available nearer the time,

and on **Thursday mornings** at **Colin’s** home, **Carradale**, Deanfoot Road, West Linton at 10.00 am. (Coffee and cake)

All studies will commence w/c 24th November.

Traditionally, when we think of that first Advent, we see that Christmas card picture of Mary and Joseph huddled by a manger in a stable, the Angel Gabriel, Wise Men, and shepherds tending their flocks, and a shining star against a night sky. But our study this year draws us into the sharp reality of life in Palestine at that time and the real darkness that had to be navigated to reach the hope that shining star announced.

We’ll take a fresh look at the Advent narratives of Luke and Matthew, to see the true story of resistance, abusive rulers and oppression, and the real economic hardship of the time. And throughout all this the author also weaves in her personal stories of her relationships with those living in Israel-Palestine. She contrasts the hope and joy of Jesus' coming with the very real struggles of the marginalised and oppressed.

Poppy Scotland

The offering at the joint Remembrance Day service with St Mungo’s raised £565.68 which has been acknowledged with thanks by Poppy Scotland. All donations received play a vital role in supporting our Armed Forces community living in Scotland.

Christmas Gifts

We are once again proposing to collect gifts and toys for distribution to those less fortunate through the Salvation Army and our local Social Services.

Gifts should be new and unwrapped and may be handed in to St Andrews Church on Saturday 13th December between 10am and noon or at the morning service on 14th December. Some wrapping paper is also appreciated.

The Salvation Army leaders indicate that there is a continuing need for our assistance and are very grateful for our participation.

Need some emergency help?

These organisations are nearby: Penicuik Food, Facts & Friends

42 John St Penicuik EH26 8AB www.foodfactsfriends.org.uk

Peeblesshire Foodbank 1 Silverbirch Studios, Cavalry Park, Peebles

EH45 9BU 07413 484174 www.peeblesshire.foodbank.org.uk

Crisis Assistance from the Minister's Barnabas Fund 07943 509906
emergencyfoodbank@standrewswestlinton.org.uk

Pastoral Group

We are a small group of people who are there to offer a listening ear in confidence. If you know of anyone who might appreciate a visit please do contact our minister The Rev Tony Foley

TFoley@churchofscotland.org.uk or

Jean Howat howatjean@gmail.com

We are not professional counsellors but rather sympathetic listeners.

Guid Blethers

Christmas Lunch

Tuesday 9th December

Details from Helen Dry

01968 660506



The next Messy Church session is on

Sunday 14 December – Messy Christmas!

The session starts at 4pm promptly 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 a song and then the children will do a range of craft activities, followed by 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

Blue Christmas Service

Date – Monday 8 December

Venue – St Mungo's Church, WL

Time 7.30 pm

Theme – Light in the Darkness

Open to - all from any/all/no denomination

Sip and Share — Fridays 2pm to 4pm

Cosy Coffee has restarted under a new name. It will now be known as Sip and Share (slightly less posh than Cake and conversation) but the idea is the same.

Entry is completely free, open to everyone (though under 16s must be accompanied by an adult), dogs welcome if well behaved.

Entry is free although donations are welcome.

Got a problem?

Parenting difficulties? Relationship issues? Work problems? Trouble at school/ college? Etc. Whatever the problem - large or small, recent or long-standing - Solution Focussed Brief Therapy can help.

Ask for an appointment at

THE OPEN GATE

Fridays 2pm to 5pm.

Anyone who wants help for their problem is welcome, and will be seen locally and in confidence by arrangement.

PHONE OR TEXT 07535 898 244

The Open Gate uses a counselling approach which is brief, effective and future-orientated, building on your own solutions. All sessions are free and confidential, with no long waiting-list.



AN EVENING OF LAUGHTER AND SONG

*In memory of
Doreen Graham MBE*

Newlands Church
Saturday 13th December
7pm

With Crescendo and The Wednesdays
Tea, coffee and mince pies • Proceeds to MSF • Tickets £10

Tickets -£10 in aid of Medecins sans
Frontieres are available from Jean Howat -
howatjean@gmail.com - or the West Linton
pharmacy.

ETHICAL CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

BUY A BED - BETHANY CHRISTIAN TRUST CAMPAIGN

Looking for an ethical Christmas present this year? Still searching and confused? Why not support Bethany Trust's Buy a Bed Campaign?

By buying a gift card, you will be helping to provide access to Bethany's Rapid Re-accommodation Welcome Centre at ELS House, Gorgie Road, Edinburgh for those who would otherwise be sleeping rough on the streets this winter. It is open until 29th April 2026.

Just £25 could save a life.

Your gift card provides:

A warm, safe, private room with en-suite facilities

24 hour care and support from professional, supportive and loving staff

Three meals a day including a freshly prepared, hot, two course dinner

A wide range of on site support services

Assistance to move rapidly out of the crisis of homelessness

There is no upper or lower limit on donations, which can be made online at the Bethany website

www.bethanychristiantrust.com

AMAZING? £25 could Save a Life.....

Robert Higgins

Sunday Club
St Andrew's Parish Church,
West Linton
Children's Nativity Service

All age nativity service
Sunday 7 Dec. 2025 at 11:30am



Children are encouraged to come dressed up as their favourite nativity character and will be able to take part if they would like to.

A warm welcome is extended to all.

The service will be very relaxed and should last about 45mins.
(Princesses and action heroes will made very welcome at the stable too.

Church Flowers

In the village the beautiful shades of the autumn colours surround us, as we enjoy an unseasonally mild spell and look forward to the crisp bright winter mornings as the days shorten.

Again, we would like to express thanks to all who continue to donate to the Flower Fund, all contributions are very much appreciated. If you would like to donate, please put 'Flower Fund' on any plain envelope which you put into the offering bag or pass on to any member of the flower team or Elder. To pay direct into the Flower Fund please use the details below:

Account Name: St Andrews Kirk Session

Sort Code: 80-09-39

Account number: 0081782

I would like to express sincere thanks to the Flower Team who ensure that the church is adorned with flowers for all to enjoy, every single day of the year. Our arranger in October was Nancy Porteous, Nancy also led the team who decorated the church for our Harvest Thanksgiving Service on 12th October. She was joined by Jill Green, Sheila Forsyth, Fiona Hessey, Kate Dykes and Cathy Hoskins. The striking autumnal colours which, bathed in sunshine through the stained-glass windows looked quite spectacular. Thanks to all who gave such encouraging feedback which was very complementary and very much appreciated. Sheila Forsyth is our November arranger and I am sure you will agree that her arrangement for the Remembrance Service was absolutely beautiful. At the beginning of December, Jill Green will arrange our flowers, with the team coming together to do the Christmas Flowers thereafter. Nancy Porteous will arrange the Advent wreath.

We are looking for volunteers to join our team of flower arrangers and would like to encourage you. You do not require any special skills, cut flowers in a vase of water can look just as beautiful as an intricate arrangement. If you like flowers and would like to join us please do get in touch.

Ann

Sunday Club

Christmas Nativity Service

On Sunday 7th December the Sunday Club are hosting the Children's Nativity Service. We will decorate the church with our nativity scenery and the Sunday Club children will be on hand to welcome everyone who would like to be part of it. Our plan is to invite the children and families from Boys Brigade, Messy Church, Baby Brunch and the Early Learners along with all children in the community, to come along to join in. We want to encourage them to come in a nativity costume or indeed any costume of their choice. Everyone is welcome, it should be a fun morning and we hope you will enjoy it too.

Christmas Party

On the afternoon of the 21st December, we will be holding our Christmas Party in the New Church Hall and plan to invite the boys from the Boys Brigade to join us.

We may be looking for some volunteers for both events so please don't hesitate to let us know if you would like to help. Additionally, if you happen to have any nativity costumes or props lurking around in your attic or cupboards, please let us know.

Thanks

Ann and Kate

FreeWill Offering Envelopes

As a registered charity, St Andrew's has for many years enjoyed free banking for normal day to day transactions. While no charges apply for electronic payments being made to or from the Church's account, the bank has recently started to charge a percentage fee when cash is lodged into the account at a bank or Post Office branch.

This will apply to the weekly cash offerings uplifted during Sunday services, including those given via FreeWill Offering (FWO) envelopes. This is perhaps an opportunity to highlight the convenience of giving your offering by monthly Standing Order instead. That way, 100% of your donation is safely received into the bank account.

It is appreciated that some people prefer having FWO envelopes to place in the offering bag during a service and it would still be possible to use these as well, for smaller or occasional payments that you might wish to make in addition to a regular Standing Order. Where Standing Order users have signed up for the Gift Aid scheme, we would encourage the use of FWO envelopes rather than loose cash for any such additional offerings, so that these too can be counted for Gift Aid recovery purposes.

If you would like details of how to set up a Standing Order, or of how to sign up for the Gift Aid scheme, or if you would like to start using FWO envelopes from 2026, then please contact the Treasurer (details on page 13).

Contacts

Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley

Telephone: 01968 660221 email: tfoley@churchofscotland.org.uk

Mobile: 07793 294000

Linkage Administrator: Kate Whalley

Office: 01968 733112 email: cos1560.tweed@outlook.com

Telephone: 07973 501665 email: kate@westlinton.com

(Most of the time Kate will be working from home therefore use the contact details immediately above)

Joint Session Clerk: Kevin Scott

Telephone: 01968 661744 email: kevin.scott@energrow.co.uk

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Telephone: 07702 984185 email: annlyon@live.co.uk

Sip and Share: Kate Whalley Telephone: 07973 501665

Guid Blethers: Helen Dry Telephone: 01968 660506

Baby Brunch: Mary Turnbull Telephone 01968 661737

Boys Brigade: Emma Lyon Telephone
Email: westlintonbb@gmail.com

December

	West Linton 11.30 am	Carlops 10.00 am	Newlands 10.00 am
7th	Steven Whalley	David Henderson-Howat	Rev Dr Tony Foley
14th	David Henderson-Howat	David Henderson-Howat	Isobel Hunter Gift Service
21st	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Steven Whalley
24th	Watchnight Service at 11.30pm	Christmas Eve Carol Service at 7.00pm	Watchnight Service at 11.30pm
25th	Christmas Day	Service at 11.00am	in St Andrew's
28th	Rev Chris Levison	Rev Chris Levison	Rev Dr Tony Foley
4/1	Colin Herd	Colin Herd	Rev David Bartholomew

Door Duties

December

K Dykes	Choir
P Graham	Main
C Herd	Gallery

January

T Hoskins	Choir
M Knott	Main
K Scott	Gallery

Readers

December

7th	Pat Graham
14th	Tony Hoskins
21st	Tony Hoskins
28th	Mary Turnbull

January

4th	Mary Turnbull
11th	Helen dry
18th	Helen Dry
25th	Elaine Robinson

Material for the October Newsletter should be submitted to the editor by Monday 29th December 2025. Please include 'Newsletter' in the subject of your email. All submissions should be in MS Word or equivalent. Please do not embed in an email. The October 2025 issue will be available by 4th January 2026.

