



CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

Newsletter

Volume 17, Number 7; July 2023

Services, July 2023

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

2 July 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley
Communion

9 July 10am: Prof Murray Campbell

16 July 10am: Isobel Hunter

23 July 10am: Dr Peter Worthington

30 July 10am: Fiona Burnett

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

What is a Procrustean bed?

The bed is too short ... and ... the blanket is too narrow (Isaiah 28:20)

Among the myths of Greek antiquity is the story of Procrustes. He was a notorious legendary highwayman of Attica, who tied his victims on an iron bed, and, as the case required, either stretched or cut off their legs to adapt them to its length. Hence the phrase *a Procrustean bed* came to refer to an idea, theory, or system to which facts could and would be arbitrarily fitted to fit the desired outcome. Rather like the pontifications of some of our contemporary political leaders.

Isaiah is not the only Old Testament prophet to use the analogy of a bed to illustrate the dangers of an inadequate faith. His contemporary Amos speaks in his prophecies of *Those who sit in Samaria on the edge of their beds and on the corner of their couches.*

We all know people who tend to perch precariously on the edges of beds and the corners of couches. As though they are afraid to commit themselves to the extent of sitting firmly or fully on the bed or couch. It's the *I can only stay for a moment!* attitude, reflective of an apparent unwillingness to become *too involved*. It is seen in a body posture that says *Let me just rest ever so lightly on the edge, not get too settled, for fear I might want to beat a hasty retreat.* Some people go through their whole life with that attitude: minimum faith, minimum involvement, and minimum concern for others.

Isaiah's graphic and humorous picture of a bed with skimpy covering is addressed to a people who, although feverish in their religious activities, are suddenly discovering the all too obvious inadequacy of their religion to cover the facts and to meet the needs for life in a time of real crisis.

It begs the question: is it ever appropriate to reduce our religious convictions to a minimum, to boil them down to a few ethical principles? Surely reduction can never be the last word on the Christian faith. When we speak of music, we don't ask how much we can get rid of and still have it be counted musical. When we speak of the family, we never dream of considering what parental duties we can evade and still be considered a good parent. Is it not the same with faith? How little of the Christian faith can we do without and still think we have a Christian faith? Is it true of us, as one wit put it, that *Many professing Christians have found just enough faith to cherish their own opinion.*

What Isaiah is trying to say to his devoutly religious audience is that the person who tries to reduce their faith in God to mere religious duty and decency will in the crises of life find that "the bed is too short and the blanket too narrow". Religious activity, whatever its guise, comes easily, naturally, and often cheaply to human beings. But according to Jesus, the Gospel he calls us to believe in and commit to will cost us nothing, except everything we are and own.

Peace, Tony

News



New Administrative Assistant for our linkage

Rev Dr Tony Foley reports that a new Administrative Assistant has been appointed in the stead of Michelle Fraser, who left recently.

Mark Hepworth is our new assistant; Tony describes him as *a young parent from West Linton, with a link to St Mungo's*. Mark expects to start work soon, perhaps as early as Monday 26 June 2023.

Welcome to West Tweeddale, Mark. We look forward to getting to know you and working with you. We hope your time with our linkage proves both satisfying and enjoyable.

Christian Aid 2023; Carlops' results

Mary Levison, Carlops Church's representative on the linkage Christian Aid committee, reports that the Carlops' campaign in support of Christian Aid week during May were very successful. The strategy of nominating scheduled and well-established church events to aid the charity clearly worked; despite there being no old-style door-to-door collection, our parish raised around £950 from activities like Soup lunch, Coffee drop-in and the Christian Aid envelopes that our supporters were "encouraged" on several occasions to pick up, fill and return!

For anyone whose planned donation is still a good intention: you can add to the above total by visiting www.christianaid.org.uk and donating online; or by sending a cheque to Christian Aid, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL..

Well done, Carlops, and thank you.

Patient transport: towards a volunteer service?

Public transport is wonderful, of course, and a key factor in saving the planet, but even its most ardent devotees will struggle to convince anyone that it offers an easy way of getting from anywhere in our West Tweeddale linkage to Borders General Hospital, Edinburgh's New Royal Infirmary, or St John's Hospital, Livingston. For those who don't drive or are unable to do, these journeys are daunting, long, tiring, and plain tedious. Hence a current initiative, led by Margaret Torrance – West Lintonian by residence, and a Carlops supporter through the Thursday *Cuppa and company* gatherings, the Linton Singers, and other activities.

Margaret would like to establish a voluntary service that will provide transport to medical appointments for anyone who may need such assistance. The service would be open to everyone in

and around our linkage who is able to participate, whether as transport provider or transport recipient.

Informal conversations at *Cuppa and company* and elsewhere confirmed local need for such a service and revealed support for the idea. An informal “all welcome” meeting was held in West Linton Village Centre on Tuesday afternoon, 13 June 2023 to explore the matter further and to gauge support, especially from potential volunteer drivers. Margaret reports that that meeting confirmed that there is a very great need for the service, and hopefully no shortage of prospective drivers. The principal requirement is a core of computer-literate administrators to organise the activity and generally “make it happen”. We cannot move forward without that.

Margaret invites interested people to volunteer as possible committee members to help get the project further organised, with a view to being properly formed as early in the autumn as possible. In addition to the meeting mentioned above, Margaret has sent a short article to the *Peeblesshire News* ...

Linton Lifts

West Linton's journey towards establishing a group to support health-related transport is revving up! Many thanks to all who attended our first meeting last week – it goes without saying that there is a great need for the proposed volunteer-driven scheme, and therefore a need for willing people to run it.

Already we have a short list of potential drivers (but need more), and clients, but very much needed now are computer-literate administrators! If you are reading this and thinking maybe you could help, do please email MargaretTorrance with a sentence or two about what you think you could contribute to the team. Volunteers will benefit in many ways from using a bit of spare time helping to run this much needed initiative, so don't hold back! I look forward to hearing from you!

Readers should note that despite one implication of the alliteratively attractive title of Margaret's article, there is total agreement that any such service should operate “Tweeddale-wide”.

Contact Margaret Torrance for more information and to volunteer help: email margarettorrance6@icloud.com

Fair Trade in Carlops Church

Have your shopping habits changed since lockdown? Ours certainly have. Previously, we did weekly shops at a large supermarket, with occasional trips to the Co-op in West Linton. We started using fortnightly *click & collect* early on during lockdown, followed by home deliveries when our car was off the road for a while. I have never gone back to the large supermarket shop – I don't miss it, and we save on car journeys. The weekly fresh fruit and veg stall in West Linton is a favourite – and I can get anything else we need in the Co-op.

Before lockdown, the monthly Fair Trade stall in the church was pretty steady with loyal customers who bought regularly, supporting the ethics of Fair Trade and keeping our profile high as an Eco Congregation. Annual income for 2016-2018 averaged £1,400, over £100 per month. Now, we

struggle to take in £50 a month.

The definition of Fair Trade is when products are sourced through a fair supply chain, where small-scale farmers, producers and artisans are treated with dignity, respect and fairness. Trading partnerships – with other producers and with retailers – give producers in the global south the bargaining power to achieve better trading conditions for themselves.

The Fair Trade organisation make agreements to set the price for products, allowing producers to earn enough to cover the cost of production and have enough left over to invest in their farms and businesses. It's not just about survival, it's about improving year on year and building resilience. On top of the agreed price, producers receive a "Fair Trade Premium", that can be invested in healthcare, education and anything else they think will benefit their community.

It may seem that you can pay less in local supermarkets, but have you seen the obscene profits they have been making recently? Surely, it is better to buy direct and benefit the people who really need us. If we want to be a Fair Trade Church in an Eco Congregation, we need to step up.

Anna Woolverton

The Column



Like a King in a palace

It's good to welcome our old friend Jack Kellet back to the Columnist's slot. Thanks for this characteristically spirited contribution, Jack. And do try to stay well!

Rennie McElroy Editor

The Tuesday after the coronation in May, I was still relishing the new King's testimony that his reign would be about continuing to serve rather than being served, when suddenly, I found myself being installed in that NHS Palace commonly called *Borders General Hospital*. And I was the centre of attention of more courtiers than Edward II ever had at Westminster!

Of course, I had not been at all surprised when, right at the start of the coronation service, King Charles III broke with the traditional order of his predecessors, by promising that he intended to serve, rather than wait to be served. In 1981, I was invited to lead worship for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her family while they were staying at Balmoral. The young, then Prince of Wales, with his title's motto "Ich Dien" on his epaulettes, had quizzed me about deprivation in Leith. He then went on to do much to bring about improvement. Later, when the last mill in Walkerburn closed, local youth leaders were taken aback to be invited to Holyrood Palace and find Charles urging business leaders to provide computers for the distraught village, so that young people could acquire the new skills they needed to get a job. Indeed, I knew that over the decades, the Prince's Trust had helped more than a million young people set up in business.

Now, out of the blue, summoned by the excellent St Ronan's Health Service, a gold and green carriage had carried this actual servant – ordained sixty-one years before as a minister "ad vitam aut culpam" – and installed him in *their* Palace. Four gifts of tried and tested (no doubt appropriately blue!) blood replenished the proletarian dregs left in my arteries, and a huge range of highly skilled, professional NHS staff from countries all over the world were taking turns, sometimes four or five at a time, to give me the care and attention they decided I needed. This Palace provided a room better even than Balmoral. As well as being a ninety-four-year-old, bolshie *Scotsman* reader – I was a king surrounded by subjects!

Less than a week later, the Borders Palace Planning Staff even arranged a re-baptism before bearing me back to my duties in the world. Realising that there are an increasing number of Jacks around these days, and caringly alert to the risks of older-age confusion, they ushered me into a larger reception room. There, they first welcomed me with non-skid, blue-for-a-boy socks, offered me orange juice instead of just water for the ceremony, and then named me "Ward 4 Room 4 Bed 20."

Long Live the NHS! Glory to God for the Bible's inspiration to campaigners for a better world!
And long may this King and Queen reign over us!

Rev Jack Kellet

Diary



Forthcoming events

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

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

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

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

Cuppa and company Thursday 27 July 2023, 2-4pm

Coffee drop-in Saturday 30 July 2023, 10.30am-12noon

Cuppa and company Thursday 3 August 2023, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company Thursday 10 August 2023, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company Thursday 17 August 2023, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company Thursday 24 August 2023, 2-4pm

Cuppa and company Thursday 31 August 2023, 2-4pm

Coffee drop-in Saturday 3 September 2023, 10.30am-12noon

Contacts

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Church Administrator: Vacancy

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Email 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

Church bookings: Sheena Livingstone

Telephone 01968 661 282

Email sheena@deanfoot.onmicrosoft.com

Coffee drop-in and Cuppa & company: Mary Levison and Mary McElroy

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Email maryhmcelroy@outlook.com

Assistance required and always welcome; contact Mary or Mary if you can help!

Eco Group: Anna Woolverton

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Newsletter and website: Rennie McElroy

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Session Clerk and Organist: Murray Campbell

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Soup lunch: Nan Buchan

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Assistance required and always welcome; contact Nan if you can help!

Sunday School: Julie Gamble

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Material for next issue

To Rennie McElroy by Monday 24 July 2023