



# CARLOPS CHURCH

In the community, for the community

## Newsletter

Volume 17, Number 10; October 2023

### Services, October 2023

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

- :
- 1 October 10am: Dr Patsy Campbell
  - 8 October 10am: Mrs Mary McElroy
  - 15 October 10am: David Henderson-Howat
  - 22 October 10am: Sheena Livingstone
  - 29 October 10am: Rev Dr Tony Foley
- GMT: clocks back one hour*
- 5 November 10am: tba

**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

## Jesus – the invitation

The life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth have captivated the hearts and minds of millions for over two millennia. His person, teaching about reconciliation with and compassion towards others, and his miraculous deeds have left an indelible mark on human history. They address universal themes of love, justice, and the human condition. Themes that in a world so evidently marked by division, conflict, and inequality, remain deeply relevant.

Despite the centuries that have passed since Jesus' earthly life he remains for many an enigmatic figure, often defying easy categorization. Amidst all the stories there remains a fundamental and profound question: Who is Jesus, and what does his life mean for us today? Was he merely a charismatic teacher, a political revolutionary, or was he something more? The diverse perspectives on Jesus' identity have given rise to a myriad of theological and philosophical debates throughout history.

One undeniable aspect of Jesus' life is how his teachings continue to resonate with people of all backgrounds. His lessons on love, forgiveness, compassion, and the Kingdom of God have had a profound and lasting impact on individuals and on communities. Through the Sermon on the Mount and his parables, Jesus offered a vision of a transformed and just world, a vision that challenges all of us to examine our values and our actions.

Then of course there is the legacy of miracles attributed to Jesus, from turning water into wine to healing the sick, these have undoubtedly sparked intrigue. For some, these acts are seen as proofs of his identity as the Son of God. For others, they raise questions about the nature of the miraculous and a rational understanding of life.

But it is the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus that remain pivotal events in the Christian faith. For Christians these events have profound theological significance and have great bearing not only on how we experience God but on how we see ourselves as a human race. They speak not only about human nature, of forgiveness and the possibility of redemption but also of the promise of life after life. While at the same time raising questions about the nature of suffering and sacrifice.

Ultimately, for Christians the invitation of Jesus is not merely to an intellectual exercise but to a personal encounter. Many have found transformation and purpose through their encounter with Jesus. Even today he continues to invite all of us to explore the depths of our own beliefs about ourselves, about life and about God. Why not accept his invitation and explore his Gospel for yourself.

Peace

Tony

# News



## Under (partly) new management!

Julie Gamble and I have compiled this issue of the *Newsletter* together, as we begin the staged handover that will see Julie take over as editor from the first issue of 2024.

It's not a "spot the difference" game, so there are no prizes for detecting tweaks and differences. We simply decided that compiling the issue as a team is the best way of helping Julie discover how an issue comes together and familiarising herself with ropes, deadlines, page layouts, wondering what to include, inviting (and demanding!) copy, and other stuff.

Thanks for your help, Julie. Enjoy the read, everyone.

Rennie McElroy *Editor*

## Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings ...

*During morning service in Carlops Church on the first Sunday of September, Laura Armstrong walked to the lectern to lead the congregation in prayer. Laura explained that, while thinking about what to say, she told her three children (aged four to seven) what she was doing and asked them what they thought her prayer should include. The children's ideas flooded out and Laura decided to use them just as they were expressed.*

*The congregation that Sunday was deeply moved – and delighted – with the result that Laura read, and we think more of our supporters should have opportunity to read what Maddie, Juliet and Toby proposed. Here is the Armstrong family's prayer ...*

Rennie McElroy *Editor*

Dear God

Thank you for the lovely clothes, food and water.  
Thank you for our beds and blankets and pillows.  
Thank you for our siblings, our friends and our cousins.  
Thank you for parties.  
Thank you for animals.  
Thank you for our skills and for helping us learn new stuff.

We pray for people who need help but aren't being looked after.  
We pray for people who need food and water.  
We pray for people who don't have a house or shelter.  
We pray for children who don't have enough clothes or toys or shoes.

We pray for children who don't have party rings.  
Or parties.  
We pray for people who are sick.  
We pray for people who have broken bones.  
We pray for people who are deaf or who can't see.  
We pray for very old people who find it difficult to walk.

Please comfort people who are sad.  
Please keep company people who are lonely.  
Please help us to share our stuff with people.  
Please help us to be patient when people make us cross.  
Please look after all the people who need you.

Amen

Maddie (7), Juliet (5), Toby (4) [and Laura (?)]

## Carlops Church's next Local Church Review

Presbytery has determined that Carlops Church's next Local Church Review (LCR) should be conducted in the next few weeks, though the precise dates have not yet been announced.

Local Church Reviews are normally conducted every five years. Carlops' last LCR was held in 2016, but the schedule was affected by the coronavirus pandemic, then by the restructuring of Scottish Presbyteries.

The LCR is intended to assess the well-being, energy and achievements of a church. A team of enquirers appointed by Presbytery study information that the church itself provides, then visit the church and hold discussions with office-bearers and other supporters. Typically, the visitors will also participate in worship. The process is searching, but amicable. If it is well conducted, both the church assessed, and the visiting assessors learn much from it.

Our Session Clerk has received a questionnaire requesting information which will inform the visitors prior to their arrival here. Members of the Kirk Session have contributed to its completion, describing and analysing the range of activities which Carlops Church organises, providing basic statistical information about our supporters (no personal details!) and making an assessment of our impact upon the wider community of Carlops.

Expect more information about this important and potentially interesting visit and series of meetings as it becomes available.

## Carlops eco-workshop at Presbytery conference

Our still-new Presbytery of Lothian and Borders held a one-day conference in Jedburgh in late September and a team from Carlops' Eco group presented a workshop about the Carlops approach to eco-work as an arm of our church's outreach activities. The purpose was to illustrate one way in

which churches might approach Presbytery's "Mark of Mission five" – Treasure the Earth and strive to protect it from harm caused by human activity.

In an initial presentation, the main themes included ...

- Most people intuitively support protecting the planet, so the potential audience is inherently sympathetic
- Keep the focus, practical, local and do-able, so that people are not overwhelmed by the enormity of the task
- It's advisable to use plain language and avoid "church speak", to retain the attention and sympathy those legitimately sceptical about church
- How to handle the socially controversial approach of some eco-activists; vital if one presents as a church trying to relate to the whole community

After the opening presentation, a lively discussion ensued, which workshop participants decided to pursue instead of (as originally planned) breaking into small groups to consider pre-set questions! Interest centred particularly on the approaches Carlops Church employed in the several projects we have run that involved the whole community: how we secured community involvement and participation; got people outwith the congregation to take important roles; communicated widely, raised funds; and in particular, used hospitality as a tool to attract in initial interest and retain it. Of course, the last is easy-peasy in Carlops; perhaps more challenging in a less focussed, urban environment.

Though we say it as shouldn't, the workshop was well received, with delegates expressing a supportive view and planning to "try something back home".

## A little local busy-ness this winter

Look out for extra activities around Carlops Church late this year and early in 2024. As some will know, a film company may arrange to use the village hall during a period stretching from November 2023 to February 2024, with a break around Christmas and New Year. It may occasionally use the church as well. The principal outcome for Carlops Church, however, is that some of the activities that would normally take place in the hall are likely to transfer to the church during that period.

The hall's traditional Christmas and New Year events will be protected under any agreement that may eventually be negotiated, and the Church's established pattern of services and regular social events will not be affected. But there will be more furniture moving, and re-moving, and re-moving yet again. No change there, then!

As we go to press, arrangements remain to be finalised. Negotiations may still fall through. Budgets and schedules may change. Apologies for the uncertainty; that's the way of the world. We will provide an update in later issues of the *Newsletter* if appropriate.

What's that you asked? Oh – the film! The grapevine says it's about a female Samurai warrior and is to be shot in the oh-so-far-eastern Pentland Hills. That apart, editorial lips are sealed – and in any case, we don't know any more! One apology, readers: not being a Hollywood groupie, your editor has no least idea whether a delegation of Carlopians will receive all-expenses-paid invitations to the 2025 Oscars to help celebrate its undoubted triumph.

## Sowing one seed of deliberate kindness Could YOU help?

There is a great and urgent need for a friendly and affordable door-to-door service to hospitals, clinics etc. We want to hear from people who can spare some time to help their neighbours to access health-related appointments.

This is an ideal opportunity for the empty nesters, newly retired, or anyone willing to put their skills to good use. Volunteering with a group such as this is a great way to get to know more members of our community and can be very rewarding.



*Linton Lifts* needs to become a properly constituted group as soon as possible in order to manage the proposed service, and to that end I would ask anyone reading this who has a bit of time to volunteer, to please contact me (details below) for further information. You won't regret it!

*Thank you for reading this. Please spread the word. Do contact me!*

Margaret Torrance  
email [margarettorrance6@icloud.com](mailto:margarettorrance6@icloud.com)  
or Fb private message

*My thanks to Rev Dr Tony Foley for his suggestion about the title of this piece*

## Kirkurd & Newlands, Harvest Supper

Our Harvest Supper will be held at Newlands Church on Saturday 7 October 2023, at 6.30pm. Everyone is warmly invited, but please let me know if you would like to come – contact details below. It's a pot-luck supper, so please bring either a savoury or a sweet dish.

Jean Howat (email [jeanhowat@gmail.com](mailto:jeanhowat@gmail.com))

## Messy Church



Messy Church will soon start again for this winter season. It will meet on the following dates ...

Sunday 12 November 2023	Noah's Ark
Sunday 10 December 2023	Christmas
Sunday 14 January 2024	Daniel and the Lions' Den
Sunday 18 February 2024	Joseph
Sunday 10 March 2024	Moses and the Burning Bush

All sessions start at 4pm prompt in the New Church Hall at West Linton and finish at 6pm.

All children from babies to P7 are most welcome to come and join in the fun! We will start with a Bible Story and 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 do consider joining us for an afternoon of fun activities and a family meal together.

For more information, contact Jean Howat: T 01968 660677; E [howatjean@gmail.com](mailto:howatjean@gmail.com)

# The Column



## Candles

In these days of instant electric light and “Health and Safety” fears, we use candles very little outside church. Before all recollection disappears, I would like to record some of my memories of candles, as well as reflect upon their symbolism in church.

We always had real candles on our Christmas tree. I remember one year when it was all red candles and balls, with silver lametta. I remember evenings spent with my Godmother, when all the lighting in the room was candles. I remember one year in church when the huge tree was decorated with just white candles and silver lametta, applied strand by strand. Christmas always ended with the family watching the candles going out one by one, competing to see who could predict the last survivor.

Eventually, we (children) were let into the secret of placing the candles: the clip of the candleholder was used to link two branches together, to give enough strength to support the candles upright. Candles needed to be placed carefully, so as not to be directly beneath a higher branch, but the natural taper of the tree makes that fairly simple. With a little care, there was no danger, and we enjoyed the kindly, calming light. It is a light that you can look at easily and it encourages reflection (no pun intended!). Candles on the dinner table enhance the occasion.

The use of candles in church is well summarised by this prayer from Salisbury Cathedral ...

Lighting a candle is a prayer ...

When we have gone, it stays alight, kindling in the hearts and minds of others the prayers we have already offered for them and for others: for the sad, the sick and the suffering, and prayers of thankfulness too.

Lighting a candle is a parable ...

Though burning itself out, it gives light to others. Christ gave himself for others. He calls us to give ourselves.

Lighting a candle is a prayer ...

Of love and hope, of light and warmth. Our world needs them all.

Large candles, we do not use up all at once. A snuffer is one way of putting them out without disturbing or perhaps broadcasting the wax pool. If a snuffer is not handy, we may try to catch the molten wax with a hand behind the candle. I leave you with a better method I learned from my sister: put your thumb in front of the candle and blow; your breath going round the thumb will snuff out the candle safely and securely.

I wish you all the joy of candles.

Michael Hell (submitted by his sister, Anna McCosh)



# Diary



## Forthcoming events

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

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 5 October 2023, 2-4pm

**Soup lunch** Wednesday 11 October 2023, 12.00-1.30pm

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 12 October 2023, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 19 October 2023, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 26 October 2023, 2-4pm

**Coffee drop-in** Saturday 28 October 2023, 10.30am-12noon

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 2 November 2023, 2-4pm

**Soup lunch** Wednesday 8 November 2023, 12.00-1.30pm

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 9 November 2023, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 16 November 2023, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 23 November 2023, 2-4pm

**Coffee drop-in** Saturday 25 November 2023, 10.30am-12noon

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 30 November 2023, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 7 December 2023, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 14 December 2023, 2-4pm

**Cuppa and company** Thursday 21 December 2023, 2-4pm

## Contacts

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

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## Material for next issue

To Rennie McElroy by Monday 23 October 2023