

# Carlops Parish Church

[www.carlopschurch.org](http://www.carlopschurch.org)



## NEWSLETTER

**Volume 15, Number 4 April 2021**

In-church services remain suspended owing to Coronavirus  
Contact [sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org](mailto:sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org) for a link to Carlops' Zoom services

### Zoom Services, April 2021

28 March 10am	Colin Herd <i>Palm Sunday</i>
1 April 7.30pm	Rev Nancy Norman <i>Linkage communion</i>
2 April 8pm	Rev Nancy Norman <i>Good Friday service</i>
4 April 10am	Rev Nancy Norman <i>Easter</i>
11 April 10am	Dr Patsy Campbell
18 April 10am	Mrs Mary McElroy
25 April 10am	Miss Sheena Livingstone

## **From our new Interim Moderator**

*I wrote to our new Interim Moderator Calum Macdougall a whole 15 hours after his appointment was confirmed. I asked him for a "Hello" piece for the Newsletter and had the nerve to tell him that the copy date was 48 hours away. I received his generous response within six hours. May the first Carlops thank you to Calum be from me!*  
*Rennie McElroy Editor*

I retired in September 2019, having been minister at Eddleston with Peebles: Old for just over 18 years. Now that Presbytery has agreed to extend our linking to include the three remaining parishes of Upper Tweeddale, and has granted permission to call a minister, I feel privileged to have been asked to be Interim Moderator. I look forward to working with the elders and office bearers of all six congregations, together, of course, with the Nominating Committee once it has been elected. I firmly believe that our new linking has a bright future with its new ministry.

Calum Macdougall

## **New linkage approved**

Presbytery gave final approval on 23 March 2021 to the new linkage of Carlops, Kirkurd & Newlands, West Linton St Andrew's, Broughton Glenholm and Kilbucho, Skirling, and Tweedsmuir. The new linkage was formally established from the same date and may be referred to as West Tweeddale.

The linkage has permission to seek a new minister. Work to that end will begin soon. Presbytery has agreed that the vacancy committee should consist of two people from each of the six congregations, plus one additional member from St Andrew's West Linton, to reflect its greater size. The committee will be chaired by the Interim Moderator.

The Session Clerks will meet via Zoom soon to discuss how to move all forward. We wish them well in their discussions in our service.

## **Interim Moderators**

We welcome Rev Calum Macdougall as Interim Moderator of our new linkage. Calum was formerly minister at Eddleston with Peebles Old, and more recently, Interim Moderator to the parishes of Upper Tweeddale, our new linkage partners. Many will know Calum through his support for eco-congregation activities, especially via the Esk and Tweed circle.

Welcome to Carlops, Calum. We hope your time and work with us are happy and satisfying.

We say goodbye to former Interim Moderator Rev Malcom Jefferson, who has guided us with a sure and friendly touch since last autumn. Thank you, Malcolm, for your service to us. We wish you well in all that you do.

## **Happy Easter**

Easter events will be Zoomed again this year, but the season still provides ample reason for celebration. Our Easter services are listed on the front page of this issue and we extend a warm invitation to everyone to join us on-screen to reflect on Easter, and to see friends and chat!

## **Re-opening Carlops Church**

Session is taking advantage of the gradual relaxation of lockdown regulations and seeking permission to re-open Carlops Church.

Zoom services will continue as the norm until further notice, but occasional worship gatherings in the church, akin to those held in Advent, may be arranged as spring and summer progress.

Having permission to re-open also means that the church building becomes available to groups who wish to use it under virus-controlling conditions.

## **Congregational meeting**

The congregation met via Zoom after morning service on Sunday 21 March 2021. This was not a formal Stated Annual Meeting, because the Church of Scotland has no provision for such events to be held via Zoom.

Treasurer Mary McElroy presented the 2020 report and accounts. Coronavirus has affected finances, mainly through the lack of Sunday plate offering and loss of income from events like soup lunches. The finances are stronger than may have been expected, however, because people responded well to signalling of this issue: some made extra donations; others started new standing orders or increased existing ones. Mary thanked people who had helped in this way but warned that similar action may be necessary in 2021. The annual report and accounts can be read on our website: visit [www.carlopschurch.org](http://www.carlopschurch.org) and navigate to Business matters > reports and procedures.

Gill Gold reported that the church building is inspected regularly and remains in sound condition.

Anna Woolverton reported on Eco Group work and noted that Earth Hour is 8pm on Saturday 27 March. She invited all to participate by turning off lights and other power-consuming devices, and placing a candle in the window.

Murray Campbell reflected on the “old” linkage and the “about-to-be new”. He paid tribute to Stewart McPherson for his service to us over two years as interim minister.

Murray said that Carlops Church has responded strongly to coronavirus, citing the success of Zoom worship and other events. Zoom “reaches places other activities do not” and it will be important to retain some such activity in a post-virus world. The church’s audiovisual and information technology is being reviewed and may be enhanced to permit this to happen successfully.

Mary Levison invited the congregation to thank Murray for all he has done to maintain Carlops Church activity in 2020-21. She mentioned the joy of being able to see friends and exchange chat via Zoom pre- and post-service.

## **Cultural and social events team**

Bridget Wilcox became events organiser as the first lockdown began and might reasonably have concluded that the situation was impossible. Instead, she formed an energetic, imaginative team with Julie Gamble and Sophie Pilgrim; they have delivered engaging and enjoyable events via Zoom: talks, a Hallowe’en party, a panel show. Thank you, team. Well done and keep it up!

## **Services Group**

The Services Group, which includes all who lead services in the linkage, met on 16 March 2021. Here, we record Carlops-related matters not already covered in this issue.

The group reviewed Zoom worship and noted positive features:

- Seeing and engaging with friends is a key factor
- More people are involved in service delivery via prayers, readings and reflections
- Housebound and/or less fit people can participate
- Several now participate who did not attend in-church
- Average numbers are up 33% from in-church levels
- Friends who have left the area can still take part
- Technology has not proved a barrier to participation

The main negative factor is the lack of music and singing.

Carlops members thought Zoom worship works well and is valued by the congregation. We should talk to “new Zoomers” about their participation, and to those few former regulars who choose not to Zoom. We should maintain some virtual delivery after any return to normal; the strategy should be *as well* not *instead*. It would be poor practice to cease Zooming and thereby exclude people it has attracted to worship or enabled to attend.

Members agreed to explore live-streaming and related activities, and review Carlops’ existing technology to develop ideas about extending it to offer more options. This work would address the use of technology in outreach work, as well as worship.

Murray Campbell continues to organise the worship rota for the whole linkage and was

thanked for his work.

Members looked forward to the new, extended linkage and to discussions with worship leaders from Upper Tweeddale, while envisaging that this present group will continue as a practical, exchange of experience group.

## **The Column The Thirteen Drifty Days**

*The long cold, snowy spell earlier this year reminded me of this piece by James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. Carllops is in the Pentlands, and beside Auchencorth and Harlaw moors, so we may identify a little with the predicament of Hogg's Shepherd.*

*Mardy Walker*

The most dismal of all those on record is the thirteen drifty days. This extraordinary storm, as near as I have been able to trace, must have occurred in the year 1620. (*Hogg got the date wrong: the Thirteen Drifty Days are generally agreed to have occurred in March 1674.*) The traditional stories and pictures of desolation that remain of it, are the most dire imaginable; and the mentioning of the thirteen drifty days to an old shepherd in a stormy winter night, never fails to impress his mind with a sort of religious awe, and often sets him on his knees before that Being who alone can avert such another calamity. It is said that for thirteen days and nights the snow drift never once abated – the ground was covered with frozen snow when it commenced, and during all that time the sheep never broke their fast. The cold was intense to a degree never before remembered; and about the fifth and sixth days of the storm, the young sheep began to fall into a sleepy and torpid state, and all that were so affected in the evening died over night. The intensity of the frost wind often cut them off when in that state quite instantaneously. About the ninth and tenth days the shepherds began to build up huge semicircular walls of their dead, in order to afford some shelter for the remainder of the living; but they awaited but little, for about the same time the sheep were frequently seen tearing at one another's wool with their teeth. Then the storm abated, on the fourteenth day from the commencement, there was on many a high-lying farm not a living sheep to be seen. Large misshapen walls of dead, surrounding a small prostrate flock likewise all dead, and frozen stiff in their lairs, were all that remained to cheer the forlorn shepherd and his master; and though on low-lying farms, where the snow was not so hard before, numbers of sheep weathered the storm, yet their constitution received such a shock that the greater part of them perished afterwards. The final consequence was, that about nine-tenths of all the sheep in the South of Scotland were destroyed. In the extensive pastoral district of Eskdale-moor, which maintains upwards of 20,000 sheep, it is said none were left alive, but forty young widders on one farm, and five old ewes on another.

James Hogg

## **Forthcoming events**

None currently scheduled

## **Material for next issue**

To [info@carlopschurch.org](mailto:info@carlopschurch.org) by Monday 19 April 2021 please

**End**