



# CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

## Newsletter

Volume 16, Number 5; May 2022

## Services, May 2022

Services held in church and available via Zoom  
Request link from [sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org](mailto:sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org)

1 May 10am: Steven Whalley  
8 May 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley  
15 May 10am: David Henderson-Howat  
22 May 10am: Colin Herd  
29 May 10am: Mary McElroy

**Join us, in the church, or in other activities**

**We promise you a warm welcome**

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



# Our Minister

## Everyone is the friend of one who gives gifts (Proverbs 19:6)

Is there any point in arguing with someone who disagrees with you, especially when it comes to matters of faith? How open are you – truly open – to views other than your own in areas that really matter to you? Presumably, you start to argue because you would like the other person to change their mind. But that is easier said than done. Experience shows that trying to get people to change their mind is extremely difficult, especially when it involves changing ideas and beliefs that are linked to their sense of identity. As one writer put it, any kind of conflict involving a person's personal attachment to their belief system, be it personal, religious or political, invariably encourages *competitive personal contests rather than collaborative searches for the truth*.

When we engage in this kind of *mine is better than yours* approach to dialogue, it often makes things worse. Discussion descends into adversarial argument, which can begin to feel like a war in which the opposing sides dig the trenches of their religious and political convictions ever deeper. The result is that each “side” begins to use every issue as an opportunity to launch their beliefs, positions, and convictions at the “opponent” like verbal hand grenades – and of course, to repel unheeded, anything coming from “the other side”. All the while failing (even refusing) to realise that people are not likely to change their mind when they feel they are being subjected to an attack.

These kinds of conflicts might give everyone involved the temporary satisfaction of *that just proves that I am right, and they are wrong*. But the odds are that neither camp is winning the argument, or even making useful progress; on the contrary, attacks often make opponents (no longer co-conversationalists or fellow debaters) ignore the common ground, exaggerate the differences, become still more entrenched, and resort to more extreme behaviour – verbal, psychological and physical.

Jesus brought the Gospel to us as a gift not as a demand. If we want to change hearts and minds, we could start by refusing to use our values, and the convictions that go with them, as weapons, and start offering them as *a gift*.

Peace

Tony

# News



## After-church coffee: help invited

The return of after-church coffee has been welcomed, as has the mode of serving, devised to reduce the risk of infection. Bringing the coffee to church in flasks and serving it in recyclable, disposable cups (and/or bringing one's own cup to church) eliminates people clustering in the vestry-kitchen, cuts out dish-washing and keeps us "green". We haven't tackled biscuits yet but will experiment with individually wrapped goodies soon. This model may be with us for some time; certainly until the coronavirus pandemic is behind us, as distinct from "probably past its latest peak".

That being so, we should address the undue workload the model places on the people who make the coffee and bring it, and the milk, to church. The same two people have done this every Sunday since the service restarted (though others have helped serve). We should share the burden better.

A stock of cups, spoons and sugar is easily maintained, but we need a wider circle of people to make coffee and bring it to church. There is now a coffee rota sheet on the notice board. You are invited to sign up to be coffee monitor on one or more Sundays. Two jugs (one if it is very large) are enough for a Sunday morning. There are vacuum flasks in the vestry-kitchen. Take jugs home one Sunday; bring them back filled with coffee the next (don't forget the milk!); leave them empty in the church for someone else to carry on the cycle. Or of course, use your own thermos jugs. On request, the Treasurer will refund the cost of coffee and milk against receipts.

Come on, Carlops. We can do this!

## Christian Aid week 15-22 May 2022

Last year, £5.5million was raised in Christian Aid week, an incredible achievement in difficult circumstances during the covid pandemic, which still hinders traditional fundraising events.

### **The 2022 Christian Aid theme: *Help Jessica turn hunger into hope***

Drought starves. It robs women of the power to farm and grow food for their families. In rural Zimbabwe, seven out of ten women rely on farming to earn a living and provide for their families. But with no rain, women can't grow enough food.

For Jessica, drought means every day is a struggle for survival. She toils on her farm, but little food grows on her dry land. Jessica is at the mercy of the climate crisis. Drought makes women like her hungry, poor, and robs them of the chance to earn a living with dignity. She shares her heartbreak: *My children crave a good meal, but I can't provide it. We often go to bed with empty stomachs.*

Your Christian Aid week donations will help women like Jessica grow drought-tolerant crops that survive better, and help her develop skills to preserve and store food safely for the dry season. Love gives Jessica the strength to stand strong against drought and hunger. Will you stand with her? Read more online at [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk).

### How to donate

For covid safety reasons, there will be no door-to-door collection in the linkage this year.

1. If possible, donate online at [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk) Your money goes directly to Christian Aid with no hidden deductions reducing its value.
2. If you prefer to use the traditional Christian Aid donation envelope, these will be available to pick up at Sunday church services in May; return your envelope to your church Christian Aid representative (Mary Levison at Carlops).
3. Post your personal cheque to Christian Aid, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL

### Christian Aid quiz

Paper copies of this year's cryptic quiz (about *Food and drink*) will be available to purchase from your church Christian Aid representative (Mary Levison) in May.

Robert Higgins  
Chair, Christian Aid Committee  
T 01968 660 629

## Skirling's Christian Aid car boot sale; reminder

A reminder that there will be a car boot sale on Skirling village green on Sunday afternoon, 15 May 2022, in support of Christian Aid. All are welcome. Contributions for sale are invited; if you sell for Christian Aid, entrance is free; otherwise, £8. There will be a stall for baking, plants and other items, and teas, ice cream and other goodies in Skirling village hall.

More information from Isobel Hunter, to whom enquiries should be directed. Contact her at Firknowe, Skirling, Biggar ML12 6HD; E [isobel@skirlinghouse.com](mailto:isobel@skirlinghouse.com); T 01899 860 274

## Our linkage is on YouTube

There is now a YouTube channel for "West Tweeddale Parish Churches", established by Neil Robinson as part of the work of the linkage-wide Communications working group. The channel's name may be open to change; the group want a title that is all of descriptive, meaningful and snappy, but so far is stuck with only two (or perhaps one-and-a-half?) of these! Any ideas?

As we go to press, there are about ten videos on the channel; more will be added. At present, the simplest (perhaps not the only or the most elegant!) way of finding linkage material is:

1. Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
2. Type **West Tweeddale Parish Churches** into the search box
3. Choose **Filters**
4. In the column headed **Type**, select **Channel**
5. Click on the round “multi-church” icon for a list of videos posted
6. Click on a video to watch it

After step 5 above, you can make that page a “favourite”; that will enable you to reach it more easily on future occasions. If you have a Google account, you can subscribe to the channel; you should then be notified when new videos are posted.

This is our first attempt at publishing on YouTube. If you have ideas about improving the channel, or suggestions about material that could be uploaded, contact Neil Robinson [neil@glenholm.co.uk](mailto:neil@glenholm.co.uk).

## New Presbytery structure in 2023

Readers will recall that the Church of Scotland has approved and implemented a *Radical plan* to increase its operating efficiency, reduce the administrative burden and costs, and address the continuing shortage of ministers. In Carlisle, we experienced the impact of the *Radical plan* through the establishment of our new linkage, and the appointment of Rev Dr Tony Foley as sole minister of the now six-church linkage of West Tweeddale.

Changes under the *Radical plan* are not limited to individual churches; efficiencies and savings are sought also at Presbytery level and at “121” (which location a former chair of Eco-congregation Scotland once memorably described as “the only address in Britain that may qualify as an expletive”!).

Our current Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles will unite with the three existing Presbyteries of Duns, Jedburgh, and Lothian (which last does not include Edinburgh) from 31 December 2022. The resulting, larger organisation will be known as the *Presbytery of Lothian and Borders*. This new presbytery is scheduled to meet for the first time on Saturday 21 January 2023, at a time and place to be agreed. At that meeting, it will appoint its own Moderator and Clerk, and agree its future pattern of meetings, standing orders and committee structure. As we understand it, members of the four constituent presbyteries will be members of the new Presbytery of Lothian and Borders, at least in the first instance.

Other presbyteries (formerly, there were 46 in Scotland, plus the three Presbyteries of England, International Charges, and Jerusalem) are also merging to form fewer, larger units.



# The Column

## An “Elegance” of Eagles

*Nan Buchan continues her series of alliterative nature reports!*

On the morning of the first of January 2021, my son Angus came to the door to wish me a socially distanced Happy New Year. Our conversation was suddenly interrupted when he pointed to a tree close by and asked “What on earth is that bird? It is twice the size of a buzzard.” I rushed into the house to grab the binoculars and for more than five minutes all covid instructions about social distancing and hand sanitising went by the board as we stood close together and shared the binoculars while we marvelled at the sight of a golden eagle preening itself on the topmost branches of a tall beech tree. It stretched out each enormous wing in turn while it groomed its breast feather and then lifted its fan-shaped tail, giving an excellent view of its thickly feathered legs. As we stared, some people walked down the road and our stately elegant visitor spread its wings and glided away behind the trees.

Angus and I stared at each other in amazement and agreed that, if we tried to share our story, we would be greeted with cries of disbelief. In fact, we later learned that a Silverburn resident had had a brief sighting of the bird s it soared over the village in the direction of my house, Corroboration!

It was so very fortunate that Angus and the eagle chose to arrive at the same time, or I would never have been aware that I had been so lucky. What are the chances that I will ever have a return visit?

*Aquila Chrysaetos* is a very large bird of prey native to the northern hemisphere. It has a wingspan of between 1.8 and 2.3 metres and is not an endangered species, although it is not as widespread as in previous years.

The South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project aims to translocate birds from the north of Scotland to the hills of Galloway and the Borders. It is funded to run for five years. Human activity and changes in land use had caused the population to fall to three breeding pairs in this area, which is capable of supporting sixteen pairs. Permission is only granted to remove fledglings for translocation while they are very young and if there are two healthy chicks in a nest. It can therefore be difficult (for project staff) to meet the number target. However, if the project is successful, we may have the treat of more frequent sightings of golden eagles on our home territory.

Nan Buchan

# Diary



## Forthcoming events

None scheduled

## Contacts

**Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley**

Telephone 07793 294 000

Email [TFoley@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:TFoley@churchofscotland.org.uk)

**Christian Aid: Mary Levison**

Telephone 01968 674 566

Email [marylevison@btinternet.com](mailto:marylevison@btinternet.com)

**Cultural and social events:**

*Position vacant; expressions of interest invited: contact Murray Campbell, Mary McElroy, or Rennie McElroy*

**Eco Group: Anna Woolverton**

Telephone 01968 660 382

Email [annapye@btinternet.com](mailto:annapye@btinternet.com)

**Flowers: Hilary Watt**

Telephone 01899 221 100

Email [hilarywatt9lf@btinternet.com](mailto:hilarywatt9lf@btinternet.com)

**Newsletter and website: Rennie McElroy**

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**Session Clerk and Organist: Murray Campbell**

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## Material for next issue

To Rennie McElroy by Monday 30 May 2022