



CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

Newsletter

Volume 17, Number 4; April 2023

Services, April 2023

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

26 March 10am: Fiona Burnett

2 April 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley

7 April 8pm: Prof Murray Campbell

Good Friday, Tenebrae service

9 April 10am: Rev Chris Levison

Easter Day

16 April 10am: Mary McElroy

23 April 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley

30 April 10am: Kevin Scott

Join us, in the church, and in other activities

We promise you a warm welcome

www.carlopschurch.org

Carlops is one of the West Tweeddale linkage of churches

www.westtweeddale.org.uk



Our Minister

Magnanimity in a graveyard

To live in a world without forgiveness is to make of life an instant fossil record, each imperfect action instantly ossifying us into a failed promise of personhood.
(Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*)

I love Arendt's striking use of words like *fossil* and *ossifying* to describe the impact that a refusal to offer and enact forgiveness has on human beings. And if it has this effect on individual human beings, think of what it might do to our contemporary society, where grace and mercy are becoming increasingly absent in our public discourse. Where the "benefit of the doubt" is rarely given, and people can have their potential futures "cancelled" for past sins. It is ironic that in a world where change is a rapidly increasing constant, the one area where we refuse to allow change is other people's character and points of view. That is why I think the world needs to hear more about the message of Easter.

Easter is a consequence of forgiveness. It speaks so loudly and so emphatically of the promise of new beginnings, of mercy overcoming the worst and holding forth the promise of the best. Easter is the embodied truth that evil does not get to have the last word, that sin is not an inevitable, insurmountable end, but merely a very much surmountable obstacle. What happened in a Judean graveyard two thousand years ago speaks to us of the joyful, liberating experience that forgiveness bestows on its recipients. Arendt is right when she says: *Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever.*

Forgiveness is the exact opposite of vengeance. Forgiving is the only reaction which does not merely re-act [*God does not crucify us for crucifying Him*], but acts in a new way, unconditioned by the act which provoked it, thereby freeing from its consequences the one who is forgiven. When Jesus tells us to forgive those who sin against us, he is not encouraging us to engage in some kind of a gritted teeth stoic duty, but rather revealing to us that this is how life works, this is how life continues. That is surely part of what was bundled up in his declared desire: *I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly.*

It is the promise that God through his wonderfully life-nurturing mercy holds forth in a graveyard to us this Easter. Pass it on.

Peace

Tony

News



Easter celebrations

We are arranging several events to mark Easter and extend a warm invitation to everyone to join us in any and all of these events, in any and all churches of our West Tweeddale linkage.

Events in Carlops include ...

Good Friday 7 April, 8pm: Tenebrae service in Carlops Church; Prof Murray Campbell
A stark and moving acknowledgement of Good Friday

Easter Sunday 9 April, from 9am: Easter breakfast in Carlops Village Centre
A happy, informal way of marking Easter morning amongst friends. Please join us; no need to book in advance. Breakfast is free; donations to a charity will be invited.

Easter Sunday 9 April, 10am: Family Easter service in Carlops Church; Rev Chris Levison

Holy Week Pilgrimage in West Tweeddale

From Monday 3 to Friday 7 April 2023 there will once again be a Holy Week pilgrimage around West Tweeddale. Most services will start at 7pm and on Monday to Wednesday, should last for no more than half an hour.

- Monday in Tweedsmuir Kirk will be centred on the wooden beam of the cross that Jesus carried and will be led by Dr Fiona Burnett.
- Tuesday in Broughton Kirk will be centred on the crown of thorns that Jesus was made to wear and will be led by Dr Peter Worthington.
- Wednesday in Skirling Kirk will be centred on the seamless robe that they dressed Jesus in and will be led by Isobel Hunter.
- Thursday in Newlands Kirk will include the Maundy Thursday Sacrament of Communion and will be led by Rev Dr Tony Foley.
- Friday in Carlops Kirk will be a Tenebrae Service **starting at 8pm** and finishing in darkness led by Prof Murray Campbell.

Please join us for any or all of these Holy Week services, designed to take us to the reality of the crucifixion before we celebrate the resurrection on Easter Sunday.

We look forward to greeting you. Happy Easter!

Revising Carlops Church's *Forward plan* Please tell us your ideas

Rennie McElroy writes ... The Kirk Session has asked me to revise Carlops Church's *Forward plan*, approved in 2016. Julie Gamble has agreed to work with me.

The revised plan will cover everything Carlops Church does – cultural, social and spiritual. It will explain how we hope to serve the community of Carlops and everyone who supports any aspect of our church's work. It will not be restricted to a Sunday congregation and worship, but these will form an important element. We expect to reaffirm some aims and activities, and propose new ones.

We want this revised plan to reflect the ideas of a cross-section of people, so please get in touch and tell us what you think. This invitation is addressed to everyone; it is emphatically *not* restricted to those who come to Carlops Church on Sunday morning. Email, telephone, or just talk to us ...

Julie Gamble	E julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk	T 07980 258 381
Rennie McElroy	E rennie.mcelroy@btinternet.com	T 01968 661 042

You can re-read the current *Forward plan* at this link [Future plans - Carlops church](#). What do you think of it? How has Carlops Church performed since it was published? How do you hope the church may develop over five to ten years? We particularly want to hear about four issues ...

1. What do you think Carlops Church does best? And less well?
2. Carlops is a parish church, so it serves the whole community. How do you see its role in respect of "Sunday congregation" and "wider community"?
3. Our core of "organising supporters" is small; their average age is over 70. How may we design aims and activities so that they can be achieved by such a group? And how may we attract new people to *organise* activities, as well as attend events?
4. What things would you like Carlops Church still to be doing in five to ten years' time? What new things should be added, if possible? What might be dropped, if necessary?

What you say needn't be detailed and eloquent; bullet points are fine. And it needn't cover everything; just what you want to say. Please get in touch. We look forward to hearing from you.

Julie Gamble and Rennie McElroy

Stated Annual Meeting, 2023

Carlops Church's 2023 Stated Annual Meeting was held in the church on Sunday 19 March 2023 at 11am, following morning service.

The meeting received the annual report and accounts for 2022, which had been approved by the

Kirk Session and will be submitted to our Presbytery, to the Church of Scotland's Stewardship and Finance department at "121", and to OSCAR, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Session Clerk Murray Campbell provided his analytical summary of the year's work and achievements in Carlops Church. In the unavoidable absence of Mary McElroy, Treasurer, he also drew attention to some issues arising from the accounts. The agenda also included reports on property, and Eco Group and related developments in and around Carlops.

The full text of the annual report and accounts will be posted on the church website soon.

Quiz Night by West Tweeddale Guild

West Tweeddale Guild, which we hosted in Carlops Church recently, is holding a quiz night in Broughton Village Hall on Friday 31 March 2023 at 7pm. All are invited to what will be a fun event. You can enter a team of four, or go as a singleton and the organisers will fit you into a team on the night. Entrance fee is £5 per head, or £20 for a table of four; this includes a sandwich supper at "half-time". There will also be a raffle.

The proceeds will go to two Guild projects: *Home for Good*, which finds homes for vulnerable children in Scotland; and *Starchild*, which helps children with disabilities in Uganda.

Contact Fiona Burnett (E fiona@glenholm.co.uk T 01899 830 408) if you would like to take part. She will do the rest!

Open Gate counselling

The Open Gate is a free counselling service for anyone, young or old, who would like some help.

Phone or text 07535 898 244 for a telephone appointment to be arranged.

Margaret Habeshaw



The Column

The Pale Blue Dot

The 2022 Carlops eco-service included The pale blue dot, a film of Earth in space, as seen from the deep-space probe Voyager I. The filming was instigated by Voyager project scientist Carl Sagan. People have remarked on the power of his voice-over commentary for the film. Chris Levison has sourced the text and it is printed here; it seems right to revisit it at Easter-tide. To watch the video as you read, visit <https://youtu.be/vRF6EO0q6uQ>. Read, watch, think.

“Look again at that dot. That’s here. That’s home. That’s us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every “superstar”, every “supreme leader”, every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there – on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.

“The earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilt by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill on another, how fervent their hatreds.

“Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the greater enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.

“The earth is the only world known so far to harbour life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand.

“It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we’ve ever known.”

Carl Sagan: voice-over for the film *The Pale Blue Dot*
Researched and submitted by Chris Levison

Diary



Forthcoming events

Coffee drop-in Saturday 25 March 2023; 10.30am-12noon

Cuppa and company Thursday 30 March 2023, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company Thursday 6 April 2023, 2-4pm

Easter breakfast Sunday 9 April 2023, 9am, in Carlops Village Centre

Cuppa and company Thursday 13 April 2023, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company Thursday 20 April 2023, 2-4pm

Soup lunch Wednesday 26 April 2023; 12noon-1.30pm

Coffee drop-in Saturday 29 April 2023, 10.30am-12noon

Cuppa and company Thursday 4 May 2023, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company Thursday 11 May 2023, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company Thursday 18 May 2023, 2-4pm

Soup lunch Wednesday 24 May 2023; 12noon-1.30pm

Coffee drop-in Saturday 27 May 2023, 10.30am-12noon

Cuppa and company Thursday 1 June 2023, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company Thursday 8 June 2023, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company Thursday 15 June 2023, 2-4pm

Coffee drop-in Saturday 24 June 2023, 10.30am-12noon

Contacts

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Soup lunch: Nan Buchan

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Material for next issue

To Rennie McElroy by Monday 24 April 2023