



# CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

## Newsletter

Volume 17, Number 5; May 2023

### Services, May 2023

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

30 April 10am: Kevin Scott

7 May 10am: Mary McElroy

14 May 10m: Rev Dr Tony Foley  
*Communion*

21 May 10am: Rev Chris Levison

28 May 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley  
*Baptism*  
*Louisa Isobel Moore*

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

**We promise you a warm welcome**

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

***Carlops is one of the West Tweeddale linkage of churches***

**[www.westtweeddale.org.uk](http://www.westtweeddale.org.uk)**



# Our Minister

## Are you allergic to being “present”?

Are you allergic to being “present”, or perhaps addicted to “being somewhere else”. Let me explain. Have you ever sat at a table trying to talk to someone and found that you’re losing the battle with their mobile phone? You’re trying to look into their eyes, but their eyes keep dipping down to glance at a little screen. You’re trying to talk about this shared reality, but they are busy attending to a virtual reality that is wooing them with differently-toned beeping noises at odd intervals. You might find yourself asking: “Is it me? Am I too boring, too threatening, too intense, too in-your-face, too demanding, just too much for you? Maybe the problem is that the little electronic device in your hand is offering you a possible future of texted assignations, or Tik-Tok funny moments, or Twittered allegations; a whole fantasy world of potential possibilities. While I am sitting here right in front of you, offering you simple present-tense reality, but you seem to be addicted to being somewhere else.”

Before we get too self-righteous and resentful about friends or family members who are phubbing<sup>1</sup> us and who seem to be “allergic to being present”, hold your judgment call. Don’t you think that we’re all a little like that with God? We all, even the religiously devout, can often be preoccupied with fiddling and fantasising, all the while avoiding eye contact with God. We are behaving as though we are allergic to being present in his presence.

The Roman Catholic priest Henry Nouwen speaks of how what he thought of as a life of religious devotion to God was actually a form of avoiding God. He explains that at the root of his “devotion” was a desire to control God, of him trying to control how much access God could have to his life and on what terms he could have it. He goes on to say that during that time that he imagined was his personal struggle to find God, “God had been trying to find me, to know me, and to love me”. Nouwen says it was only then that he realised that his question was no longer “How am I to find God?” but “How am I to let myself be found by him?” The question was no longer “How am I to love God?” but “How am I going to let myself be loved by God?” Like the father in Jesus’ story of the prodigal son, God is looking into the distance for us, longing to “see us” and to celebrate us.

In other words, what Jesus came to tell us, in stories like the prodigal son, is that God is the one who is longing to look into *our* eyes. So, this week why not put your “phone” down and take time to be *present in God’s presence*? Let him look into your eyes. Let him love you.

Peace

Tony

<sup>1</sup>*Phubbing is the practice of ignoring one's companion or companions in order to pay attention to one's phone or other mobile device.*

# News



## **Cuppa and company extended**

*Cuppa and company*, the informal Thursday afternoon gathering in Carlops Church, is proving so successful that organisers have decided to run it every week from now on. The extra occasions will be welcomed by regular and occasional attenders alike – and will it make much easier to remember the event! Come along and enjoy a cup of tea, a biscuit, and some friendly conversation.

## **Christian aid, 14-20 May 2023** **Christian Aid fighting poverty with peas!**

Christian Aid's publicity this year focuses on Malawi, where Christian Aid is helping farmers like Esther and Jen to transform their livelihoods using the mighty *pigeon pea* – a drought resistant, soil revitalising, high protein, low cost, delicious crop. Their families are suffering because of the global crisis. Food, fuel, fertiliser and school fees have doubled in price in the last year. Hard working farmers are seeing their traditional harvests fail as climate change brings increasingly erratic weather. The pigeon pea is proving to be a more reliable, profitable crop, helping to build happier futures for their children. Read Esther's and Jen's stories online at [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk).

Christian Aid week runs from 14 to 20 May this year and will be marked by several events and activities around our linkage. See below ...

Robert Higgins, Linkage CA Chair

## **Christian Aid in Carlops**

Donations made at Soup lunch on Wednesday 24 May (12noon to 1.30pm) and Coffee drop-in on Saturday 27 May (10.30am to 12noon) will be gratefully received in support of Christian Aid. We invite everyone to participate and help make the fund-raising activities successful.

## **CA Activities in West Tweeddale linkage**

### ***Collections***

There will be no door-to-door collection in the linkage, but there are several other ways to donate ...

1. Ideally, online at [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk): your gift goes direct to CA with no hidden deductions reducing its value.
2. If you still prefer to use the traditional CA envelope, these will be available to pick up in church at Sunday services in May. Return directly to your CA representative.
3. By post: send personal cheque to CA, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL.

### CA quiz

The theme of this year's cryptic quiz is *Flower and Plant names*. Printed copies of the quiz will be available to pick up in church (optional discretionary donation invited). Answers are available on request (but not yet!) if you get stuck.

### CA Service

St Andrew's Church, Sunday 14 May, 11.30am, led by Rev Dr Tony Foley. We extend an open invitation to all. Refreshments and fellowship afterwards!

## Car boot sale at Skirling for Christian Aid

Skirling Church is hosting its traditional car boot sale in support of Christian Aid on Sunday afternoon, 14 May 2023. Everyone is warmly invited to come and buy in a good cause. In addition to a wide range of stalls selling baking, books, plants and more, there will be a bouncy castle, an ice cream van and teas in Skirling Village Hall (highly recommended! Ed).

Organisers appeal for bric a brac, books, baking, plants, etc to sell on the Christian Aid stall, and (more) baking – scones and cakes – for the teas. Try to clear out those cupboards for the sale! Items can be delivered to Isobel Hunter, but after 4 May, please.

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

## Carlops Church's *Forward plan*: reminder

A reminder that your opinions and ideas are invited. The Kirk Session has asked Julie Gamble and Rennie McElroy to revise Carlops Church's *Forward plan*. The plan will cover everything Carlops Church does – cultural, social and spiritual – and it should reflect the views of as many Carlops people as possible, so please tell Julie and Rennie what you think. Email, telephone, or just talk to ...

Julie Gamble	E <a href="mailto:julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk">julieggamble@yahoo.co.uk</a>	T 07980 258 381
Rennie McElroy	E <a href="mailto:rennie.mcelroy@btinternet.com">rennie.mcelroy@btinternet.com</a>	T 01968 661 042

You can re-read the current *Forward plan* at this link [Future plans - Carlops church](#). Julie and Rennie would like to hear about four issues in particular ...

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?
4. What things would you like Carlops Church still to be doing in five to ten years’ time? And 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.

## Messy Church Picnic

Messy Church will hold its summer picnic on Sunday 21 May from 3pm in the garden of St Mungo’s Church, West Linton. Families are warmly welcome. Please bring your own picnic, and come and join the fun! All children must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information, contact Jean Howat: [howatjean@gmail.com](mailto:howatjean@gmail.com).

## Michelle Fraser moving on

As is made evident by the item that follows this, our Linkage administrator Michelle Fraser is moving on after about a year in post. She has accepted a full-time job at the University of Edinburgh in their Human Resource department – an area of major interest for her. Michelle writes *“My new job is really going well, I am doing a lot of Academic recruitment, and am heavily involved in the development of their new People and Culture Strategy, focusing particularly on employee experience and wellbeing; right up my HR/workplace psychology alley. So I am really enjoying it.”*

For the moment, Michelle is still handling some church work in her spare(!) time – evenings and weekends – but she looks forward to handing over to a replacement, hopefully before too long.

We thank Michelle for her contribution to our fledgling expanded linkage and for the friendly and helpful manner in which she has made it. We wish Michelle well in all she tackles in future.

## Job Opportunity West Tweeddale Churches Linkage Administrator Part-time (12 hrs per week)

The Church of Scotland in West Tweeddale is looking for a part-time assistant for the Minister, partly based in a central office in West Linton, and partly working from home. The linkage of West Tweeddale consists of six congregations based in Broughton, Carlops, Kirkurd and Newlands, Skirling, Tweedsmuir and West Linton.

The post-holder will provide administrative support to the Rev Dr Tony Foley and to a team of four session clerks. The successful candidate will be responsible for worship rota schedules, event

planning, calendar management, minute-taking, action point facilitation and *ad hoc* administrative duties to support the Church's activities. The post-holder will also be the main point of contact with the Church of Scotland's national and regional offices.

Essential skills are: IT and administrative experience; communication skills; a driving licence and access to a car. Experience of Church of Scotland structures would be useful.

**Salary** £12 per hour; 12 hours per week. 72 hours paid holiday per annum.

**Closing Date** 31 May 2023

**Contract Type** one-year fixed term

### How to Apply

Please send a CV and personal statement outlining your suitability and motivation for the role to Rev Dr Tony Foley; email [tfoley@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:tfoley@churchofscotland.org.uk).

For a full job description, please email [cos1560.tweed@outlook.com](mailto:cos1560.tweed@outlook.com).

## Still want this Newsletter? Checking, to observe some procedural niceties!

I send you this *Newsletter* every month because you have agreed to receive it and have also agreed that I may keep your email address on my computer so that I can email the publication to you.

I take care to keep your information safe and use it in a proper manner. The file of *Newsletter* email addresses is used only for Carlops Church business. It is not available to anyone except me, as *Newsletter* editor and distributor. It is protected by a password known only to me; if any third party were to access my computer, s/he would be unable to open the file containing your address. I restrict the email messages sent to you to the *Newsletter* itself and very occasional additional announcements deemed urgent by office-bearers of Carlops Church; there have been fewer than four of these "extra" messages since January 2022. I trust this reassures you that your information is adequately protected, used only for the purposes you provided it, and that you are not burdened with unnecessary communications.

To continue receiving the *Newsletter*, do nothing; I will continue to email it to you. To stop receiving it, send email saying *No Newsletter* to [info@carlopschurch.org](mailto:info@carlopschurch.org).

If you would prefer me not to hold your email address on file, send email saying *Delete my address* to [info@carlopschurch.org](mailto:info@carlopschurch.org). Be aware that this means that you will no longer receive the *Newsletter* directly, as it is an electronic-only publication. You can access recent issues at [www.carlopschurch.org/newsletter/](http://www.carlopschurch.org/newsletter/), but will not receive alerts about new issues. If you do this, you can re-subscribe by emailing *Newsletter please* to [info@carlopschurch.org](mailto:info@carlopschurch.org).

Simple, isn't it? Phew!

Rennie McElroy *Editor*

# The Column



## Kirstenbosch Botanic Garden, Cape Town, South Africa

*Jo Blackburn entranced several Carlops What's App-ers with her occasional photographs from her recent trip to South Africa. Here, Jo writes about a botanic garden in that country. Ed*

Kirstenbosch is a very beautiful Botanic Garden, set in a magnificent site on the steep eastern slopes of Table Mountain at the southern tip of Africa. The development of the Botanic Garden began in 1913, on land bought in 1895 by Cecil Rhodes and subsequently bequeathed to the government. Its first Honorary Director was Harold Pearson, first Professor of Botany in Cape Town and previously of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

Its collection is devoted to indigenous South African plants. In its lower reaches are areas allotted to medicinal plants, useful plants, scented plants and a sculpture garden with fine sculptures from Zimbabwe, set amongst lawns. An avenue of Camphor and Fig trees leads upwards and there are remnants of a Wild Almond hedge originally planted in 1660 to demarcate the edge of the fledgling Dutch colony. It is known as Van Riebeck's Hedge, after Jan van Riebeck, who led the first party of Dutch East India company settlers.

In the middle reaches of the garden, a stream runs past stepping-stones in a dark dell. Its source is in Colonel Bird's well and above it is an amphitheatre where Cycads flourish.

A tree canopy walkway runs through the Arboretum, home of a collection of native South African trees.

The high lawns contain beds of Proteas, Ericas, and Restios, the diverse plants which cover the Table Mountain and Cape of Good Hope reserves and are known as Fynbos (fine bush). The Cape Floral Kingdom is tiny but one of the richest in the world. There are spectacular views of the eastern cliffs of Table Mountain and of the Cape Flats area to the East. Proteas in flower are a magnificent sight, the crowning glory being the large blooms of the King Proteas.

Skeleton and Nursery Gorges lead steeply from the high garden to the top of Table Mountain, but only for the strong and fit!

Jo Blackburn

# Diary



## Forthcoming events

**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

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 25 May 2023, 2-4pm

**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

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 22 June 2023, 2-4pm

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

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 29 June 2023, 2-4pm

## 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: Vacancy**

Telephone 01968 733 112

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

*If there is no response from these contacts, I suggest contacting Minister or Session Clerk Ed*

### **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 drop-in and Cuppa & company: Mary Levison and Mary McElroy**

Telephone 01968 674 566 Email [marylevison@btinternet.com](mailto:marylevison@btinternet.com)

Telephone 01968 661 042 Email [maryhmcelroy@outlook.com](mailto:maryhmcelroy@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: 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 [maryhmcelroy@outlook.com](mailto:maryhmcelroy@outlook.com)

## Material for next issue

To Rennie McElroy by Monday 22 May 2023