

West Linton St Andrew's Parish Church

July/August 2024

Scottish Charity No SC003938

Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley

Finding Prophets among the Paperbacks

If you are wanting something to read this summer do yourself a favour and read Lionel Shriver's latest novel *Mania*. Shriver sets her story in an alternative 21st century. The main character, Pearson Converse, is wrestling with the 'latest' major political dogma of her time. And in doing so, she's in danger of losing her best friend; ends up having tense arguments with her husband; is summoned to the dean's office at the University where she teaches; and receives a threatening visit from Child Protection Services. The plot of the story is focused on the last crusade for social justice which isn't racism, or gender equity but "*cognitive discrimination*."

The Mental Parity (MP) movement inspired by the best-selling *The Calumny of IQ: Why Discrimination Against "Dumb People" is the Last Great Civil Rights Fight*, has begun its blitzkrieg through educational institutions. It's no longer permissible to speak about, or even to acknowledge, differences of intelligence. "Smart," "stupid," "dumb," and all similar evaluative terms are placed on the MP Index of forbidden words. The Child Protection Services visit Pearson's home because her youngest child, Lucy, reports to a teacher that her mother uses these insulting words at home.

Smart books and smart movies are censored, because they assume cognitive disparities and make some people feel inferior. Dumb movies—*Dumb and Dumber*, for instance—are preceded by a "warning about offensive representations of cognitive inferiority." *The Simpsons* gets cancelled because of the double transgression of portraying an idiot (Homer) and a genius (Lisa).

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In a society where intelligence gets flattened, everything else does too. No one can admit there's such a thing as "being good at." Pearson's daughter Zanzibar is too good an actor to be cast in school plays, and the orchestra director stops her when she plays a stunning Bach melody on her flute. Pearson's tree-surgeon husband, Wade, tries to keep his head down, hoping MP will never touch him, until he's forced to hire an incompetent employee and keep him on the payroll for fear of a cognitive discrimination lawsuit, a decision that leads to disaster. With the American food system and auto industry staffed with dumb people who aren't allowed to be trained, American food becomes toxic and American cars explode on the highway.

Sudoku, crosswords, and all other puzzle games are quietly dropped from newspapers because of how they make the '*cognitively different*' feel inadequate. Pearson's teaching is hamstrung because telling students something they don't know already comes with the forbidden implication that they were ignorant before they learned it. Schools have given up on testing and grading.

Mania is a great piece of satire that pokes fun at contemporary not unlike our own society and of where that society might be headed. It all makes for an interesting and compelling read. In one remarkable passage Shriver lets her characters reflect on the energies of radicalism:

'Radical movements keep ratcheting up their demands because nothing enervates a cause more than success. Crusaders resent having their purpose stolen out from under them by the fulfilment of their quest; reaching the promised land leaves seekers bereft. There's little to do in a utopian oasis but sip coconut water. So, the journey must never be completed. The goal must remain out of reach. To preserve the perfect impossibility of getting there, the desired end point becomes ever more extreme.'

Shriver's humorous tale makes a serious point, like all good authors she may prove to be less of a satirist and more of a prophet.

Peace,

Tony

Kirk Session Report

A Kirk Session meeting was held on Tuesday 25th June 2024.

It was a very full agenda, but the summary is:

Steven Whalley has been appointed as co-Session Clerk and will work closely with Kevin.

Dr Foley outlined the thinking of an event for all the linkage congregations to be held in September/October. More details will follow.

Ann Lyon summarised the great things that have been happening in Sunday Club, including the Easter Egg hunt, and the bunting that was made during the Whipman service which was shown to those who attended as they had coffee after the service. The Club now has 15 members,

A property report including confirmation that the work on the outside of the Church had been completed and that there was new flooring in the New Church Hall and in the Church vestry.

Michael Knott presented the accounts, which had previously been reviewed and approved by the independent examiner, Jean Macnab, and he answered questions arising. It was noted that a shortfall of £5,000 had arisen over the year, and also that the costs of the external work on the Church roof and walls during the period from October 2023 would fall to be met in the 2024 financial year. It was therefore anticipated that the 2024 accounts would also be likely to show a shortfall. The Kirk Session approved the accounts, which would then be presented to the congregation at the Stated Annual Meeting.'

There was an update on the newsletter following the exercise to reduce printing cost by distributing via e-mail. There are 85 names on the e-mail distribution list.

There was an update on safeguarding including a reminder of the training that needs to be undertaken.

There was an update on Boys Brigade and the Kirk Session expressed it's thanks to Emma Lyon for taking on a leadership role.

There was a summary of monies paid out since the last Kirk Session by the Kenneth Paul Trust.

There was a discussion on reporting and other activity needed to be undertaken on the Manse. Michael Knott agreed to take on the manse convener position on a temporary basis and would progress the manse condition schedule which is now due.

Report on St Andrew's Stated Annual Meeting

The Stated Annual meeting was held after the service on Sunday (30th June).

Dr Foley welcomed everyone and confirmed Steven Whalley had been appointed co-Session Clerk and that he will work closely with Kevin Scott.

Michael Knott presented the congregational accounts for 2023 - a separate report on this is included elsewhere in this newsletter - and thanks were expressed to Mrs Jean Macnab for acting as independent examiner of the accounts

Steven Whalley, on behalf of the Property Committee, described all the work on property including the work on the outside of the Church.

Ann Lyon reported on Sunday Club, which is now 2 years old, and thanked the Congregation for their welcoming and supportive approach.

Kevin Scott then gave a comprehensive report on all the Church activities with the theme that we do new things as part of God's work. He thanked the many people involved in God's work in the Church, especially the new team of leaders at Boys Brigade and he also celebrated the 10 years of Baby Brunch. He highlighted importance of the choir to our Church life and worship and thanked those organists who play for us each Sunday. Kevin closed by reflecting on the Whipman Service this year, held in the marquee on the Lower Green, noting the profound and powerful message which had been made to our community that we were happy to move outwith our four walls and to share our faith with them in their place of community in the Whipman Marquee.

Dr Foley closed the meeting leading us in prayer.

If you want any further information, please speak to your Elder.

Finance Report for 2023

The congregational accounts for 2023 were presented at the Stated Annual Meeting.

There was a shortfall for the year of just over £5,000. Overall income was up by around 5% after adjusting for two exceptional items in the previous year, these being the grant received for purchase and installation of the cameras in the Church and the recovery of manse rent from 121. Income from offerings and Gift Aid recovery was steady, with an increase in receipts from both bank interest and hall rental payments.

Expenses were at a similar level to 2022, after adjusting for the exceptional item for purchase of the camera equipment following receipt of the grant payment. Key expense items in 2023 were for St Andrew's contribution to the cost of ministry and for property repair and maintenance. The latter again reflects an element of catching up on necessary work which had been delayed during lockdown. Importantly though, the invoice for the external work to the Church roof and walls is due to be paid shortly and will therefore feature in the 2024 accounts. While the cost of £14,000 (or £11,500 after anticipated VAT recovery as the Church is a listed building) is in line with the initial estimate, it is fortunate that initial fears of much higher costs have proved to be unfounded.

The shortfall for 2023 has the effect of reducing the Church's reserves by £5,000. It also appears likely that the above property costs incurred this year will contribute to a further shortfall, and hence a further call on our reserves, when the 2024 accounts are available. It was also noted that the renewal terms for the Church of Scotland Energy Scheme will see a significant increase in electricity costs this year.

It therefore remains important that costs are carefully managed and income is maintained, or increased, where possible. The higher cost of living has increased the Church's costs generally, as it has for all of us, so please keep in mind whether you might be able to review your giving at this time. Gift Aid provides a valuable boost to the Church's income and taxpayers who have not already done so are encouraged to consider

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completing a Gift Aid declaration in conjunction with giving by Standing Order or Free Will Offering envelopes – I will be happy to provide more details on request – contact details on page 11.

Michael Knott, Treasurer

The Open Gate

Just a reminder that The Open Gate is still available to offer an appointment to anyone of any age who could do with a little bit of counselling. This uses a Brief Solution Focussed Therapy (BFST) approach which is pleasant and helpful for all sorts of problems- often after only 1 session.

Phone 07535 898 244 to ask for an appointment in Newlands Centre on Friday afternoons 2-5pm.

This is confidential and free.

Thanks

Lesley Johnstone would like to thank everyone who sent her the many cards, flowers and good wishes during her recent stay in

Congratulations

We sent our congratulations to Jack and Ivy Stafford who celebrated their 73rd Wedding Anniversary on 23rd June.

Community Cosy Coffee Afternoon

The café will be closed in July reopening on Friday 16th August



Following a little break, we were delighted to welcome a group of local boys back to Boys Brigade in May. We held three really successful sessions with around 10 boys attending – some coming back, others who were new to Boys Brigade. We're a new leadership team, so what we lack in BB experience, we make up for with enthusiasm! We offered these sessions to under-11s, so included programme activities suitable for both Anchor and Junior Sections. The boys gave us "thumbs up" feedback, which was a great encouragement as we look ahead to a new term starting in September.

We're very grateful for the strong foundation that Neil and Margaret Wolfenden have handed over to us to build on; and for setting up that new unit more than 10 years ago bringing Boys Brigade to West Linton. We look forward to continuing their good work and offering opportunities to local boys through Boys Brigade.

We'd also like to thank the Elders and Congregation of St Andrews for their support and encouragement. Over the next year we hope to strengthen the link between our church and our Boys Brigade.

Emma, Jo and Gillian

West Linton Boys Brigade Leadership Team

westlintonbb@gmail.com



Do you find staying busy and active harder than it used to be? With a little support from one of our volunteers, you could join one of our social groups. Sometimes, that can make all the difference when it comes to staying healthy and independent.

What we do depends very much on your needs and wishes. Our centres connect you to our local communities, there are opportunities to find new and old friends and is a place to share a meal and a good giggle.

WHERE: West Linton Village Centre, EH46 7ED

WHEN: Thursday

TIME: 10:00 - 14:00

TO FIND OUT MORE CONTACT: 01896 75 44 81 / 07773123 765

Royal Voluntary Service is a national charity that supports hospitals and communities through the gift of voluntary service. To find out more about the work we do or to volunteer, visit royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk

Royal Voluntary Service is a registered charity 1015988 (England and Wales) & SC038924 (Scotland). C53575_1122

Celebration of Paintings

From the 26th of July until the 9th of August **Mary Scott** will be putting on a “Celebration of Paintings” featuring paintings from six decades of her life.

This will take place in the Old Church Hall from 10.00 am until 5.00 pm each day.

As this event is in support of the charity Mary’s Meals, there will be paintings and prints for sale. There will be an opportunity each day from 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm for a £5.00 donation to enjoy tea and cake and a chance to meet the artist.

Mary’s Meals is a Scottish charity which provided a daily meal for school children in many countries ensuring children who would otherwise be hungry are able to attend school with a full tummy.

Thanks to St Andrew’s Church for allowing the use of the hall for this event.

Property Matters

If you are walking past the Church on Main Street, you may have noticed the unsightly dark patch is no longer visible on the Church Wall.

In fact, you may have noticed that all the walls of the Church have now been painted and they are looking good.

There has been more than just painting that has happened. The harling was patched where it had come away from the walls. Also, a special sealant has been applied to the copestones at the top of the Church which, we hope, will stop the water leaking into the Church.

When the work started in October last year it was scheduled to last for two weeks. But the weather conditions have meant it was only finally finished in June.

Our thanks goes to the company who undertook the work.

We hope the look of the Church allows you to enjoy walking around West Linton just a little bit more.

Property Committee.

Church Flowers

Thank you to all who continue to donate to the Flower Fund which provides the beautiful flowers both in church and for distribution to people in our community. The recipients of church flowers continue to express their appreciation. Here are a few of the excerpts from the many cards and messages we receive from people;

“I just wanted to say thank you for the lovely plant”

“Please convey my thanks to all at St Andrews for this thoughtful gift”

“Thank you so much for my flowers, what a lovely surprise”

“I am writing to extend my thanks for the beautiful flowers, such kind and meaningful gestures of community and pastoral support”

Sincere thanks to Jill Green and Lillian Slater who arranged the flowers in May; and to Kate Dykes our arranger in June. Thanks also to Anne McDiarmid, Helen Bruce and Marion Moore for distributing flowers to people in the community and to Colin Whitmore who designs and produces the beautiful bespoke cards to accompany these flowers.

The flower arranger in July will be Fiona Hessey and in August, it will be Jill Green.

Have a lovely summer everyone and enjoy the beautiful flowers you see on your travels.

Thanks

Ann

Contacts

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Telephone: 07973 501665 email: kate@westlinton.com

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

Session Clerk: Kevin Scott

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

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Telephone: 07973 501665 01968 661347

Flowers: Ann Lyon

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

Cosy Café: **Kate Whalley** Telephone: 07973 501665

Guid Blethers: **Helen Dry** Telephone: 01968 660506

Baby Brunch: **Mary Turnbull** Telephone 01968 661737

Sunday Club

**On the first Sunday of each month during School Term Time
for children in P1 to P7**

And pre-school children by arrangement

Contact Kate Whalley or Ann Lyon

07973 501665 or 07702 984185

Services July/August

	West Linton 11.30 am	Carlops 10.00 am	Newlands 10.00 am
7/7	Fiona Burnett	Fiona Burnett	Isobel Hunter
14/7	Isobel Hunter	Isobel Hunter	Peter Worthington
21/7	Peter Worthington	Peter Worthington	Rev Dr Tony Foley
28/7	Steven Whalley	Patsy Campbell	Isobel Hunter
4/8	TBC		
11/8			
18/8			
25/8			

Door Duties

July

Daryll Green	Choir
Michael Knott £	Main
Helen Bruce	Gallery

August

Ann Lyon £	Choir
Steven Whalley	Main
Kate Dykes	Gallery

September

Tony Hoskins	Choir
Pat Graham £	Main
Marion Moore	Gallery

Readers

July 7th Neil Calvert

14th Morag Kerr

21st Morag Kerr

28th Daryll Green

Aug 4th Daryll Green

11th Colin Herd

18th Colin Herd

25th Mary Turnbull

Sept 1st Mary Turnbull

8th Michael Knott

15th Michael Knott

22nd Kevin Scott

29th Kevin Scott

Material for the September Newsletter should be submitted to the editor by Monday 12th August 2024. Please include 'Newsletter' in the subject of your email.

The September 2024 issue will be available by 18th August 2024