

Carlops Parish Church

www.carlopschurch.org



NEWSLETTER

Volume 15, Number 5 May 2021

In-church services remain suspended owing to Coronavirus
Contact sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org for a link to Carlops' Zoom services

Zoom Services, May 2021

25 April 10am	Miss Sheena Livingstone
2 May 10am	Rev Nancy Norman
9 May 10am	Steven Whalley
16 May 10am	Kevin Scott
23 May 10am	Rev Nancy Norman
30 May 10am	Rev Chris Levison

Thoughts from the Locum

Above the spacious entrance hall of the East Wing of Washington DC's National Gallery of Art, the mobile sculpture moves as lightly as a feather. Suspended by a single cable its long and gracefully curving arms support, along their thirty-metre lengths, huge triangular black and red panels, each individually mobile. From the floor of the hall below, visitors crane their necks in awe to watch the sculpture's motion, barely perceptible, effortless and noiseless as it glides, revolves and rotates, responsive to the tiniest current of air. Poetry in motion, precision, balance and counter-balance and an impression of weightlessness mask the fact that the whole structure, constructed of steel and aluminium, weighs more than half a ton.

There is a garden gate in Peebles, wrought iron, twice my height and three times my width, and yet at the touch of a hand upon its latch, the gate swings open silently and effortlessly despite its weight. Perfect balance and counter-balance.

Somehow a weight is borne. But the effort does not show.

The communities that make up Carlops, Kirkurd & Newlands and St Andrew's West Linton move and revolve, responsive to the things that happen within them and beyond them – joyful things, sad things, big things, little things, worrying things, comforting things, fun things and serious things. Rarely does anything happen that does not touch most everyone in the community in some way or other. But that, I believe, is a strength. Every weight is borne, dispersed and shared, instinctively, naturally, though the effort does not necessarily show. But no weight or burden is carried by one alone.

The resilience and strength of any community lie in the fact that the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals that make it up balance and counter-balance each other. Every individual's character traits, abilities, interests, gifts, talents, skills, capacities are needed at some time and in some way, though not all at the same time nor in the same way. Where one individual might show strength in a particular way, another who may not have that same strength has other strengths which others need but do not have. Sometimes a particular circumstance calls forth a strength that otherwise might have remained hidden had that circumstance not arisen. What is certain is that each individual has a crucial part to play within the life of the community, and as that happens every weight is borne by the community together. That dynamic may not always be visible, but it happens. And the community, rather than being weakened, grows in strength. Balance and counter-balance. That is the value of life lived in community.

As higher authorities in the church consider the viability of ministry in small, rural parishes, may it be the privilege and responsibility of communities such as this one, and its new linking into West Tweeddale, to show a resilience and a strength far beyond its size, a stubbornness of purpose that is not easily defeated, and a centrality of Christ-like living that supports not only the people who live within the boundaries of the parish but also people everywhere. And let us thank God for who we are, and offer what we have and are, to balance and counter-balance, uphold, support and bear every weighty part of life, here and throughout all the wide earth.

Nancy Norman

New linkage: first meeting of elders

The elders of the new linkage met for the first time on Tuesday 30 March 2021, via Zoom. Our new Interim Moderator, Rev Calum Macdougall, chaired the meeting. Members of Presbytery's Vacancy Procedure Committee also attended.

Elders explored what is involved in seeking a new minister, including: deciding policy on certain issues; agreeing a parish profile for the whole linkage; appointing a Nominating Committee. The Kirk Sessions will discuss these matters further. Expect to hear more soon.

In five-six-person discussion groups, people were invited to express what they think are "their" church's key characteristics and strengths, and their hopes for how the linkage might operate. There was no plenary report-back, but a group composed of Carlops and Upper Tweeddale people agreed the key points are: friendship is critical and underpins all else; the church should build links with and serve the whole community, not just the Sunday congregation; the desirability of the linkage churches working together on some tasks, while also being free to pursue their own interests, exploit their own talents, and serve their own local needs; *freedom in partnership* was the phrase used.

Zoom and beyond at Carlops Church?

Delivering services and other events via Zoom has been a success; "attendance" exceeds pre-virus in-church levels and several new supporters participate. People look forward to returning to the church but are prepared to wait until restraints on behaviour (eg singing, conversation) are much reduced, or no longer necessary. Moreover, there is broad agreement that we should maintain some internet-based delivery after we return to the church; it would be wrong to discard Zoom entirely and thereby risk turning away from people who find it an easier model, physically and/or psychologically, than going to the church building.

Informal discussions about this identify live-streaming as a viable option. It would enable us to hold an event in the church and deliver it over the internet at the same time; it could also be recorded and posted on our website, where it could be "attended" at any time. Plans for achieving this are emerging.

To live-stream from Carlops Church, the building needs a secure internet connection and improved wi-fi: a local provider has offered to do this. We also need to enhance and extend our audiovisual- and information technology: the prospect of securing grants to defray the cost of this is being explored. More when we know more; for now, questions and ideas to Murray Campbell or Mary McElroy.

Supporting "our" charities

After the annual report and accounts were presented to the congregation in March, someone asked how people can best support Carlops Church's customary charities, given that drop-in coffee is suspended and the church's "penny prayers" jar cannot be reached.

Treasurer Mary McElroy is willing to forward donations sent to her if they are made payable to Carlops Church and accompanied by a note of the donor's preferred charity. However, Mary notes that the simplest way to support these charities is to donate directly via their website; this is secure and may be gift-aided if you are a taxpayer.

Carlops Church's support for charities is well respected in the community; it influences how our church is regarded, and this in turn influences the support we attract for these very charities; a virtuous cycle! Mary notes that charities are experiencing reduced funding owing to the pandemic. She suggests that as we emerge from lockdown, we need to think hard about finding new ways of delivering support to our chosen charities. Your ideas are invited and will help inform how we proceed. Send ideas to Mary McElroy, contact at treasurer@carlopschurch.org.

Christian Aid week 2021 **Monday 10 – Sunday 16 May 2021**

Normally our linkage would be preparing for Christian Aid (CA) Week. Alas, times are not normal! Our usual local fundraising events are still prohibited by COVID-19 regulations: no Saturday coffee morning; no door-to-door envelope collection; no special service in St. Andrew's.

In 2020, despite restrictions of the first lockdown, almost £4 million was raised digitally for CA. This was half the total for 2019, but was still a great achievement, showing CA's adaptability in connecting with its loyal supporters.

Responding to emergencies is how CA started 75 years ago. It was founded by British and Irish churches to help refugees searching for food, shelter and kindness in the aftermath of WW2. Being there for people in crisis is still a key part of its work today. Your generosity allows CA to respond quickly; its local partner agents understand the needs of disadvantaged communities, ensuring your donations go further.

This year CA will focus on those whose lives are adversely affected by climate change, for example in Kenya, where unpredictable rainfall causes chaos, as severe drought can change suddenly to extensive flooding.

How to donate

- Online at www.christianaid.org.uk Your donation goes directly to CA; no hidden deductions reduce its value.
- By cheque to Christian Aid, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL

Other events during CA week

- *Quiztarian Aid* Saturday 8 May, 7pm. The return of the popular virtual general knowledge quiz hosted by celebrity guests, suitable for all the family. Register your team by Googling "caweek.org/quiztarianaid"

- *Guess the Song*: paper quiz sheets available from your church's CA committee representative (optional donation)

Please give Christian Aid all the help you can in this especially difficult year.

Robert Higgins, *Chair, Linkage Christian Aid Committee*
T 01968 660 629; E higfam72@gmail.com

Clarification and correction

Last month, I applied the term *vacancy committee* to the group tasked with seeking a new minister; the formal title currently used by the Church of Scotland is *Nominating Committee*.

In the same article, I wrote that the Interim Moderator would chair that group; in fact, the Nominating Committee will appoint its own convenor; who may be the Interim Moderator, or not.

My error; I apologise.

Rennie McElroy *Editor*

The Column

What matters? Steve Jobs' lesson

Steve Jobs founded Apple and was a billionaire but died of cancer at 56. He voiced these thoughts on his sick bed.

I achieved success in the business world and, in others' eyes, my life is an epitome of success. However, aside from work, I have little joy. In the end, wealth is only a fact of life. Now, lying here recalling my life, I realise that the wealth and recognition that I took pride in are meaningless in the face of death.

You can employ someone to drive the car for you, or to make money for you, but you cannot have someone to bear sickness for you. Material things that are lost can be found, but life can never be found once it is lost. When a person goes into the operating room, he realises that he has yet to finish reading the book of healthy life. Whatever stage in life we are at, we will face the day when the curtain comes down. So treasure love for your family, your spouse, your friends; treat yourself well.

As we grow older and hence wiser, we slowly realise that:

- wearing a \$300 or \$30 watch, they both tell the same time;
- whether we drive a \$150,000 car or a \$30,000 car, the road and distance are the same; so is the destination;
- whether we drink a bottle of \$300 or \$10 wine, the hangover is the same;
- whether the house we live in is 300 or 3,000 square feet, loneliness is the same.

Therefore, be aware: when you have friends, brothers and sisters that you laugh with, sing with, talk about north-south-east-west or heaven and earth with – that is true happiness!

Five facts of life

1. Don't educate your children to be rich. Educate them to be happy. Help them know the value of things, not the price.
2. Eat your food as your medicines; otherwise, you have to eat medicines as your food.
3. The one who loves you will not leave you; even if there are 100 reasons to give up, s/he will find one reason to hold on.
4. There is a big difference between a human being and being human. Only a few really understand it.
5. If you just want to walk fast, walk alone. But if you want to walk far, walk together!

Submitted by Bridget Wilcox (*edited*)

Forthcoming events

COP26 Talk by Adrian Shaw (formerly Eco-congregation Scotland Friday 30 April 2021, 7.30pm, via Zoom. Link available from info@carlopschurch.org

Material for next issue

To info@carlopschurch.org by Monday 24 May 2021 please

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