



# CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

## Newsletter

Volume 16, Number 12; December 2022

### Services, December 2022

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

27 November 10am: David Henderson-Howat

4 December 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley

11 December 10am: Carlops Eco service

18 December 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley

24 December 7pm: Rev Chris Levison

*Carol Service*

25 December 10am: Prof Murray Campbell

*Christmas morning service*

1 January 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley

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

**We promise you a warm welcome**

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

# Our Minister



## The Queens came late

Christmas does not just happen. Someone has to make it. According to the Gospels, even God needed help to pull the first one together. There are lots of reasons to be grateful at Christmas, not least for those who make such selfless and gigantic efforts to “make Christmas” for us all. That is partly why I love the poem *The Queens came late*.

I love the poem because, without losing the wonder of Christmas, it manages to by-pass the sentimental and capture the practical aspects of that first Christmas, and indeed of every Christmas since. Practicalities which, if men are honest, are usually overseen and taken care of by the women in their lives. The poem reminds us to pause this Christmas, to step back, to look around, and give thanks for and to those people in our lives who do so much to “make Christmas” a joyous occasion and a lasting memory for all of us.

### The Queens came late

From *The Night It Snowed* by Norma Farber

The Queens came late  
but the Queens were there  
With gifts in their hands and crowns in their hair.  
They'd come, these three, like the Kings, from afar,  
Following, yes, that guiding star.  
They'd left their ladles, linens, and looms,  
Their children playing in nursery rooms,  
And told their sitters:  
“Take charge! For this  
Is a marvellous sight we must not miss!”

The Queens came late, but not too late  
To see the animals small and great,  
Feathered and furred, domestic and wild,  
Gathered to gaze at a mother and child.  
And rather than frankincense and myrrh  
And gold for the babe, they brought for her  
Who held him, a homespun gown of blue,  
And chicken soup – with noodles, too –  
And a lingering, lasting, cradle-song.  
The Queens came late and stayed not long,  
For their thoughts already were straining far –  
Past manger and mother and guiding star  
And a child aglow as a morning sun –  
Toward home and children and chores undone.

I do hope all of you have a wonderfully memorable Christmas this year and, as you do, that you will also remember to say “thank you” to those who made it so for you. Not least among them of course, is the God whose wonderfully personal gift of His son Jesus started the whole thing. In fact, why don’t you, your family and friends join us in giving Him your own personal “thank you” at our Christmas services this year.

Peace

Tony

# News



## Happy Christmas

We extend our warmest wishes for a happy, peaceful Christmas, and a successful New Year. May Christmas 2022 and all of 2023 bring you joy and all that you seek for you and your closest.

We look forward to seeing you at any or all of the events we are organising to help celebrate Christmas, be it a service, carol singing, or meeting for tea, mince pies and a friendly chat. Details of all events are in this issue of the *Newsletter* and at [www.carlopschurch.org](http://www.carlopschurch.org).

Rennie McElroy *Editor*

## Advent garden ceremony

You are invited to come and enjoy the Carlops Advent Garden ceremony, which returns on Sunday 4 December 2022; gather in the church at 3.45pm for a 4pm start. Technically, this is a children's event, but adults are welcome, and don't need to be accompanied by a child!

With Gerda Stevenson leading the ceremony, we will make a magical indoor garden with a spiral path of moss, with a mound in the centre, holding a large candle. As we sing carols, children will walk the paths in the moss and light their own candles, which they carry in lovely red cored apples, then choose a place in the garden to plant them.

The ceremony will last for about an hour. There will be Christmas biscuits for the children to enjoy with juice after the ceremony, while Gerda reads a Christmas story; mulled wine for the adults.

Each child should bring her/his own apple, with a candle in its cored centre, so that the apple becomes a candle-holder. An ordinary white kitchen candle is ideal. Red apples look lovely in the green moss. Finally, thinking of candles at ground level, it would be best to avoid flouncy, flowing clothes.

More information from Gerda Stevenson, tel 01968 661 058; or Hannah Walters, tel 01968 660 470.

## Carlops Eco-service, 2022

Carlops' annual Eco-service will be held on Sunday 11 December 2022, at the usual time of 10am. The delivery team this year will be Jo Blackburn, Chris Levison, Mary McElroy and Rennie McElroy.

## “Shoebox” 2022; last reminder

A reminder that 4th December 2022 is the latest date to contribute to Carlops Church’s support for Scottish Women’s Aid this Christmas. In consultation with the charity and by unanimous agreement amongst Carlops people, we invite donations of cash that will allow Scottish Women’s Aid to target their needs as they think best.

### Donations

By Sunday 4th December 2022 latest please, in any of three ways ...

#### BACS

Identify your gift as WA (for *Women’s Aid*, the beneficiary charity) and transfer to ...

Account name	Carlops Church
Account number	00246459
Sort code	80-09-39

#### Cash

Place your donation in the Shoebox collection box (on a window sill in the church)

#### Cheque

Payable to Carlops Church; send to Mary McElroy, Marfield View, Carlops EH26 9NJ

Thank you in advance for your participation and generosity.

## New Linkage website

The cross-linkage communications group has been working on a website to represent the whole linkage. It is intended to provide the linkage with a “web presence”, and to support and extend the reach of individual church websites, which will continue to be maintained. The General Kirk Session approved early proposals in autumn and asked that they be developed to a finished product and made public on the internet. This has now been done.

The new year issue of the *Newsletter* will carry more information (your editor reckons that the run-up to Christmas is not a wise time to float new products if one expects them to receive informed attention!), but readers may care to make an early visit to the site [www.westtweeddale.org.uk](http://www.westtweeddale.org.uk).

We confirm that the new site is not intended to replace either the Carlops Church website, or this *Newsletter*. Both will continue alongside the linkage site, and we hope they will continue to act as a prime source of Carlops-related information.

## Presbytery plan, 2023-27

Regular readers will know that the responsibilities and activities of the Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles will be taken over by a new, larger Presbytery of Lothian and Borders from January 2023.

One of the final acts of Melrose and Peebles Presbytery has been to develop a *Mission plan* for the period 2023-27, setting out its objectives and hopes, and explaining how it believes the allocation of human resources and buildings may best be managed for that period. The plan, approved by

Presbytery at its meeting on Wednesday 16 November 2022, will be passed to the new Presbytery and will be reviewed annually.

The plan was prepared in the context of the Church of Scotland's formally agreed needs to manage with fewer ministers and to reduce the number of buildings that it maintains. Carlops Session Clerk confirms that the approved plan implies no threat to the immediate future of Carlops Church.

## Winter Warmers: a linkage-wide initiative



**Winter Warmers** is a cross-linkage project of the West Tweeddale parishes to respond to the current economic and fuel problems and to offer help and support to everyone in our communities.

**Winter warmers** is signposting “warm events” taking place across the six parishes: events open to everyone; where people can be sure of a welcome, refreshments like a cup of tea or coffee, or a bowl of soup; served in a warm, safe environment; and a chance to meet friends and neighbours to talk and exchange news. Some of these events may be familiar already, but **Winter warmers** gives them a higher profile and advertises them more widely.

A monthly timetable of the winter warmer events will be posted around the parishes (in Carlops, see the church's outside notice board) and the events will be listed in this *Newsletter*, on the Carlops Church website [www.carlopschurch.org](http://www.carlopschurch.org) and on the new, West Tweeddale linkage website; see article above, and visit it at [www.westtweeddale.org.uk](http://www.westtweeddale.org.uk).

The project stems from a proposal from Fiona Burnet to the General Kirk Session that the linkage churches should take simple, practical steps to ensure that people are kept aware of support available, including the several social activities organised to promote regular contact with friends and neighbours. Fiona envisaged especially, a focus on staying warm and having company during the coming months; both of these will help people through the current cost-of-living difficulties. Fiona's proposed initiative was welcomed warmly, with several people offering to take part.

Subsequently, a cross-linkage group has been working to publicise existing events and arrange some new ones. These too will aim to keep people warm and offer company. Some will include practical sessions, providing suggestions about cost-saving and helping to enhance everyday skills. Look out for posters and articles advertising these soon.

From Carlops, Mary McElroy and Sheena Livingstone are on the group. More information about West Tweeddale Winter Warmers can be obtained from them and through the linkage office: telephone 01968 733 112.

## Considering ethical Christmas presents this year? Bethany's "Buy a bed" campaign is back

Bethany Christian Trust has re-launched its successful "Buy a Bed" campaign, which provides secure accommodation for people who might otherwise have to sleep rough. In 2021, the campaign raised an admirable £94,634. This year, the target is £140,000.

Can you help achieve this total and help someone in extreme need? A donation of £21 will support someone needy. The Bethany Welcome Centre at Haymarket Hub Hotel provides a safe, warm bed and three meals a day, backed up by individualised support to help the homeless move on to stable longer term accommodation. In return for your donation, you will receive a physical or digital illustrated card that you can gift to your family or friends as an ethical Christmas present.

The cost-of-living crisis and attendant high inflation rates has already led to a 50% increase in the number of homeless needing emergency accommodation. Please join with Bethany to help provide this vital service this winter – and hold the needy in your thoughts and prayers.

Donate online by visiting <https://bethanychristiantrust.com> and following the link to the *Buy a bed* campaign

Robert Higgins

## Messy Church reminder

A reminder and an update on dates for Messy Church this winter ...

Sunday 11 December Messy Christmas!  
Sunday 15 January The Good Samaritan  
Sunday 19 February Jesus the Healer  
Sunday 12 March The Feeding of the 5000 (Messy Church goes wild outside!)

All sessions 4-6pm, in the New Church Hall, West Linton

All children, from babies to P7, are welcome to come and join in the fun. Each session will start with a bible story, then the children will do a range of craft activities, followed by a song and a prayer, and finish off with a meal together. All children MUST be accompanied by an adult.

Please consider joining us for an afternoon of fun activities and a family meal together.

For more information contact Jean Howat: T 01968 660 677; E [howatjean@gmail.com](mailto:howatjean@gmail.com)



# The Column

## Carry on!

This is not overtly “Christmassy” (whatever that means today) but seems appropriate given events of the past 30+ months. Guy Walters read this poem during Carlops’ remembrance service on 13 November 2022. The last verse will be too imperial for 2022’s taste, and there’s a tendency to decry “stiff upper lip” these days; perhaps that is part-justified; but perhaps too, the pendulum has swung too far and we could do well to redress the psychological balance.

The poet, Geoffrey Anketell Studdert Kennedy (1883-1929) was an Anglican priest, nicknamed “Woodbine Willie” during World War I for giving cigarettes, as well as spiritual aid, to the soldiers he met. He was awarded the Military Cross “for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty”.

### *The Spirit*

When there ain't no gal to kiss you,  
And the postman seems to miss you,  
And the fags have skipped an issue ... Carry on.

When ye've got an empty belly,  
And the bulley's rotten smelly,  
And you're shivering like a jelly ... Carry on.

When the Boche has done your chum in,  
And the sergeant's done the rum in,  
And there ain't no rations comin' ... Carry on.

When the world is red and reeking,  
And the shrapnel shells are shrieking,  
And your blood is slowly leaking ... Carry on.

When the broken battered trenches,  
Are like the bloody butchers' benches,  
And the air is thick with stenches ... Carry on.

Carry on ... Though your pals are pale and wan,  
And the hope of life is gone ... Carry on.

For to do more than you can,  
Is to be a British man,  
Not a rotten “also ran” ... Carry on.

Written by G A S Kennedy; remembered by Guy Walters; “liked” by Rennie McElroy, *Editor*



# Diary



## Forthcoming events

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

**Advent Garden ceremony** Sunday 4 December 2022, 3.45pm

**Midweek cuppa and company** Thursday 8 December 2022, 2-4pm

**Christmas Midweek cuppa and company** Thursday 22 December 2022, 2-4pm

**Midweek cuppa and company** Thursday 12 January 2023, 2-4pm

**Soup lunch** Wednesday 25 January 2023 12noon-1.30pm

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

**Midweek cuppa and company** Thursday 9 February 2023, 2-4pm

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

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

**Midweek cuppa and company** Thursday 9 March 2023, 2-4pm

**Man(!) Soup lunch** Wednesday 22 March 2023; 12noon-1.30pm

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

## Contacts

**Minister: Rev Dr Tony Foley**

Telephone 01968 660 221

Mobile 07793 294 000

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

**Church Administrator: Michelle Fraser**

Telephone 01968 733 112

Email [cos1560.tweed@outlook.com](mailto:cos1560.tweed@outlook.com)

**Christian Aid: Mary Levison**

Telephone 01968 674 566

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

**Church bookings: Sheena Livingstone**

Telephone 01968 661 282

Email [sheena@deanfoot.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:sheena@deanfoot.onmicrosoft.com)**Coffee and cuppa events: Mary Levison and Mary McElroy**

Telephone 01968 674 566

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

Telephone 01968 661 042

Email [maryhmcclroy@outlook.com](mailto:maryhmcclroy@outlook.com)*Assistance required and always welcome; contact Mary or Mary if you can help!***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**

Telephone 01968 661 042

Email [rennie.mcelroy@btinternet.com](mailto:rennie.mcelroy@btinternet.com)**Session Clerk and Organist: Murray Campbell**

Telephone 01968 660 530

Email [d.m.campbell@ed.ac.uk](mailto:d.m.campbell@ed.ac.uk)**Soup lunch co-ordinator: Nan Buchan**

Telephone 01968 678 352

Email [nan.buchan@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nan.buchan@hotmail.co.uk)*Assistance required and always welcome; contact Nan if you can help***Sunday School: Julie Gamble**

Telephone 07980 258 381

Email [julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk)**Treasurer: Mary McElroy**

Telephone 01968 661 042

Email [maryhmcclroy@outlook.com](mailto:maryhmcclroy@outlook.com)

## Material for next issue

To Rennie McElroy by Monday 26 December 2022