



CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

Newsletter

Volume 16, Number 10; October 2022

Services, October 2022

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

25 September 11.30am: Rev Dr Tony Foley
In St Andrew's Church; no service at Carlops
Special service of thanksgiving for the life of
Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

2 October 10am: Dr Patsy Campbell

9 October 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley

16 October 10am: Isobel Hunter

23 October 10am: Fiona Burnett

30 October 10am: Kevin Scott

Join us, in the church, or in other activities

We promise you a warm welcome

www.carlopschurch.org



Our Minister

Miserere mei!

One of the saddest tendencies in our present culture is an increasing indignant intolerance for the basic humanity of being human. We live in a culture where people of the past are too often and too easily harshly judged by the standards of the present. Mercy and compassion are in short supply and nowhere is this more evident than in the world of social media. It seems that under the cover of anonymity, cyber-space offers the temptation to indulge in the sugary sweet pleasure of self-righteous comments that is simply irresistible to an increasing number of people.

How can we recapture an ethos of mercy and compassion towards others, especially when those others disagree with and even attack our beliefs? We are all deeply attached to and even defined by our beliefs, for they define our reality and are elemental to our sense of self, so any challenge to our core beliefs tends to feel like a personal attack. But this is equally true of those who hold opposing beliefs – such is our shared human condition.

I came across a song recently entitled *Compassion*, by singer /song-writer Lucinda Williams. With a powerful poetic eloquence, the song calls on us to be merciful and compassionate in our dealings with each other.

Have compassion for everyone you meet
Even if they don't want it
What seems like conceit
Is always a sign
Always a sign ...

Have compassion
Even if they don't want it
What seems like bad manners
Is always a sign
Always a sign ...

Always a sign
of things no ears have heard
Always a sign
of things no eyes have seen

You do not know
What wars are going on
Down there, where the spirit meets the bone
Down there, where the spirit meets the bone

Compassion can only thrive where there is a *common* recognition that those “wars” that Williams’

song speaks of are the shared wars of our common humanity. That *my* suffering is always a part of what Martin Luther King so poetically called, “our inescapable network of mutuality”.

If we are to win those “wars” we need to put away our commonplace indignant intolerance for the basic humanity of being human. That is what Jesus is encouraging us all to recognise when he calls on us to ...

[Always] *Be merciful as your Father is merciful* [Luke 6:36].

Peace

Tony

News



Regular social events in Carlops Church

Following the success of two Drop-in coffee events summer, and heeding feedback from participants, organisers have arranged to restart other social events in Carlops Church this autumn. Information about these is provided below, and dates for all of them are in the **Diary** section of this issue and on our website at www.carlopschurch.org/cultural-social-events/. Cautiously, we still add the rider *virus permitting*; we will monitor infection rates and make judgments with guests' safety in mind.

- **Drop-in coffee**
Last Saturday of every month (except December) until further notice; 10.30am-12noon
- **Fair Trade stall**
Will be open on every Drop-in coffee occasion, and after morning service the following day
- **Soup lunch**
Wednesday before the last Saturday of every month (except December) until further notice; 12noon-1.30pm. First event on Wednesday 26 October 2022
- **Midweek cuppa**
We are going to trial a new, mid-week afternoon event on Wednesday 12 October 2022, 2-4pm. Deliberately simple and easy to run: cup of tea, biscuit, chat in a warm church. If it works and people say they like it, it will become a regular feature.

Initially at least, format and style will be similar to the pre-pandemic events: no charge, but charitable donations invited; no need to book; turn up; take a cup or choose your soup; drink, eat and chat. As regulars know, places are limited and it can get busy; an early appearance may be the wise strategy.

The plan is to run all these events regularly throughout autumn and winter 2022-23 and to review them around Easter, but the presumption, all else being equal, is that they will continue through spring and summer 2023. Comment and ideas are invited; please let us know what you would like.

It's fun, but it's a lot of work too, so help is always welcome. If you could contribute in any way, contact Mary McElroy (T 01968 661 042, E maryhmcclroy@outlook.com) or Mary Levison (T 01968 674 566, E marylevison@btinternet.com). You don't need to do everything, and you don't need to be present all the time. You can do one or any of the jobs involved: make coffee or soup; set out tables and chairs; greet guests; serve coffee and soup; wash up and tidy away afterwards.

We look forward to seeing you at some or all of these events, and hopefully, to hearing from you as a potential volunteer helper too.

Visiting Her Majesty

Nan Buchan writes ...

The death of Queen Elizabeth prompted me to search out this article, which I wrote for a volunteer project newsletter after I was fortunate enough to be invited to an evening reception at Buckingham Palace in February 2000, in recognition of a voluntary project with which I was involved. I thought readers might like to share this 22-year-old memory with me.

My project was The Midlothian Schools' Project, an offshoot of the nationwide Retired and Senior Volunteers Project (RSVP). In the days before paid classroom assistants, it arranged for suitably experienced retired people to provide primary schools with additional support in classrooms, helping pupils with reading, painting and other activities.

One day in January 2000, a thick envelope bearing the royal cipher came through my letterbox. Inside, I found an invitation to an evening reception to be given by the Queen at Buckingham Palace in recognition of work carried out in the community by volunteers. I felt diffident about being the only person to represent RSVP and its Midlothian Schools' Project, but the morning of 23rd February 2000 found me on the train to London, with a new dress and jacket in my case. By 5.30pm, I was in my hotel, dressed and ready to go.

My hotel was only a few minutes' walk from Buckingham Palace, but I decided that, in view of my high-heeled shoes and the dignity of the occasion, I would travel by taxi. Normally, taxi drivers don't like to take a fare such a short distance, but my driver was thrilled to be asked to go through the main gate of Buckingham Palace, into the inner quadrangle and draw up beneath the canopy at the red-carpeted entrance. I gave him the special pass which would allow him past the guard, and he told me that he admired the Royal Family and had never had the opportunity to drive through the Palace gates in 23 years as a London taxi driver. As we drew to a stop, he wished me a happy evening and said: "Now sit still – don't move until the footman opens the taxi door." I did as I was told!

I left my coat in a room adjoining the Grand Hall and was directed, with other guests, towards the Grand Staircase. I am not surprised that the word "grand" occurs so often because there is no other word to describe the entrance hall and the staircase. We climbed the wide, shallow-stepped, red-carpeted stairway with its ornate, gilded balustrade. At the top, we were welcomed and given badges bearing our name and the organisation to which we belonged, and a booklet with the royal crest, listing all those attending the reception.

We moved into the Picture Gallery – the largest room in the Palace – its walls hung with works by Van Dyke, Rubens, Rembrandt and others. I admired the paintings, listened to music provided by a string quartet made up of members of the National Youth Orchestra, and spoke to other guests. The guests came from all over the UK and from a wide variety of voluntary work. During the evening, I described RSVP and the Midlothian Schools' Project many times, and talked with people who worked for Marie Curie, Save the Children, MIND, Cancer Research, and ethnic volunteer projects. I found everyone friendly and interested in each other. As we talked and moved around, we were offered drinks and savoury nibbles by staff who made a point of being helpful and welcoming.

On either side of the Picture Gallery, doorways led to the Blue, Green, and White Drawing Rooms and to the Music Room, where a young harpist played. An hour flew past as I admired the décor, so different in each room, and gazed at the elaborate ceilings and brilliant chandeliers. This part of the Palace was designed by John Nash in the 1820s for King George IV, but building it greatly exceeded the estimated cost and after the King's death in 1834, Nash was dismissed for "inexcusable irregularity and great negligence". I reflected on the escalating cost of the Scottish Parliament building and thought *Nothing's new!*

As we moved around, people gathered in groups and on joining one of these, I had an excellent view of Her Majesty The Queen as she chatted to those around her. She wore a flowered afternoon dress and appeared happy and relaxed as she listened and talked, gesturing with her hands and smiling in a very natural manner. At least an hour and a half had passed when I returned to the Picture Gallery and found myself standing beside a man who worked for Voluntary Service Overseas. A familiar looking young man came and started a conversation with my neighbour and it took a minute for me to realise that he was Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex. Nearby, the Countess was in conversation with several young guests. After that, I seemed always to be in the right place at the right time, because I had not moved far before Princess Alexandra approached and asked me to explain the work of our project. We talked about its benefits for the children, then she excused herself because she saw the Princess Royal moving in our direction. A few minutes later, Princess Anne stepped forward smiling, read the project name on my badge and remarked that she was interested to hear about a project that was based in Scotland.

I was feeling pleased that I could report that I had had the chance to speak with two members of the Royal family about the work being done by our project volunteers, and I moved towards the Grand Staircase, as people were starting to leave. I stopped to talk to a lady who was guiding her husband in a wheelchair and as we spoke, Her Majesty moved towards us. She spoke to the gentleman in the wheelchair and then turned to me. When I had given her an outline of our project she specifically asked if it helped the children with their reading and was interested to hear about the wide variety of activities of our volunteers. She had visited a school earlier in the day where many CSV volunteers were involved. She moved on and the thought that struck me was – I had remembered to say *Ma'am* as I spoke to her!

I descended the Grand Staircase in a bit of a daze, crossed the Grand Hall, collected my coat and walked out into the night.

Nan Buchan

Eco Group

The Eco group met after morning service on Sunday 4 September 2022; about ten people attended. Plans were put in hand for the traditional Eco service, which may take place later than usual this year. The group also discussed options for social events in Carllops Church (see elsewhere in this issue for outcomes!) and considered how eco-work might help build and strengthen the linkage.

The Eco Group is open to everyone; it is not a special membership group. We extend a warm welcome to all supporters of Carllops Church to take part in Eco Group discussions and work.

From the General Kirk Session

Tuesday 30 August 2022, in Carlops Church

Rev Dr Tony Foley chaired a blended meeting, with people attending in person and via Zoom.

Linkage website

Neil Robinson demonstrated a website for the linkage created by the Communications working group and explained its aims ...

- Provide a public face for the linkage for the whole community, not just the congregations
- Communicate about our churches' policies and character, as well as their activities
- Share information to complement individual church websites, not supplant them

The website will always be open to extension and amendment. Office-bearers and team leaders will be able to update for themselves, those parts of the site that most concern them. Everyone is invited to propose amendments and additions; contact any member of the Communications team: Barbara Allison, Skirling; Colin Herd, St Andrew's; Rennie McElroy, Carlops; Ilke Roehe, Kirkurd & Newlands; Christine Parker, Tweedsmuir; Neil Robinson, Tweedsmuir.

Members of the Kirk Session thanked the working group and hoped the website might go live on the internet soon; its address will be published widely once this has been achieved.

Messy Church

Jean Howat reported that Messy Church will restart this autumn. She hopes it will become a linkage-wide activity for families. It will meet one Sunday afternoon every month, November to March, in West Linton. Contact Jean Howat for more information and/or or to offer help.

Finance

Michael Knott explained linkage finances and how costs are shared. The Upper Tweeddale churches together contribute 28% (proportion approved by Presbytery when linkage was established. Of the remaining 72%, St Andrew's contributes 50%, Carlops and Kirkurd & Newlands, 25% each. The cost of work on the manse, and of setting up a linkage office in the New Church Hall, West Linton, will be shared in the same proportions.

Manse

Mary McElroy explained how the Manse Committee is structured. Each linkage church has two members, normally but not necessarily Treasurer and Fabric Convenor. Currently the Upper Tweeddale churches are represented by Peter Worthington alone.

The Church of Scotland General Trustees publish advice about the conditions and facilities that any manse should meet, and the Manse Committee works towards these standards. Mary summarised recent and current repair and upgrading work at the manse, which includes significant maintenance work on the roof, which has not needed repair for some ten years.

Tony Foley said that Yvonne and he moved into the manse in early summer; they are enjoying the house and living close to the centre of West Linton.

Upper Tweeddale churches union

The three Upper Tweeddale churches have agreed to form a union, thereby becoming one church in organisational terms, while remaining in West Tweeddale linkage. Isobel Hunter confirmed that the

Kirk Sessions and congregations of Broughton, Skirling, and Tweedsmuir had voted in favour of this change. The proposal is with Presbytery, which is expected to decide upon the issue later this year.

Away days and Connect groups

Tony Foley expects to arrange away days for groups active in the linkage over the next months, and if successful, regularly thereafter: Pastoral Care Group, Communications, Teaching Elders (near descendent of the group Carlops readers have known as *Services Group*); GKS. The away days aim to provide time for discussion and planning, often with the support of an external facilitator/speaker.

Tony reported on his developing contacts with primary schools, Castle Craig and Whim Hall. He also explained his idea for *Connect groups*: informal groups from within and outwith the congregations, united by a common interest, to talk, support, and pursue mutually beneficial activities; participation in person and/or via Zoom. GKS received the idea positively and Tony invited ideas for possible groups.

Whistle-blowing

Pat Graham reported. The General Assembly has asked all congregations to put in place a whistle blowing policy and code of practice, to encourage people to report possible poor conduct, and to protect both victims and reporters. A draft model was circulated. Each Kirk Session is asked to discuss and adopt a suitable policy and code of practice.

Cost of living

Fiona Burnett spoke about cost-of-living issues and suggested that the linkage churches work in their parishes and together to offer practical help. She invited people to join a planning group to focus on simple, practical actions, and to help by highlighting existing services, guiding people towards them and identifying gaps that we could fill.

Several people said they would like to be involved, and existing and forthcoming activities were cited: coffee events, soup lunches, food bank. More activities like these, review of best timing for them, and support with transport, were mentioned. Everyone who can help with ideas and action is invited to contact Fiona.

Kirkurd & Newlands Harvest Supper

Jean Howat announced that Newlands' Harvest supper will be held on 8 October, 6.30pm, in Newlands Church. Jean invited everyone to attend: all churches, all supporters throughout the linkage. The Harvest supper is a pot-luck event: bring your own main-course / picnic food, plates and cutlery; and also bring cake / dessert to share. More information from Jean Howat.

Positive thinking!

Gill Gold sent me this and suggested that Carlops readers might find it inspiring, as did she. Ed

I was intrigued by a news report last month: an 82-year-old man, Nick Gardner, had just completed a round of Scotland's 282 Munros. At the summit of Cairn Gorm, his final hill, Nick was greeted by a piper and friends providing a guard of honour with their walking poles. He had spent the last two years climbing all of Scotland's highest peaks. The physical achievement for a man of his age was impressive.

But his underlying motivation was moving. At the age of 80, Nick had felt life was over. His wife Janet had to move into a care home after developing Alzheimer's and osteoporosis. Her illness meant an abrupt end to a wonderful lifestyle they had had for thirty years, living on a croft in northwest Scotland. Nick had great difficulty coming to terms with the sad change to his life.

But he decided to challenge himself to climb the Munros and aimed to raise £50,000 for Alzheimers and Osteoporosis charities. He completed the challenge on 13 August, raising over £80,000.

Bikes for refugees Scotland

Can YOU help?

I heard recently about an organisation, *Bikes for refugees Scotland*, who are looking for donations of bikes, lights, cycle racks, panniers, new helmets, tools and funds. Volunteer bike mechanics do up donated bikes which are then passed on to refugees and asylum seekers to support their resettlement as new Scots. It sounds like a good scheme – there must be so many bikes and cycling equipment gathering dust in garages and sheds. It would be nice to know that your old bike will be put to good use again, helping someone else integrate and mobilise after going through difficult times. Donated bikes should be in reasonable condition – no junk please!

More information at the following links ...

www.bikesforrefugees.scot

<https://www.bikesforrefugees.scot/bike-donors/#donate=a-bike-form>

If there is enough interest locally, we could possibly organise collection and bulk forwarding of suitable donations.

Robert Higgins
T 01968 660 629
E higfam72@gmail.com

Christian Aid's *Rise up, Pay up*

Campaign against climate-related loss and damage

Christian Aid has released an activity pack to help churches take action on climate-related loss and damage. *Rise up Pay up* is available free; enter caid.org.uk/riseuppayuppolitical into your browser to be taken to the resource, which offers advice, statements and arguments that may be useful in lobbying MPs and other decision makers. A selective taster ...

The climate crisis is making extreme weather events such as droughts, floods and hurricanes more common. The impact can cause communities to lose everything and the damage done can be irreversible. This is a key issue for communities on the frontline who have done the least to cause it. In the global North, the loss and damage caused is often ignored by politicians and the public, and even by our churches.

The people most affected are already facing damage to harvests and homes, they are losing their lives, land and culture. Often the impacts are too great for communities to adapt

because they happen too quickly or are on too large a scale. Meanwhile polluters continue to burn fossil fuels, to profit from the poison they produce and turn their backs on the damage already done. It's time for the biggest polluters to pay up to repair what's been damaged.

CA believes it's time for governments across the world to set up a central fund to pay for the loss and damage. The companies and countries most responsible must contribute the most. The money needs to be new, not taken from existing budgets, and be in the form of grants, not loans with high interest rates. Time and again, rich countries have shown that huge sums can be found quickly when the political will is there. The fund could be financed by taxes on fossil fuel extraction, air passenger levies or redirecting fossil fuel subsidies.

What can we do in the UK?

The UK is a historical polluter. Like other similar countries, it has continually blocked calls from climate vulnerable countries to establish a loss and damage fund. The UK is still seen as a world leader on climate (COP26 in Glasgow) and should use its influence to persuade other countries to do their share. CA wants to raise awareness of the issue among the wider public so that our government realises that the UK population want action.

For more information, including how to maximise impact with your political representatives, read the resource on the Christian Aid website at [L&D Church Activity Pack Online J288467.pdf \(christianaid.org.uk\)](#)

Robert Higgins *Chair, linkage Christian Aid committee*



The Column

A woman who tried

The Newsletter rarely carries obituaries, but we wish to acknowledge the service of Her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Everyone may form their own judgment, but here are some characteristics and qualities one might consider – ninety-six seems an appropriate number – offered in a manner the Newsletter has employed before.

Ability, achievement, application, astuteness, attentiveness, awareness, calm, candour, care, charisma, charity, Christianity, commitment, common-sense, compassion, concern, conscientiousness, consistency, constancy, courage, courtesy, curiosity.

Dedication, dependability, determination, devotion, devoutness, dignity, diplomacy, discernment, duty, engagement, example, faith, faithfulness, focus, generosity, gentleness, goodness, grace, graciousness, honesty, honour, hope, humility, inclusiveness, indomitability, inspiration, integrity, joyfulness, judgment.

Kindness, leadership, love, loyalty, majesty, modesty, nobility, open-mindedness, originality, peace-loving, perceptiveness, perseverance, persistence, perspective, professionalism, purpose, reassurance, reliability, respect, responsibility, rigour.

Selflessness, sensitivity, service, sincerity, spirituality, staunchness, steadfastness, stoicism, strength, support, sympathy, tenacity, thoroughness, thoughtfulness, tolerance, trustworthiness, truthfulness, understanding, unifying, vigour, vision, warmth, wisdom, zest.

Read; ponder; reach your view.

Rennie McElroy *Editor*

Diary



Forthcoming events

Drop-in coffee & Fair Trade stall Saturday 24 September 2022, 10.30am-12noon

Midweek cuppa Wednesday 12 October 2022; 2-4pm. *Trial event; come and make it a success!*

Soup lunch Wednesday 26 October 2022; 12noon-1.30pm

Drop-in coffee & Fair Trade stall Saturday 29 October 2022, 10.30am-12noon

Soup lunch Wednesday 23 November 2022; 12noon-1.30pm

Drop-in coffee & Fair Trade stall Saturday 26 November 2022, 10.30am-12noon

Soup lunch Wednesday 25 January 2023 12noon-1.30pm

Drop-in coffee & Fair Trade stall Saturday 28 January 2023; 10.30am-12noon

Soup lunch Wednesday 22 February 2023; 12noon-1.30pm

Drop-in coffee & Fair Trade stall Saturday 25 February 2023; 10.30am-12noon

Soup lunch Wednesday 22 March 2023; 12noon-1.30pm

Drop-in coffee & Fair Trade stall Saturday 25 March 2023; 10.30am-12noon

Contacts

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Coffee and soup events

For information and to become involved, contact Mary McElroy or Mary Levison

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Material for next issue

To Rennie McElroy by Monday 24 October 2022