



CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

Newsletter

Volume 16, Number 8; August 2022

Services, August 2022

Services held in church and available via Zoom
Request link from sessionclerk@carlopschurch.org

31 July 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley
7 August 10am: Dr Patsy Campbell
14 August 10am: Isobel Hunter
21 August 10am: Rev Chris Levison
28 August 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley

Join us, in the church, or in other activities

We promise you a warm welcome

www.carlopschurch.org



Our Minister

How do you see what you see?

Try this exercise. Stop reading right now and look for two things that contain the colour blue. It could be the curtains in the room, the paint on the door, the carpet on the floor – any two things that are blue. Now, what happened? I will bet you found those blue-coloured things. Why, because you changed how you looked at what was around you. For lack of a better term, you created your own *blue mind-set*. With your *blue mind-set*, you began to see blue in places you had not noticed the colour before. The reason is simple: we tend to see what we sensitise ourselves to see. Let me put it another way. Photographers will tell you that when you use a slow lens with a small maximum aperture, the picture invariably comes out dim. In the same way, when you use a wide-angle lens, because it is highly inclusive, it seeks to incorporate a multitude of subjects within the frame. But like the slow lens, it distorts what you are seeing: objects that are nearer appear larger and those far away appear smaller. In other words, *the kind of lens you use determines how you see what you see.*

There are countless reasons why God may seem distant from us. We may have chosen to ignore or deny His presence. Maybe our sinning, and the subsequent sense of guilt and shame, has driven an artificial wedge between God and us. Whatever the reason, they are *our* reasons and *our* responses, not God's. God, because He loves us and is committed to us, is always nearby. One Old Testament prophet-poet put it this way as he spoke of God's constant presence and care for us (Psalm 139):

GOD ...
I'm an open book to you;
even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking.
You know when I leave and when I get back; I'm never out of your sight.
You know everything I'm going to say before I start the first sentence.
I look behind me and you're there, then up ahead and you're there too –
your reassuring presence, coming and going.
This is too much, too wonderful –
I can't take it all in!

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6), Jesus also talked about how we see what we see:

Your eyes are windows into your soul. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your soul will fill up with light. If you live squinty eyed in greed and fearful distrust, your soul will become a musty cellar. If you pull the blinds on the window to your soul, what a dark life you will have... So steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions.

So let me ask you: **How do you see - what you see?** God is closer to you than you realise and cares about you more than you know. How will you recognise His presence and His care? Well, that all depends on the lens and mind-set you have chosen to see with.

Peace
Tony

News



Coffee drop-in reminder

A note to remind readers that Carlops Church's drop-in coffee events have started again. Last Saturday of every month, 10.30am to 12noon. That means the next one is this coming Saturday, 30 July. We hope to see you there!

Our manse family

Rev Dr Tony Foley and his wife, Yvonne, moved into the manse in West Linton in mid-July. Their contact details there are: The Manse, West Linton EH46 7EE; telephone 01968 660 221.

Column, anyone?

It's that time again: the editorial *Column* drawer is empty, and I am reduced to foisting my own imaginings upon readers again. Please will some reader(s) exercise imagination and pen in the general interest and write for *The Column*? Contributions are confidently anticipated and will be warmly welcomed.

Rennie McElroy *Editor*

Carlops community garden

The idea of a community garden has been in the background for years, but finally took shape on Saturday 22 January 2022 when about a dozen of us met, socially distanced, in the field to share these ideas and find a way forward. We wanted to provide the community with a space for growing/socialising/learning as we got back to a more normal way of living post-covid. Slowly and hesitantly through those months when covid was still around, a small committee was formed which finally was able to meet in person, usually with one or two Zooming. We put in an application to the Royal Horticultural Society, which, although unsuccessful, did allow us to form our ambitions and a ground plan. A small application to the Scottish Borders Council Jubilee Fund was successful and we received £1,800 to purchase "platinum" planters and purple and white flowers.

We held two community planting days when neighbours (some new) joined us in filling and planting out our garden. The Carlops Sports Day on 19 June 2022 was both a celebration of what we had done and a small step to what we hoped would again become a much-loved annual event.

Our community survey in May was encouraging. We are now about to take on a lease of the Rock

Field from Gerda and Aonghas, at a nominal rent of £1 pa, which will allow us to apply for further funding for various projects.

Meantime, we need to find about £600 per year to keep grass cut, hedge trimmed, and pay for insurance. We hope that our friends and neighbours will become “Friends of Rock Field” paying a minimum annual contribution of £10. If you can set up a payment that would be much appreciated.

Name of account: Sustainable West Linton and District
Sort code: 80-22-60
Account number: 21702560
Please use reference FOF and your name

We will, of course, keep you informed of plans and activities in the field. Please let me know if you would like to be added to our mailing list; contact details below.

Anna Woolverton *Treasurer, Carlops Community Garden Group*

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The Column



Big faith; little faith

We are often asked to “have faith” in church circles. The Bible is full of these requests, as are many Sunday services. It’s less common for the invitation to go much further; to become precise. Have faith in what? About what? At how much effort? For what return? And above all – Why? How? Perhaps these last, short questions are the biggest, and the answers to them the most sought after.

We may be forgiven for thinking that “have faith” is big theology, big philosophy, big psychology stuff; the long term and the ever-after; rather than everyday things that we need to do this week. We may be forgiven for feeling that sometimes, the speaker is (rather lazily) expressing some kirk equivalent of “Believe me. I’m a doctor.”

I call that **big faith**. I find it difficult. I can’t get my head around it in any satisfactory, lasting way. And all my training steers me away from it, and from the common follow-up of some promoters: “Just believe; let it happen”. Sorry. I keep trying. I can’t. And I don’t think I’m alone in this.

But there’s **little faith** too. Little faith is in everyday life, in many interactions. It was around yesterday, is here today, will happen tomorrow. Little faith happens to you and me. Helps you and me – if only we will let it work for us. Here’s how I know ...

A couple of months ago, two dates coincided: the General Assembly and the publication of the June *Newsletter* both fell in the last week of May. And our minister Tony Foley was a commissioner at the General Assembly, so had just a few things in his diary. Add to that: your editor contrived to act as if blissfully unaware of this major event in the Church of Scotland calendar, so asked Tony for his usual newsletter piece on 22 May; copy date evening of 25 May please. Yes, too short notice in any case, though in my defence, Tony often turns around such requests in that timescale.

As soon as I hit *SEND*, realisation dawned. No way could Tony be reasonably expected to meet that deadline, that week. And for sundry reasons, holding that issue of the *Newsletter* over wasn’t an option. So, the editor prepared an apology piece: *grovel; nothing from Tony this month; all my fault; sorry; must do better*. Got that finished, page-prepped, and so on, a few hours before P-for-publication hour.

And then – just before my unreasonable deadline – Tony’s article arrived in my mailbox. Panic over; embarrassment over, apology no longer necessary (but as you see, put to use anyway!).

Small matter in the great cosmological scheme of things. Just about two fellows, two diaries, and one job. Just little faith; *practical* faith. But if only I’d had more of it ...

So have faith. Go for the little kind first. Practice hard. Maybe big faith gets easier if we approach the whole shebang that way?

Rennie McElroy *Editor*

Diary



Forthcoming events

Drop-in coffee Saturday 30 July 2022, 10.30am – 12noon; all welcome

Drop-in coffee Saturday 27 August 2022, 10.30am – 12noon; all welcome

Drop-in coffee Saturday 24 September 2022, 10.30am – 12noon; all welcome

Contacts

Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley

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01968 660 221

Email TFoley@churchofscotland.org.uk

Christian Aid: Mary Levison

Telephone 01968 674 566

Email marylevison@btinternet.com

Church bookings: Sheena Livingstone

Telephone 01968 661 282

Email sheena@deanfoot.onmicrosoft.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

Flowers: Hilary Watt

Telephone 01899 221 100

Email hilarywatt91f@btinternet.com

Newsletter and website: Rennie McElroy

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Session Clerk and Organist: Murray Campbell

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Sunday School: Julie Gamble

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Treasurer: Mary McElroy

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Material for next issue

To Rennie McElroy by Monday 22 August 2022