

West Linton St Andrew's Parish Church

May 2024

Scottish Charity No SC003938

Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley

‘Whatabouterism’

In 2013, the then future Prime Minister of the UK, Boris Johnson wrote an article, describing what he called “*dead cat*” strategy politics. Or what I have termed ‘*whatabouterism*’. Imagine for a moment a family heatedly engaged in some hoary familial argument. When, in walks granddad and slams a mangy and very dead cat on the table. In that moment, the argument is forgotten. The dead cat is all the family is talking about. Johnson’s somewhat cynical point was that if you present the public with an outrageous, ridiculous, and scandalous piece of news, they completely forget about the much more pertinent issue that needs their attention. It is a tactic political media strategists and spin doctors seek to use almost every day — it’s when they shout “*Oh, look over there!*” - ‘*What about that!*’ This insipient form of ‘*Whatabouterism*’ is the plague of our time. It is the stuff that Social Media and our 24/7 news media thrives on.

In 1990, the Nobel Prize winner and Pulitzer Prize Saul Bellow gave a lecture at Oxford University titled “***The Distracted Public.***” In his talk, Bellow lamented what he called the looming “moronic inferno” that was being fuelled by our contemporary addiction to distraction, which if left unchecked would one day become, “the apocalypse of our times.” He called on artists and writers everywhere to raise their voices and use their talents to counter this

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“massive and worldwide hostile condition” that is besetting humanity.

C.S. Lewis struck a similar note in a sermon he preached during the Second World War speaking to what he called the ‘The task of our times,’ counselled his listeners: *“Never, in peace or war, commit your virtue or your happiness to the future. Happy work is best done by the person who takes their long-term plans somewhat lightly... The present is the only time in which any duty can be done, or any grace received.”*

The ‘*Whatabouterism*,’ of popular media that is constantly trying to invade our daily lives is emotionally akin to finding ourselves out at sea caught in the thrall of never ending squalls. Perhaps that is what Jesus was trying to warn us about when he counselled us to: *‘Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.’* MATTHEW 6:34

Peace,

Tony

Whipman Service - Sunday 2nd June at 11.00 am

Join us on Sunday 2nd of June in the Marquee on the Lower Green at 11:00 am for the joint (St Andrew's and St Mungo's) Whipman Service to celebrate the installation of Tanny and Jill.

The service will be led by Rev Dr Tony Foley and Rev Nick Bowry, with contributions from members of both congregations. All are welcome. Please come and join us to give thanks to God for our 2024 Whipman and Lass, for our village and for our community and its traditions.

Messy Church Picnic

We will be holding a **Summer Picnic** on **Sunday 19 May at 3pm** in the garden of **St Mungo's Church, West Linton**.



Families are warmly welcome and please bring your own picnic or food to share and a rug or chairs and come and join the fun! (All children must be accompanied by an adult)

For more information contact Jean Howat: howatjean@gmail.com

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.

From Sheila Black

Dear all

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the lovely Easter card & flowers which you gave me. It was really appreciated to know you were all thinking of me and also nice to see Marion Moore who brought them down to me. I hope that you all had a lovely Easter and many thanks once again.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Black

Sunday Club

Thanks to everyone for helping to make our first Sunday Club - Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday such an enjoyable occasion. It was a very happy morning, and joyful to see so many families joining us. We are hugely encouraged by the positive feedback from everyone.

On Sunday 5th May and Sunday 2nd June the children will continue to hear about Moses and we will then break for the summer, resuming on Sunday 1st September.

Thanks to you all for your continued support of us in what we are doing with the children and for welcoming them and their families.

Ann and Kate

Sunday Club

**On the first Sunday of each month
for children in P1 to P5**

**Contact Kate Whalley or Ann Lyon
07973 501665 or 07973 501665**

Church Flowers

Thank you to all who continue to donate to the Flower Fund which provides the flowers for our beautiful church, without your generosity we could not do what we do.

If you would like to donate to the Flower Fund, please use the details below:

Account Name: St Andrews Kirk Session

Sort Code: 80-09-39

Account number: 00817827

It would be helpful if you could add 'Flower Fund' to your donation and if you are a taxpayer please consider to 'Gift Aid' your donation. If you have any questions, or would like further information, please email treasurer@standrews-westlinton.org or call 660977 or write to Michael Knott, 9 Tarfhaugh Brae, West Linton EH46 7DP.

Sincere thanks to all the members of the Flower Team who arrange the flowers every week in church, with Nancy Porteous, Sheila Forsyth and Chris Whittemore arranging the flowers in March and April. A special mention to Nancy and Sheila who along with Kate Dykes did the stunning Easter flowers this year.

The amazing team who distribute flowers to people in our community have delivered flowers on over 70 occasions in the past year. Many thanks to Anne McDiarmid, Helen Bruce and Marion Moore for the time they spend undertaking this worthwhile and very much appreciated outreach. Also to Colin Whittemore who designs and produces the bespoke cards which accompany every bunch of flowers.

Arrangers: May Ann Lyon/Lillian Slater
 June Kate Dykes.

Thanks, **Ann**

DONATIONS TO SELL NEEDED

**CHRISTIAN AID
CAR BOOT SALE**

**SKIRLING
VILLAGE
GREEN**

**SUNDAY
12 MAY**

**1:30 -
4:30 PM
VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**



**HELP WITH THE TEAS, HELPING IN THE KITCHEN,
SERVING TEAS , BAKING FOR THE TEAS**

MANNING THE CHRISTIAN AID STALL

GENERAL ASSISTANCE IN SET UP & TAKE DOWN



West Tweeddale Web Site

This is the QR code for the West Tweeddale Churches Web Site. Simply scan with your phone to access the site for all the information on current events.



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 12-18th May 2024

Donations

Ideally, donate on line at www.christianaid.org.uk

Your money goes direct to CA with no hidden deductions reducing its value.

If you still prefer to use the traditional CA envelope, these will be available to pick up from the church at Sunday services in May – return either to Robert Higgins or place in a plain envelope labelled “FREEPOST Christian Aid” and post.

CA Service St. Andrew’s church, Sunday 12th May 1130am. Peter Worthington will lead the service. Slides will be shown telling the story of Aline who lives in Burundi. She was abused, homeless and hungry, poverty had pushed her to the brink of survival. CA funded her in a small business training course and she has now rebuilt her life and has hope for her children’s future.

CA Cryptic Quiz

The theme this year is animal/creature names. Printed quiz sheets can be picked up from the church (optional discretionary donation). Alternatively, an electronic version is available from Robert Higgins higfam72@gmail.com. Answers by request (but not yet!) if you get stuck.

Carlops Church Events

Soup lunch Wednesday 8th May noon-130pm

Coffee drop-in Saturday 25th May 1030am-noon

SKIRLING CAR BOOT SALE Sunday 12th May

See poster for full details. Please support this traditional fund raiser.

Robert Higgins, CA Chair tel: 01968 660629

Unity - Acts 4:32-35

This short passage from Acts is all about unity, about being united in God's purpose, about being together, and the blessing and power there is in that unity.

What does unity say to me and about my life, and in particular my life as a follower of Christ? For me there's a hierarchy where unity is fundamental. This hierarchy starts, foundationally, with my relationship with Jesus. Am I united with Christ? Am I as united with Christ as I could be or as I should be? Or am I just comfortable with the idea that Jesus walks with me each step of each day. Walking in that knowledge and confidence is a wonderful thing but how much more is there if I'm united with Christ?

And then there's wider unity in relationships, are we united with husband, with wife. As individuals we are selfish, we look to ourselves, to the things that we feel we need to do individually, but as husband and wife we need to look to each other first, and then look to the other things we feel are important. Then there is unity with family, which is not always easy, unity with friends, unity with work colleagues. Some of these aren't easy at all, but where there's unity there is strength, there is power and there is blessing.

And how are we doing as Church? As Church are we united in Christ? Do we carry that unity with us in power within our own Church community, across our Linkage and out to the wider local community around us?

In this passage from Acts the believers were completely united (Acts 4:32a). All the believers were of one heart and mind. Being of "One heart and mind" is a comprehensive unity. There was both a spiritual unity and a unity of commitment to the shared purpose of the believers. There was only one agenda and it was God's agenda. There weren't different sub-groups of the believers off pursuing their own agendas. They were completely united.

The believers shared generously with one another (Acts 4:32b). There was a voluntary desire to meet the needs of others. The believers weren't forced or coerced to give anything. People wanted to give because they didn't want anyone to be without.

The apostles stayed focussed on their mission (Acts 4:33). They continued

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to share the message of the gospel proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This was the thing that society around them commanded them not to do, but they did it anyway. They were united with Christ! The apostles could not be diverted because they were all united and together they were all united in Christ. Their path was not without risk but they walked in a power that they could not turn from.

So where are we now? Where is our unity? Where is our focus as individual followers of Christ, as congregations of followers of Christ, as Church? If the church as a whole is as divided as the world why would anyone believe that Jesus came from God to save the world?

I come back to where I started. Am I as united with Christ as I could and should be? Is Jesus at the centre of my life? Because that should be my true foundation, my one foundation. That is the foundation from which unity with my personal community will flow, unity with my wife, unity with family and friends, unity within my Church community, unity at work and within my wider community. It is only from this foundation of unity in and with Christ that the fullness of God's grace, power and blessing will flow from me and from us.

Christian unity is a unity of heart and soul, a unity which leads people to work together in harmony, seeking God's will and not their own. This unity is encapsulated in Jesus' prayer for all his disciples, past and present, from John 17:20-23.

"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one, as you are in me Father and I am in you.

And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

"I have given them the glory you gave me so they may be one as we are one.

I am in them and you are in me.

May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me."

Kevin

Guid Blethers
May 8th
Topic to be confirmed
May 22nd
Picnic at Baddingsgill

Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from **2.00 pm to 3.30 pm**. Following a talk on an interesting subject or an activity (non strenuous!) we enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and some wonderful tasty nibbles. **Helen Dry 660506**

Baby Brunch
every Friday during term-time
10.00 to 11.30am In the Old Church Hall
For parents, grandparents and carers with
young children

Community Cosy Coffee Afternoon

Our hours are 2pm to 4pm on Fridays, at the Old Church Hall. Come along for a chat, cuppa, company and cake! Everyone very welcome, although under 16s need to be accompanied by an adult. Free of charge although donations welcome but not expected. More information from **Kate Whalley**.

Services May			
	West Linton 11.30 am	Carlops 10.00 am	Newlands 10.00 am
5th	Kevin Scott	Patsy Campbell	Rev Dr Tony Foley
12th	Peter Worthington	Peter Worthington	Mary McElroy
19th	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Rev Dr Tony Foley	David Henderson-Howat
26th	Steven Whalley	Steven Whalley	Rev Dr Tony Foley
2/6	Rev Dr Tony Foley with Rev Nick Bowry Whipman Service In the Marquee at 11.00 am	Rev Chris Levison	Fiona Burnett

Door Duties			
May		June	
Tony Hoskins	Choir	Colin Herd £	Choir
Helen Bruce £	Main	Mary Turnbull	Main
Pat Graham	Gallery	Kevin Scott	Gallery

Readers		Readers	
May		June	
5th	Sheila Black	2nd	Pat Graham
12th	Sheila Black	9th	Pat Graham
19th	Robert Higgins	16th	Tony Hoskins
26th	Robert Higgins	23rd	Tony Hoskins
		30th	Neil Calvert

Material for the June Newsletter should be submitted to the editor by Sunday 19th May 2024. Please include 'Newsletter' in the subject of your email.

The June 2024 issue will be available by 26th May 2024.

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