

West Linton St Andrew's Parish Church

February 2026

Scottish Charity No SC003938

Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley

“There is no science without fancy, and no art without facts.”

Vladimir Nabokov.

Did you know that over one third of the Old Testament is written as poetry. It seems that whenever God wants to say something important to us or wants us to think deeply about a matter, He wraps it up in the rhythms and rhymes of poetry, in metaphors and similes. The father of modern biology Charles Darwin, reflecting in later life on the danger of spending too much time in the pursuit of prosaic information warns us that failing to make time in our lives for poetry, art, and music robs us of something that we cannot obtain by any other means.

“My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but ...if I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week; for perhaps then those parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character.” CHARLES DARWIN

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I don't like poems.

*I don't like poems,
knotty worded poems
encasing parcels of wisdom*

*I don't like poems,
poems loaded with hard heavy words,
vein rich with the ore of insight.*

*I don't like poems with sharp words
that pierce my carefully constructed
Self, defences.*

*I don't like poems
I need them.*

Do yourself some good this week, sit with a poem, a piece of music, or art long enough to hear its voice and to feel its heart. You just might be surprised at how much good it will do you and your brain. Who knows you might even hear the prompting of God.

Peace,

Tony

Lent Study

Our group studies for Lent this Year will be based on the book *Life Attitudes*. This is a 5-session course on the Beatitudes by Robert Warren and Sue Mayfield.

Details have still to be confirmed but it is likely that the studies will commence week commencing 23rd February. We expect that there will be a morning 'in person' group in Broughton and an evening group on Zoom. Watch the weekly News for the final details.

West Linton Kirk Session

The Kirk Session will meet on Tuesday 10th February in the Old Church Hall.

Newlands Pudding Night

Newlands are holding their annual **Pudding Night on Friday 6th February in Newlands Church at 6.30pm.**

There will be soup to start and everyone brings a pudding to share.

Tickets are £5 and there will also be a raffle in aid of Oxfam.

To book your place contact Jean Howat howatjean@gmail.com or phone 07544 785159.

Blythwood Shoe Box Appeal

Extract from letter of thanks from Blythwood Administration Team

Who do you share your shoes with? Do you wear them one day and someone else wears them the next day? Do you take turns morning and afternoon?

We delivered your gift-filled boxes to one family in Kosovo and discovered the boys took turns at wearing their one pair of shoes. The one who didn't have shoes was barefoot and was glad to find socks in the box. The toddler in the family had nothing from the waist down. New underpants in the box were put to good use very quickly.

Another family had a foam mattress blocking the space where an outside door should be. It kept some cold out but didn't stop rats coming in. Dad was in prison and mum had no money to buy Christmas presents. Imagine how much your gifts meant to them.....

We could have given away more. There are never enough but our partners know their communities and make sure your boxes go to the people most in need. They couldn't do it without your contribution.

The people who give out shoeboxes asked us to thank you. And we know the children and adults who received a box all to themselves want us to thank you too.

West Linton Churches Bethany Care Van Team

Update and Thank You

With a heavy heart, I recently made the decision to step down at the end of last year as co-ordinator of the West Linton Churches Bethany Care van team - a position I had occupied since 2018. My wife Sheila and I have had an even longer association with Bethany Trust going back over 20 years, driving and serving on the van and making soup.

At a well attended meeting in October in the Old church hall, it was clear that the team wanted to continue supporting the Care van in 2026 and honour our regular commitment to Bethany's rota (third Sunday evening each month). To our delight, Peter Woodfield from St. Mungo's volunteered to take over my role from 1st January – much to the relief of all present! Most of my duties have now been redistributed to other team members so we're all hoping for a smooth transition under the new regime – many prayers said..... and fingers crossed?

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of you at St. Andrews for the interest, encouragement and equally importantly financial support during my tenure. Tony Foley has used the Minister's fund twice to bail us out when finances were at a particularly low ebb. More recently, the Christmas Day service leaving collection raised £409, a very generous and totally unexpected windfall. Every effort is made to keep our running costs to a minimum but essential items have to be regularly purchased including milk, tea, coffee, sugar, toiletries and new underwear. Be assured, every penny received is well spent for the direct benefit of our clientele.

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Unfortunately there will always be homeless people on the streets in desperate circumstances needing support especially in these harsh economic times - there but for the Grace of God go I? Free provision of hot drinks, home made soup, rolls and delicious home baking help warm recipients stomachs (and their hearts?) throughout the year but particularly on freezing Edinburgh winter evenings. A wide range of secondhand clothing is procured from charity shops (including the Knot) to keep them warm overnight, especially coats, gloves, scarves and hats, backed up with sleeping bags and blankets. Tony Foley has enthusiastically made the manse garage available to sort and store suitable clothing which has been a great blessing. Don't underestimate the value of team members taking the time to chat whilst serving our customers – it might be the only conversation they will have all day – they appreciate being treated sympathetically as real individuals with interesting tales to tell. Some are recent immigrants, a vulnerable group who are unfairly getting bad publicity in the media and need to be made welcome in their new country.

At present we have around 25 active members in the group. Three volunteers go out each month on the van, two as servers plus a driver who must be under 70 years of age to comply with Bethany's insurance provider. Others feel more comfortable staying at home to make soup, butter rolls and bake – it is a whole team approach.

If after reading this article, you think you may be interested in joining the group, please feel free to make further enquires either with me (tel 01968 660629) – or alternatively contact Peter Woodfield directly by phone 07747 023108 or email pawoodifield@gmail.com

Robert Higgins

Christmas Offering

Robert Higgins has asked to pass on his sincere thanks to the Kirk Session for choosing the West Linton churches' Bethany Care van team as recipients for the retiring offerings at the Watchnight and Christmas Day services at St. Andrew's church. The amazing sum £409 was very welcome but completely unexpected. It will make a huge difference to the viability and quality of the service we provide for the homeless during 2026.

Separately, Robert has decided to step down as coordinator of the West Linton Care Van team and we wish to record our thanks and appreciation to Robert for his many years of dedicated service in this important role. We are also pleased to welcome Peter Woodfield of St Mungo's church as the incoming coordinator. The Care Van team extends to over 30 people across St Andrew's and St Mungo's who help in a range of different ways, from providing soup, rolls or home baking to being on the team which goes out on the monthly Sunday evening outing on the streets of Edinburgh, whether by serving clients or driving the van. New volunteers are always welcome and if you would like to become involved then please either speak to Robert or get in touch with Peter at pawoodfield@gmail.com

Michael Knott

Sunday Club

Sunday Club dates are as follows

Sunday 1st February

Sunday 1st March

On Sunday 5th April there will be no Sunday Club because of school holidays, however as it happens to be Easter Sunday that day all our families will be invited to the Easter Service and our Easter Egg Hunt in church that morning.

Ann and Kate

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

Guid Blethers

11th February

Illustrations –Niamh Shaw

25th February

Scottish Country Dancing

Margie Stevenson

In the Old Church Hall from 2.00pm to 4.00pm

Followed by Tea, Coffee and Cake

Suggested weekly donation £1.00

All welcome

For further information contact **Helen Dry**



The next Messy Church session is on

Sunday 8th February

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.

For more information contact Jean Howat howatjean@gmail.com

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.

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.

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.

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

Joint Session Clerk: Steven Whalley

Telephone: 07525 378187 email: stevenwhalley.westlinton@gmail.com

Treasurer: Michael Knott

Telephone: 01968 660977 email: michael.knott@talk21.com

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Sunday Club: Kate Whalley, Ann Lyon

Telephone: 07973 501665 01968 661347

Flowers: Ann Lyon

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

February

	West Linton 11.30 am	Carlops 10.00 am	Newlands 10.00 am
1st	Rev Tony Foley	Rev Tony Foley	Julian Birchall
8th	Parsy Campbell	Patsy Campbell	Rev Dr Tony Fpley
15th	Murray Campbell	Murray Campbell	David Her=nderson-Howat
22nd	Rev Dr Tony Fpley Communion	Rev Dr Tony Fpley Communion	Colin Herd
1/3	Steven Whalley	Steven Whalley	Rev Dr Tony Fpley

Door Duties

February

K Dykes	Choir
P Graham	Main
C Herd	Gallery

March

A Lyon	Choir
K Scott	Main
C Greenhow	Gallery

Readers

February

1st Elaine Robinson
 8th Robert Higgins
 15th Robert Higgins
 22nd Christine Leith

March

1st Christine Leith
 8th Jean Macnab
 15th Jean MacNab
 22nd Kevin Scott
 29th Kevin Scott

Material for the March Newsletter should be submitted to the editor by Monday 23rd February 2026. 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 March 2026 issue will be available by 1st March 2026.